

**REFUGEE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA
2005-06 FEDERAL BUDGET
SUMMARY OF REFUGEE RELATED ISSUES**



Overseas Aid:¹

- Total of **\$2.49 billion** – an increase of \$358 million which is equivalent to 11.7% in real terms, increasing the level of aid by 0.02% to 0.28% of GNP;
- the core contribution to **UNHCR** has remained static at \$7.3 million;
- the core contribution to the **International Red Cross (ICRC)** rose from \$5 million to \$7 million (representing an increase of \$4 million in 2 years);
- the core contribution to **UNICEF** increased from \$5.5 million to \$8 million;
- the core contribution to the **World Food Program** rose from \$31 million to \$32.5 million but is still well short of the \$50.4 million in the 2001 Budget;
- \$155.4 million has been allocated for **Emergency, Humanitarian and Refugee Programs**, an increase of \$24.4 million over last year's budget figure but \$21.2 million less than for 2004-05 (which was inflated due to the tsunami);
- included within the above allocation is the **International Refugee Fund** which has remained at \$15 million (a decrease in real terms);
- additional funding of \$45 million will be provided to **Iraq** in the next two years and \$26 million has been allocated to the **Afghanistan** Reconstruction Trust Fund to support democracy and rebuild institutions;
- aid to **Africa** increased by \$9.6 million to \$77 million, a welcome reversal of the falls in recent years;
- funding for **volunteer and NGO programs** rose from \$130 to \$135.8 million, though the Emergency and Humanitarian component of this fell from \$48.3 million to \$42.5 million;
- **governance** continues to be the largest component of Australia's development programs, growing to 36% of total Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Included in the governance sector is "law and justice" which has seen an almost 10 fold increase in expenditure in the last 2 years. Also included is "civil society and human rights" which has also increased as a proportion of the budget. These are key elements in addressing the root causes of forced migration.

Immigration:²

Unlike the 2004 Immigration Budget that included an additional \$267.6 million over 4 years to deliver an increased humanitarian program and expand settlement services, the 2005 Budget was disappointing from the perspective of humanitarian settlement. No additional allocations were made.

The main focal areas of the Immigration Budget were **border control, security and skilled migration**. An additional \$112.3 million was allocated for new border control initiatives of the next 4 years. Specific programs include:

- \$43 million for the introduction of biometric technology for identity verification at the border;
- \$44 million for improvements to the Movement Alert List;
- more than \$12 million for various measures to combat people smuggling;
- a further \$12 million to combat identity fraud.

As previously announced, the humanitarian program remains at 13,000 places. At the same time the skill stream of the migration program was increased by 20,000 to 97,500, bringing the non-humanitarian program to 130-140,000.

¹ Complied from AusAID Budget statement and ACFID Budget Analysis.