



Refugee Council of Australia

2011-12 FEDERAL BUDGET IN BRIEF: WHAT IT MEANS FOR REFUGEES AND PEOPLE SEEKING HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION

KEY POINTS

- *The Refugee Program will increase by 1,000 places, tied to Australia's new deal to transfer asylum seekers to Malaysia.*
- *Government funding for refugee and migrant settlement services will total \$329.6 million, an increase of 5.3%.*
- *Immigration detention costs will blow out to more than \$800 million, representing a tripling of costs in just two years.*
- *The total cost of the Government's offshore asylum seeker management program will be \$1.058 billion, an increase of 39% on 2010-11 and 247% increase on 2009-10.*

REFUGEE AND SPECIAL HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM INTAKE

- The 2011-12 Refugee and Humanitarian Program will increase to 14,750 places in 2011-12, making it the largest annual program since 1995-96 and the third largest program since 1983-84. The 1,000 additional places in 2011-12 (4,000 places over four years) will be tied to the planned bilateral agreement which will see the transfer to Malaysia of 800 asylum seekers who arrive by boat (referred to by the Government as "irregular maritime arrivals").
- The 1,000 additional places will be allocated to the Refugee Program, increasing it to 7,000 places in 2011-12. However, these 1,000 places will be reserved for refugees currently residing in Malaysia. The cost of this increase to the resettlement program will be \$216.4 million over four years.
- This means that the 2011-12 Refugee and Humanitarian Program will comprise 7,000 Refugee Program places (for refugees referred for resettlement through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR]) and 7,750 places to be shared between the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) and onshore protection visa allocations.
- The Woman at Risk quota will remain at 12% of the Refugee Program. With this program's expansion, this quota will increase to 840 places.
- The Government has allocated \$75.9 million over four years to provide support and maintenance for asylum seekers transferred to Malaysia under the bilateral arrangement with Malaysia.

GENERAL MIGRATION PROGRAM

- The general migration program will increase to 185,000 places, up from 168,700 places for 2010-11. The program will comprise 125,850 skill stream places, 58,600 family stream places and 550 special eligibility places. This is an increase of 4,050 for the family migration program.
- \$4.8 million will be allocated over four years to implement initiatives that encourage migration to regional Australia. The Government has also made a number of changes to the

Employer Sponsored Program stream of the 2011-12 Migration program to encourage people with relevant skills to migrate to regional Australia. For the first time, the program will specify the number of places allocated to the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme component, making 16,000 places available under the Employer Sponsored Program.

SETTLEMENT AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

- Government funding of settlement services for migrants and refugees will increase to \$329.6 million, up from \$313.1 million in 2010-11.
- The Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program has been allocated \$73.4 million (up from \$66.1 million) and the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) will see funding of \$38.7 million, up from \$36.4 million.
- Total funding for the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) will increase from \$204.9 million to \$212.5 million.
- \$3.47 million has been allocated for guardianship, monitoring and settlement support arrangements for Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (up from \$3.39 million).
- Funding for the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program will increase from \$2.31 million to \$3.56 million in 2011-12 but will decrease to \$2.05 million in 2012-13.
- The Government will provide \$4.7 million over four years to implement Australia's multicultural policy, the *People of Australia*. Funds will be spent on the establishment of a new independent Australian Multicultural Council, a Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program and a National Anti-Racism Partnership. The cost of this measure will be met through existing departmental resources committed to the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council; from the reallocation of funds from the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program; and from savings identified by the Australian Sports Commission.

PROCESSING OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND IMMIGRATION DETENTION

- The cost of Australia's immigration detention system will blow out to more than \$800 million in 2011-12. The Budget papers reveal that DIAC will spend \$90.2 million on its onshore detention network while DIAC will pay contractors \$709.4 million for detention services for asylum seekers managed through the offshore process (boat arrivals affected by the Government's excision policy). This figure does not include DIAC's own costs in the running of the offshore detention network, as these costs are included in DIAC's internal costs associated with all aspects of offshore asylum seeker management (\$199.4 million). This figure of \$709.4 million compares to the revised budget estimate for 2010-11 of \$561.9 million and for 2009-10 of \$250.1 million.
- The following table outlines DIAC's spending on status resolution and detention programs, showing how much costs have shifted towards the detention and management of asylum seekers arriving by boat:

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2yr change
4.1 Visa Compliance and Status Resolution	\$mil	\$mil	\$mil	
Contracts	7.178	8.738	9.063	26.3%
DIAC Management and Program Design	124.114	114.098	117.101	-5.7%
Total Visa Compliance and Status Resolution	131.292	122.836	126.164	-3.9%
4.2 Onshore Detention Network				
Contracts	67.273	60.034	63.980	-4.9%
DIAC Management and Program Design	33.393	28.428	26.267	-21.3%
Total Onshore Detention Network	100.666	88.462	90.247	-10.4%
4.3 Offshore Asylum Seeker Management				
Contracts	183.291	602.139	825.090	350.2%
DIAC Management and Program Design	121.005	160.652	233.253	92.8%
Total Offshore Asylum Seeker Management	304.296	762.791	1058.343	247.8%
4.4 Foreign Fishers				
Contracts	8.762	9.100	9.290	6.0%
DIAC Management and Program Design	9.104	2.728	2.744	-69.9%
Total Foreign Fishers	17.866	11.828	12.034	-32.6%
Total for Outcome 4				
Contracts	266.504	680.011	907.423	240.5%
DIAC Management and Program Design	287.616	305.906	379.365	31.9%
TOTAL	554.120	985.917	1286.788	132.2%

- In its work in Visa Compliance and Status Resolution, DIAC will spend \$71.8 million on Detection Onshore, \$21.1 million on Removals and \$24.2 million on Status Resolution. Contracts for compliance resolution, community care and assistance will increase by \$325,000 to \$9.06 million.
- In the Offshore Asylum Seeker Management program, \$825.1 million has been allocated to contract payments. This will comprise \$709.4 million on detention services, \$17.8 million for management and care of irregular immigrants in Indonesia, \$47.2 million on regional cooperation and capacity building, \$6.9 million on returns and reintegration assistance packages, \$17.4 million on refugee status determinations for offshore entry persons and \$26.3 million for the Regional Cooperation Framework.
- \$24.0 million will be spent over two years for capital works at two sites that are to be used as new immigration detention facilities. \$14.8 million will go to upgrade a Defence facility at Pontville, Tasmania, that is to be used as a temporary detention centre to accommodate up to 400 single men. The Government will also lease a privately built facility at Wickham Point in the Northern Territory that is to be used as an immigration detention centre. This measure provides capital funding of \$9.2 million over two years to enhance administration, medical and security amenities to ensure appropriate accommodation for irregular maritime arrivals.
- The Government will spend \$107.7 million over four years as part of its response to the High Court decision that confirmed the availability of judicial review for offshore entry persons. The measure includes:
 - \$26.1 million over two years to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for internal and external legal expenses associated with anticipated judicial review of refugee status determinations;
 - \$8.2 million over four years to the Federal Magistrates Court for two additional Federal Magistrates and their support staff to assist with the increased workloads.

- Approximately \$2.1 million per year will be ongoing funding for the Federal Magistrates Court; and
 - \$73.4 million over two years for the Independent Protection Assessment Office including an increase in the number of reviewers to expedite the processing of refugee status applications under the Protection Obligation Determination process, which has been developed in response to the High Court decision.
- Funding for the Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS) for onshore asylum applicants will be \$3.16 million (up from \$3.05 million in 2010-11). \$28.9 million over three years will be made available to reimburse costs incurred by State and Territory Legal Aid Commissions in providing legal assistance in Commonwealth law related cases.
- Payments to the Red Cross for delivery of the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme will total \$10.6 million (up from \$10.1 million).
- DIAC will receive \$21.2 million in 2011-12 to spend in working with Indonesia to enhance that nation's capacity to manage irregular migration flows in the region. This figure is up from \$5.7 million in 2010-11.
- The Government has allocated DIAC \$33.3 million over three years to irregular migration responses in South East Asian and Pacific regions. Of this, \$23.8 million over three years will be spent continuing the Regional Cooperation Agreement with Indonesia involving practical support, such as accommodation, food and emergency medical assistance to irregular migrants in Indonesia via the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This work also includes voluntary repatriation of irregular migrants. The Sri Lankan Department of Immigration and Emigration has also been named as a recipient of some funding for biometrics and documentation processes.

BORDER AND REGIONAL SECURITY MEASURES

For 2011-12 the federal Government will be spending \$1.1 billion on border security. This involves many projects, with those relevant to refugees and asylum seekers including:

- *ACV Triton – extension of lease:* The Government will provide \$61.8 million over two years to extend the lease of the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service vessel *ACV Triton* to 30 June 2013. This vessel operates in Australia's northern waters and supports surveillance and enforcement activities against maritime people smuggling.
- *Australian Security Intelligence Organisation protective security assessments – improved targeting:* The Government has identified savings of \$6.9 million over four years through risk-based targeting of additional security checking of applicants for Protection Visas by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. Asylum seekers classified as "Irregular Maritime Arrivals" will remain subject to mandatory security checks.
- *Counter people smuggling communications campaign:* The Australian Government's 'communications campaign' aimed at countering people smuggling ventures in source and transit countries will continue with an expenditure of \$3.0 million over two years.
- *Enhancing regional capability to combat people smuggling:* \$10.8 million over two years will be spent on the deployment of seven Australian Federal Police (AFP) liaison officers to Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.
- *Maintaining increased aerial surveillance of Australia's northern waters:* \$15.3 million will be spent over two years to maintain increased aerial surveillance of Australia's northern waters. The surveillance contributes to the enforcement of Australia's maritime borders through detecting illegal activity, including illegal foreign fishing and people smuggling. Commercial contractors will provide and operate these aircraft. This measure is part of the Australian Government's response to people smuggling.

- *Post-interdiction management of suspected irregular entry vessels:* There was a reduction in costs of \$9.1 million relating to the management, towing, caretaking and destruction of intercepted Suspected Irregular Entry Vessels (SIEVs). \$1.5 million will be spent over two years for the post-interdiction management of SIEVs.
- *Strengthening regional legal frameworks – combating people smuggling and transnational organised crime:* \$6.7 million will be spent over two years in providing legal assistance and training to South and South East Asia, for the development and strengthening of their own people smuggling laws. The program will be expanded in future years to include emerging priority countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

OVERSEAS AID AND MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE

- Australia's total aid budget has increased from \$4.3 billion in 2010-11 to \$4.836 billion in 2011-12. This represents 0.35% of Gross National Income (GNI) for Official Development Assistance (ODA) in order to stay on course to reach the 0.5% goal in 2015-16. The United Nations (UN's) recommended aid allocation is 0.7% of GNI. The new money in this year's Budget amounts to \$1.9 billion over the next four years, with most spending back-ended to later years.
- Funds to UN Humanitarian agencies (UNOCHA, WFP, UNCERF, UNHCR, UNWRA) equals \$95 million, and the International Committee of the Red Cross will receive \$20 million (up from \$18 million).
- As the Australian Council for International Development notes, humanitarian protection is still not considered a priority for the Australian Government's development assistance funding. No funding in the 2011-12 Budget was designated to the development of a framework to address humanitarian protection. There was a slight increase of \$33.9 million in the overall funding for ongoing AusAID activities in fragile states such as Sri Lanka (\$0.5 million), Afghanistan (\$14.9 million), East Timor (\$9.7 million), Pakistan (\$10.2 million) and Solomon Islands (\$3.4 million). However, funding for these activities in Iraq decreased by \$8.8 million.

Aid allocation by region

- The overall aid allocation to Papua New Guinea and the Pacific has remained steady at around \$1.016 billion.
- There has been a 42% increase in the overall aid allocation to Africa from \$200.9 million in 2010-11 to \$291.3 million in 2011-12.
- Aid to Central Asia and the Middle East will increase from \$273.8 million to \$350.5 million.
- For Indonesia and East Asia, the aid allocation will increase from \$1.09 billion to \$1.265 billion.
- Aid to South Asia will increase from \$171.3 to \$207.2 million.

Country-specific details

- Total funds to Afghanistan for 2011-12 are \$165.1 million, of which \$124.1 million is managed by AusAID. This represents an increase of \$23.9 million (up from \$141.2 million) from last year's commitment.
- The Government will provide \$9.7 million over two years for Phase III of the Afghanistan Passport and Visa Issuing System Capacity Building Project to ensure that passports issued meet international standards. This measure is an element of the Memorandum of Understanding that the Governments of Australia and Afghanistan and UNHCR signed on 17 January 2011. Funding for this measure will be offset from the provision for expanded

aid funding held in the Contingency Reserve and therefore has no net impact on the budget position.

- \$697.1 million over four years (including \$1.4 million in capital funding) will go to expand aid in Indonesia and the South East Asian region. This measure will address aid priorities in Indonesia (\$492.8 million) through assistance for basic and tertiary education, including the construction of 2,000 additional junior secondary schools in poorer districts.
- The Government will provide \$827.1 million over five years (including \$44.0 million in 2010-11 and \$2.5 million in capital funding) to expand aid in Africa, South and Central Asia and the Middle East.
- \$150.6 million over four years has been allocated to increase development and humanitarian assistance in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Pacific. This includes \$124.5 million to expand the access that children have to basic education and ensure they have opportunities to better access further education, training and employment. \$26.0 million will also be provided to expand existing programs addressing high levels of violence against women in PNG and the Pacific by increasing existing support to the United Nations and civil society organisations and working with partner governments to improve health services for women who have experienced violence.

BROADER HUMAN RIGHTS MEASURES

- \$18.3 million will be provided over four years to implement the Human Rights Framework. This includes the project to consolidate Australia's anti-discrimination laws and a National Action Plan on Human Rights. Approximately one third of the four year funding is to be allocated to the Australian Human Rights Commission and the remaining two thirds to the Attorney General's Department. The Framework was the Government's 2010 response to the national consultation on a Human Rights Act and the National Action Plan is the federal response to the recommendations made after Australia's reporting to the UN Universal Periodic Review.

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP OPERATIONS

- DIAC has again been required to improve efficiencies through the administration of grant programs. With \$7 million in savings over 4 years identified, it appears that no grant funding has been cut.
- DIAC will also redirect funding for corporate support, policy and program design and service delivery functions within the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to meet emerging priorities. Savings will be achieved by reducing expenditure on corporate support, policy and program design and service delivery functions. This measure will provide savings of \$198.2 million over four years.