

Refugee Experiences in Australia Study

Final Report

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Abbreviations & Terms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
MMM	Multicultural Marketing and Management
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
The Department	The Department of Home Affairs
The Outcomes Framework	The Refugee and Humanitarian Entrant Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework
Longer term migrants	Arrived in Australia between 2013 and 2018
Recent migrants	Arrived in Australia between 2019 and 2024
SETS	Settlement Engagement and Transitions Support
SFRI	Scanlon Foundation Research Institute

Executive Summary

This research study aims to understand the settlement and integration journey of refugee and humanitarian migrants in Australia. On behalf of the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs (the Department), the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute (SFRI) engaged the Social Research Centre to support it in conducting mixed methods research to explore the settlement and integration journeys of refugees and humanitarian entrants through the lens of the Department's Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework 2023 ('the Outcomes Framework').¹ The Outcomes Framework provides a conceptual structure to understand settlement and integration, which helps to inform government policy by identifying emerging challenges, areas of unmet need, and examples of what is working well within current settlement programs. These insights are intended to support targeted investment and program and policy adjustments that can improve settlement outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants.

This report explores the integration experiences of over 2,000 refugees and humanitarian entrants who have settled in Australia, drawing on a quantitative survey and in-depth interviews. Participants span a wide range of backgrounds and settlement stages, from those newly arrived to those who have lived in Australia for a decade. Participants come from diverse cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, and vary in age, gender, education and family composition. They have come to Australia via various pathways and have experienced different levels of trauma and displacement before arriving here.

The research study consisted of three components: qualitative interviews and focus groups and a quantitative (online) survey. This final report brings together the interview data and online survey findings. Twenty-seven indepth interviews with humanitarian entrants from Africa, the Middle East and Asia were conducted using a mix of remote and face-to-face methods between 10th October and 2nd December 2024. The online survey was completed by 2,240 humanitarian entrants between 23 January and 7 March 2025.

Together, these findings provide comprehensive insights that help us to understand the settlement and integration experiences of refugee and humanitarian migrants in Australia. The survey component was designed using validated questions from established instruments, aligned with key elements of the Outcomes Framework. This approach enabled meaningful comparisons between the study sample and the broader Australian population using existing national datasets. Complementing the survey, the interviews offer a deeper exploration of the lived experiences of refugees and humanitarian entrants and capture nuanced, personal insights that extend beyond what could be measured through the structured survey questions alone. Overall, these findings reveal the successes, challenges and complexity of the journey towards finding safety and establishing a new life in Australia.

¹ Department of Home Affairs: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/refugee-humanitarian-entrant-settlement-integration-outcomes-framework.pdf>

Summary of Findings

The research study provides a comprehensive analysis of the settlement and integration experiences of humanitarian migrants in Australia, guided by the Outcomes Framework.

There is complex interplay between the personal, social and structural factors that shape settlement trajectories. Humanitarian migrants reported strong feelings of belonging and safety, high levels of civic engagement and positive attitudes toward Australian society, despite facing challenges, often persistent, like discrimination, financial stress and language barriers. Social connections within and across cultural groups were robust, and most participants felt welcomed by their local communities. Access to public services was generally high, although outcomes varied by demographic factors such as English proficiency and employment status. The findings highlight the importance of settlement facilitators, including cultural understanding, transport, digital literacy and English proficiency in enabling meaningful participation in Australian life and successful long-term integration.

The findings presented in this report reflect combined quantitative and qualitative insights. Throughout the report, major themes are highlighted, with points of alignment and occasional divergence between the two datasets clearly noted. For a more in-depth exploration of the qualitative component, this report should be read in conjunction with the standalone qualitative report, which provides a fuller account of the interview and focus group findings.

Findings from each outcome domain are summarised below.

Personal Outcomes

The Outcomes Framework identifies two key personal outcomes for analysis: a sense of belonging and perceptions of security and safety. These outcomes encompass individuals' feelings of connection to their community and country, as well as their experiences of safety, trust and material stability.

Belonging

Belonging was measured in the survey via a sense of belonging at the national and local (neighbourhood) level.

A strong sense of belonging in Australia was reported among humanitarian migrants, with 95% feeling they belong in Australia to a moderate or great extent, which is higher than the general community (86%). This sense of belonging was slightly higher among longer term arrivals (96%) compared to recent arrivals (94%). Corroborating the survey findings, most interviewees reported a strong sense of belonging in Australia. This feeling was often attributed to the kindness, friendliness and welcoming nature of Australians, as well as to Australia's multicultural environment.

A large majority of humanitarian migrants agreed or strongly agreed that **people from different backgrounds get on well in their local area** (community cohesion) (86%) and that **they felt like they belong** in their neighbourhood (85%). **Perceived community cohesion** (86% vs 81% of all Australians) and neighbourhood belonging (85% vs 81% of all Australians) were similar for humanitarian migrants and all Australians.

Despite the strong perceptions of community cohesion and belonging, **experiences of social isolation** were common among humanitarian migrants, with 48% feeling isolated from others some of the time or often, similar to the general community (49%).

Humanitarian migrants were far more likely to have **experienced discrimination** because of their skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion in the last 12 months than all Australians, with 30% of humanitarian migrants having experienced discrimination compared to 17% of the general population. Discrimination was more commonly reported by longer term arrivals (33% vs 22% of recent arrivals), and younger migrants aged 18-34 (34% vs 25% of those aged 35+).

Security and safety

Although security and safety, including sense of safety, trust and financial security, was not a primary outcome domain assessed in this study, findings are reported here due to their relevance to other outcome areas.

Humanitarian migrants' sense of safety at home was high and similar to all Australians, with nine-in-ten (90%) humanitarian migrants feeling fairly or very safe at home by themselves during the day, compared to 94% of all Australians. **Men were more likely to feel very safe at home** (68% vs 61% of women), while women tended to feel safe at a moderate level (30% felt fairly safe vs 22% of men).

Consistent with the survey findings, interview participants widely viewed Australia as a safe country, often contrasting this with negative experiences in their home or host country prior to resettling in Australia. While most individuals felt safe in their homes and local communities, a few raised concerns about crime in their neighbourhoods or in broader Australian society.

Humanitarian migrants were fairly evenly divided on social trust, similarly to the broader Australian population, with 47% believing most people can be trusted (vs 46% of all Australians), while 52% felt they can't be too careful in dealing with people (vs 53% of all Australians). Interview findings echoed the survey's mixed findings on sense of trust. Participants generally trusted those with similar linguistic, cultural, or religious backgrounds, and many reported a general sense of trust in people within their local communities.

Humanitarian migrants **experienced varying levels of financial hardship** over the past 12 months across different financial security measures. **More than half reported financial stress** related to basic health and living needs, with 60% sometimes or often unable to see a dentist when needed and 49% unable to heat or cool their homes sometimes or often. Humanitarian migrants were also much more likely to have experienced food insecurity, with 33% reporting going without meals sometimes or often in the last 12 months because there wasn't enough money for food, in contrast to 13% of all Australians.

Social Outcomes

The Outcomes Framework defines three social outcomes in scope for analysis in this study: social connections, community welcome and access to institutions. These dimensions provide insight into the extent to which humanitarian migrants are able to establish and maintain meaningful interpersonal relationships, feel a sense of acceptance and inclusion within their local communities, and navigate and engage with key public services and civic systems. Together, these outcomes offer a lens through which to assess the broader social integration of humanitarian migrants and the structural conditions that support or hinder their participation in Australian society.

Social Connections

Humanitarian migrants reported substantial social connections with others from the same national, ethnic or religious backgrounds, with 62% having five or more friends from the same background. Compared to the general Australian population, **humanitarian migrants reported having a higher number of close friends from different national, ethnic, or religious backgrounds to their own**: 43% of humanitarian migrants reported having 5 or more friends from different backgrounds, compared to 35% of all Australians. Supporting the survey findings, most interview participants reported strong social bonds, which were most often facilitated through engagement with local ethno-cultural and religious organisations.

Humanitarian migrants reported being **actively involved in various types of civic groups at higher rates than the general Australian population**: 66% of respondents reported being actively involved in social or religious groups, compared to 43% of all Australians, while 58% of humanitarian migrants reported being actively involved in community support groups, compared to 23% of the broader population.

Community welcome

The majority (88%) of humanitarian migrants agreed or strongly agreed that they felt welcome in their local area. Echoing the strong sense of community welcome from the survey findings, the majority of interview participants also reported feeling welcomed by broader Australian society, speaking of general kindness and openness from the community.

Access to institutions

Similarly in the survey in 2022, access to government services was evaluated using a subset of questions from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Trust in the Australian Public Service Survey.²

Three-in-five (61%) humanitarian migrants reported looking for work in the past 12 months, while just under two-in-five (38%) started a new job or returned to work, indicating **substantial employment-seeking activity**.

Just over half (54%) of humanitarian migrants reported having a job (including casual, temporary, part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid) in the last 7 days, although almost half (45%) reported not having a job of any kind. In contrast to this, it is reported that 64.3% of the broader Australian population is employed.³

English proficiency and education level appeared to be closely linked with employment status. **Not having a job of any kind was much higher among those with poor English proficiency.**

Centrelink (65%) and Medicare (62%) were the most commonly accessed Australian public services among humanitarian migrants, followed by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (37%), Department of Home Affairs (16%), and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) (7%). However, access to Australian public services also varied significantly across demographic groups. Overall **satisfaction with public services was high** among humanitarian migrants who had accessed services in the past 12 months, with 72% expressing some level of satisfaction, and 18% reporting dissatisfaction.

Settlement facilitators

The Outcomes Framework identifies cultural understanding as the sole settlement facilitator within the scope of this analysis.

Settlement facilitators are critical to enabling meaningful participation in social, economic, and civic life, and their influence extends across multiple dimensions of the settlement experience. By examining humanitarian migrants' familiarity with Australian social norms and legal principles, their ability to communicate and navigate digital environments, and their access to reliable transportation, we can examine the supports that underpin successful settlement trajectories.

Understanding host culture

For an understanding of Australian social and cultural norms, familiarity with Australian law and social norms was assessed through statements on gender equality, same-sex marriage, violence and freedom of religion.

The majority of humanitarian migrants demonstrated **strong support for equality and non-violence**, with 83% rejecting gender-based employment discrimination, 48% acknowledging same-sex marriage rights (with 31% unsure), 90% supporting religious freedom and 87% opposing violence in response to insults. Humanitarian migrants also expressed more **positive attitudes toward Australian culture** than the general Australian population, with 94% taking pride in the Australian way of life to a moderate or great extent (vs 81% of all Australians).

Notable differences emerged by arrival status, with **longer term arrivals more likely to reject gender-based hiring discrimination**, compared to recent arrivals (85% vs 80%), while **recent arrivals were more likely to be uncertain about same-sex marriage** (36% vs 30% responding 'Don't know/Refused').

² Trust in Australian public services -2022 Annual Report

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2025, April). Labour Force, Australia. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/apr-2022>.

Transport

Access to transportation was assessed through a question about the perceived level of difficulty in reaching necessary destinations, adapted from a similar question in the General Social Survey. Overall, while 65% of humanitarian migrants reported being able to easily get to places they need to go, **over one-third experienced some level of difficulty navigating transportation**, with 24% sometimes having difficulty, 8% often having difficulty, and 3% unable to reach needed destinations. Access to transport was also closely associated with employment status or outcomes, as **transport difficulties were much higher among humanitarian migrants who did not currently have a job** (44% had difficulty getting to places sometimes, often or always, vs 25% of those who had a job of any kind).

Language and digital literacy

Language skills were measured by an adaptation of the Census English ability item, asking how well the respondent could speak English (only asked if the respondent used a language other than English at home).

While **two-thirds (67%) of humanitarian migrants reported speaking English well or very well**, a substantial proportion reported limited English proficiency (33% spoke English not well or not at all vs 3% of all Australians). **Humanitarian migrants had much lower English proficiency** compared to the general Australian population, with the vast majority using a language other than English at home (94% vs 24% of all Australians).

Higher English proficiency, demonstrated by those who can speak English well or very well, **was typically reported by longer term arrivals** (70% vs 60% of recent arrivals) **and younger migrants** (84% of those aged 18-34 vs 50% of those aged 35+).

Internet usage was very high among humanitarian migrants, with 90% reporting use within the last week, while only 2% had never used the internet.



1. Introduction

This report explores the settlement experiences of humanitarian entrants who settled in Australia during the past ten years through 27 qualitative interviews and 2,240 online surveys. It reports the findings through the lens of the Department's Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework 2023 ('the Outcomes Framework').⁴ The Outcomes Framework, underpinned by the principles of self-agency and self-efficacy, delineates 11 interrelated and mutually reinforcing outcome domains that support successful integration.

While this study focused on five of these domains, the report also incorporates findings from two additional domains: 'safety and security' and 'language and digital literacy'. Although not part of the original scope, these areas emerged as significant themes in the qualitative interviews. Survey data was therefore included in the report to provide a more complete view of humanitarian entrants' settlement experiences in Australia. The Outcomes Framework is provided in full in Appendix A.



Credit: chameleonseye

1.1 Research purpose and scope

The overall aim of this research study was to better understand the integration experiences of refugees and humanitarian entrants in Australia through the lens of the Outcomes Framework⁵, and to provide the Department with insights into their successes and challenges, the facilitators of successful long-term integration and the barriers individuals face to achieving this. This report provides an evidence base to assist the Department to make effective policy decisions, to help it direct investment towards barriers and needs and to judge the efficacy of current settlement programming.

The primary objectives of the study were to:

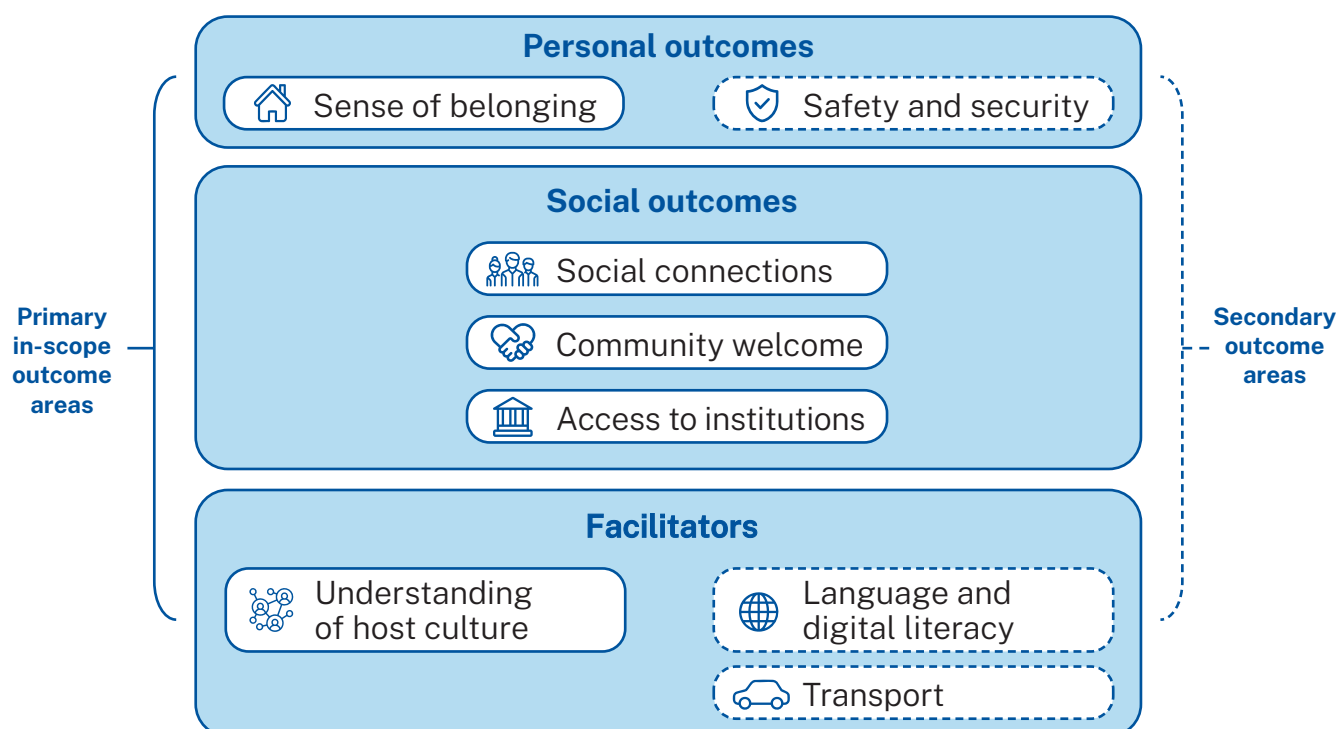
- Better understand settlement outcomes and barriers to achieving settlement objectives.

- Provide a rich data source of refugee and humanitarian entrant integration experiences, including insights into social connectedness and belonging within and outside of their own ethnic or religious community, identification with Australia and access to government services.
- Provide, where possible, the Department with findings that assist them in understanding better the efficiency and effectiveness of settlement programs and Commonwealth and State/Territory mainstream services and identify pressure points and emerging problems so as to inform future policy development and service design.

Due to ethical considerations, the research excluded participants' pre-settlement experiences, including their motivations for settlement and the circumstances of their journey to Australia.

Qualitative and quantitative findings are framed according to the Outcomes Framework as follows:

Figure 1 Settlement and integration outcome areas related to the research study



⁴ Department of Home Affairs: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/refugee-humanitarian-entrant-settlement-integration-outcomes-framework.pdf>

⁵ Department of Home Affairs: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/refugee-humanitarian-entrant-settlement-integration-outcomes-framework.pdf>

1.1.1 Study design

The overall research study consisted of three components: qualitative interviews and focus groups and a quantitative (online) survey. This final report focuses on the interview and survey findings. The qualitative interview component comprised 27 in-depth interviews with humanitarian entrants from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Interviews were conducted using a mix of remote and face-to-face methods between 10th October and 2nd December 2024. The quantitative component involved an online survey completed by 2,240 humanitarian entrants between 23 January and 7 March 2025, administered in English and 10 languages widely spoken amongst the target cohort: Arabic, Assyrian, Burmese, Chin, Dari, Hazaraghi, Karen, Nepali, Swahili, and Tigrinya.

The survey also captured data from a group of humanitarian migrants (n=160) who arrived in Australia from 2011. However, to ensure consistency with the approach taken in 2022, data analysis was confined to those participants who had arrived in Australia in the 10-year period prior to the study. Hereafter, the report specifies that participants who had arrived in Australia from 2013 were included in the study sample. Further details of the methodology of each project component is provided in detail in Appendix B.

1.2 Reading this report

Terminology

Throughout this report, comparisons are made to the 2024 Mapping Social Cohesion survey⁶, which has an in-scope population of Australian residents, including humanitarian migrants, and to other population benchmarks where relevant questions were not available from the Mapping Social Cohesion survey. To reduce repetition, various terms are used to characterise the views reported from this data, including ‘all Australians,’ ‘Australians as a whole,’ ‘the general population,’ and ‘the general community.’ These are synonyms and use of the one or the other phrase is not intended to convey meaning.

Likewise, the terms migrants, humanitarian entrants, humanitarian migrants and refugees are used as synonyms to refer to the target cohort of this study and should be understood with this meaning within the context of this report.

In this report, analysis is provided by recency of migration: ‘recent arrivals’ are those who arrived between 2019 and 2024 and ‘longer-term arrivals’ are those who arrived from 2013 to 2018. The ‘recent arrivals’ category in the analysis aligns with the maximum five-year period for which additional support through the Settlement Engagement and Transitions Service (SETS) is available (lifted November 2023).

The report also delineates responses by age where relevant. ‘Younger adults’ (and synonyms) are those aged 18–34 and ‘older adults’ (and similar) are those aged 35 years and above.

Reporting on country of birth is by region, classified according to the Standard Australian Classification of Countries⁷ (ABS, 2016) Major Groups.

1.3 Ethics approval and accreditation

The project’s qualitative and quantitative components were reviewed and approved by Bellberry HREC on 27 September 2024, under Application ID 2024-07-975.

All aspects of this research was undertaken in accordance with ISO 20252:2019 Market, Opinion and Social Research Standard, The Research Society (formerly AMSRS) Code of Professional Behaviour, the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2021.

⁶ SFRI: Mapping Social Cohesion - The Scanlon Foundation Research Institute

⁷ Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC) | Australian Bureau of Statistics.

2. Findings

This study focused on five core domain outcome areas: belonging, social connections, community welcome, understanding host culture and access to institutions, also including findings from two additional domains: ‘safety and security’ and ‘language and digital literacy’. Although not part of the original scope, these areas emerged as significant themes in the qualitative interviews and were included in the survey to provide a more comprehensive picture of the humanitarian settlement experience in Australia.

Qualitative themes are provided where appropriate and are noted throughout the report as ‘Qualitative findings’. Relevant verbatim quotes are also provided throughout for illustrative purposes. These have been de-identified, however broad demographics have been provided for context.

Table 1 presents a summary of key findings and themes from the study, mapped to the key domain areas outlined in the Outcomes Framework. Survey findings are compared to population benchmarks where available.

Table 1 Summary of themes and findings

Factors	Domain	Interview themes	Survey findings ⁸
Personal outcomes	 Sense of belonging	A strong sense of safety, better opportunities and aspirations to contribute meaningfully to Australian society cultivate a sense of belonging. Local sense of belonging was affected by a welcoming reception, multiculturalism, and the presence of ethnocultural communities and infrastructure. Sense of belonging to broader Australian society was grounded in individuals’ recognition of their civil and political rights.	Humanitarian migrants generally reported a stronger sense of belonging at the national level compared to the general Australian population. At the local (neighbourhood) level, humanitarian migrants were similar to the general community in terms of their sense of belonging and perceived community cohesion. Humanitarian migrants were far more likely to have experienced discrimination than the general population.
	 Safety and security	Sense of safety in local communities and Australia overall was generally high, often contrasted to pre-migration experiences. Social trust was generally high, but stronger within familiar cultural groups. Financial stress was common, with high living costs straining families even with financial support from the government.	Sense of safety at home during the day was similar for humanitarian migrants and the general population. Humanitarian migrants were fairly evenly divided on social trust, similar to Australians as a whole. Humanitarian migrants were also much more likely to have experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months compared to the broader population because there wasn’t enough money for food.

⁸ This table includes only survey findings that compare humanitarian migrants with population benchmarks, and findings for questions without available benchmarks are not included here in this table

Factors	Domain	Interview themes	Survey findings ⁸
Social outcomes	 Social connections	Social bonds, often the first form of social capital established, were affected by the presence or absence of pre-existing networks in Australia. Social bridges were fostered through religious organisations, interactions with educational institutions and casual encounters in the neighbourhood.	Humanitarian migrants were more likely to have close friends who shared their national, ethnic or religious background, but they also reported having more close friends from other backgrounds than the general Australian population. Humanitarian migrants also reported being actively involved in social, religious groups or community support groups at higher rates than the overall population.
	 Community welcome	While most participants felt an overall sense of community welcome, experiences of racism challenged this perception. The multicultural makeup of a community and presence of cultural and religious infrastructure fostered a sense of community welcome.	
	 Access to institutions	Centrelink financial support was critical early on but mixed feelings about reliance on government aid indicated a paradoxical relationship. Challenges to access primarily centred on the complexities of navigating unfamiliar systems, bureaucratic obstacles, and language barriers. Caseworkers were considered a critical link to services, but inconsistency in the quality of casework support was seen as a key area for improvement.	

Factors	Domain	Interview themes	Survey findings ⁸
Settlement factors	 Language and digital literacy	Limited English proficiency was identified as a formidable barrier to effective integration and posed barriers to accessing services digitally.	Humanitarian migrants had much lower English proficiency compared to the general Australian population, with the vast majority using a language other than English at home.
	 Understanding the host culture	Both alignment and dissonance were evident between the Australian values participants encountered and their lived realities. Cultural differences were highly salient early in the settlement journey, but formal and informal channels of support assisted with navigating these. Individuals showed a strong sense of acceptance of Australian cultural norms, but emphasised the importance of preserving cultural heritage.	Humanitarian migrants expressed more positive attitudes toward Australian culture than the general Australian population, with a large majority taking pride in the Australian way of life to a moderate or great extent, compared to all Australians.

2.1 Personal outcomes

The Outcomes Framework identifies two personal outcomes in scope for this analysis:



A sense of belonging, which has been defined to mean a psychological sense of being at home in Australia, the inverse of social exclusion.



Security and safety, is also defined with reference to an individual's feelings about the stability of their circumstances, which is facilitated by housing and financial security.

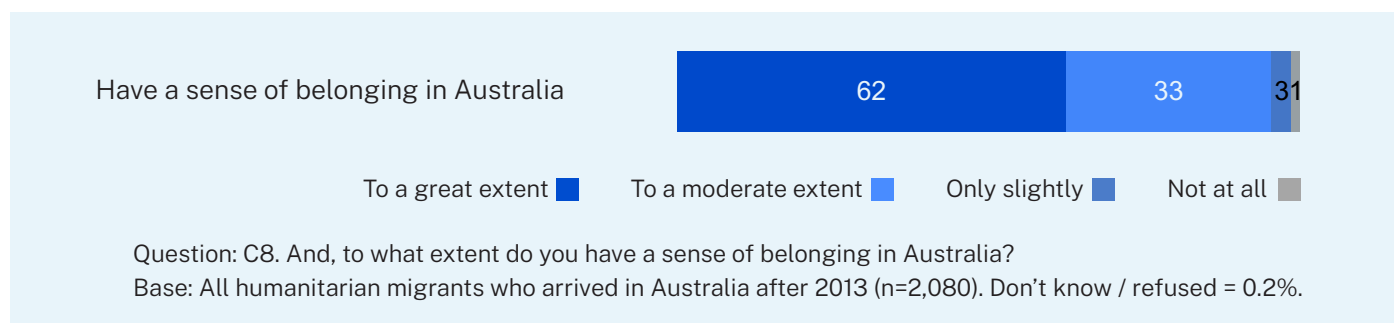
Although the personal outcome above was not originally within the scope of analysis for this study, findings from the survey and interviews have been included due to its connection with other outcome domains.

2.1.1 Belonging

Two dimensions of belonging to Australia were assessed in the survey: sense of belonging at the national level and sense of belonging in one's own neighbourhood (at the local level).

Sense of belonging at the national level

Figure 2 Sense of belonging in Australia among humanitarian migrants (%)



A strong sense of belonging in Australia was reported among humanitarian migrants, with 95% feeling they belong in Australia to a moderate or great extent, which is **higher than the general community** (86%). This sense of belonging was slightly **higher among longer term arrivals** (96%) compared to recent arrivals (94%). **Migrants from North Africa/Middle East were more likely to report a strong sense of belonging to a great extent** (70%), compared to those from South-East Asia (46%), other regions (54%), and Southern/Central Asia (60%).

Qualitative findings

Corroborating the survey findings, most interview participants reported a strong sense of belonging in Australia. This feeling was often attributed to the kindness, friendliness and welcoming nature of Australians, as well as Australia's multicultural environment. Many participants noted that the presence of diverse and evolving migrant communities made them feel less like outsiders and more integrated into the broader social fabric.

Australia is a multicultural country where every community, every people has the right to speak their own language and own culture, which is amazing. I love this country.

— Male, 45+ years, longer-term arrival, Asian

You have people here more from the Afghan community. You have people from Sudanese community, you have people now from Iraqi and Syrian communities and Philippines and Chinese. It's a mix of all communities... What makes me feel like I'm a part of the community is more the safety and the understanding each other because we are from different walks of life and people are multicultural.

— Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Middle Eastern

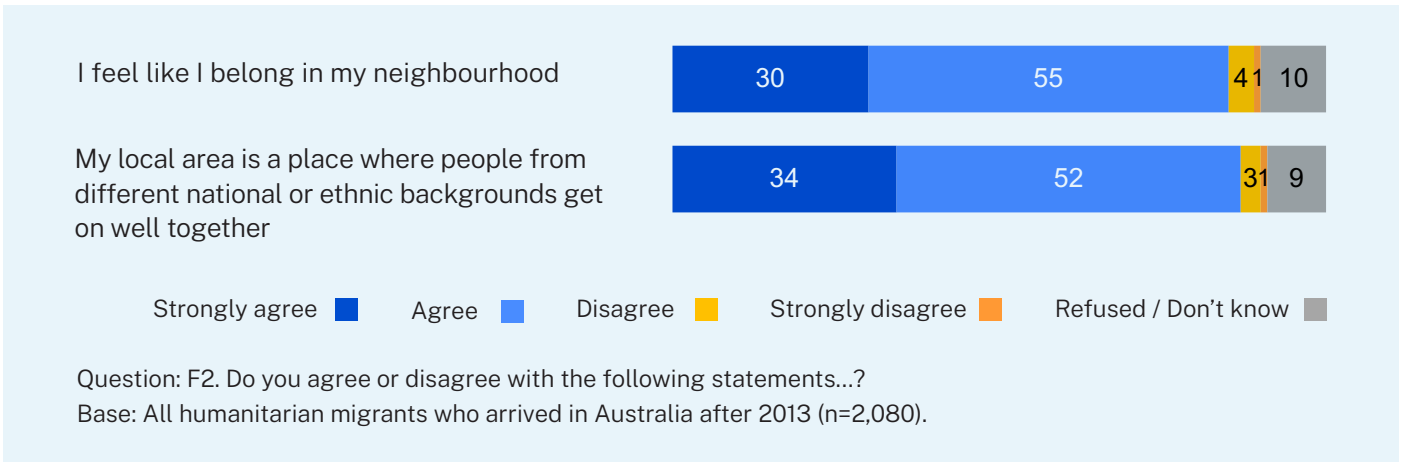
Participants' sense of belonging at the national level was also grounded in recognition of their civil and political rights. Legal recognition of these rights, especially after prior experiences of being "stateless" and exposed to war and persecution, provided participants with a sense of stability and dignity, and the feeling they had a secure place within the social fabric of Australian society.

I do belong here. I've settled in very well. We're happy as a family. We feel like this is home for us. Then we are continuing our life without any worries that we think of... Where basic human rights haven't been given to anyone. That's when you think that the negative experiences that we have back home, lots of discrimination based on my ethnicity, religious beliefs or cultural group... Whereas in Australia, I think you can say that nobody can discriminate based on my race, background, or gender. So, that's something that I really see value in. I can be treated equally as other people regardless of my culture or identity.

— Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Asian

Sense of belonging at the neighbourhood level

Figure 3 Sense of belonging in neighbourhood (%)



A large majority of humanitarian migrants agreed or strongly agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well in their local area (community cohesion) (86%) and that they felt like they belong in their neighbourhood (85%). Perceived community cohesion (86% vs 81% of all Australians) and belonging in their neighbourhood (85% vs 81% of all Australians) were similar for humanitarian migrants and the broader population.

Recent arrivals were more likely to agree or strongly agree that people from different backgrounds get on well in their neighbourhood (90% vs 85% of longer-term arrivals). Strong agreement with this statement was reported among migrants born in **Sub-Saharan Africa** (48%) compared to those from South-East Asia (22%).

Higher levels of neighbourhood belonging were reported by men (88% agreed or strongly agreed vs 83% of women). The strongest sense of belonging in the neighbourhood was expressed by migrants born in **Sub-Saharan Africa** (52% strongly agreed), compared to migrants from North Africa/Middle East (31%), Southern/Central Asia (28%), other regions (24%), and South-East Asia (16%).

Qualitative findings

Similar to the survey findings, most participants in the qualitative interviews emphasised the warm welcome they received from their local community, which strengthened their sense of belonging at the neighbourhood level.

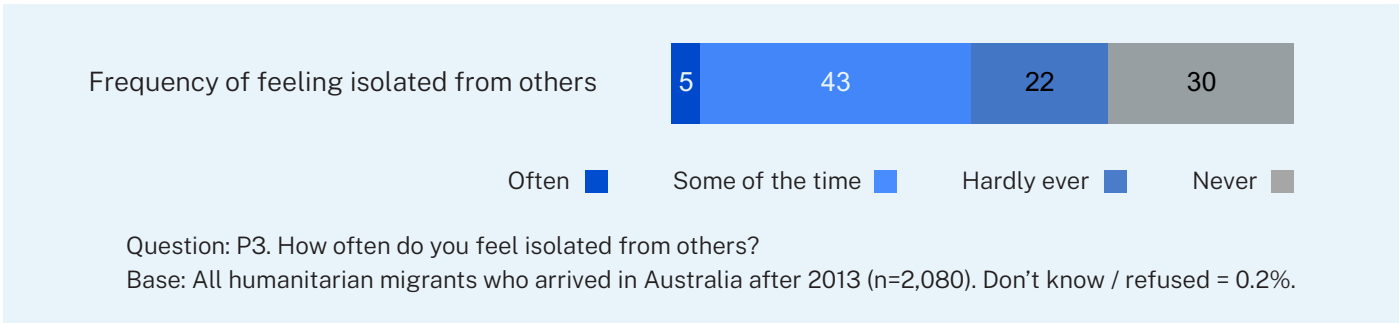
I've come across some beautiful people, very kind and helpful, very supportive of the people even like myself coming in from a refugee background and even in the community where I work, I see that they're very welcoming, they're very supportive.
— Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Asian

Some of these participants shared that their sense of belonging was strongly connected to places where large numbers of their ethnocultural community had settled. These communities provided opportunities to engage with and celebrate their cultural heritage, supporting identity continuation and deepening their sense of belonging in their new neighbourhoods.

The sense of belonging in Australia is much better than in other countries because Australia is a big country and we can find everything that we need, everything that we want. For example, in Dandenong we can find everything that Afghan people use. Restaurant, halal food or clothes, everything that every person needs, they can find... We are very comfortable in Dandenong when we see each other – we feel it's Afghanistan.

— Female, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Asian

Figure 4 Frequency of feeling isolated from others (%)



Despite the strong perceptions of belonging, experiences of social isolation were common among humanitarian migrants, with 48% feeling isolated from others some of the time or often, on a similar level as the general community (49%).

Experiences of social isolation were more common among women (52% experienced this some of the time or often vs 44% of men) and migrants born in South-East Asia (62% vs 39% of Sub-Saharan Africa or other regions).

Qualitative findings

In contrast to the survey findings, few interview participants explicitly mentioned social isolation. Instead, they emphasised the importance of building social connections – particularly social bonds with people from similar backgrounds but also social bridges across diverse groups – to strengthen their sense of belonging and community in Australia.

Coming from a different country to a very strange and big world, it's different for us. I was hoping there is a community, they will guide us to go to community where they speak my language, so I won't feel I'm that stranger. As well as if there is any groups... where I can share my thoughts or learn more things... The challenge was for me to start... [looking] for places where you can enjoy yourself, where you can feel happy... In [my neighbourhood], there is lots of Arab communities.

— Female, 26–45 years, long-term arrival, Middle Eastern

Discrimination

Figure 5 Experience of discrimination among humanitarian migrants in the last 12 months (%)



Humanitarian migrants were far more likely to have reported experiencing discrimination because of their skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion in the last 12 months than all Australians, with 30% of humanitarian migrants having experienced discrimination compared to 17% of the general population. Discrimination was more commonly reported by longer term arrivals (33% vs 22% of recent arrivals), and younger migrants aged 18-34 (34% vs 25% of those aged 35+). Migrants from South-East Asia also reported higher levels of discriminatory treatment compared to those from North Africa/Middle East (39% vs 24%).

My husband has quite fair skin and so people say “hey mate” but when they hear his accent they pull back and stop having a chat with him. 50% may welcome us, 50% might not. It must be based on their experiences, or maybe because we are of different colour.

— Female, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Asian

Qualitative findings

Like the survey findings, some participants in the interviews also shared experiences of discrimination. These ranged from subtle biases to overt acts of racism, either personally experienced or witnessed—often tied to differences in accent or physical appearance. Participants also noted that negative media portrayals can perpetuate racial prejudice within the community. The following quotes illustrate how visible differences and media narratives can shape social interactions and create or reinforce feelings of social exclusion.

Once at a train station with my family going to the Opera House, there was a terrorist attack that day, and some junkie was screaming at him and his family to go back. The people around him (the public) were instantly defending him and fought with him. That was stressful for my family, and he left the train.

— Male, 26–45 years longer-term arrival, Middle Eastern

The whole like gang violence blah blah blah, always in the news. It seems to always project South Sudanese more negatively, which, obviously, includes me. I feel like, in a way, people out there look at you like that. [They] might not say it, but you can see it in their faces. Like they're scared to be around you. Or they pre-judge you because of that. Sometimes I smile and say hi to non-African people and I feel like they are shocked -it's surprising for them because maybe they just have negative perspectives about us.

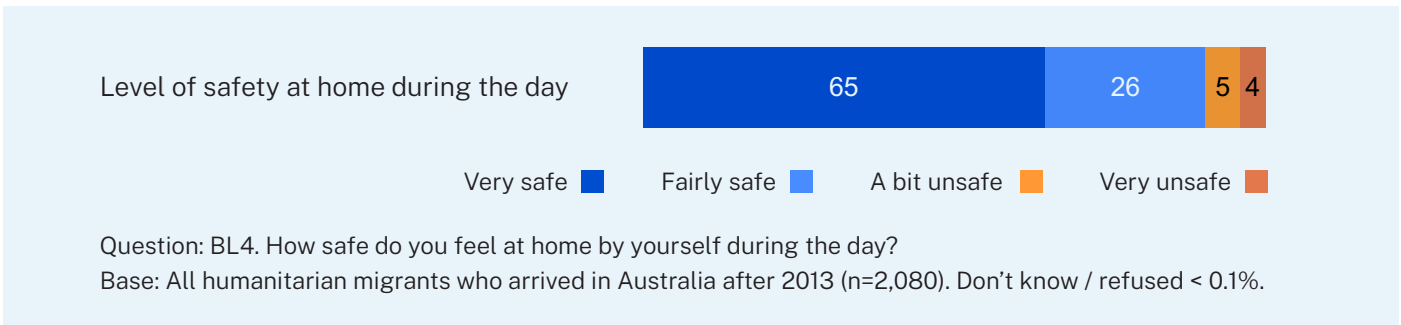
— Female, 18–25 years, longer-term arrival, African

2.1.2 Security and safety

Although ‘security and safety’, including sense of safety, trust, and financial security, was not a primary outcome domain assessed in this study, related findings from the survey and interviews have been included due to their relevance to other outcome areas.

Sense of safety

Figure 6 Level of safety at home during the day (%)



A sense of safety at home was high and similar for humanitarian migrants and all Australians, with nine-in-ten (90%) humanitarian migrants feeling fairly or very safe at home by themselves during the day compared to 94% of all Australians.

Men were more likely to feel very safe at home (68% vs 61% of women), while women tended to feel safe at a moderate level (30% felt fairly safe vs 22% of men). Recent arrivals exhibited a higher sense of safety, with 72% feeling very safe at home (vs 62% of longer-term arrivals), while longer term arrivals expressed a more moderate level of perceived safety (28% felt fairly safe vs 19% of recent arrivals). By country of birth, migrants from other regions reported higher levels of safety at home (74% felt very safe), followed by migrants from Southern/Central Asia (67%), Sub-Saharan Africa (67%), and North Africa/ Middle East (63% vs 47% of migrants from South-East Asia).

Qualitative findings

In alignment with the survey findings, interview participants widely viewed Australia as a safe country, often contrasting this with negative experiences in their home or host country prior to resettling in Australia. While most felt safe in their homes and local communities, a few raised concerns about crime in their neighbourhood or in broader Australian society.

I like the peaceful environment and the majority of people are law abiding and the system is really good. They are disciplined and kind, but of course, there are very few people who like drugs and alcohol and stealing. Those are the community which I don't like and which are causing a bad impression and causing disturbance.

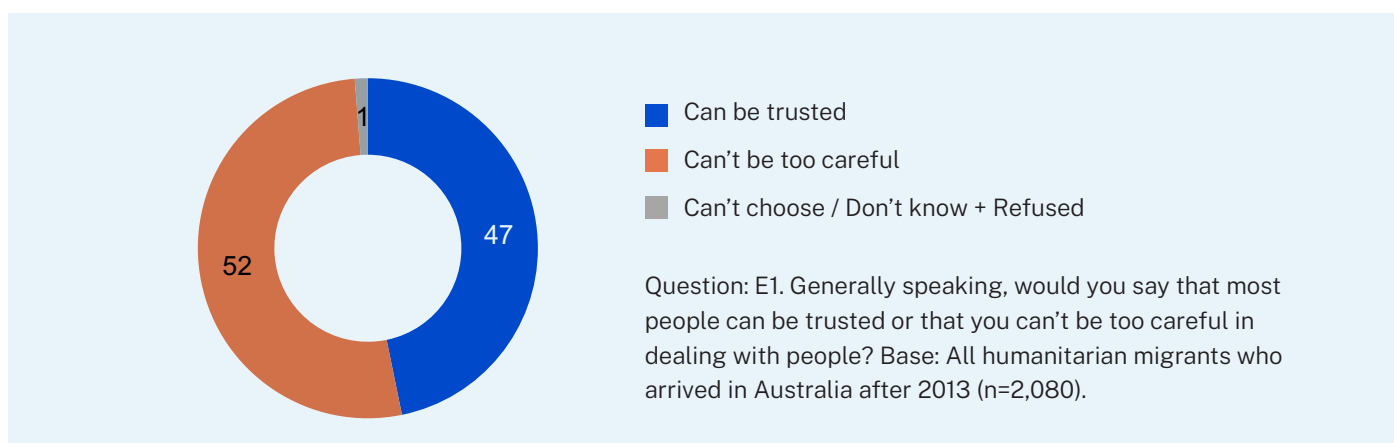
— Male, 45+ years, recent arrival, Asian

You can hear on the news stabbing in the shopping centre, robberies, fighting. Most of them are younger people and they just fight each other or stab each other.

— Female, 45+ years, longer-term arrival, African

Sense of trust

Figure 7 Sense of trust in people among humanitarian migrants (%)



Humanitarian migrants were fairly evenly divided on social trust, similar to Australians as a whole, with 47% believing most people can be trusted (vs 46% of all Australians), while 52% felt they can't be too careful in dealing with people (vs 53% of all Australians).

Men were more inclined to trust people compared to women (51% vs 43%). Trust levels varied by country of birth, **with migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa exhibiting the highest levels of trust (78%).** In contrast, migrants from South-East Asia (61%), North Africa/Middle East (58%), other regions (54%), Southern/Central Asia (52%), and Oceania/Antarctica (47%) were more likely to express caution, believing that one can't be too careful when dealing with people.

Qualitative findings

Interview findings echoed the survey's mixed findings on sense of trust. Participants generally trusted those with similar linguistic, cultural or religious backgrounds, and many reported a general sense of trust in people within their local communities. While most saw Australia as a safe country with trustworthy people, police, and government institutions, there were some instances where participants expressed caution in trusting others.

It is just people can't be trusted 100 per cent in general, any kind of people. There is always a boundary. I set boundaries. I don't like to just be very trusting. I would like to keep always a boundary between me and people. I think it's a kind of wisdom.

— Female, 45+ years, longer-term arrival, African

My initial dream was safety and a stable life for my family and for myself. Safety was a number one concern because I came from a war country... When I came to Australia, I feel like I am a human being again. The people here are treating me in a good way. Not like back there, they used to take into consideration your religion, your colour, this and that, your language. Here, regardless of everything, I was treated with my family fairly.

— Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Middle Eastern

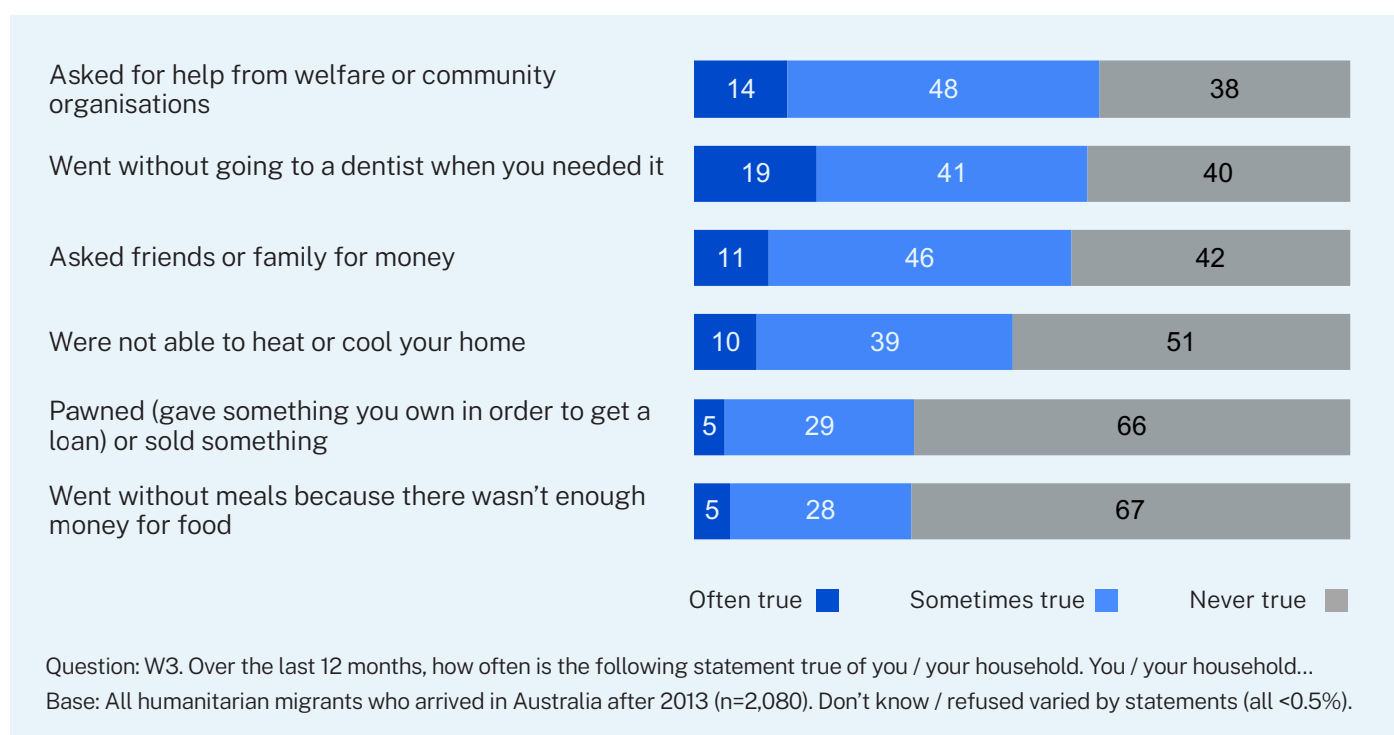


Financial stress

In the survey, financial stress or hardship was measured by asking humanitarian migrants whether any of this list of events had occurred to them or their household in the past 12 months:

- Pawned (gave something you own in order to get a loan) or sold something
- Went without meals because there wasn't enough money for food
- Went without going to a dentist when you needed it
- Were not able to heat or cool your home
- Asked friends or family for money
- Asked for help from welfare or community organisations

Figure 8 Perceived levels of financial stress among humanitarian migrants (%)



Humanitarian migrants experienced varying levels of financial hardship over the past 12 months across different financial security measures. **More than half reported financial stress related to basic health and living needs**, with 60% sometimes or often unable to see a dentist when needed and 49% unable to heat or cool their homes sometimes or often. **Humanitarian migrants were also**

much more likely to have experienced food insecurity, with 33% reporting going without meals sometimes or often in the last 12 months because there wasn't enough money for food, in contrast to 13% of all Australians. Additionally, more than half the humanitarian migrants sought help from welfare or community organisations (62% sometimes or often) or asked family or friends for money

(57% sometimes or often). Thirty-four percent had resorted to pawning or selling items (in contrast to 5.2% of the general population who had pawned/sold an item).⁹

Severe financial distress, indicated by experience of food insecurity, was more common among recent arrivals, with 39% having gone without meals in the past year (vs 30% of longer term arrivals), and among younger migrants aged 18–34 (37% vs 29% of those aged 35+). **Migrants born in Oceania/Antarctica were more likely to have gone without meals sometimes or often** (66%) compared to those born in North Africa/Middle East (33%), South-East Asia (35%), Southern/Central Asia (38%), Sub-Saharan Africa (30%), and other regions (22%).

Regarding basic health needs such as dental care, **longer term arrivals sometimes or often struggled to see a dentist when they needed to** (61% vs 54% of recent arrivals). This was also **more common among migrants from North Africa/Middle East** (67%), compared to those from Sub-Saharan Africa (48%) and other regions (52%).

Energy-related financial stress, exemplified by the inability to heat or cool one's home, was more frequently reported by women (12% often true vs 7% of men) **and recent arrivals** (12% often true vs 8% of longer-term arrivals). Additionally, **energy insecurity was more prevalent among migrants born in Southern/Central Asia**, with 58% sometimes or often unable to heat or cool their homes, compared to a lower rate of 43% among those from South-East Asia and 30% among those from Sub-Saharan Africa.

In coping with financial stress, **migrants were more likely to seek support from welfare or community organisations than friends or family**. Migrants who reported sometimes or often asking friends or family for money **were more likely to be men** (61% vs 54% of women), **younger** (63% among those aged 18–34 vs 51% of those aged 35+), **and born in Southern/Central Asia** (63%), **Sub-Saharan Africa** (62%), **or North Africa/Middle East** (61% vs 46% from South-East Asia or 45%

from other regions). Seeking financial support from welfare or community organisations did not vary significantly by gender, age, recency of arrival or country of birth.

Migrants who resorted to pawning or selling goods for money sometimes or often were more likely to be younger, aged 18–34 (37% vs 30% of those aged 35+), and this was **more common among migrants from Southern/Central Asia** (42% vs 28% from North Africa/Middle East).

Qualitative findings

Like the survey findings, most interview participants reported experiencing financial distress during their settlement. Many highlighted the high cost of essentials—such as housing, groceries, and transportation—and noted that the current cost-of-living crisis placed significant financial strain on individuals and families. While Centrelink support helped ease some of this burden, many were surprised by how quickly the payments were absorbed by basic expenses, particularly for those supporting an entire family.

Living here is very expensive. I never expected that living here is that expensive... When I arrived here, Centrelink was giving me \$1,700, the whole family. Me, my wife and two kids, 1,700 fortnightly. I was paying 1,000 to the rent fortnightly. Do you imagine that I was spending \$700 fortnightly on food, transport, internet, electricity bill, the gas bill and all these expenses. Do you think? I was very unlucky, but I was killing myself to find a job

—Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Middle Eastern

It's been hard because it's just me and her. Now, I have to basically pay all the bills and rent and everything because, obviously, she's studying. The money she gets from Centrelink is not that much

—Female, 18–25 years, long-term arrival, African

⁹ Department of Social Services. (2022). Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey [Data set]. Melbourne Institute. <https://dataverse.ada.edu.au/dataverse/hilda>.

2.2 Social outcomes

The Outcomes Framework defines three social outcomes in scope for this analysis:



Social connections, defined as the building of social bonds (relationships with family, co-ethnic, co-national, co-religious groups), bridges (relationships with other social groups) and links (relationships with state, government services and agencies) to create social capital in support of settlement and integration.



Community welcome, defined as the presence of positive, inclusive and supportive community attitudes and public discourse.

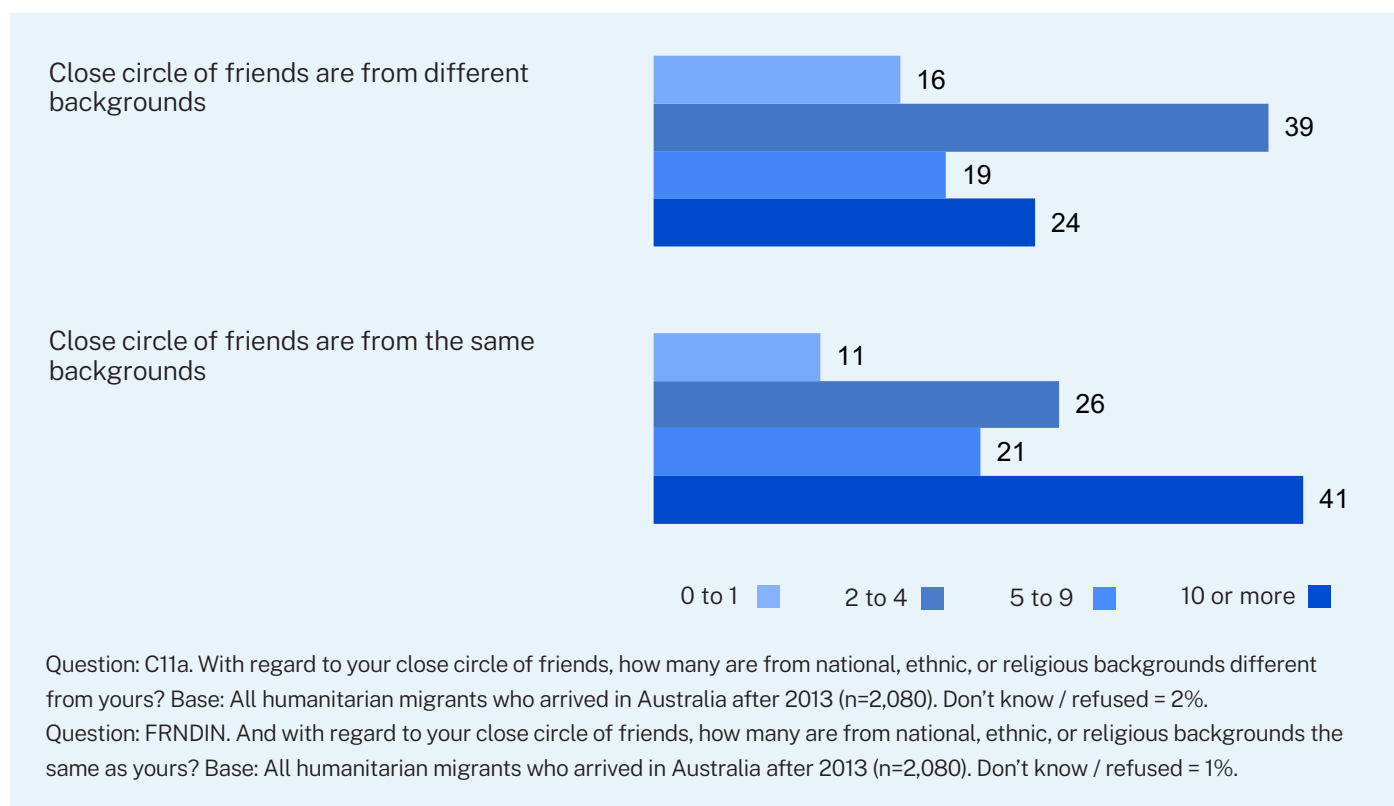


Access to institutions, defined in reference to institutions ensuring their services are accessible to refugees, responsive to their needs and delivering equitable outcomes, regardless of cultural or linguistic background.

2.2.1 Social connections

Social bonds

Figure 9 Backgrounds of close circle of friends among humanitarian migrants. Percentage of individuals with one friend, two to four friends, five to 9 friends and 10 or more from different or the same background.



Humanitarian migrants reported substantial social connections with people from the same national, ethnic, or religious backgrounds, with 62% having five or more friends from the same background, while 37% reported having fewer than five friends from the same background.

Age emerged as a crucial factor, with those aged 35+ years more likely to have larger friendship circles with individuals from their own background, compared to younger respondents (46% vs 37% reporting 10 or more friends). Humanitarian migrants born in North Africa/Middle East (70%) were more likely to have five or more friends from the same background, and which was lower for those born in Southern/Central Asia (59%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (52%). Gender and recency of arrival showed no notable differences in friendship patterns.

Compared to the general Australian population, humanitarian migrants reported having a higher number of close friends from different national, ethnic or religious backgrounds to their own: 43% of humanitarian migrants reported having five or more friends from different backgrounds to their own, compared to 35% of all Australians.

Diversity in friendship circles was more common among women, longer term arrivals and younger migrants. Among humanitarian migrants, women were significantly more likely than men to have 5-9 friends from different national, ethnic or religious backgrounds (22% vs 16%). Recent arrivals were significantly more likely than longer-term migrants to have 10 or more friends from different backgrounds (29% vs 24%), while longer term arrivals were more likely to have 2-4 friends from different backgrounds (41% vs 34%). Migrants aged 35+ years were significantly more likely to have none or only one friend from a different background, compared to those aged 18-34 years (18% vs 13%).

Qualitative findings

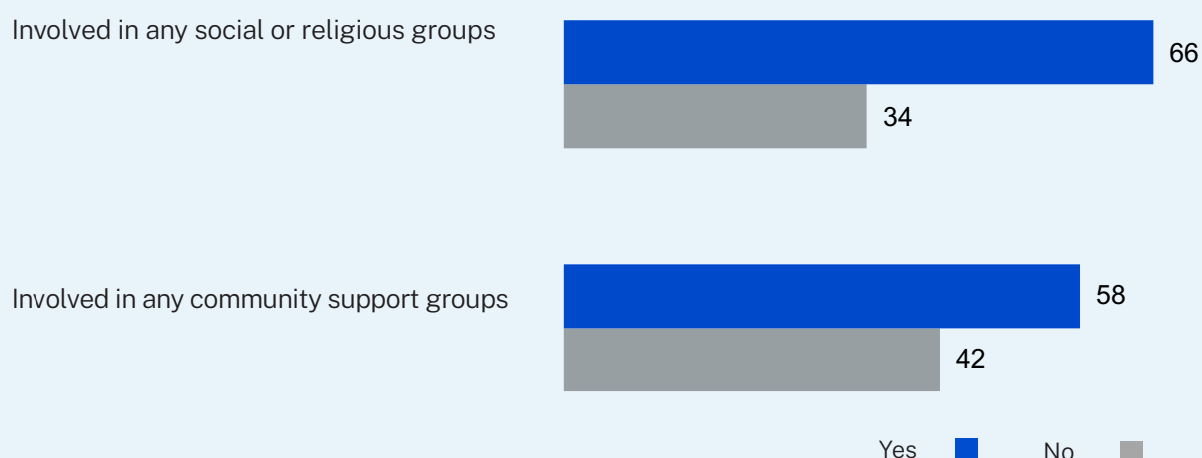
Supporting the survey findings, most interview participants reported substantial social bonds, which were most often developed through engagement with local ethno-cultural and religious organisations. These networks helped to fill gaps in settlement and governmental support, helping with tasks such as setting up bank accounts, arranging transport, completing Centrelink forms, etc. Those who arrived with pre-existing family or friendship networks generally found it easier to establish social bonds, compared to those without such connections.

When we just arrived, my aunty... we stayed with her for like a month, and then she took us obviously to the bank. She was the one that helped us open the bank. She was the one that took us to Centrelink, the first time we arrived... Some people from my community came over, and they said hi. She did that – the people came over obviously because people know her and they knew we came to Australia.

— Female, 45+ years, longer-term arrival, African

Social bridges

Figure 10 Involvement in social, religious or community support groups in the last 12 months (%)



Question: Q01a. In the last 12 months, have you been actively involved in any community support groups? Base: All humanitarian migrants who arrived in Australia after 2013 (n=2,080). Don't know / refused = 0.4%.

Question: Q02a. In the last 12 months, have you been actively involved in any social or religious groups? Base: All humanitarian migrants who arrived in Australia after 2013 (n=2,080). Don't know / refused = 0.3%.

Humanitarian migrants reported being actively involved in various types of civic groups at higher rates than the general Australian population:

- 66% of respondents reported being actively involved in social or religious groups, compared to 43% of all Australians
- 58% of humanitarian migrants reported being actively involved in community support groups, compared to 23% of all Australians

Involvement in social or religious organisations differed by country of birth. Humanitarian migrants born in Sub-Saharan Africa (90%) reported the highest participation rates, compared to those born in North Africa/Middle East (59%), Southern/Central Asia (65%), other regions (65%), and South-East Asia (67%).

Involvement in community support groups was associated with age and country of birth. Humanitarian migrants aged 35+ years were significantly more likely to be involved in community support groups compared to 18-34 year olds (62% vs 53%). Higher participation rates were among migrants born in Sub-Saharan Africa (74%) and other regions (68%), compared to migrants born in North Africa/Middle East (55%), South-East Asia (46%), and Southern/Central Asia (53%).

Qualitative findings

The qualitative findings showed that participants were at different stages of building social bridges, often developed through religious organisations, educational institutions and local community groups. Religious organisations fostered social bonding around shared faith, while also facilitating the development of social bridges through intercultural engagement. Similarly, educational settings like TAFE and schools, along with local community groups such as parenting groups and local sports clubs, also served as key points of contact with the wider community.

They're from Afghanistan, they're from India, they're from Egypt, from Libya, from Algeria... We meet in the mosque most of the time and we also meet outside for community events and we invite each other... When my wife cooks, she cooks our own food, our Libyan food, and then they enjoy it. We go to their house; we enjoy their Egyptian food.

— Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, African

To be honest, the most important one was the TAFE. It's like, I made friends, speaking English, I met Australian people, Australian students, so this is the way I've got in touch with them... I introduced myself as a refugee, I came newly to the country, so they are very good people.

— Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Middle Eastern

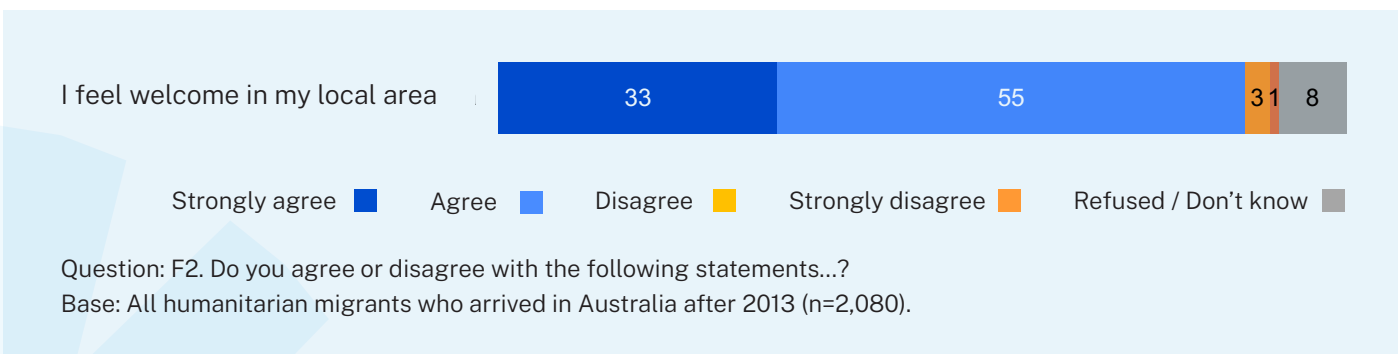
There were lots of...different people [in my cricket team]. Most people are from Australia, Aussie, so I was playing among them... There was one other guy, he was from India, and one of my friends, he was from Afghanistan, then the rest was all Aussie. So we were really happy. We just respect each other, and we enjoyed the game and we were just looking at how to win the game.

— Male, 18–25 years, recent arrival, Asian

2.2.2 Community welcome

Perceptions of community welcome

Figure 11 Perceived community welcome in the local neighbourhood (%)



The majority (88%) of humanitarian migrants agreed or strongly agreed that they felt welcome in their local area.

Men were more likely than women to disagree that they feel welcome in the local area (5% vs 2%). Sense of community welcome was not significantly associated with age, recency of arrival or country of birth.

Qualitative findings

Echoing the strong sense of community welcome from the survey findings, the majority of interview participants also reported feeling welcomed by broader Australian society, speaking of general kindness and openness from the community. Most participants found Australians to be approachable and accepting, highlighting small but meaningful gestures that deepened their sense of welcome, belonging and connection.

I have never felt like I am a stranger here because everyone comes from a different place and different language – never felt unwelcome.

— Female, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Middle Eastern

I find that people are very welcoming – I have come across some beautiful people who are kind and helpful of people like myself, coming here from a refugee background. Even in the community that I work in, they are very welcoming and supportive.

— Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Asian

The presence of religious and cultural infrastructure within the community also shaped perceptions of community welcome. Places like churches, mosques, temples, community centres and specialty grocery stores not only provided spaces to build social connections, but their physical presence within the community landscape also strengthened participants' positive views of their community and reinforced their sense of inclusion.

In my local area, there's a Lebanese, Middle Eastern supermarket here, and it's really nice to go and find products from your country, ingredients that you use from home. You know that there's Iraqis around that can speak your language and feel comfortable to get what you need, which is really nice. It makes you feel a bit like home.

— Female, 26–45 years, recent arrival, Middle Eastern

2.2.3 Access to institutions

Access to public institutions

Similarly to the survey in 2022, access to government services was evaluated using a subset of questions from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Trust in the Australian Public Service Survey.¹⁰ Due to the comprehensive nature of this survey, only a selection of questions could be included. Some questions were also modified to suit the constraints of this survey.

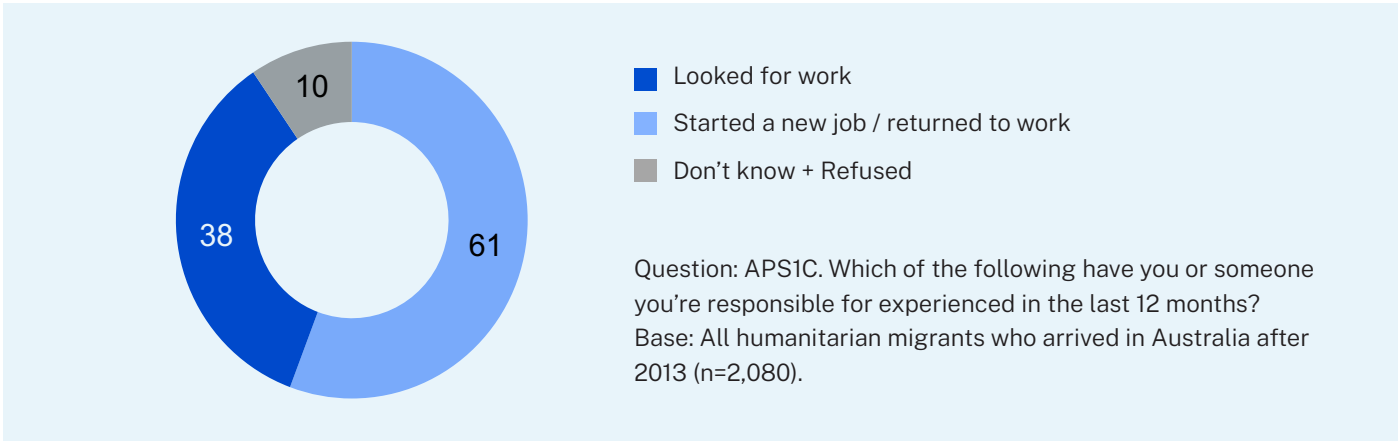
This survey asked:

- Whether the respondent had, in the past 12 months, looked for work or started a new job/returned to work
- Whether the respondent had a job of any kind in the last 7 days
- Which Australian public services the respondent had accessed in the past 12 months, including:
 - » Services Australia – Centrelink
 - » Services Australia – Medicare
 - » Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
 - » National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
 - » Department of Home Affairs
 - » Another service
 - » Did not use Australian public services
- Overall satisfaction with Australian public services (asked only of those who had accessed the APS).

For detailed question wording, please refer to the questionnaire in Appendix D.

¹⁰ Trust in Australian public services – 2022 Annual Report

Figure 12 Employment seeking behaviours of humanitarian migrants in the last 12 months (%)



Three-in-five humanitarian migrants (61%) reported looking for work in the past 12 months, while just under two-in-five (38%) started a new job or returned to work. This indicates **substantial employment-seeking activity** among the cohort.

Recent arrivals were significantly more likely to look for work compared to longer term arrivals (74% vs 57%), although longer term arrivals were often more successful in securing employment (43% vs 25% starting or returning to work).

Age also played a role, with **younger migrants aged 18-34 years more likely to start a new job or return to work**, compared to those aged 35+ (43% vs 33%). Migrants born in **Oceania/Antarctica (87%), Southern/Central Asia (70%) and North Africa/Middle East (64%) reported higher rates of job seeking**, significantly higher than South-East Asia (47%) and other regions (46%). Migrants born in **Sub-Saharan Africa (59%) and other regions (52%) showed higher rates of starting new jobs or returning to work**, compared to those born in North Africa/Middle East (33%), Southern/Central Asia (28%), and Oceania/Antarctica (27%).

Figure 13 Employment of any kind in the last week (%)



Just over half (54%) of the humanitarian migrants reported having a job (including casual, temporary, part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid) in the last 7 days, although a significant proportion (45%) reported not having a job of any kind. In contrast to this, for the general population it is reported that 64.3% of the population is employed.¹¹

Humanitarian migrants who did not have a job were more likely to be women (52% vs 38% of men), **recent arrivals** (65% vs 38% of longer term arrivals), or those born in **North Africa/Middle East** (57%), **Southern/Central Asia** (57%), **Oceania/Antarctica** (43%) or **South-East Asia** (40% vs 13% of other regions).

English proficiency and education level appeared to be closely linked with employment status. **Not having a job of any kind was much higher among those with poor English proficiency** (60% of those who spoke English not well or not at all vs 37% who spoke English well or very well). Similarly, not having a job was also considerably **higher among those who did not go to school** (71% vs 43% of those with an education level of Year 12 or lower), and those **without an educational qualification** (58% vs 32% of those with a trade certificate or other qualification).

Qualitative findings

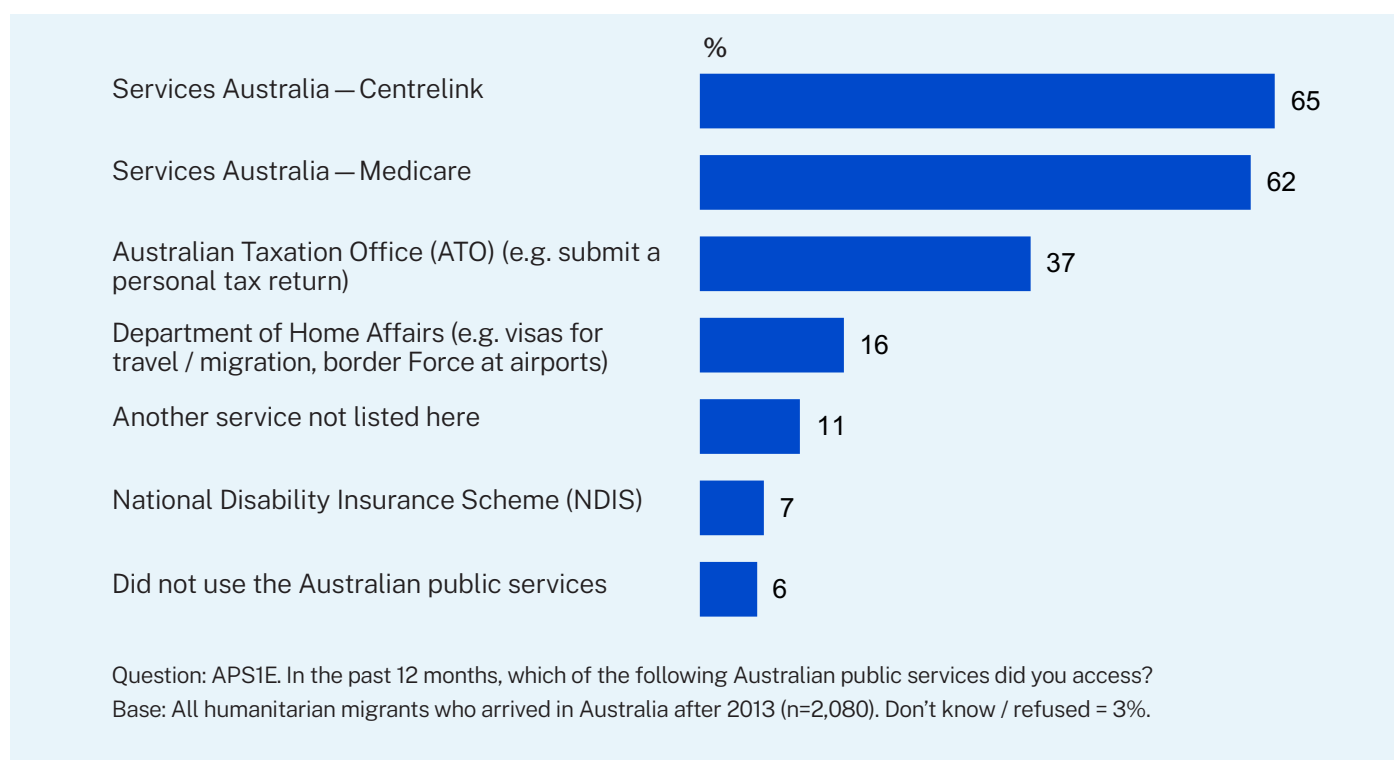
Skill underutilisation or occupational downgrading was evident for participants who experienced a lack of recognition of their prior education or professional qualifications from their home country. This limited the jobs they were able to secure after settlement. Language barriers often compounded this difficulty, making it difficult to enter the workforce and achieve financial independence easily.

I have bachelor's degree in accounting from Syria. Once I arrived here, I tried, but the problem was I don't have any English language, like zero... I tried a lot just to improve my English, and to get my diploma in accounting as well. After that, I worked with a company doing construction. I was site admin... I'm still with them now. That's four years ago... TAFE advised me that if you have bachelor's degree in accounting, you can go and do a diploma in accounting... I was willing, always, to keep going, keep trying, keep trying. Just, I need to find a job, because the work is very important... Even if you have bachelor's degree, high qualifications, whatever, without the language, it will be a big barrier.

— Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival,
Middle Eastern

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2025, April). Labour Force, Australia. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/apr-2025>.

Figure 14 Access to public services in Australia among humanitarian migrants (%)



Centrelink (65%) and Medicare (62%) were the most commonly accessed Australian public services among humanitarian migrants, followed by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (37%), Department of Home Affairs (16%), and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) (7%). Only 6% reported not accessing any Australian public services in the past 12 months.¹²

Job-seeking activities and employment outcomes were linked to the use of various Australian public services. Humanitarian entrants who accessed **Centrelink** were **more likely to be looking for work** in the past 12 months (70%), compared to those who started new jobs or returned to work (58%). Conversely, humanitarian entrants who secured **employment** were **more likely to have accessed the ATO** (57% vs 31%) or the Department of Home Affairs (22% vs 15%).

Access to Australian public services also varied significantly across demographic groups. **Women demonstrated significantly higher engagement with Centrelink services** in the past 12 months, compared to men (71% vs 59%). **Recent arrivals** showed notably higher usage of both **Centrelink** (78% vs 61%) and **Medicare** (76% vs 58%) in the past 12

months, compared to **longer term arrivals**, while longer term arrivals showed greater interaction with the **ATO** (41% vs 29%) and the **NDIS** (8% vs 4%). While age differences were minimal, **younger migrants** aged 18-34 were more likely to report **no service usage** in the past 12 months, compared to those aged 35+ (8% vs 4%). Among country of birth groups, **humanitarian entrants born in Southern/ Central Asia (72%) and North Africa/ Middle East (69%) reported higher usage of Centrelink** compared to those born in Sub-Saharan Africa (51%) or other regions (53%). Those born in **other regions (58%) or South-East Asian (52%) migrants reported higher usage of ATO services** compared to those from North Africa/Middle East (30%) or Southern/Central Asia (30%). Engagement with the Department of Home Affairs' services in the past 12 months was higher among those born in **South-East Asia (30%)**, Sub-Saharan Africa (24%), or other regions (23% vs 10% of those born in North Africa/Middle East, 13% of those born in Southern/Central Asia).

¹² Comparable data were not available for the general population. We focus only on humanitarian migrants.

Qualitative findings

Interview participants identified key institutions –such as Centrelink, Medicare, banks, and educational institutions –as critical to their initial settlement in Australia. These were seen to form the backbone of support for newly arrived humanitarian migrants, offering critical services like financial support, healthcare, housing, and education. Supporting the survey findings, financial assistance from Centrelink was often identified as the most critical form of support, alleviating immediate financial needs and allowing participants to feel a sense of security.

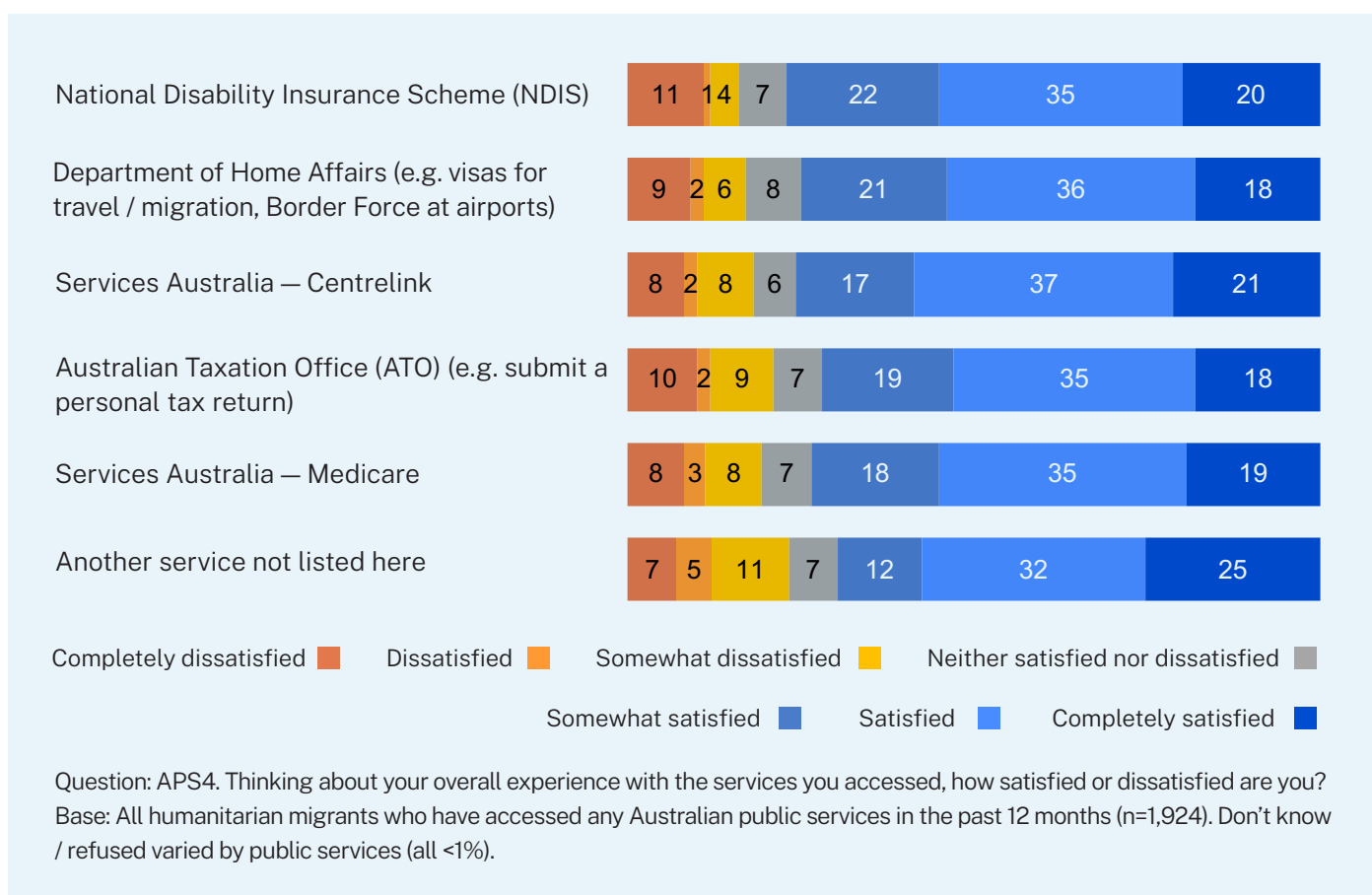
When I arrived to Australia, (Centrelink) was like the big support for us... from zero we start, they gave us everything.

— Male, 18–25 years, recent arrival, Asian

We are very happy, for one year government is supporting us with money.

— Male, 45+ years, longer-term arrival, African

Figure 15 Satisfaction with Australian public services accessed (%)



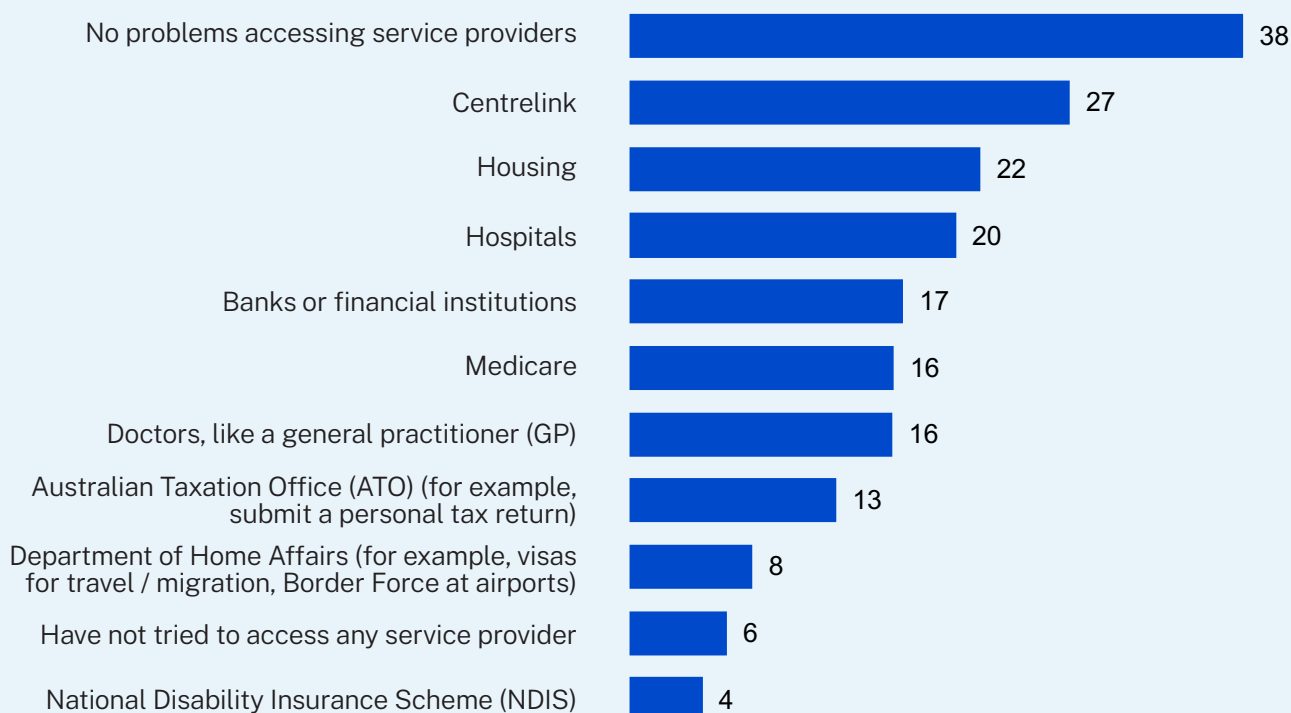
Overall satisfaction with public services was high among humanitarian migrants who accessed services in the past 12 months, with 72% expressing some level of satisfaction, and 18% reporting dissatisfaction.

Experiences with public services varied considerably based on arrival status and country of birth. **Recent arrivals** reported **significantly higher levels of satisfaction** compared to longer term arrivals (81% vs 70% somewhat satisfied, satisfied, or completely satisfied). **Satisfaction** with public services was **higher** among humanitarian migrants born in **North Africa/Middle East** (79%), **Sub-Saharan Africa** (78%), and **Southern/Central Asia** (73%), compared to those born in other regions (60%).

Satisfaction levels were generally consistent across the public services accessed, with satisfaction with the NDIS comparable to other services (78% somewhat satisfied, satisfied, or completely satisfied), such as Centrelink (75%) and Medicare (73%). However, when we examine benchmarks from levels reported in the Trust in Australia Public Services report (2022), some of these tended to be lower than the broader population: satisfaction with the NDIS was lower at 58% and Centrelink was 63%. Medicare was slightly higher at 78%.¹³

Challenges in accessing institutions — bureaucracy, complexity and language barriers

Figure 16 Problems accessing Australian public services (%)



Question: DASP_Q01. Have you experienced any problems accessing services such as these?

Base: All humanitarian migrants who arrived in Australia after 2013 (n=2,080). Don't know / refused = 3%.

Overall, while 38% of humanitarian migrants reported no problems accessing services, Centrelink (27%), housing (22%), and hospitals (20%) were the most commonly cited services where access problems were experienced. A small minority (6%) reported not trying to access any services.

Access challenges varied by arrival status, age, country of birth and English proficiency. **Longer term migrants** reported significantly **more difficulties with ATO services** (15% vs 6%) and **the NDIS** (5% vs 3%), compared to recent arrivals. **Older migrants** aged 35+ reported **significantly more difficulties with several services** compared to younger migrants, including Centrelink (32% vs 23%), Medicare (19% vs 13%), and banks/financial institutions (20% vs 14%). Problems with accessing services were much more common among humanitarian migrants born in South-East Asia, with higher rates of difficulties reported for accessing Centrelink (40%), Medicare (29%), banks/financial institutions (26%), ATO (26%), doctors (25%) and Department of Home Affairs services (19%). Migrants born in Southern/Central Asia (33%) also reported higher rates of Centrelink access issues. Issues with accessing hospitals, Medicare and the ATO were also more commonly reported by migrants born in other regions (29%, 25% and 29%, respectively). In contrast, migrants born in **North Africa/Middle East** and **Sub-Saharan Africa** were **more likely to report no difficulties accessing services** (46% and 51%, respectively). Similarly, humanitarian migrants who **spoke English well or very well** were **more likely to report no problems** accessing services (42%), compared to those with limited English proficiency (30% who spoke English not well or not at all). Migrants with lower English proficiency were more likely to report difficulties accessing a range of services, including banks and financial institutions (23% vs 14%), Centrelink (36% vs 23%), hospitals (30% vs 15%), Medicare (24% vs 12%), and doctors (21% vs 13%).

Qualitative findings

While most interview participants appreciated the availability of government institutions and services, their accessibility, effectiveness and user satisfaction were seen to vary widely. Many found the systems unfamiliar and difficult to navigate, experiencing bureaucratic delays and obstacles.

Centrelink system is a bit complicated and sometimes when they suspend your payment, and you have to call Centrelink and then getting interpreter and getting to connect to Centrelink it takes sometimes an hour or more than that.

— Male, 45+ years, longer-term arrival, Asian

It took so long for us to get the Medicare. It would literally take almost nine months. Then when it came, we only had it for like three months before it expired again. Then we had to do the process again

— Female, 18–25 years, longer-term arrival, African

Effectively engaging with government institutions was seen to require a combination of formal support from settlement and mainstream services, alongside informal support through connections with family, friends, and ethno-specific communities. For those lacking or dissatisfied with formalised supports, social connections played a crucial role in helping them navigate complex systems.

There was no connection with my support workers. Nothing took place from their side to really support me or do anything... So, it was all just the support that I had from the community as well as my friends because they were here before me, and they helped me navigate things.

— Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Asian

Caseworkers played a vital role for participants without family and friends in Australia, helping with housing, public services, and community connections. Positive experiences were linked to proactive, knowledgeable caseworkers, yet support quality varied considerably. Those with unresponsive or ineffective caseworkers often had to rely on their social networks to navigate these systems or institutions or were left to themselves, reinforcing the crucial role of informal support during early settlement.

I would say you have to rely on yourself not on the organisations. You have to know more about the support, about the services, you have to know about everything because they won't tell you much. The thing is, these organisations, because they are giving the refugees all the information about Australia, they have to do better than that, they have to—because the refugee will be new to this country, doesn't know nothing about this country. They have to be the face of this country, explain, be there, be present.

— Male, 26–45 years, recent arrival, Middle Eastern

It's important to get a good case worker when you first arrive. So, some case workers were really hopeless and it's just wasting the government money and not doing much work. But some case workers are really good.

— Male, 45+ years, longer-term arrival, Asian

2.3 Settlement Factors

The Outcomes Framework defines one settlement factor in scope for this analysis:



Understanding host culture, defined as a working knowledge of Australian values, social and cultural norms and expectations, as well as participating in cultural expression

The following two settlement factors were not originally within the scope of this analysis; however, relevant findings have been included in this section due to their connection to other outcome areas.



Language and digital literacy, defined as a combination of reading, speaking and writing in the English language, and the ability to use digital technology to access services, media and wider society



Transport, defined as access to public transport or support to obtain drivers' licences as a facilitator to access other domains, such as employment, education, social connections



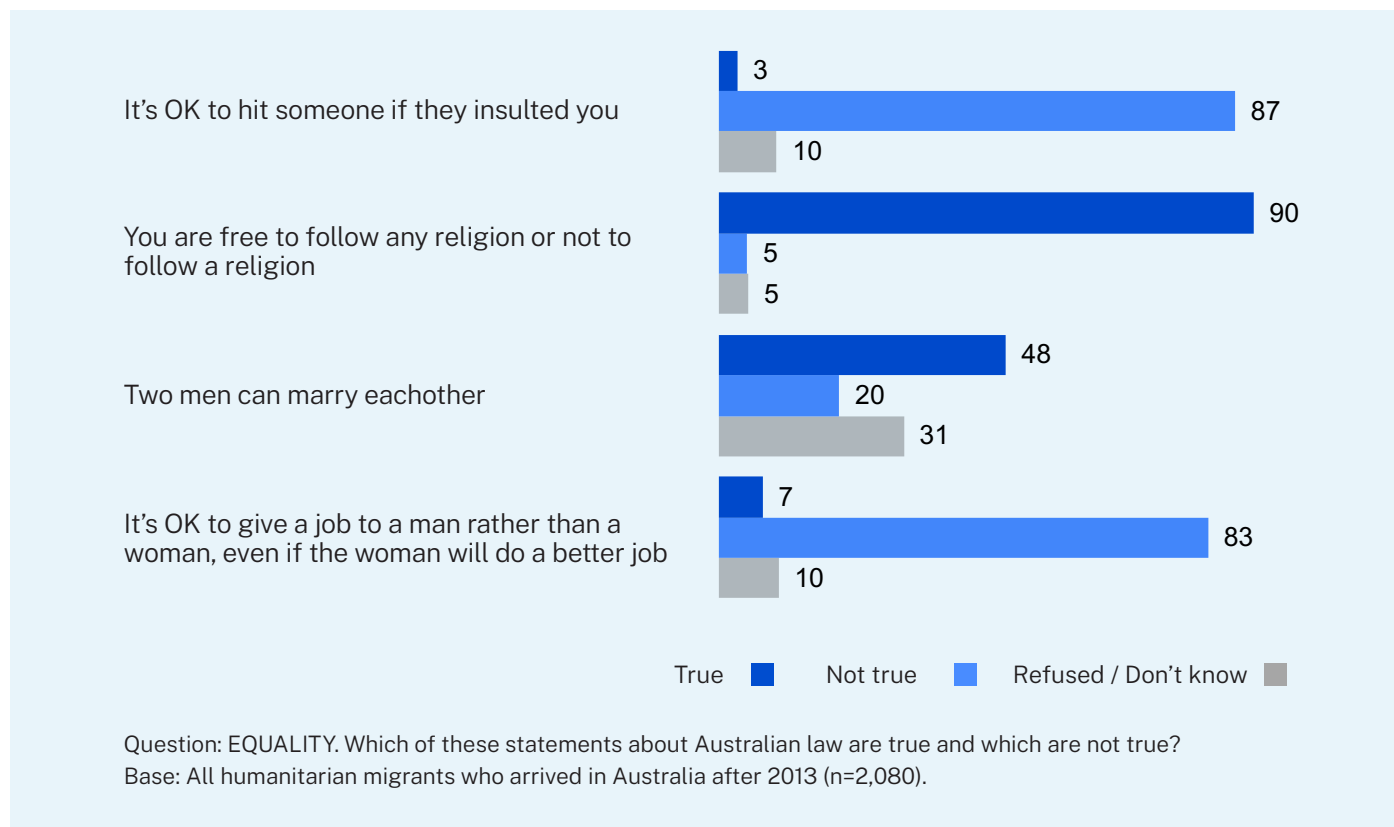
Credit: Helena Lopes

2.3.1 Understanding host culture

Navigating Australian social and cultural norms

Familiarity with Australian law and social norms was assessed through statements on gender equality, same-sex marriage, violence and freedom of religion.

Figure 17 Familiarity with Australian law and social norms – which of these statements are true or not true (%)



The majority of humanitarian migrants demonstrated strong support for equality and non-violence, with 83% rejecting gender-based employment discrimination, 48% acknowledging same-sex marriage rights (with 31% unsure), 90% supporting religious freedom and 87% opposing the use of violence in response to insults.

Notable differences emerged by arrival status, with **longer term arrivals more likely to reject gender-based hiring discrimination**, compared to recent arrivals (85% vs 80%), while **recent arrivals** were more likely to be uncertain about same-sex marriage (36% vs 30% responding 'Don't know/Refused'). **Women were much more likely than men to oppose violence in response to insults** (90% vs 85%), although gender differences were minimal for other equality measures.

Country of birth showed notable variations in attitudes, particularly regarding gender discrimination and same-sex marriage. Migrants born in **Oceania/Antarctica** (33%) and **South-East Asia** (17%) showed **higher support for gender-based employment discrimination** compared to those born in North Africa/Middle East (6%), Southern/Central Asia (7%), or Sub-Saharan Africa (2%). Those from **Oceania/Antarctica** and **North Africa/Middle East** were more likely to **reject same-sex marriage** (46% and 27%, respectively), compared to those born in Southern/Central Asia (15%) and other regions (12%), while migrants born in **South-East Asia** were the **least likely to oppose violence in response to insults** (75%) compared to migrants born in Sub-Saharan Africa (92%), North Africa/Middle East (90%) and Southern/Central Asia (88%).

Qualitative findings

Interview participants consistently identified freedom, equality and multiculturalism as core Australian values. While they expressed strong appreciation for these principles and, in line with the survey findings, largely endorsed them, their lived experiences sometimes reflected a more complex and contradictory reality.

Among the values discussed, freedom emerged as the most frequently cited and strongly supported—particularly in terms of freedom of religion, speech, and movement, as well as protection from unlawful surveillance or intrusion into one’s personal life.

Here is a free country. I have got freedom and whatever you like, and you work without any problem. You can go anywhere without any restriction so it’s a very nice environment here.

— Male, 45+ years, longer-term arrival, African

Echoing the survey findings, most interview participants also expressed a strong belief that fairness and equality were valued in Australia. They emphasised how Australian law is applied equally to all and that anyone living in this country should be able to achieve their goals, regardless of background.

Australian way of life

Figure 18 Taking pride in the Australian way of life and culture (%)



There are lots of people that come from other countries and there are lots of people that are not originally from Australia and they are just like me, and you know... we are equal, which is very cool and I love it.

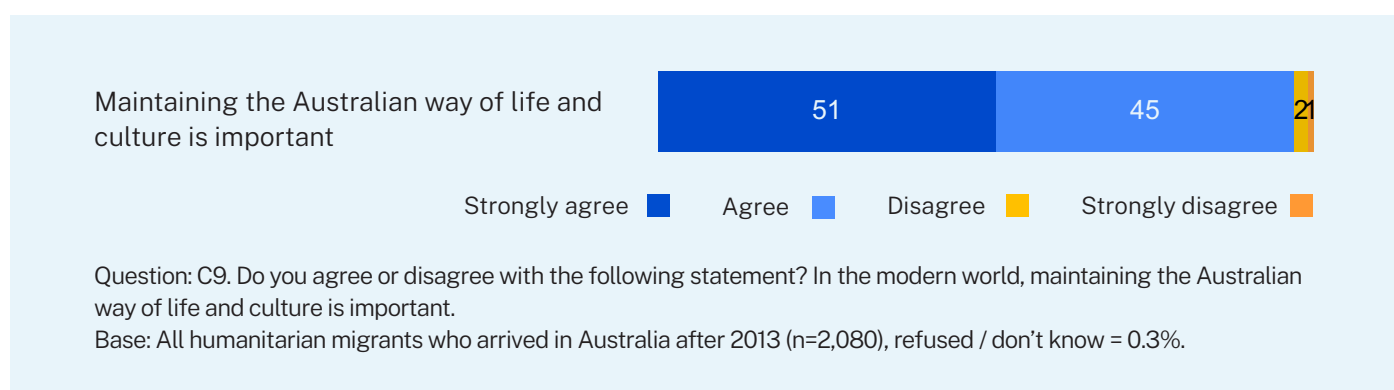
— Female, 18–25 years, recent arrival, African

Most felt that Australia values cultural diversity and social cohesion and respects individual cultural identities. However, several also pointed to a gap between this ideal and their own experiences, citing instances of racism and social exclusion that challenged the inclusive image of Australian society.

It’s a multicultural country, they say. I feel like there’s still a lot of racism and a lot of hate that goes around. That was obviously something that I was worried about because [back home] I’ve never really experienced it.

— Female, 18–25 years, longer-term arrival, African

Figure 19 Agreement with the importance of maintaining the Australian way of life and culture (%)



Humanitarian migrants expressed **more positive attitudes toward Australian culture** than the general Australian population, with 94% taking pride in the Australian way of life to a moderate or great extent (vs 81% of all Australians) and 96% agreeing or strongly agreeing that maintaining Australian culture is important in the modern world (vs 86% of all Australians).

Gender, country of birth and age showed minimal differences in cultural attitudes, although **longer term arrivals were more likely than recent arrivals to disagree or strongly disagree that maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important** (3% vs 1%). Pride towards Australian culture varied significantly across country of birth groups. Migrants born in **North Africa/Middle East** showed **higher levels of pride in Australian culture** (70% to a great extent), compared to migrants born in South-East Asia (51%) and Southern/Central Asia (57%), while South-East Asian (40%) and Southern/Central Asian (36%) migrants were more likely to express moderate pride compared to those from North Africa/Middle East (26%) and Oceania/Antarctica (14%).

Qualitative findings

Most interviewees expressed a strong sense of acceptance of Australian cultural norms and appreciation for the Australian way of life and culture, although many emphasised the importance of preserving the customs and traditions of their culture of origin as well. The balance between adopting Australian norms and maintaining cultural heritage was particularly evident among participants with strong ties to their ethnocultural and religious communities in Australia.

So on the weekends, especially on Saturday, through the [government] influence, they allow the community to use the university space or the school space and normally the Tibetans, they look after property and then the rest take responsibility. So in that way all the community members can get together and maintain their culture and identity and, more importantly, we can pass on that identity and culture to the younger generation who are struggling to keep up their identity.

— Male, 45+ years, longer-term arrival, Asian

We have got cultural days, twice a year. So, we dress up in our own culture, traditional costume. Also, do traditional dance and also have traditional food. Yeah. So, that is how we manage to maintain... keep practising our own traditional appropriately depending on what the situation is...and also to pass down to their generation as well, how important it is to maintain our own tradition...

— Female, 26-45 years, longer-term arrival, Asian

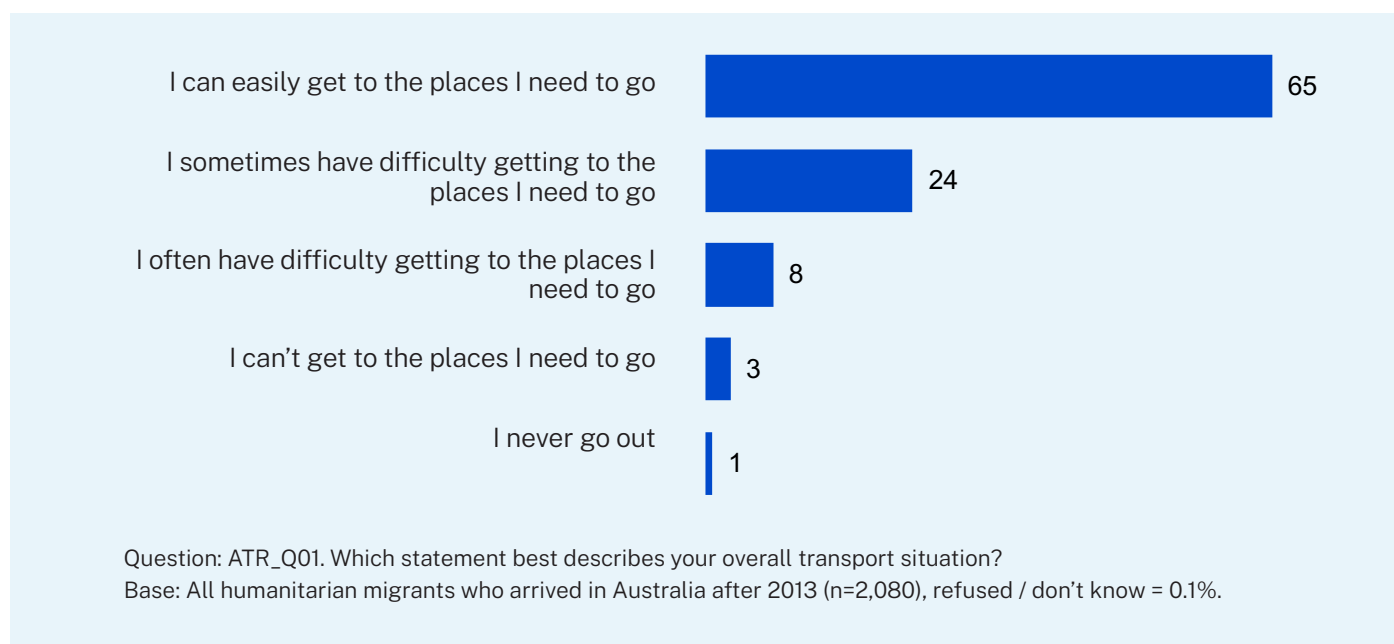
Although age was not a major factor influencing perceptions and understanding of Australian culture, the qualitative findings indicated intergenerational differences, with young participants (aged 18–25) ascribing more strongly to Australian cultural norms, compared to their parents. Additionally, younger participants often played a key role in facilitating cultural exchange between generations, helping their parents navigate Australian values and expectations.

2.3.2 Transport

Access to transport

Access to transportation was assessed through a question about the perceived level of difficulty in reaching necessary destinations, adapted from a similar question in the General Social Survey.

Figure 20 Agency in navigating transportation among humanitarian migrants (%)



Overall, while 65% of humanitarian migrants reported being able to easily get to places they need to go, over **one-third** experienced **some level of transport difficulty**, with 24% sometimes having difficulty, 8% often having difficulty, and 3% unable to reach needed destinations.

Men reported higher levels of easy access compared to women (69% vs 62%), while **women were more likely to report difficulty accessing places they need to go** either sometimes (27% vs 21%) or often (10% vs 6%). **Recent arrivals** were more likely to report sometimes (30% vs 22%) or often having difficulty (12% vs 6%) with transport, while longer term arrivals could access places they need to go more easily (69% vs 54%). Humanitarian migrants from other regions reported the highest levels of ease in accessing the places they need to go (80%), followed by those from Sub-Saharan Africa

(74%), Oceania/Antarctica (70%), and North Africa/Middle East (65%). **Transport difficulties were most commonly reported** by migrants born in **Southern/Central Asia** (44% indicating they sometimes, often, or never can get to the places they need to go), **South-East Asia** (39%) and **North Africa/Middle East** (35%), compared to those born in other regions (19%).

Access to transport was also closely associated with employment status or outcomes, as **transport difficulties were much higher** among humanitarian migrants **who did not currently have a job** (44% had difficulty getting to places sometimes, often or always, vs 25% of those who had a job of any kind). Transport difficulty was **also higher** among those who were **looking for work in the last 12 months**, compared to those who had started a new job or returned to work (38% had difficulty getting to places sometimes, often or always vs 24%).

Qualitative findings

Contrary to the survey results, many interview participants reported difficulties accessing transportation in Australia, particularly during the early stages of settlement. Factors such as financial constraints, reliance on support workers, communication barriers, unfamiliar surroundings and long travel distances were mentioned as influencing their ability to access and navigate transport systems.

So, the main challenge is communication. The case worker is the main person that we have connected with -if they don't contact us we cannot do anything. Then, yes, because of the communication difficulty, we also cannot access any transport.

— Female, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Asian

Transportation was big, because you don't have any car. So, even to get to the bus stop from where we are renting, sometimes in wintertime the weather is not great to walk to the bus stop or train station. Things like that. So, that was a little bit of a challenge... If you have to go to uni or [thing] for your further study, you have to travel far...

— Female, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Asian

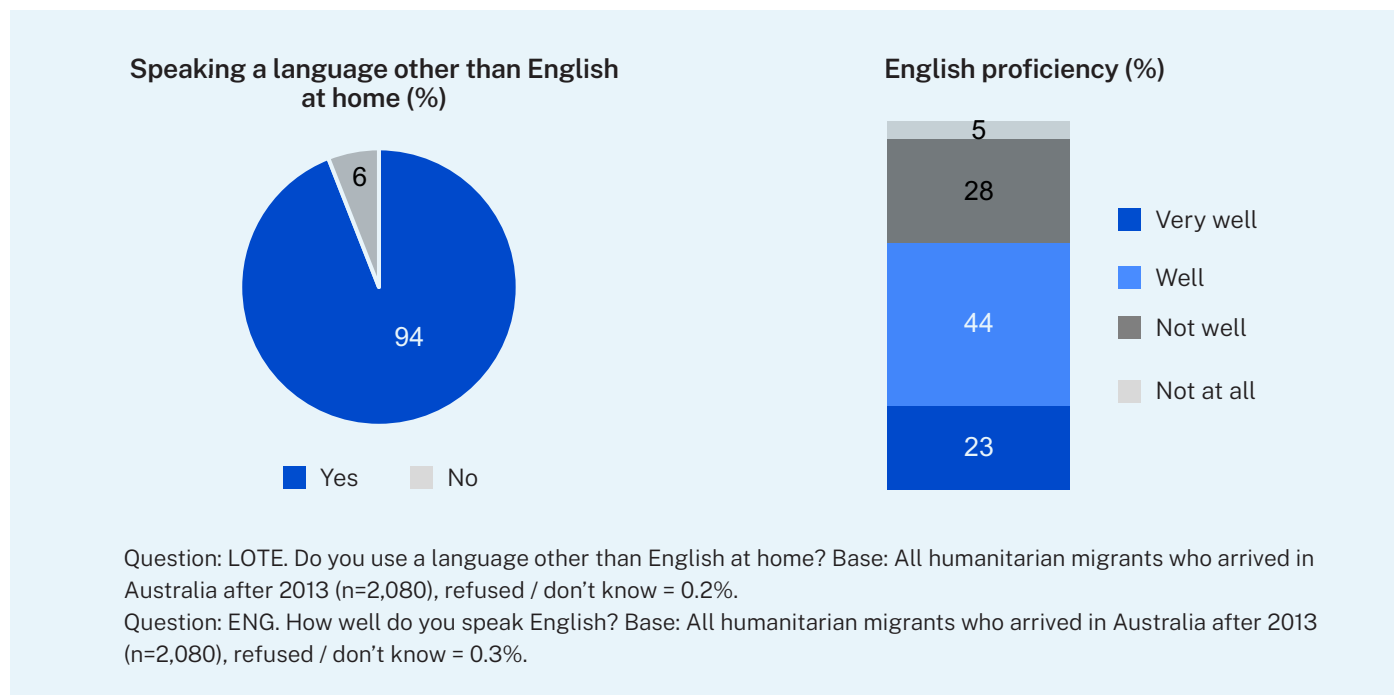


2.3.3 Language and digital literacy

Proficiency in spoken English

Language skills were measured by an adaptation of the Census English ability item asking how well the respondent could speak English (only asked if the respondent used a language other than English at home).

Figure 21 English proficiency among humanitarian migrants



While **two-thirds** (67%) of humanitarian migrants reported **speaking English well or very well**, a substantial proportion reported limited English proficiency (33% spoke English not well or not at all vs 3% of all Australians). Humanitarian migrants had **much lower English proficiency** compared to the **general Australian population**, with the vast majority using a language other than English at home (94% vs 24% of all Australians).

Higher English proficiency, demonstrated by those who can speak English well or very well, was typically reported by **longer term arrivals** (70% vs 60% of recent arrivals) and **younger migrants aged 18-34 years** (84% vs 50% of those aged 35+). By country of birth, reported English proficiency was **highest** among migrants **born in Sub-Saharan Africa** (82% speaking English well or very well), followed by those from **Oceania/Antarctica** (80%), **North Africa/Middle East** (70%), **Southern/Central**

Asia (68%), **South-East Asia** (63%), and lowest among those from other regions (47%). English proficiency was also associated with education, with **proficiency levels increasing as the level of education increased**. Notably, reported English proficiency was the lowest among those who did not go to school (91% spoke English not well or not at all) and higher among those who had completed a Trade certificate (78% spoke English well or very well) or other qualification (77%).

The vast majority (94%) of humanitarian migrants reported using a language other than English at home. This was more common among migrants born in North Africa/Middle East (96%), Southern/Central Asia (95%), Oceania/Antarctica (95%), and other regions (95%). While slightly lower, the prevalence also remained high among migrants from South-East Asia (88%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (86%).

Qualitative findings

Language barriers were one of the most prominent challenges identified by the participant interviews. Limited functional English affected everyday communication and created constraints to accessing support services such as healthcare (e.g., Medicare), social welfare (e.g., Centrelink) and employment and education programs. Language barriers were also an impediment to engagement in the Australian workforce, pursuit of local education and qualifications, and understanding of Australian culture and systems.

The hard part was, I tell you, to complete the uni. To be a registered nurse, you have to be competent in English language... You do uni three years by English language and you're writing essay, you learn about English words... get feedback for English test, again, that was the hard part. That was the challenging part - especially when you are a refugee background or any people from other countries, a non-English speaking background.

— Male, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, African

Of course, I don't know much English, so I have to learn English from scratch and so it's not easy to get a job not knowing English.

— Male, 45+ years, recent arrival, Asian

Consistent with the survey findings, generational differences in English language proficiency emerged as a significant factor complicating the settlement experiences of interview participants. Older participants and those without prior formal education reported struggling to acquire English, which made accessing job opportunities and education programs challenging. In contrast, younger participants reported more rapid English language acquisition, facilitated through immersive learning in educational environments, which enabled them to integrate more easily into Australian society.

I did actually attend English classes. But being quite old and learning a new language, it's actually causing more trauma and [it's] difficult and so I was not about to learn much. So I would rather prefer to work and do some voluntary work.

— Male, 45+ years, longer-term arrival, Asian

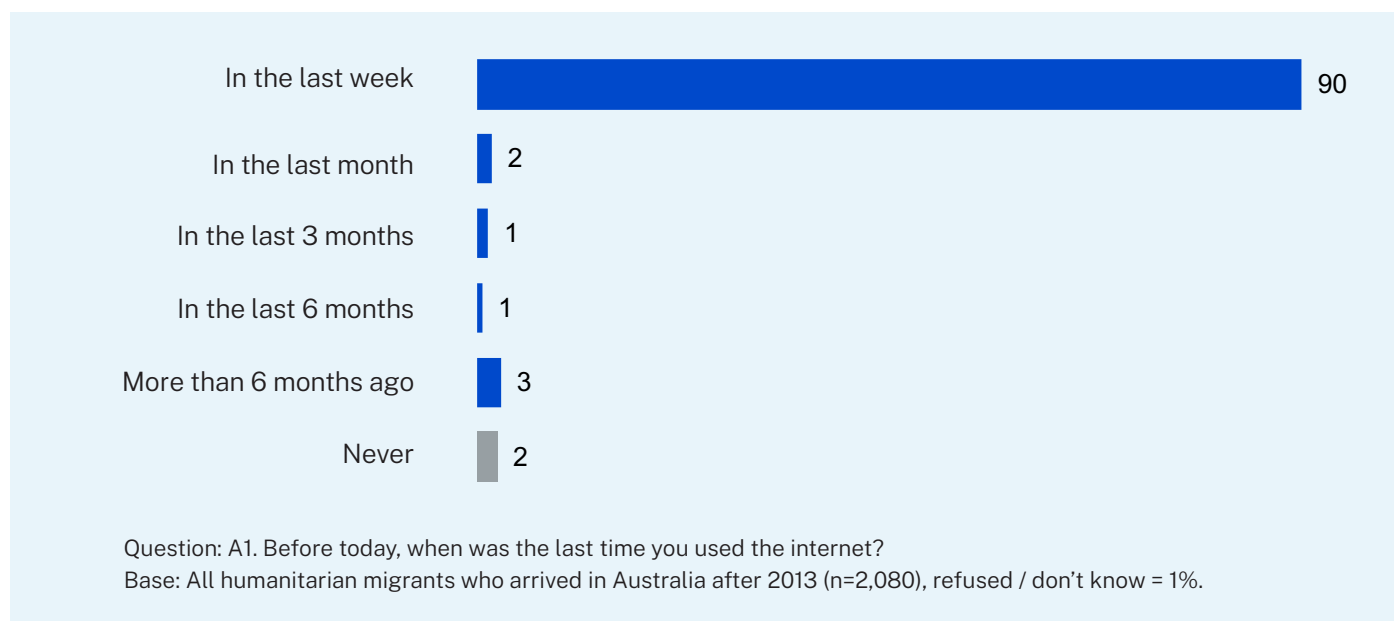
Many interview participants considered the AMEP essential during the early stages of settlement, helping them to build confidence in communicating in English and providing an important stepping stone towards further vocational studies and/or employment. Through the program, participants received feedback and encouragement from their teachers, built valuable social connections and were often connected in with other support services. For those with young children, access to free onsite childcare made attendance at classes easier. However, distance to the program, for those who lived further away, was a barrier to participation.

Other factors also influenced individuals' participation in the program. Those with limited language proficiency upon arrival found the program challenging; however, those with greater fluency found the program to be below their level. For some, the time taken up learning English conflicted with employment needs, making it difficult for participants to manage both.

Digital access

Digital inclusion was assessed through a question regarding the frequency of internet use from the Australian Digital Inclusion Index (Thomas et al. 2023), with benchmark data provided by the kind permission of the research team.

Figure 22 Internet usage among humanitarian migrants (%)



Internet usage was **very high among humanitarian migrants**, with 90% reporting use within the last week, while only 2% had never used the internet. Results from the Australia Digital Inclusion Study indicate 96% of Australians had access to the internet (Thomas et al. 2023).¹⁴

Recent internet usage (in the last week) was **higher** among migrants born in **North Africa/Middle East** (94%), **Southern/Central Asia** (91%), and **Sub-Saharan Africa** (90%), compared to those from Oceania/Antarctica (70%). Migrants from Southern/Eastern Europe and South-East Asia also reported higher rates of not using the internet (25% and 8%, respectively).

Qualitative findings

While most interview participants expressed confidence in accessing government services digitally, some found this to be highly challenging. These participants cited confusing forms, the lack of user-friendly design, limited familiarity with using the internet and lengthy wait times as factors that diminished their confidence in using digital services.

It's awful on the phone. They don't care that you're a human. You need your time - just been on the phone an hour or so. You imagine sometimes working full time like me, how difficult it could be... They set the system like... they have some assumption... the people that need to call Centrelink... they are jobless, so they have plenty of time.

— Female, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Middle Eastern

¹⁴ <https://www.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/>

The interview findings also highlighted that limited English language proficiency poses a significant barrier to digital literacy. While some were able to overcome this challenge with help from interpreters or family members, these solutions were not always easy. One participant, for example, found using an interpreter difficult and instead relied on Google Translate, which they found more accessible and manageable.

I'm not good at using the internet, so I don't access any support.

— Female, 26–45 years, longer-term arrival, Asian

Online, you can slowly, slowly, you can translate whatever [is] on the screen. You can use Google Translate... That's much better than the interpreter, and going there via phone, and no one can understand you, and you will be confusing, and you will be [shy].

— Male, 26-45, longer-term arrival, Middle Eastern



Credit: iñamember

3. Conclusions

This report provides a substantial and robust evidence base that significantly enhances the existing body of knowledge about humanitarian experiences of settlement and integration in Australia. By drawing on a large-scale national survey and in-depth qualitative interviews, it offers a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the integration experiences of humanitarian migrants across key domains of the Department of Home Affairs' Outcomes Framework.

A major achievement of this study was the successful collection of over 2,000 survey responses, made possible through an adapted methodology that prioritised community engagement and the use of bi-cultural workers. This approach not only improved response rates but also ensured the inclusion of diverse voices, particularly those from harder-to-reach communities such as those from African backgrounds.

The findings demonstrate strong consistency and convergence between the qualitative and quantitative data sources. Across both methods, recurring themes emerged, such as the importance of social bonds, the role of cultural familiarity, and the challenges of navigating public services, underscoring the reliability and depth of the insights presented.

Positive experiences reported by humanitarian migrants include a strong sense of belonging at both national and neighbourhood levels, high levels of civic and community engagement and widespread pride in the Australian way of life. Many participants expressed appreciation for

Australia's multiculturalism, safety and legal protections, and reported feeling welcomed by their local communities. Social connections within cultural groups and across diverse communities were robust, and participation in religious, social, and community groups was high.

However, the report also highlights persistent challenges faced by humanitarian migrants. These include experiences of discrimination, particularly among younger and longer-term migrants; financial stress and food insecurity; language barriers that limit access to employment and services; and difficulties navigating complex bureaucratic systems. Access to transport and digital literacy also emerged as critical barriers for some, particularly recent arrivals and older migrants.

Clear patterns of divergence were observed across demographic groups, particularly by recency of arrival, age and country of birth. For instance, recent arrivals were more likely to report transport difficulties and food insecurity, while longer-term migrants were more likely to report experiences of discrimination. Younger migrants tended to have higher English proficiency and digital literacy, while older migrants faced greater challenges in these areas.

Ultimately, this report provides valuable data about both the opportunities and challenges of integration and offers evidence, from the perspectives of refugees and humanitarian entrants themselves, that can be used to evaluate the strengths and shortcomings of existing services and programs.

4. Considerations for Future Research

4.1 Study changes

The inclusion of economic participation as an in-scope domain

Although the Department identified five outcome areas for the current project – belonging, social connections, community welcome, understanding host culture, and access to institutions – participants in the qualitative research consistently emphasised the critical importance of economic participation and employment. These themes were not only raised unprompted during interviews and focus groups, but were often revisited informally after the formal session has ended, underscoring their strong relevance to participants’ lived experiences of settlement in Australia.

It is therefore recommended that economic participation be formally included as a key settlement outcome area to explore in future data collection. Participants expressed a strong desire to reflect on their employment journeys, often framing economic participation as central to their broader settlement experience. Furthermore, other aspects of settlement – such as language acquisition, education, access to appropriate housing and health and wellbeing – were often described as closely connect to, motivated by, or dependent on the attainment of decent work in Australia.

A more deliberate and structured exploration of economic participation and its interconnections with other outcomes through survey and interview research is critical to building a deeper understanding of the refugee settlement and integration experience.

Feedback from bi-cultural workers and interviewers indicated that many humanitarian migrants found the current survey questions on employment to be insufficiently inclusive. For

instance, one survey question (APS1C) asked about humanitarian migrants’ experiences looking for work, starting a new job, or returning to work in the past 12 months. One respondent noted that this question did not reflect her experience as a stay-at-home mother by choice, suggesting the need for an “other” option to better capture those who are not in the labour force and not actively seeking work.

It is recommended that future research consider a broader exploration of employment-related issues in the survey, including participation in employment pathways, upward mobility, the quality of employment in relation to migrants’ skills, prior experiences and qualifications, and challenges involved in navigating the job search process.

Review of translated languages

Consistent with the 2022 study, the 2024 Refugee Experiences in Australia survey was translated into 10 commonly spoken languages among humanitarian migrants (Arabic, Assyrian, Burmese, Chin, Dari, Hazaragi, Karen, Nepali, Swahili, and Tigrinya), to facilitate survey completion in languages other than English and promote inclusive participation. To ensure the survey continues to reflect the evolving diversity of humanitarian arrivals, it is recommended that the list of translated languages be periodically reviewed, updated and expanded. Feedback from respondents suggested that emerging languages such as Pashto, Ukrainian, and Tibetan should be included in future iterations.

For rarer languages not included in the current translations, it is worth considering the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National), provided by the Department of Home Affairs, to ensure that humanitarian migrants with limited English proficiency are afforded equal opportunity to participate in the survey.

Incentive processing

Given the high risks associated with using an open survey link, survey data was manually reviewed on a weekly basis throughout fieldwork as part of the data quality assurance process to identify and remove duplicate or fraudulent responses prior to processing incentives. As a result, there were minor delays in distributing incentives during the fieldwork period. To manage expectations and maintain respondent trust, it is recommended that the expected timeframe for incentive processing (by SMS and by mail) be clearly communicated and expediated if possible.

Bi-cultural recruitment

Sample from the 2024 survey was drawn from multiple sources, using a range of media channels (e.g., social media, newsletters, email, website, and in-language audio and video), outreach to organisations with strong connections to refugee and humanitarian migrant communities and bi-cultural workers who leveraged their existing networks to directly contact potential respondents and assist with survey completion. This multi-channel recruitment strategy effectively broadened the survey's reach and improved response rates, and is recommended for future iterations. However, to further maximise responses, it is advised that bi-cultural workers be engaged and briefed well in advance of survey fieldwork to allow adequate time for community engagement.

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Appendix A

Refugee and Humanitarian Entrant Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework

In 2023, the Australian Government released the Refugee and Humanitarian Entrant Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework, which depicts Australia's vision for successful settlement and integration. In preparation for the development of this research plan, the Department of Home Affairs advised interested in understanding settlement outcomes in the following domains:

- Economic Participation
- Health and Wellbeing
- Education
- Language and Digital Literacy
- Housing and Transport
- Belonging
- Social Connections
- Community Welcome
- Understanding Host Culture
- Access to Institutions
- Safety and Security

For the purposes of this project the Department has advised of specific interest in the last five outcome areas: belonging, social connections, community welcome, understanding host culture, and access to institutions.

Appendix B

Research Methodology

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was drafted with the goal of understanding the areas identified by the Department in its Concept Paper (Department of Home Affairs, 2021b) and making analytical comparisons to existing data sets where relevant. Because of the desire to link these findings to other research for comparison purposes, questions to be included were determined with the following logic:

- Where possible, questions were drawn unchanged from existing SFRI measures, particularly those asked in the 2024 Mapping Social Cohesion Survey, to provide a common reference point
- Where no relevant question was available from SFRI surveys, the Social Research Centre looked to draw questions from other contemporary, credible surveys outlined below and detailed in the survey (see Questionnaire in Appendix D)

Table B1 Language survey completed in (unweighted)

Language	n	%
English	1402	67.4
.Arabic	337	16.2
Dari	274	13.2
Burmese	29	1.4
•Hazaragi	10	0.5
•Karen	8	0.4
Swahili	7	0.3
•Tigrinya	7	0.3
Nepali	6	0.3
•Assyrian	0	0
Chin Haka	0	0

Note: no surveys were completed in Assyrian and Chin Haka despite the availability of translated versions.

Translation and interpreting

The survey and supporting material were translated into Arabic, Dari, Assyrian, Burmese, Karen, Chin Haka, Swahili, Nepali, Hazaragi, and Tigrinya, with these languages being selected on the basis of being among the most-spoken languages by eligible humanitarian migrants (see below on eligibility). Completions by language are shown in Table B1. Translations were provided by NAATI-certified translators from Multicultural Media and Marketing (MMM) and independently reviewed by another NAATI-certified translator, in line with best practice.

Sampling

Eligible participants were only enrolled into the study if they meet all the inclusion criteria and none of the exclusion criteria listed in the following sections.

- Eligible participants were:
- aged 18 and above
- a resident in Australia as of the date of survey completion

have been granted a refugee or non-refugee humanitarian visa between 1 June 2011 and 31 December 2023. This includes those who may have subsequently changed status (for example, became citizens). Participants do not need to be the primary applicant and may be a family member who was granted the same visa as a secondary applicant.

Participants were excluded if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Under the age of 18 years
- Had not been granted a refugee or non-refugee humanitarian visa between 1 June 2013 and 31 December 2023.
- Did not wish to participate.

The study population¹⁵ was 95,656, including sample from all country of birth or cultural groups. The sample size was unknown and was dependent on the success of community engagement activities; however the aim was to achieve over 1000 responses to the survey.

Demographic characteristics of eligible participants

Sample demographics are shown in Table B2. The following outlines areas of over- and under-representation in the sample compared to the population of humanitarian settlers who arrived between 2013 and 2022, as provided by the Department of Home Affairs:

- The sample over-represented longer-term arrivals (arrived 2013–18) and under-represented recent arrivals (2019–24)¹⁶.
- The sample slightly over-represented humanitarian migrants aged 18–34 and above and under-represented those aged 35+.
- The sample slightly over-represented female humanitarian migrants and under-represented males.

- The sample slightly over-represented humanitarian migrants in Victoria, Tasmania, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, and under-represented those in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia.
- The sample over-represented humanitarian migrants born in Southern and Central Asia, South-East Asia and Oceania and under-represents migrants born in North Africa and the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, and other regions.
- The sample likely over-represented humanitarian migrants with higher levels of proficiency with English.¹⁷ At time of arrival, 63.5% of humanitarian migrants had 'nil' English. At the time of the survey, 6.5% of respondents said they could use English not at all. While improvements in English proficiency are expected over time through education and exposure to an English-speaking environment, migrants with limited or no English skills are likely harder to reach, even with translated surveys and targeted bi-cultural workers outreach and are therefore likely under-represented in the sample.

Notes: * Includes Certificates I and II or equivalent. † Includes Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas or equivalent. Cell sizes below 10 are collapsed. Population percentages from Settlement Database filtered to 2013–22 arrivals calculated to be aged 18 and above in 2024 (age calculation = age at arrival + 2024 – year of arrival). Survey percentages unweighted.

¹⁵ The population figure was sourced from the Department of Home Affairs' Settlement Database, with records filtered to include arrivals between 2013 and 2022 (the most recent data available), and individuals aged 18+ as of 2024.

¹⁶ The timeframe for recent arrivals defined in this report does not align exactly with the benchmarks sourced from the population file, as the population file includes only records with a date of arrival up to May 2022.

¹⁷ The information recorded in the migrant file uses different categories to the Census question used in the survey. The population file uses very good, good, poor, and nil. The survey uses very well, well, not well, and not at all and was not asked of people who only used English at home.

Table B2 Demographic characteristics of the survey sample (unweighted)

Language	<i>n</i>	%	Pop %	Notes
Other	205	9.9	12.5	North-West Europe, Southern and Eastern Europe, North-East Asia, Americas
Language used at home				Groupings use Australian Classification of Languages (ASCL) (ABS 2016) Major Group definitions except where otherwise noted; population shows language spoken at time of arrival
Not reported	60	2.9	-	
English only	121	5.8	-	
Southwest and Central Asian languages	121	5.8	-	
Southern Asian languages	48	2.3	-	
Southeast Asian languages	196	9.4	-	
Other languages	391	18.8	-	North European, Southern European, Eastern European, and Eastern Asian languages in addition to ASCL other languages
English proficiency				
Refused	4	0.2	-	
Speak English only	126	6.1	-	
Very well	358	17.2	-	
Well	841	40.5	-	
Not well	612	29.5	-	
Not at all	135	6.5	-	
State or territory of residence				Population percentage is current state in the Settlement Database
Not reported	-	-	0.1	
VIC	1131	54.4	32.8	
NSW	553	26.6	38.6	
QLD	177	8.5	13.1	
SA	81	3.9	7.4	
TAS	75	3.6	1.7	
NT	29	1.4	0.3	
ACT	26	1.3	1.1	
WA	8	0.4	4.9	
Education				
Don't know or refused	15	0.7	-	
Less than year 10*	447	21.5	-	
Year 10 and above	885	41.1	-	
Certificate III and IV	238	11.4	-	
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	102	4.9	-	
Bachelor Degree	226	10.9	-	
Postgraduate Degree †	197	9.5	-	

Recruitment process

Similar to the 2022 study design, a non-probability approach to recruitment was used again in the 2024 survey. This was necessary given the fact that no sampling frame was made available to the researchers by the Department, the limitations of budget and time, and the difficulty of accessing the humanitarian migrant population. Humanitarian migrants are an example of a hard-to-survey population (Tourangeau, 2014), being hard-to-sample due to being a rare population for which no sampling frame was available to the SFRI and Social Research Centre, hard-to-identify due to being stigmatised and, potentially, due to fear of persecution even in Australia, hard-to-locate, due to residential mobility, hard-to-persuade, due to justified lack of trust, and hard-to-interview, due to the large number of languages spoken by humanitarian migrants and illiteracy among some migrants. Non-probability methods are more broadly accepted in the study of hard-to-survey populations compared to mainstream populations, given the lack of good alternatives (Harkness et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2014; Lyberg et al., 2014). Kalton (2014) well summarises the kind of considerations at work when deciding on methods for surveying hard-to-survey populations and evaluating the validity of findings from them.

Given the extremely high cost of obtaining a probability sample of many hard-to-sample populations, it is not surprising that many studies of these populations use non-random, or not strictly random, sampling methods. Using such methods leads to questions about the validity of the survey's findings for the target population of inference. Underpinning each of the findings is an implicit model about the selection process, and assessing the validity of the findings requires an evaluation of the applicability of that model for each finding.

In some circumstances, estimates from non-probability methods may be unbiased or approximately unbiased; however, the method needs to be critically assessed with respect to specific findings.

Participant recruitment was facilitated by the support of organisations and stakeholders who worked with and/or have relationships and networks with humanitarian entrants and refugees on behalf of the research team. This was conducted via a dual approach by the Social Research Centre with bi-cultural workers, and SFRI and Polaron Connect.

Bi-cultural worker recruitment (The Social Research Centre)

Sample for the 2024 survey was sourced via outreach to organisations with strong connections to refugee and humanitarian migrant communities. This was achieved via bi-cultural workers who leveraged their existing networks to directly contact potential respondents and assist with survey completion. This multi-channel recruitment strategy effectively broadened the survey's reach, with improved engagement from 2022.

Polaron Connect

Polaron Connect was partnered with for the research to enable the sourcing of sample and community connection. Polaron Connect is a division of Polaron, a language services and community engagement firm based in Melbourne, Australia. They specialise in providing multilingual communication and citizenship support, working with government, businesses, and non-profits. Polaron Connect also offers community consultations and engagement services to help organisations better connect with diverse community members.

Polaron promoted the survey using population-appropriate in-person networking with their community networks. They compiled a list of appropriate contacts and their bilingual consultants then approached representatives of key organisations by telephone and email to promote the survey. In addition, Polaron bilingual consultants conducted interviews with a small number of self-nominated contacts who have low levels of digital literacy to ensure some coverage within this group. The interviewers entered responses in the online survey on behalf of the participants using a separate open link with a flag for Polaron-assisted interviews. This ground-up promotion was essential in reaching those humanitarian migrants that were not connected to, or not trusting of, service providers or other organised networks.

Promotion through community media channels

News of the conduct of the survey reached local community media channels and was promoted through social media platforms, radio, and newsletters via SFRI contacts.

Department of Home Affairs' networks

Departmental staff, working in Settlement policy and programs areas, also promoted the survey through their networks. This also enhanced the reach of the survey and resulted in additional completions.

Reported source of invitation to survey

As shown in Table B3, the most common way respondents heard about the survey was through word of mouth, with 59% reporting they learned about it from someone they know. Community organisations also played a significant role, cited by 28% of respondents. Other sources included phone contact (9%), email (8%), and fewer respondents citing printed materials such as posters or brochures (3%). This highlights the value of engaging community organisations and bi-cultural workers as key channels for reaching humanitarian migrants, complemented by additional promotional methods such as emails, posters, and brochures.

Table B3 Reported source of information about the survey (unweighted)

How did you hear about this survey?	<i>n</i>	%
I heard about it from someone I know	1226	58.9
My local community organisation	577	27.7
I was contacted by phone	179	8.6
From an email	168	8.1
Saw a poster or brochure	168	3.4
Don't know / refused	6	0.3

Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive and may add up to more than 100%.

Incentives

In the 2024 survey, a \$20 incentive was offered to each respondent upon completing the survey, replacing the prize draw approach used in the 2022 study. Respondents could choose to receive the incentive either as an e-gift card via SMS or as a printed voucher sent by mail. The incentive was provided as a gesture of appreciation for their time and participation in the research. Its value was carefully determined to ensure it was non-coercive, recognising that many within the target population may experience financial hardship, while also minimising the risk of moral hazard, such as attempts to complete the survey multiple times.

Learnings

The 2024 survey sample was recruited using a variety of sources and media platforms, including social media, newsletters, email, websites, and in-language audio and video content. Recruitment efforts also involved Departmental outreach, outreach to organisations with strong ties to refugee and humanitarian migrant communities, and bi-cultural workers, who utilised their networks to directly engage and support potential participants. This diverse recruitment strategy successfully expanded the survey's reach and enhanced response rates and is recommended for future surveys. To further strengthen community engagement and maximise participation, it is recommended that bi-cultural workers be involved and briefed well ahead of the survey period.

Weighting

The survey data was weighted to totals from the Settlement Database. Consistent with 2022, we adopted a model-based approach that uses the maximum amount of information on the population available from the Settlement Database (Department of Home Affairs, 2019); see Appendix E for further details. The final weighting solution used age, country of birth, gender, state of residence, and year of arrival.

Limitations to the analysis

The analysis is subject to various limitations:

- Due to the multi-channel recruitment strategy, the achieved in-scope sample size ($n = 2,080$) is relatively large for a hard-to-reach population such as humanitarian migrants. However, to preserve confidentiality and ensure consistency with the previous study's analytical approach, the minimum size for a group to be included in reporting was $n = 10$; groups below this level were collapsed into higher level groups for reporting purposes.
- Due to the absence of a sampling frame and the low incidence of humanitarian migrants in Australia, a nonprobability sampling approach was used. As such, the assumptions underlying inferential statistics, such as significance testing and margins of error, do not apply. Therefore, significance tests are not reported for comparisons with the Mapping Social Cohesion survey, other benchmark data, or within-group comparisons among humanitarian migrants.
- Measurement error may have occurred if the intended meaning of questions was not fully captured in translation or during interpretation. Respondents with limited English proficiency who completed the survey without support may have interpreted questions differently, contributing to potential inconsistencies in responses.
- Analysis of survey findings necessarily focuses on the weighted averages and relatively large proportions and can miss nuance and understate diversity of experiences of humanitarian migrants.
- Caution is advised when interpreting digital literacy measures, as the primarily online survey mode likely led to an overestimation of digital literacy levels.

Qualitative Study Design

This section describes the approach used for the qualitative interview component, summarising the design, sampling and data collection methodology, and the analytical framework used.

Data collection

This qualitative research involved in-depth interviews with 27 humanitarian entrants across the following three regions:

- Africa
- Middle East
- Asia

Interviews were conducted from 10th October – 2nd December 2024. Table B4, below, provides an overview of the qualitative methods utilised along with sample and location information.

Table B4 Overview of data collection.

Method	Sample size	Duration	Location/Site	Study Population
In-depth interviews	n = 27	60 mins	Online / In-person	Individuals who: • Entered Australia on 200 class visas (200, 201, 202, 203, 204) between 1 June 2011 and 31 December 2023. • Are aged 18 and above • Are a resident in Australia as of date of fieldwork participation • Identify with a cultural community from one of the following three locations: Africa, Middle East, Asia.

In-depth interviews

Interviews were conducted both remotely –via videoconference or telephone –and face-to-face, depending on the participant’s preference. Participants were offered access to an interpreter if they required it –in these cases, interpreters were used to translate the researcher’s questions and the participant’s responses. For transcription purposes, the English translation during the interviews was what was transcribed.

The semi-structured discussion guide (see Appendix C) for these in-depth interviews was developed by drawing out areas of exploration within each key outcome of the Outcomes Framework, ensuring qualitative data collection was consistent and complementary to the areas of interest in the quantitative questionnaire.

Sample and demographic characteristics

The purpose of qualitative research is not to aim for representativeness in any statistical sense. Nonetheless, being able to broadly generalise from a qualitative sample to the wider population – in this case, humanitarian entrants from three discrete communities – by identifying patterns, themes, and trends, is an important facet of rigorous and valid qualitative research.

To provide for this possibility, ensuring depth and capturing the diversity of the relevant population:

- The sample parameter for in-depth interviews was set at 30 humanitarian entrants

- Location and identity were considered in developing the sampling frame and captured during recruitment to reflect mediating factors of experience as highlighted by the Outcomes Framework.
- The sample was constructed to ensure that the different demographic characteristics and circumstances (gender, age, location, years of education, time since arrival in Australia) were captured.

Contact details for over 40 research candidates were collected to screen and recruit for this research. A total of 27 interviews were completed. Table B5 explicates the demographic characteristics of those who participated in qualitative interviews, with Table B6 outlining countries of origin.

Table B5 Participant demographics for qualitative interviews.

Community		African n = 9	Middle Eastern n = 9	Asian n = 9	Totals n = 9
Gender	Male	4	3	6	13
	Female	5	6	3	14
Age range	18-25	3	0	2	5
	26-45	3	7	5	15
	45 +	3	2	2	7
Location	Metro	6	8	9	23
	Regional/rural	3	1	0	4
Years of education	Less than 6 years	2	4	2	8
	7-10 years	3	0	1	4
	11 + years	4	5	6	15
Arrival in Australia	0-2 years	2	0	4	6
	3-5 years	0	3	1	4
	5 + years	7	6	4	17

Table B6 Sample countries of origin.

Cohort	Country of origin	Number	Total
Africa	Ethiopia	3	9
	Eritrea	3	
	South Sudan	2	
	Libya	1	
Middle Eastern	Iraq	3	9
	Syria	3	
	Iran	1	
	Jordan	1	
	Egypt	1	
Asian	Afghanistan	4	9
	Myanmar	3	
	Nepal/Tibet	2	
		Total	27

Recruitment process

Participant recruitment was facilitated by the support of organisations and stakeholders who work with and/or have relationships and networks with humanitarian entrants and refugees.

SFRI contacted organisations and stakeholders from its professional networks that had a broad base of refugee contacts to promote the research and recruit participants for the study. The SRC worked with SFRI to help identify and screen suitable participants, as well as consulting its own networks and utilising an external recruiter, MMM, to ensure that a balanced and full sample was reached. MMM was also engaged to provide interpreter services to those participants who required it.

To account for participants initially expressing interest but not progressing to the interview stage or being found ineligible to participate, a minimum of 40 participants were identified as potential research candidates through SFRI's, the SRC's, and MMM's networks. In thanks for their time and insights, interview participants received a reimbursement of \$100 in the form of cash (for face-to-face interviews) or an e-voucher (for remote interviews).

Consent

Informed consent was continuously sought through this research with participants. The research team was aware of the risks associated with participants who have experienced trauma and may have ongoing mental health needs and be facing uncertainty around housing, employment, or other supports. Participants were provided with multiple points to review their consent and could decide to leave the study if their circumstances and/or interest in participating in the study changed.

All members of the research team are trained in proper procedures, including trauma-informed approaches, for ensuring the safety of study participants. A Participant Distress Protocol provided researchers with instructions on how to assess and manage project, participant, and individual risk.

Challenges encountered in recruitment

As anticipated, the identification and engagement of eligible humanitarian entrants to participate in this study was challenging. This was due to a variety of reasons, including:

- Challenges in identifying or engaging humanitarian entrants to participate, related to delayed engagement from organisations and stakeholders, maintaining a balanced sample and navigating balanced use of interpreters, and the services of external recruitment consultants.
- Reticence of humanitarian entrants to participate either before being screened or after expressing interest.
- Coordination of face-to-face fieldwork was limited by logistical considerations.

Analysis and reporting

Throughout the interviews, the research team took detailed field notes in an analytical spreadsheet that used thematic categories to undertake preliminary analytical work. This spreadsheet, in addition to transcripts of interviews conducted in English and transcripts of interviews conducted with an interpreter, formed the data points for the analysis of interview data. These data points remained connected to the demographic characteristics of participants, ensuring the findings remain traceable back to the raw data, thus providing a fully transparent analytical method.

Following completion of fieldwork, an analysis workshop was held with SFRI's research team, which involved identifying emergent themes and consolidating the approach to analysis. This workshop contributed to the development of an analytical framework to guide the more detailed interpretation of the qualitative findings and ensure that the qualitative insights report could be sufficiently triangulated with quantitative data in the current report once the survey was completed.



Appendix C

Qualitative Instrumentation

Interview Discussion Guide *Refugee Experiences in Australia Study*

Background Note

The Social Research Centre has been asked by the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute to explore humanitarian entrants' views on belonging and social connectedness, including the factors that enable or inhibit participants' integration experiences.

This research project will touch on five of the outcome areas identified by the Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework 2023. These areas are:

- **Social connections**
- **Community welcome**
- **Sense of belonging**
- **Access to institutions**
- **Understanding host culture**

This project will improve data availability by collecting information on refugee and humanitarian entrant experiences, in particular:

- their connections with their ethnic/religious community,
- connections with the wider Australian community,
- identification with Australia, and
- access to Government services.

Order of the guide:

1. **Introduction (5 mins)**
2. **Initial experience of migration to Australia including access to Australian support services (15 mins)**
3. **Community connections (15 mins)**
4. **Identification with Australia (10 mins)**
5. **Mid-long-term access to Australian support services (5 mins)**
6. **Wrap up (3 mins)**

Explanation to participants

- Introduce the purpose of the research, the researcher and where they are from. State that the work is being funded by the Department of Home Affairs.
- Purpose of interview: **People's experiences and views of integration, belonging and social connection as humanitarian entrants to Australia. We will not ask any questions about your experiences before coming to Australia.**
- Explain the importance of honest opinions, no right or wrong answers. Explain presence/role of third party (if applicable) to help with translation/language. Explain that they do not have to participate, and are able to withdraw from the research at any time. Emphasise that they do not need to answer questions if they don't want to.
- Explain audio recording and seek all parties consent to be audio-recorded. Explain how data will be used and stored. Collect consent forms (if in person) or seek verbal consent (if online).
- Explain participants will receive \$85 (cash if in person, Giftpay e-voucher if online) to thank them for their time.
- Housekeeping matters –duration of session (~60 mins), need for breaks, etc.
- Any questions before starting?

Introduction (5 mins)

The purpose of today's discussion is to learn more about people's experiences of coming to live in Australia as humanitarian entrants. We want to hear about your experience of settling in Australia, and the kind of help and support you needed and received during this time. Firstly, it'd be great to learn a little more about you.

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
- Where are you from? How long have you been in Australia?
- What are you doing these days? (i.e., work, study, etc.)

[Probe experiences with work and study –how have these facilitated or not facilitated a sense of connection?]

Initial experience of migration to Australia (15 mins)

We'd like to hear about your experiences as a humanitarian entrant in coming to Australia.

Expectations and Aspirations

- What were your hopes when you moved to Australia?
- Did you have any concerns or worries?

Early Supports and Gaps in Service Provision

- Thinking back to when you first arrived in Australia –what support did you receive? [Prompt –employment, housing, language, education, accessing services, building social networks, or understanding Australian culture].
 - » Did they help you with your new life in Australia? [Prompt –did they help you find a job, access suitable housing, improve English language skills, access study/education, access other services like childcare, accessing social support systems, etc.].
- Based on your experience, which supports were most helpful/least helpful? Why?
- What other assistance might have helped you? [Probe: was there any support that you wanted to access but couldn't?]

Early Challenges

- Can you think of a challenge you faced when you first arrived in Australia?
- What did you do when you faced this challenge? [Prompt –existing skills/knowledge, psychological resources/personal strengths, support services, social connections].

Suggestions to Support Early Adjustment

- If you had a family member or friend coming to Australia, what advice would you give them to help them settle in in that first 6-12 months?

Community connections (15 mins)

Now we'd like to hear about your experiences in the area in which you live – your local area (e.g., main street, local shops, sports, etc.), and the people around you.

- Can you tell me a bit about your local community?
 - » What do you like about it? What don't you like about it? [Prompt: connected, good/poor services available, employment opportunities, crime/safety, demographic make-up].

Sense of Local Community and Social Bridges

- Have you tried to connect with people in your local area? What has that experience been like for you?
- Are the people in your local area welcoming?
 - » What makes you feel a part of your local area? [Prompt: knowing people? Having shops/ activities/ supports nearby? Connection to people from your own or other cultural/religious groups?]
 - » Are you involved in any local groups? Have these helped you in any way? [Prompt: own groups or others, e.g., volunteer work, cultural/religious groups, gym, mums/family groups, other social engagement, political participation, online communities, etc.]
- Can you think of a time when you felt you could trust people in your community?
 - » Could you tell me about that time?

Social Bonds

- In your local area, are there people who have a similar background to yours? [Prompt: who are also humanitarian entrants/refugees, similar cultural and/or religious backgrounds?]
 - » How did you first meet them? How often do you see each other? What do you do together?
 - » Have these relationships helped you in any way? How so?
- How important is it for you to maintain links with your own culture and people who have a similar background to yours?
 - » What are some of the ways that you do this? [Prompt: joining community/cultural/religious groups, maintaining ties online, social media, etc.]
 - » Is there anything that makes this difficult? [Prompt: if so, could you tell me more about this?]

Suggestions to Build Community Connections

- If you had a family member or friend coming to Australia, what advice would you give them to help them build relationships here?

Identification with Australia (10 minutes)

Now I'd like to turn to your thoughts on the wider Australian community and Australia itself.

Perceptions of Australia

- Before you arrived in Australia, what did you think Australia would be like?
- Have your views of Australia changed since living here? How?

Sense of Belonging and Connections with Wider Australian Community

- Do you feel like you belong here in Australia?

- What has made you feel this way this way?
 - » If a sense of belonging: What contributes to feeling part of Australia? [Prompt: (cross-cultural) friendship, social/political/civic participation, positive media portrayals]
 - » If low sense of belonging: What stops you from feeling as though you belong? [Prompt: language barriers, cultural differences, discrimination, negative media portrayals]
- Since arriving here, can you think of a time when you felt unwelcome?
 - » Why do you think this happened? [Prompt: visa status, racism, attitudes towards humanitarian entrants, community pressure, social media, news reports]

Social and Cultural Norms

- How familiar do you feel with Australian customs and traditions?
- How important is it to you to maintain your own customs and traditions while living in Australia?
- How accepting do you think the wider Australian community is of your culture?
 - » Do you feel that the wider Australian community understands your culture? Why or why not?
 - » If not well understood: What would help it be better understood?

Access to Australian support services (5 mins)

Earlier in this conversation, I asked you about the support services you used in the early stages of your settlement in Australia, roughly the first 6-12 months. Now, I'd like to understand better how you have found accessing and using Australian support services since that time.

Accessibility and Utility of Support Services since first year of settlement

- Do you use any support services now? [Prompt: language, housing, employment, adapting to Australia, financial support, education, digital literacy]
 - » Where did you go to access these supports?
 - » How did you find out about these organisations/support services/groups?

Digital Access to Support Services

- Do you have access to a phone, computer, and/or the internet?
- Have you used the phone/internet/computer to access any supports?
 - » How did you find this experience?
 - » Do you feel confident accessing support online? Why/why not?
 - » If not confident: What would help you feel more confident accessing services and information digitally?

Wrap up (3 mins)

- Have your hopes for the future changed since settling in Australia?
- Lastly, thinking about what we've discussed today, is there anything that you've reflected on that you would like to share or discuss?

Thank the individual and close interview.

Appendix D

Questionnaire

INTRO SCREEN

Background

Thank you for your interest in the Refugee Experience in Australia Study, an important national study. Having your voice heard through doing this survey is one way you can help contribute to improving settlement journeys for the next refugees and humanitarian entrants who come to Australia.

Who is doing this research?

In Australia people are asked questions in surveys all the time to help improve services. This survey is being conducted by the Social Research Centre in partnership with the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute (Scanlon Institute).

The Scanlon Foundation Research Institute (www.scanloninstitute.org.au) supports research to understand the challenges faced by migrants in Australia. The Social Research Centre (www.srcentre.com.au) is an independent Australian social research organisation based in Melbourne owned by the Australian National University (ANU).

What is the research about?

The research aims to capture your experience of settling in Australia, views on belonging and connection as well as how you have been supported since arriving in Australia.

The survey is presented online and for most questions, you will be asked to choose your response from a list of options that will be displayed. Occasionally you might be asked to type a short response.

The survey will be available in English, Arabic, Assyrian, Burmese, Chin, Dari, Hazar Agbi, Karen, Nepali, Swahili, and Tigrinya.

If you would like to express your interest in completing the survey in your language, please call 1800 297 015 or email voices@srcentre.com.au to arrange a call with an interpreter.

Who is participating in the survey?

As part of this research, we are speaking to other humanitarian entrants and refugees across Australia who have arrived within the last 10 years, to understand how it was for them to settle in Australia.

To participate in the research, you must:

- be aged 18 and above
- a resident in Australia as of the date of interview
- have been granted a refugee or non-refugee humanitarian visa between 1 June 2013 and 31 December 2023. This includes those who may have subsequently changed status (for example, became citizens). You do not need to be the primary applicant and may be a family member who was granted the same visa as a secondary applicant.

What about my privacy?

All information you provide is **confidential** and is used for research purposes only – this means your details will not be shared with anyone who is not in the research team. Any information used in reporting will be anonymous – meaning your name and any information specific to you will not be used. Your personal information will not be shared with the Government.

Your privacy is protected by Australian law. The study is carried out in compliance with the [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#), the <https://www.>

[legislation.gov.au/Details/F2014L01725/Html/Text Privacy \(Market and Social Research\) Code 2021](https://legislation.gov.au/Details/F2014L01725/Html/Text%20Privacy%20(Market%20and%20Social%20Research)%20Code%202021) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#).

The Social Research Centre's Privacy Policy can be found at <https://srcentre.com.au/privacy-policy/>. Your personal information is protected by the Privacy Act 1988. The Scanlon Institute is following this same privacy policy as part of this research.

IP address details are collected to ensure there are no duplicate survey respondents and that all respondents are located in Australia. While interim data files contain the IP addresses, they will be stored in a separate file from the data once fieldwork has been completed to ensure confidentiality.

The survey platform, Unicom Intelligence (formerly IBM SPSS Data Collection), is a US-based company and all such companies are covered by the US Patriot Act, meaning that any data may be accessed via US security organisations with a warrant, even when the servers are housed in Australia. Participants should note that, some data from your participation in this study will be sent overseas or shared with persons outside Australia. The regulatory regimes governing data access and use in other countries may not be the same as those that are in place in Australia. If you have any questions about this direct them to the Principal Investigator.

If you have any questions or concerns or require a translator to read the above policy to you, please contact the Social Research Centre on 1800 297 015 or email voices@srcentre.com.au.

The Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023) incorporating all updates. This Statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies. Should you wish to discuss the study or view a copy of the Complaint procedure with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints

about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Operations Manager, Bellberry Limited on 08 8361 3222.

What's in it for me?

Sharing your experiences will help improve the support available to humanitarian entrants and refugees when they arrive in Australia. This is an opportunity for you to give back and help improve the settlement journey for the new arrivals to Australia.

To thank you for your time, you will receive a \$20 e-gift card as a thank you. Note the incentive will be sent to your mobile phone via SMS shortly after your survey completion. (Note the incentives are sent manually, so it may take several days for it to arrive due to processing time).

Are there any risks to me?

Because of the research topic, you could experience some discomfort or sad feelings during or after the interview. We will not ask you why or how you came to Australia. Instead, we will focus on how things have been for you since settling in Australia and if anything could have been done to improve that experience. Before taking part in this research, you should speak to someone you trust and make sure you feel comfortable and safe doing the interview.

Because your support service promoted this research you may feel you have to participate to keep receiving support. If you decide you do not want to be part of the research, it will not harm your relationships with your support service, the Scanlon Institute or the Social Research Centre.

As this research is funded by the Government, you may feel that things you say could affect Government support or assistance, or citizenship or visa applications. Whether you choose to participate in the research or not, the support or assistance you receive from the Government or other services will not be impacted. Being part of this research will not change anything about any citizenship or visa applications you or people close to you have.

If you decide you do not want to be part of this research, you can stop at any time. If, after you've completed the survey, you wish to withdraw from the project, you can contact the Principal Investigators (details below) and let them know. In this circumstance, the data you've provided will be deleted and not used in further analysis and reporting. If your information has already been used in reporting, this will not be able to be removed.

The Social Research Centre is dedicated to protecting your privacy and has a range of systems in place to protect you from any possible risk (see above for 'What about my privacy?'). Your survey data is confidential as far as the law allows and you can select 'Don't know' or 'Prefer not to say' for any questions you do not feel comfortable to answer.

How will my information be stored?

The research team will securely store your information on password-protected computers at the Social Research Centre. The Social Research Centre and the Scanlon Institute will destroy all data associated with the project after five years. Bellberry will destroy all data associated with the project after fifteen years in accordance with Bellberry guidance BA G11 Researcher data storage and retention (available at www.bellberry.com.au).

Who can I contact if I want confidential support?

The following emotional and psychological support services are free, confidential and available nationally. If you experience any discomfort or wish to speak with anyone, you can contact them:

- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636;
- Lifeline: 13 11 14;
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467;
- Centre for Migrant And Refugee Health Inc. 03 8382 2125
- Foundation House: Supporting Refugees to Rebuild their Lives (03) 9389 8900
- Companion House (02) 6251 4550
- MHERL, Mental Health Emergency Response Line – 24 hrs. Metro 1300 555 788, Peel 1800 676 822 (for free translation service phone TIS 131 450)

Who can I contact if I have a complaint or concern?

If you have a complaint or concern about the research you can contact the following individuals:

Name Role Organisation	Contact details
Kylie Brosnan Principal Investigator Executive Director, The Social Research Centre	Email: kylie.brosnan@srcentre.com.au Phone: +61 488 455 505 (mobile) or +61 3 9236 8500 (reception)
Operations Manager Bellberry Limited	Email: bellberry@bellberry.com.au Phone: 08 8361 3222

Ethics Committee Clearance

The Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023) incorporating all updates. This Statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies. Should you wish to discuss the study or view a copy of the Complaint procedure with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Operations Manager, Bellberry Limited on 08 8361 3222.

Completing the survey

Just click 'Next' to start the survey. By clicking next you agree that you have read the information about this study (or had someone read it to you) and you give your consent to participate.

The survey will take about 15 minutes and there are no right or wrong answers. Participation is completely voluntary and you can stop at any point.

If you don't wish to answer any question, you can just click 'Next' to move to the next question.

The information collected will be treated in strict confidence.

1. Yes, start the survey
2. No, I do not consent to take part in this study (GO TO TERM2)



MODULE A – SCREENING

*(ALL)

First, some questions about you to make sure that we've surveyed a good range of people.

*(ALL)

AGE How old are you today?

Please type in your age.

1 (RECORD AGE 18 to 110 years)

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

*(AGE=99, REFUSED AGE)

AGE_GROUP Which age group would you fall into?

1 18-24 years

2 25-34 years

3 35-44 years

4 45-54 years

5 55-64 years

6 65-74 years

7 75 or more years

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

GENDER How do you describe your gender?

Gender refers to your current gender, which may be different to sex recorded at birth and may be different to what is indicated on legal documents.

1 Man or male

2 Woman or female

3 Non-binary

4 I use a different term (please specify)

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

STATE Which state or territory do you live in?

1 NSW

2 VIC

3 QLD

4 SA

5 WA

6 TAS

7 NT

8 ACT

99 Prefer not to say (GO TO TERM3)

*(ALL)

POSTCODE What is the postcode of the place you usually live?

1 Enter postcode

98 Not sure (GO TO TERM4)

99 Prefer not to say (GO TO TERM4)

*(ALL)

HI_STATUS Did you come to Australia on a refugee or humanitarian visa?

These visas are for people who are either:

- Subject to persecution in their home country
- Subject to substantial discrimination in your home country amounting to a gross violation of your human rights and are proposed by an Australian citizen, permanent resident or organisation

- 1 Yes
- 2 No (GO TO TERM1)
- 98 Not sure (GO TO TERM1)
- 99 Prefer not to say (GO TO TERM1)

*(ALL)

YRARRIV. In what year did you arrive in Australia to live for one year or more?

Please type in the year.

- 1 [YEAR RANGE 1910-2024]
- 2 Will be in Australia less than one year
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

*(ARRIVED ON REFUGEE OR HUMANITARIAN VISA)

VISA_LOC. Where were you living when you received your visa?

I was living in...

- 1 Australia
- 2 My home country (or the home country of the family member who was the primary applicant)
- 3 Another country, not Australia and not my home country (or the home country of the family member who was the primary applicant)
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

MODULE B – CORE SURVEY

Social bridges

*(ALL)

C11a. With regard to your close circle of friends, how many are from national, ethnic, or religious backgrounds different from yours?

(INTERVIEWER BRIEFING NOTE – Respondent can select ‘Prefer not to say’ if they are not comfortable answering this.)

- | | |
|----|-------------------|
| 1 | 0 to 1 |
| 2 | 2 to 4 |
| 3 | 5 to 9 |
| 4 | 10 or more |
| 98 | Not sure |
| 99 | Prefer not to say |

Social bonds

*(ALL)

FRNDIN And with regard to your close circle of friends, how many are from national, ethnic, or religious backgrounds the same as yours?

(INTERVIEWER BRIEFING NOTE – Respondent can select ‘Prefer not to say’ if they are not comfortable answering this.)

- | | |
|----|-------------------|
| 1 | 0 to 1 |
| 2 | 2 to 4 |
| 3 | 5 to 9 |
| 4 | 10 or more |
| 98 | Not sure |
| 99 | Prefer not to say |

*(ALL)

Q01a In the last 12 months, have you been actively involved in any community support groups, such as...

(“Actively involved” can mean items such as: taking part in activities with the group, attending meetings or events.)

(INTERVIEWER BRIEFING NOTE: Some examples of common community organisations in Australia are included below.)

- Service clubs, including Rotary, Lions, the Masons and the RSL
- Welfare organisation, including the Smith Family and the Society of St Vincent de Paul
- Education and training group
- Parenting / children / youth group, including Save the Children and Scouts Australia
- Health promotion and support group, including the Australian Red Cross and MS Australia
- State Emergency Services and rural or country fire services

- | | |
|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Yes |
| 2 | No |
| 98 | Not sure |
| 99 | Prefer not to say |

*(ALL)

Q02a. In the last 12 months, have you been actively involved in any social or religious groups, such as...

(“Actively involved” can mean items such as: taking part in activities with the group, attending meetings or events.)

(INTERVIEWER BRIEFING NOTE: By social groups we mean community groups or cultural groups.)

PROGRAMMER NOTE: Bulleted list of examples below are not response options, please display as part of the question text

- Sport or physical recreation group
- Arts or heritage group
- Religious or spiritual group or organisation
- Craft or hobby group
- Adult education group
- Ethnic / multicultural club

1 Yes

2 No

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

Australian way of life and Sense of belonging (Australia)

*(ALL)

C7 To what extent do you take pride in the Australian way of life and culture? Would you say...?

1 To a great extent

2 To a moderate extent

3 Only slightly

4 Not at all

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

C8 And, to what extent do you have a sense of belonging in Australia? Would you say...?

1 To a great extent

2 To a moderate extent

3 Only slightly

4 Not at all

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

C9 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

In the modern world, maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important.

1 Strongly agree

2 Agree

4 Disagree

5 Strongly disagree

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

P3 How often do you feel isolated from others?

1 Never

2 Hardly ever

3 Some of the time

4 Often

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

Familiarity with social norms

*(ALL)

EQUALITY Which of these statements about Australian law are true and which are not true?

*(STATEMENTS; RANDOMISE ORDER)

- a. It's OK to give a job to a man rather than a woman, even if the woman will do a better job
- b. Two men can marry each other
- c. You are free to follow any religion or not to follow a religion
- d. It's OK to hit someone, if they insulted you

*(RESPONSE FRAME)

- 1 True
- 2 Not true

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

Perceptions of community welcome and sense of belonging (neighbourhood)

*(ALL)

F_INTRO. Now thinking about your local area, that is within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance of where you live.

- 1 Continue

*(ALL)

F2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements...?

Your local area is within 15-20 minutes walking distance of where you live.

*(STATEMENTS)

- b My local area is a place where people from different national or ethnic backgrounds get on well together
- e I feel like I belong in my neighbourhood
- g I feel welcome in my local area

*(CODE FRAME)

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

Safety

*(ALL)

BL4. Next are some questions on your opinion on some more general issues.

How safe do you feel at home by yourself during the day?

- 1 Very safe
- 2 Fairly safe
- 3 A bit unsafe
- 4 Very unsafe

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

Difficulty to travel

*(ALL)

ATR_Q01 The next question is about all the places you need to go to, by car or other transport.

Which statement best describes your overall transport situation?

- 1 I can easily get to the places I need to go
- 2 I sometimes have difficulty getting to the places I need to go
- 3 I often have difficulty getting to the places I need to go
- 4 I can't get to the places I need to go
- 5 I never go out
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer to say

Discrimination

*(ALL)

D_INTRO. Now thinking about any discrimination you may have personally experienced.

- 1 Continue

*(ALL)

D5. Have you experienced discrimination because of your skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion over the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

E1. Next are some questions on your opinion on some more general issues.

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people

- 1 Can be trusted
- 2 Can't be too careful
- 98 Can't choose / Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

Financial wellbeing

*(ALL)

W3. Over the last 12 months, how often is the following statement true of you / your household. You / your household...

*(STATEMENTS)

- a. Pawned (gave something you own in order to get a loan) or sold something
- b. Went without meals because there wasn't enough money for food
- c. Went without going to a dentist when you needed it
- d. Were not able to heat or cool your home
- e. Asked friends or family for money
- f. Asked for help from welfare or community organisations

- 1. Often true
- 2. Sometimes true
- 3. Never true

98. Not sure
99. Prefer not to say

Access to public institutions / Ability to get help from emergency services

*(ALL)

DASP_Q01 Have you experienced any problems accessing services such as these?

You can select more than one response

*(ALLOW MULTIPLES)

- 1 Banks or financial institutions
- 2 Centrelink
- 3 Hospitals
- 4 Medicare
- 5 Doctors, like a general practitioner (GP)
- 6 Housing
- 7 Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (for example, submit a personal tax return)
- 8 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- 9 Department of Home Affairs (for example, visas for travel / migration, Border Force at airports)
- 96 ^No problems accessing service providers
- 97 ^Have not tried to access any service provider
- 98 ^Not sure
- 99 ^Prefer not to say

Satisfaction with government services

*(ALL)

APS_INFO. The following questions ask you about Australian public services (also known as Commonwealth, Federal or National public services).

Australian public services can include anything from providing access to information online through to providing direct assistance, such as financial help.

Your views may be informed by the experiences you have had accessing Australian public services for yourself or for someone else.

Some examples of what Australian public services are include:

- Applying for an apprenticeship with Australian Apprenticeships
- Applying for an income support payment with Centrelink
- Lodging a tax return with the Australian Taxation Office
- Applying for a passport from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Applying for a Medicare rebate with Medicare
- Undertaking or updating a registration (such as organ donation) with Services Australia

Australian public services do not include services provided by state, territory and local government, such as:

- Hospitals and schools
- State emergency services (state police, fire and ambulance)
- State transport services (such as provision of transport cards).

- Local council services (such as bin collection, recycling, rates and residential development approvals).

1 Continue

*(ALL)

APS1C. Which of the following have you or someone you're responsible for experienced in the last 12 months?

Please select as many that apply.

- 1 Looked for work
- 2 Started a new job/returned to work
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

APS1E. In the past 12 months, which of the following Australian public services did you access?

Please select as many that apply.

*(ALLOW MULTIPLES)

- 1 Services Australia–Centrelink
- 2 Services Australia–Medicare
- 5 Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (for example, submit a personal tax return)
- 6 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- 8 Department of Home Affairs (for example, visas for travel / migration, Border Force at airports)
- 97 Another service not listed here
- 96 Did not use Australian public services^
- 98 Not sure^

99 Prefer not to say^

*(APS1C =1,2 OR APS1E =1,2,5,6,8,97, LOOKED FOR WORK, STARTED A NEW JOB/RETURNED TO WORK, ACCESSED CENTRELINK, MEDICARE, ATO, NDIS, DEPT OF HOME AFFAIRS, ANOTHER SERVICE)

APS4. You indicated that over the last 12 months you accessed public services.

Thinking about your overall experience with the services you accessed, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you?

- 1 Completely dissatisfied
- 2 Dissatisfied
- 3 Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 5 Somewhat satisfied
- 6 Satisfied
- 7 Completely satisfied
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

Digital access

*(ALL)

A1. Before today, when was the last time you used the internet?

- 1. In the last week
- 2. In the last month
- 3. In the last 3 months
- 4. In the last 6 months
- 5. More than 6 months ago
- 6. Never
- 98. Not sure
- 99. Prefer not to say

MODULE C – DEMOGRAPHICS

*(ALL)

HIGHEST_SCHOOLING.¹⁸ What is the highest year of primary or secondary school you have completed?

- 1 Year 12 or equivalent
- 2 Year 11 or equivalent
- 3 Year 10 or equivalent
- 4 Year 9 or equivalent
- 5 Year 8 or below
- 6 Did not go to school
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

FURTHER_EDU.¹⁹ Have you completed any educational qualification (including a trade certificate)?

If you have completed a trade / apprenticeship and another qualification, please select 'Yes – Other qualification'

- 1 No – And not currently studying
- 2 No – Currently studying for first qualification
- 3 Yes – Trade certificate / apprenticeship
- 4 Yes – Other qualification
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

*(HQUALHAVE DONE FURTHER STUDY)

HIGHEST_QUAL.²⁰ What is the level of the highest qualification you have completed?

- 1 Postgraduate Degree Level (incl. master degree, doctoral degree, other postgraduate degree)
- 2 Graduate Diploma and / or Graduate Certificate Level
- 3 Bachelor Degree Level
- 4 Advanced Diploma and / or Diploma Level
- 5 Certificate III and / or IV Level
- 6 Certificate I and / or II Level
- 7 Other (please specify)
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

Cultural and linguistic diversity

*(ALL)

CITIZEN.²¹ Are you an Australian citizen?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

¹⁸ ABS Census of Population and Housing.

¹⁹ ABS Census of Population and Housing.

²⁰ ABS Census of Population and Housing.

²¹ ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016.

COB.²² In which country were you born?

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

If overseas, please start typing and choose from the drop-down list. If the country is not listed, please type in the name and click 'Next' to continue.

1 Australia

2 Overseas [ENTER COUNTRY]

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

MAINLANG. Thinking back to when you arrived in Australia, what was the main language you used?

If you used more than one language, select the one that was used most often.

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

LOTE. Do you use a language other than English at home?

1 Yes

2 No

*(LOTE=1, USE LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME)

LANG. Which language other than English do use at home?

If you use more than one language other than English, select the one that is used most often.

Please start typing and choose from the drop-down list.

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: IF DUM_LOTE=2: This list is provided in English only, you can type in your response in any language.]

*(LOTE=1, USE LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME)

ENG. How well do you speak English?

1 Very well

2 Well

3 Not well

4 Not at all

98 Not sure

99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

ANCESTRY.²³ What is your ancestry?

You can provide up to two ancestries.

Please start typing and choose from the drop-down list. If the ancestry is not listed, please type in the name and click 'Next' to continue.

For example: Chinese, Serbian, Nigerian, Filipino, Tamil, Sinhalese, Hmong, Māori, Dinka, Ecuadorian, Samoan.

1 Afghan

2 Algerian

3 Arab

4 Assyrian

5 Bahraini

6 Bari

7 Berber

8 Burmese

9 Burundian

10 Central and West African

11 Chaldean

12 Chin

13 Congolese

²² ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016.²³ ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016.

14 Coptic
 15 Darfur
 16 Dinka
 17 Egyptian
 18 Emirati
 19 Eritrean
 20 Hazara
 21 Hutu
 22 Indian
 23 Iranian
 24 Iraqi
 25 Jordanian
 26 Karen
 27 Kurdish
 28 Kuwaiti
 29 Lebanese
 30 Libyan
 31 Mandaean
 32 Moroccan
 33 Nubian
 34 Nuer
 35 Omani
 36 Other North African / Middle Eastern
 37 Pakistani
 38 Palestinian
 39 Peoples of the Sudan
 40 Punjabi
 41 Qatari
 42 Saudi Arabian
 43 Sikh
 44 South and East African
 45 South Sudanese
 46 Sudanese
 47 Syrian
 48 Tajik
 49 Tigre
 50 Tunisian

51 Turkish
 52 Yemeni
 53 Yezidi
 54 Other (please specify)

9998 Not sure ^

9999 Prefer not to say ^

*(ALL)

RELIG_1.²⁴ What was your religion when you arrived in Australia?

Examples of 'Other': Lutheran, Salvation Army, Judaism, Taoism, Atheism.

1 No religion
 2 Albanian Orthodox
 3 Ancient Church of the East
 4 Animism
 5 Antiochian Orthodox
 6 Armenian Apostolic
 7 Assyrian Apostolic
 8 Assyrian Church of the East
 9 Born Again Christian
 10 Buddhism
 11 Catholic
 12 Chaldean Catholic
 14 Christian
 15 Coptic Orthodox Church
 16 Eastern Orthodox
 17 Ethiopian Orthodox Church
 18 Greek Orthodox
 19 Hinduism
 20 Islam
 21 Jehovah's Witnesses
 22 Macedonian Orthodox
 23 Maronite Catholic
 24 Melkite Catholic
 25 Oriental Orthodox

²⁴ ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016. ASCRG 1-digit level plus additional option for more than one religion.

- 26 Other Protestant
- 27 Pentecostal
- 28 Presbyterian and Reformed
- 29 Romanian Orthodox
- 30 Russian Orthodox
- 31 Serbian Orthodox
- 32 Sikhism
- 33 Syrian Orthodox Church
- 34 Syro Malabar Catholic
- 35 Ukrainian Catholic
- 36 Ukrainian Orthodox
- 37 Western Catholic
- 96 Other (specify)
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

Methodological / Operational

*(ALL)

SURVSOURCE. How did you hear about this survey?

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

- 1. Saw a poster or brochure
- 2. From an email
- 3. From my local community organisation
- 4. I was contacted by phone
- 5. I heard about it from someone I know
- 98. ^Not sure
- 99. ^Prefer not to say

Employment

*(ALL)

EMPLOYED. Last week, did you have a job of any kind?

- 1 Yes, worked for payment or profit
- 2 Yes, but absent on holidays, on paid leave, on strike, or temporarily stood down
- 3 Yes, unpaid work in a family business
- 4 Yes, other unpaid work
- 5 No, did not have a job
- 98 Not sure
- 99 Prefer not to say

*(ALL)

OPENVALID. Do you have any additional comments you'd like to make?

(ALLOW VERBATIM)

MODULE D – CONTACT DETAILS

*(ALL)

CONTACT To thank you for your time, you will receive a \$20 e-gift card as a thank you. Note the incentive will be sent to your mobile phone via SMS shortly after your survey completion. (Note the incentives are sent manually in batches, so it may take several days or more for it to arrive due to processing time).

We just need to collect your name, email address and mobile phone number so we can contact you to send you your incentive.

If you do not provide any details, we cannot send your incentive.

PROGRAMMER NOTE:

- IF PREFER TO RECEIVE INCENTIVE BY SMS: FIRST NAME, LAST NAME, MOBILE NUMBER ARE REQUIRED (EMAIL OPTIONAL)
- IF PREFER TO RECEIVE INCENTIVE BY POST: FIRST NAME, LAST NAME, HOME ADDRESS ARE REQUIRED (EMAIL OPTIONAL)

- 1 First name (or nickname / alias):*
<firstname>
- 2 Last name: <lastname>
- 3 Email address:*
- 4 Mobile Phone number: <MOBILE>*
- 98 ADD TICK BOX 'I'd prefer my incentive to be posted to me by mail (instead of receiving my incentive by SMS)'
- 99 ADD TICK BOX Prefer not to provide any details (and acknowledge I will not receive an incentive)

*(IF RESPONDENT TICKS 'I'd prefer my incentive to be posted to me by mail (instead of receiving my incentive by SMS)', THEN PLEASE SHOW THESE BOXES AND RUN RESIDENTIAL FLAG:

- 5 STREET NUMBER
- 6 STREET
- 7 SUBURB
- 8 STATE
- 9 POSTCODE

PROG: RESPONDENT MUST EITHER ENTER A MOBILE NUMBER AT CODE 4, OR, TICK 'I'd prefer my incentive to be posted to me by mail (instead of receiving my incentive by SMS)'

*(ALL)

FUTURE In the future, further research projects may arise. Can researchers at the Social Research Centre contact you about the possibility of taking part in future research?

Note that you can withdraw your consent to be contacted at any time.

(SINGLE RESPONSE)

1. Yes
2. No – I do not wish to be contacted
98. Not sure
99. Prefer not to say

CLOSING SCRIPT

*(ALL)

CLOSE Thank you for taking the time to participate.

If you have any questions, please call the Social Research Centre on 1800 297 015 or email voices@srcentre.com.au

This survey was designed by the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, an independent organisation dedicated to social inclusion (www.scanloninstitute.org.au).

If any of the topics raised in the survey have caused you concern or distress, please contact one of the following services for advice or support:

Beyond Blue (24/7): 1300 22 4636

Lifeline (24/7): 13 11 14

This research study has been carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles, and the information you have provided will only be used for research purposes. Our Privacy Policy is available via our website, www.srcentre.com.au/research-participants#privacy

Your answers have been submitted. You may now close the page.

Note that there was a very small proportion of respondents who did not provide answers to items about their characteristics. These were imputed at random for the purposes of weighting to ensure that all population characteristics were represented among respondents. Given the very low incidence of missing values (generally much less than 5% of respondents), such imputation is expected to have a negligible impact on survey estimates.

Appendix E

Approach to weighting

Surveys are a commonly used method for making inferences about a population based on responses from just a subset of it. Not everyone invited to complete a survey will do so, however – some may be unable to participate (such as those who do not use the internet so cannot fill in an online survey, or those who are away during the survey period), some may start the survey but not finish it, some may not be interested in the topic or may not be willing to do the survey, and so on. As a result, the subset of persons who complete the survey may not exactly reflect the underlying population, despite the best possible survey design and data collection practices.

In such situations, it is common to assign a “weight” to each responding case in an effort to align the respondents as closely as possible with the population. The weights are then used in any calculations involving the survey responses. Persons with characteristics that

are under-represented among respondents compared to the population get a higher weight in the calculations, whereas persons that are over-represented get a lower weight. For example, those born in Asian make up 86.5% of the population but only 86.0% of respondents. Therefore, to align respondents better with the population, respondents who were born in Asia should be assigned a higher weight on average compared to respondents born in other parts of the world.

A weight was calculated for each respondent so that the distributions of respondents aligned with the population distributions on the range of characteristics shown in Table F1. The use of weights in the calculation of survey results assumes that the responses of those who took part in the survey can be used as a proxy for those who did not take part and that whether or not someone participated in the survey is a function only of their characteristics.

Table F1. Characteristics used for weighting, with responding and population proportions

Characteristic	Respondents (%)	Population (%)	Average weight
AGE_GROUP. Which age group would you fall into?			
18-24 years	20.67	21.28	1.03
25-34 years	25.91	29.24	1.13
35-44 years	24.33	21.36	0.88
45-54 years	16.54	13.81	0.83
55-64 years	9.33	8.33	0.89
65 or more years	3.22	5.98	1.86
COB. In which country were you born?			
Asia	85.96	86.47	1.01
Africa	8.61	12.35	1.43
Other	5.43	1.18	0.22
GENDER. Which of the following best describes your current gender identity?			
Man or male	40.72	48.8	1.2
Woman or female	59.28	51.2	0.86
STATE. Which state or territory do you live in?			
NSW	26.59	40.18	1.51
VIC	54.38	32.77	0.6
QLD	8.51	12.43	1.46
SA/WA/TAS/NT/ACT	10.53	14.61	1.39
YRARRIV. In what year did you arrive in Australia to live for one year or more?			
2013 -2018	38.22	76.45	2
2019 -2023	61.78	23.55	0.38

It is important to note that the survey involved respondents who arrived in Australia before 2013. These respondents were assigned a weight of 0, as they are out of scope of the survey. Those with missing values for year of arrival were included in the weighting process.

Estimates made from the survey should be seen as a point-in-time approximation of the underlying population. It may be that if the survey were repeated again now, a slightly different subset of persons would take part and give a slightly different set of responses. To account for the natural variation that would occur through many possible replications of a survey, it is common to associate a level of precision with estimates made from the one survey that we have observed. One such metric is the “margin of error” for a survey estimate, which is used to form a “confidence interval” around the estimate. An example of these concepts is as follows:

An estimated 50% of persons agreed with survey statement X, with a margin of error of $\pm 6.2\%$. This leads to a 95% confidence interval for X of 43.87% to 56.2%.

This means that if our survey were repeated many times and the weights, estimates, margins of error and confidence intervals calculated for each survey, then 95% of the confidence intervals would contain the true population value. For this survey, the margins of error for a range of estimates are shown in Table F2. These apply to items asked of all respondents and the margins of error will be larger for items asked of only a subset of respondents.

Table F2 Margins of error for selected estimates (all respondents)

Estimated proportion (%)	Margin of error (%)
5% / 95%	2.0
10% / 90%	2.8
20% / 80%	3.7
30% / 70%	4.2
40% / 60%	4.5
50%	4.6

