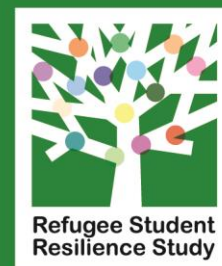


Key Issues Paper No. 1



Who are refugee background young people?¹

Young people from refugee backgrounds generally arrive in Australia through the Humanitarian Programme, either via the off-shore (meaning application is made from a country outside of Australia) or on-shore (meaning application is made by applicant from within Australia) component (Department of Home Affairs, 2018). However, refugee background young people do not always enter Australia with a refugee-related visa (MYAN (Australia), 2016). Young people may enter through other migration streams, such as the family stream migration program, but share refugee-like experiences.

Coventry, Guerra, Mackenzie, and Pinkney (2002, p. 15) define the refugee experience as 'exposure to political, religious or inter-cultural violence persecution or oppression, armed conflict or civil discord that incorporates the following basic elements:

- a state of fearfulness for self and family members,
- leaving the country at short notice,
- inability to return to the country of origin, and
- uncertainty about the possibility of maintaining links with family and home.'

We draw on this understanding of refugee experience and the definition of 'a refugee young person' developed in 'The Good Practice Principles Guide for Working with Refugee Young People' (Victorian Settlement Planning Committee, 2005). In this project we define a refugee background young person as any young person who has come to Australia with refugee-like experience, regardless of their visa category.

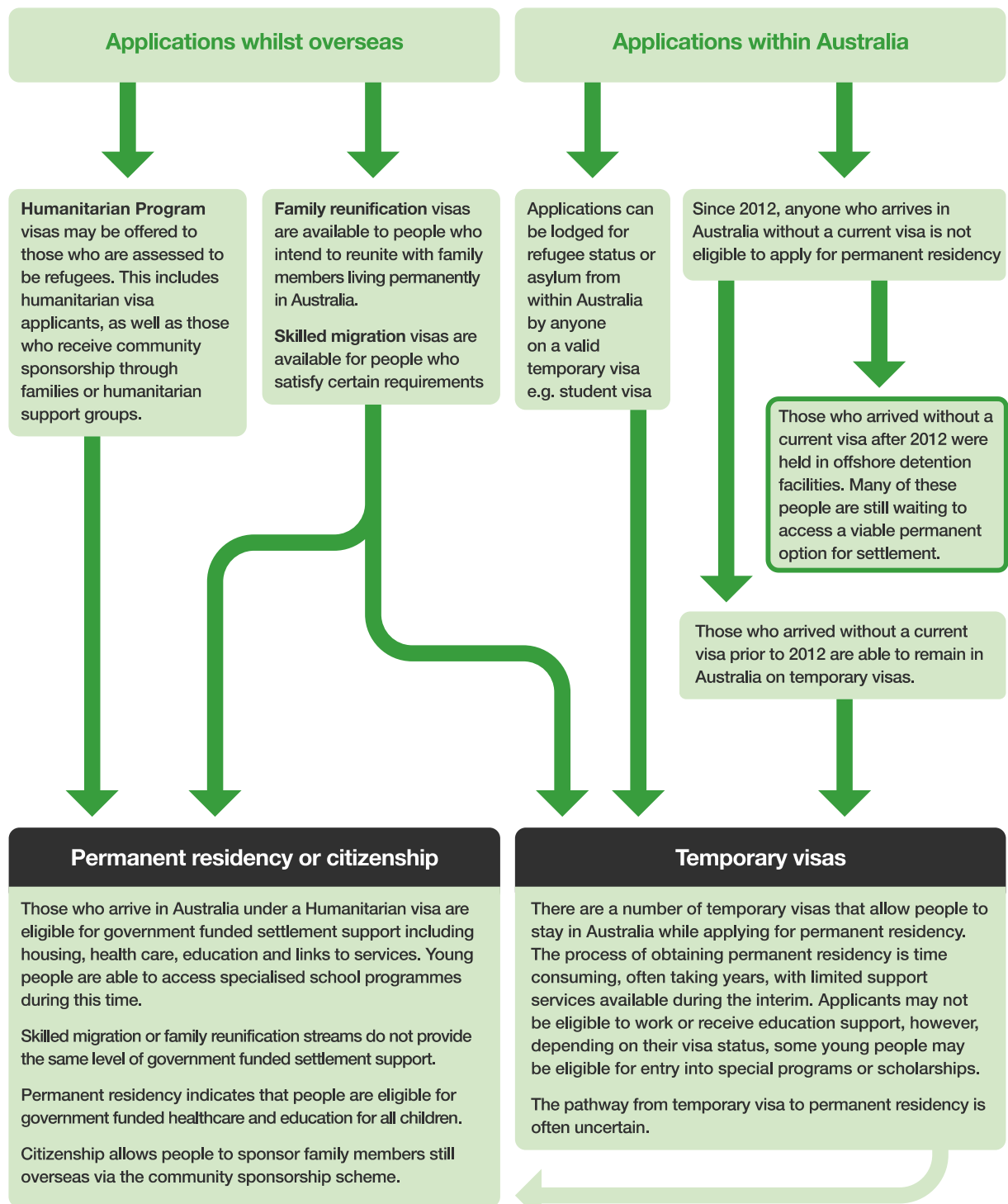
Access to resettlement services is limited by the way in which people arrive in the country, and by their ongoing status as asylum seeker, temporary migrant, permanent resident or citizen. Young people in our study may therefore have accessed a range of pathways to and through their education in Australia. Our definition of what it may mean to be a student with a refugee background is inclusive of the various strategies and supports that students may have accessed throughout their education in Australia.

The chart displayed on the following page gives a basic overview of the potential pathways to life in Australia for students in our study.

¹ To cite this paper: Baak, M., Johnson, B., Sullivan, A., Slee R. & Miller, E. (2019). Who are refugee background young people?, *Refugee Student Resilience Study Key Issues Paper No. 1*. University of South Australia. doi: 10.25954/5cc270058a631



Pathways into Australia for people from refugee backgrounds



Refugee Student Resilience Study Overview

The *Refugee Student Resilience Study* aims to investigate how schools transcend the past life experiences of students from refugee backgrounds by creating the social and educational conditions that enhance resilience. It is focusing on the policies, practices, relationships, and events that shape the schooling experiences of students and promote their resilience. The research will collect data from a selection of case study secondary schools in two Australian states, including regional and metropolitan locations. These schools will contribute to the research with contextual data relating to good practices that enhance resilience for students from refugee backgrounds.

Education is recognised as a key protective factor in facilitating successful settlement and positive lifelong outcomes for young people from refugee backgrounds. Young people from refugee backgrounds have often had disrupted experiences of education prior to displacement and while language acquisition remains important in refugee education in Australia, we argue that schools may have a more holistic role to play in supporting students from refugee backgrounds. Schools are sites in which students from refugee backgrounds may access opportunities for academic, social, emotional and cultural learning and development.

For further information please see www.refugeesatschool.edu.au

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- Department of Education and Training (DET)
- Department for Education and Child Development (DECD)
- Catholic Education South Australia (CESA)
- Australian Refugee Association (ARA)

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