

Speaker Notes for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Health talk

Slide 1

This presentation outlines background demographics and information about refugee and asylum seeker health.

SLIDE 2

It is helpful to start with a definition for who a 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker' is and to know the difference

A refugee is someone who:

- Has a well founded fear of being persecuted (according to grounds stated)
- Are outside of their country of nationality
- Are unwilling/unable to return

An asylum seeker:

- A person who is seeking protection and is still waiting to have his/her claim assessed

Australia has international obligations to protect the human rights of all asylum seekers and refugees regardless of how and where they arrive, or whether they arrive with/without a visa.

See <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/asylum-seekers-and-refugees-guide> for more specific details on obligations under various international treaties.

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UNHCR Global Trends 2016 (published June 2017, next update due June 2018)

SLIDE 4

Global numbers: 65.6M displaced

1 in 113 people globally are displaced (about 1% of the global population)

This massive increase was driven mainly by the war in Syria, which by the end of 2016 12 million people at the end of 2016; that included 5.5 million refugees, 6.3 million IDPs, and nearly 185,000 asylum-seekers (in total, over half of the pre-conflict Syrian populations)

Comments:

2013 - Just surpassed > 50M with war in Syria, first time in the post-World War II era, exceeded 50 million people

2014 - Increased 8.3M and number of unaccompanied children – largest jumps in a year ever

2016 - First year the growth of number of people forcibly displaced has slowed

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The visual on the left is out of date, from end of 2015, but illustrates the point. The statistics on the right are from Global trends end of 2016

From 2016 report:

More than half (55%) of all refugees came from 3 countries:

1. Syrian Arab Republic 5.5 M, More than half the population lives in displacement
2. Afghanistan 2.5 M,
3. South Sudan (1.4M) overtook Somalia – fastest growing refugee population

The destination for refugees is more than 80% will remain in developing countries, <1% settled annually

1. Turkey was the country hosting the largest refugee population, with 2.9 million refugees at the end of 2016 (2.8million are from Syria)
2. Pakistan hosts 1.4million – mostly from Afghanistan
3. Lebanon hosts over 1 million, mostly from Syria, but the most per capita with 1 in 6 people having refugee status

In 2016

Australia accepted 27,600 resettled refugees (3rd globally after US and Canada)

But ranks 95th for refugees to GDP per capita, and 59th for refugees per 1000 inhabitants

Average length in refugee camp 15years

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There are two main pathways refugees come to Australia

Offshore applicants who are recognised as refugees arrive in Australia with a Humanitarian Visa

On-shore applicants are asylum seekers – and arrive by boat or plane.

At various times, the boat arrivals have been referred to as “Unauthorised” “Illegal” “Irregular Maritime Arrivals” by DIBP now Dept of Home Affairs. This language is depersonalises children and families.

Fleeing persecution is not a crime. Seeking asylum is a human right. It is not illegal to seek asylum without a visa. Around 80 percent of asylum seekers who come to Australia by boat are found to be refugees

SLIDE 7

Reference:

<https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/immigranthealth/Asylum%20seeker%20identification%202018.pdf>

SLIDE 8

Pathway for application for temporary protection visa

SLIDE 9

Reference: <https://www.racs.org.au/causes/factsheets/>

SLIDE 10

References:

<http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/reports-publications/reports/annual>

<http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/reports-publications/research-statistics/statistics/live-in-australia/immigration-detention>

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/statistics/ima-legacy-caseload-january-2018.pdf>

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These are the key dates in legislation affecting asylum seekers arriving by boat.

Note the change in path to held detention, community detention or bridging visa since 2012 and path to offshore processing and no resettlement in Australia since 2013. The changes in 19 July 2013 resulted in prolonged periods of held detention.

Before Aug 2012 – bridging visas with workrights

Aug 2012 – detention centres re-opened

July 2013 – will not be resettled here

These are the key arrival dates relevant to AS

All groups face profound uncertainty

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Reference:

<http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/statistics/immigration-detention-statistics-31-january-2018.pdf>

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Pre-departure health screening consists of an Immigration medical exam, and then a voluntary Departure Health Check (DHC) within 3 days of travel to Australia.

New screening procedures have been implemented for Syrian and Iraqi arrivals, see next slide.

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IME for all and extra voluntary DHC for Humanitarian entrants, but note that children get limited screening

New screening – combining IME and DHC for Syrian and Iraqi cohorts

SLIDE 15

Reference: <https://www.asid.net.au/documents/item/1225>

SLIDE 16

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Mental health considerations

SLIDE 18

VFST recovery framework - An overview of the trauma pathway from violence and persecution to recovery goal.

SLIDE 19

A useful screening tool “ASK” when meeting with refugee families – Credit: Dr Joanne Gardiner

SLIDE 20

Up to date as of 15/03/18

Access to health care depends on your visa or asylum seeking status

Victorian policy supports full access for people seeking asylum

All Medicare cards for people on BVE expired as of Dec 31st 2017 and had to be renewed

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Up to date as of 15/03/18

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Resources