



Refugee Council  
of Australia

## **2022-23 FEDERAL BUDGET: WHAT IT MEANS FOR REFUGEES AND PEOPLE SEEKING HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION**

### **KEY POINTS:**

- *An additional 16,500 humanitarian places for Afghan nationals over four years, increasing the size of the Refugee and Humanitarian Program to 17,875 places each year until 2025-26.*
- *Spending on offshore processing policy has blown out substantially for the seventh time in eight years, with a \$146 million over-spend on the funds allocated in last year's Budget.*
- *A significant reduction in funds allocated for settlement services, the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman and Australian Human Rights Commission.*
- *Response to Ukraine including \$65 million in humanitarian assistance, allocation of three-year Temporary Humanitarian Concern Visas, and funds to establish the Ukrainian Community and Settlement Support Program.*

### **REFUGEE AND HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM**

The Government will set aside 16,500 additional humanitarian places for Afghan nationals, evenly divided across the four years from 2022-23 to 2025-26, "in recognition of our sustained commitment following Australia's two decades of operations in Afghanistan". This builds on the previously announced 10,000 humanitarian and 5,000 family places for Afghan nationals over four years from July 2021 from within the existing humanitarian and migration programs. This means that the Government has now allocated 26,500 humanitarian and 5,000 family places for Afghan nationals (31,500 in total) in the five years to June 2026. Treasury has costed the 16,500 extra refugee places at \$665.9 million over four years, including allocations of \$491.8 million to the Social Services portfolio, \$73.2 million to Home Affairs, \$44.5 million to Health and \$47.3 million to Education, Skills and Employment.

The core annual Refugee and Humanitarian Program will remain at a ceiling of 13,750 places in 2022-23 and over the four years of the forward estimates. However, with 4,125 additional places for Afghan refugees each year, the total annual humanitarian program will be 17,875 places each year until 2025-26.

The Government will also allocate a three-year Temporary Humanitarian Concern Visa (subclass 786) to Ukrainians in 2021-22 and 2022-23, as previously announced. These visas will be additional to the permanent visas in the Refugee and Humanitarian Program.

### **SETTLEMENT SERVICES**

Funding allocated to Refugee, Humanitarian, Settlement and Migrant Services will decrease by 13.7% from the \$605 million spent in 2021-22 to \$522 million in 2022-23. The Government also allocated \$500,000 to establish the Ukrainian Community and Settlement Support Program to provide additional support to those arriving in Australia after fleeing Ukraine.

\$9.2 million in 2022-23 has been allocated to extend existing Youth Transition Support services for 12 months to 30 June 2023, to continue the provision of services to young humanitarian entrants and vulnerable migrants to increase engagement in education and community sport and assist in transition to employment

## **ONSHORE DETENTION AND COMPLIANCE**

The Government will allocate \$1.28 billion in 2022-23 on onshore detention and compliance, an increase of \$20.6 million on spending in 2021-22. It has budgeted more than \$1 billion on detention and compliance for each of the four years of the forward estimates.

## **OFFSHORE PROCESSING**

Despite just 112 refugees and asylum seekers currently being held on Nauru and the end of Australia's agreement with Papua New Guinea in December 2021, the Government will allocate \$482.5 million for its offshore processing policy in 2022-23. In 2021-22, the Government spent \$957.9 million on its offshore processing policy, a blowout of \$146 million on the funds allocated in last year's Budget – the seventh substantial blowout in eight years. The 2022-23 allocation will bring the total spending on offshore processing to \$9.65 billion since July 2013.

## **BORDER SURVEILLANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The Government will provide \$136.7 million in 2022-23 to sustain Operation Sovereign Borders, including maritime surveillance. An additional \$9.2 million has been allocated to continue planning for the next generation of civil maritime surveillance and response capabilities for the Australian Border Force, including the Australian Maritime Identification System to inform future acquisitions. \$287.2 million over four years from 2022-23 will be set aside for a range of "Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime" measures, including enhancing the Australian Federal Police's intelligence and operational capabilities and increasing the presence of the Australian Border Force at airports, seaports and warehouses.

Within the Defence portfolio, over \$74 million is budgeted to support the Department of Home Affairs in activities that include, among other things, the "planning and conduct of operations to provide security of Australia's maritime borders from unauthorised maritime arrivals". This is down from expenditure of \$317 million in 2021-22.

Within the Home Affairs portfolio, a total of \$406 million has been allocated to border management and another \$1.1 billion to border enforcement in the next financial year.

## **ASSISTANCE FOR PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM**

The Government will spend \$36.9 million on assistance under the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) for people seeking asylum in 2022-23. This is the same amount as the spending in the current financial year, which was \$3.5 million more than the funding set aside in the 2021 Budget.

## **HEALTH AND TORTURE AND TRAUMA SERVICES**

The Government will provide \$44.9 million over four years from 2021-22 to support vulnerable Australians. This funding includes \$17.8 million over 2 years from 2022-23 to provide mental health support to multicultural communities across Australia. Of this, \$10 million in additional funds will be allocated for the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (PASTT) in order to top-up funding to continue to meet forecast demand for support to humanitarian entrants and survivors of torture and trauma. Interpreting services for people accessing mental health services is also included, as is \$8.3 million in 2021-22 to establish a National Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Centre. This will be the national hub of clinical and technical expertise in treatment for trauma-related mental health conditions.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AND COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN**

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) will not meet its target of 47,944 AAT applications and Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA) referrals finalised in 2021-22. It has reduced this target to 42,024 cases for future years, despite facing a significant backlog in the Migration and Refugee Division.

The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman will see its budget cut from \$47.7 million in 2022-23 to \$41.9 million in 2025-26. This is despite the fact that the Australian Government has designated the Commonwealth Ombudsman as the National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to Convention against Torture to (amongst other requirements) monitor the conditions of immigration detention facilities.

## **MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS AND CITIZENSHIP**

The Government will allocate \$100.6 million in the next financial year to Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, a 20% decrease on spending in 2021-22.

## **MIGRATION PROGRAM**

The Government will maintain the 2022-23 permanent Migration Program planning level at 160,000 places. Skill stream places will increase from the 2021-22 planning levels to 109,900, to account for around 70 per cent of the permanent Migration Program. This includes an estimated 50,000 places for the Family stream, consisting of approximately 40,500 Partner visas, 3,000 Child visas, 6,000 Parent visas and 500 places for Other Family visas. From 2022-23, Partner and Child visa processing will move to a demand driven model. 10,000 Partner visa places not granted in 2021-22 will be redistributed to the Skilled stream of the Migration Program.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Australian Human Rights Commission will see its budget cut by over one third over the next four years, from \$32.6 million in 2021-22 to \$20 million in 2025-26.

\$1 million over five years will be set aside from existing resources within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to establish a Human Rights Advocacy Program to provide grants of up to \$100,000 to human-rights focused organisations to advance Australia's human rights priorities.

## **OVERSEAS HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

Australia's baseline Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) funding has increased slightly from \$4 billion in 2021-22 to \$4.089 billion in 2022-23, with an additional \$460 million in temporary, targeted and supplementary measures in 2022-23. Within this, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will allocate \$144.9 million for protracted crises such as in Afghanistan, Myanmar and Bangladesh. In Afghanistan, \$100 million in humanitarian assistance has been budgeted, with targeted support for women and girls. In Ukraine, the Government will provide \$156.5 million in this financial year (2021-22) to deliver initial assistance following the invasion by Russia. This funding largely includes military assistance to the Government of Ukraine (\$91 million) but also includes \$65 million in humanitarian funding to help meet the urgent needs of the Ukrainian people, with a focus on protecting women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Funding allocations to key multilateral institutions working with refugees remain largely static, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) receiving the same funding as previous years (\$25 million and \$10 million). Overall funding for Humanitarian, Emergencies and Refugees within the ODA budget contracted slightly from \$485 million to \$470 million, but mostly due to the conclusion of the COVID-19 Response Fund.

## SPENDING IN 2022-23 BUDGET – DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS	2022-22 (estd actual)	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<b>1.5 Regional Cooperation</b>	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
External expenses	71,107	64,712	30,958	31,733	32,494
Departmental expenses	37,235	37,736	37,965	38,343	38,647
<b>Total</b>	<b>108,342</b>	<b>102,448</b>	<b>68,923</b>	<b>70,076</b>	<b>71,141</b>
<b>2.1 Migration</b>					
Departmental expenses	397,136	360,272	291,482	339,830	315,364
<b>Total</b>	<b>397,136</b>	<b>360,272</b>	<b>291,482</b>	<b>339,830</b>	<b>315,364</b>
<b>2.2 Visas</b>					
External expenses	0	0	0	0	0
Departmental expenses	362,310	385,122	346,321	397,726	400,128
<b>Total</b>	<b>362,310</b>	<b>385,122</b>	<b>346,321</b>	<b>397,726</b>	<b>400,128</b>
<b>2.3 Refugee, Humanitarian, Settlement and Migrant Services</b>					
External expenses	604,710	522,148	455,213	474,214	478,944
Departmental expenses	174,190	174,007	175,533	178,748	176,542
<b>Total</b>	<b>778,900</b>	<b>696,155</b>	<b>630,746</b>	<b>652,962</b>	<b>655,486</b>
<b>2.4 IMA Offshore Management</b>					
External expenses	917,917	441,348	329,197	318,860	280,715
Departmental expenses	39,946	41,182	41,463	41,963	42,230
<b>Total</b>	<b>957,863</b>	<b>482,530</b>	<b>370,660</b>	<b>360,823</b>	<b>322,945</b>
<b>2.5 Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship</b>					
External expenses	15,056	434	441	451	460
Departmental expenses	110,604	100,174	106,113	95,802	96,385
<b>Total</b>	<b>125,660</b>	<b>100,608</b>	<b>106,554</b>	<b>96,253</b>	<b>96,845</b>
<b>3.2 Border Management</b>					
External expenses	1,716	8	8	8	8
Departmental expenses	363,283	406,273	400,893	400,323	412,599
<b>Total</b>	<b>364,999</b>	<b>406,281</b>	<b>400,901</b>	<b>400,331</b>	<b>412,607</b>
<b>3.4 Border Enforcement</b>					
Departmental expenses	1,100,324	1,127,178	992,603	1,001,832	1,006,677
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,100,324</b>	<b>1,127,178</b>	<b>992,603</b>	<b>1,001,832</b>	<b>1,006,677</b>
<b>3.5 Onshore Compliance and Detention</b>					
External expenses	932,849	939,054	709,778	712,856	727,788
Departmental expenses	327,230	341,612	334,141	338,353	340,457
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,260,079</b>	<b>1,280,666</b>	<b>1,043,919</b>	<b>1,051,209</b>	<b>1,068,245</b>
<b>SERVICES AUSTRALIA - PAYMENTS ON BEHALF OF DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS</b>	2022-22 (estd actual)	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<b>Payments on behalf of Dept of Home Affairs</b>	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Asylum Seeker Support	36,900	36,900	-	-	-