

# MIGRANT AND REFUGEE SUPPORT

## What is it?

Migrants are people who have left their country of origin to take up residence in another country. The term Migrants generally refers to people who decide to make New Zealand their new home. Refugees are those who need to leave their country for many reasons (war, conflict, personal safety) and are not able to return. They have little choice in leaving or in the choosing of their new country.<sup>1</sup>

As both groups are involved in resettlement in New Zealand and Christchurch, this paper provides relevant information for both migrants and refugees where available.



## Why is it important?

New Zealand approves around 50,000 new permanent residents each year. Around 60% of these are skilled and business migrants, and most of the remainder are family-related approvals. A small balance reflects humanitarian and international responsibilities.<sup>2</sup> New Zealand's policy is to resettle a quota of 750 refugees annually with a focus on refugees in special need of protection.<sup>3</sup>

Refugees and Migrants have much to offer their new communities. As a country, we also have a responsibility to ensure their settlement is as positive as is possible. The focus of the Settlement Strategy is to ensure positive settlement outcomes for all.<sup>4</sup>

## Data

The most recent data indicates that 40,737 people were approved for residence in the 2010/2011 year across New Zealand. This is less than usual largely due to the global economic climate and in a small way the Christchurch earthquakes.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1 Residence approvals by stream: 2010/11 financial year<sup>6</sup>**

Stream	People approved	% of NZRP
Skilled/Business stream	23,145	57
Uncapped Family stream	9,597	24
Capped Family stream	5,229	13
International/Humanitarian stream	2,766	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,737</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Labour, Settlement Support. 2006. Refugee and Migrant Streams: A guide to understand how refugee's and migrants enter New Zealand. <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/25defbd1-cec4-4c03-be8e-c3fca0ded1A4/0/refugeeandmigrantstreamsublishednov06.pdf> Accessed 05.06.12.

<sup>2</sup> Stillman S, Mare D, Motu Economic and Public Policy Research. 2009. Economic Impacts of Immigration Working Paper Series. <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/research/lmainz/index.asp> Accessed 05.06.12.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Labour, Immigration Department Refugee Resettlement Fact Sheet (updated Dec 2010) <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/research/lmainz/index.asp> Accessed 05.06.12.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Labour. 2007. Our Future Together: New Zealand Settlement Strategy. <http://www.ssnz.govt.nz/publications/NZSettlementStrategy.pdf> Accessed 05.06.12.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Labour. 2011. Migration Trends Key Indicators Report: July 2010-June 2011.

<http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/general/monthly-migration-trends/11jun/> Accessed 05.06.12.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

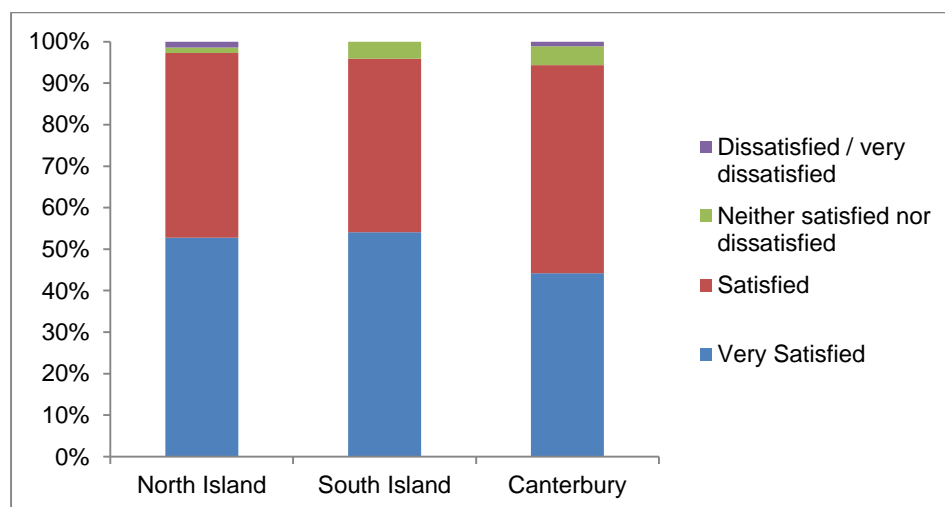
There are a number of research papers that look at the resettlement experiences of migrants and refugees. The Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand (LisNZ)<sup>7</sup> is a study designed to produce detailed information on the settlement outcomes of migrants over time. This study identified a number of indicators for resettlement of which a selection is presented here. For refugee resettlement, New Land New Life provides information on resettlement experiences, once again only a selection of the data is presented here.<sup>8</sup> These two research projects have different methodologies so are not directly comparable.

Around two thirds of migrants (62.4%) come from three areas, UK/Ireland (32.2%), North Asia (18.1%) and the Pacific (12.1%). Most migrants were aged less than 45 years, with 36% aged 25-34 and 30% aged 35-44. Some of this is impacted by migration policy.<sup>9</sup>

Refugee populations change depending on the countries from which New Zealand accepts refugees at any one point in time. For the survey reported here the respondents were largely from the Ethiopia, Iraq, Somalia and Vietnam. On arrival to New Zealand, around one in five (21%) were aged 12 years or under, and a quarter (26%) were in their 20s. Only 1 in 10 (10%) was aged 45 years and over on arrival in New Zealand.

On the whole the resettlement process is very positive with 87% of migrants saying they felt settled or very settled in New Zealand. Figure 1 overleaf identifies this by region from the LisNZ study. Former refugees were overwhelmingly very satisfied and satisfied with the way in which they were treated by other New Zealanders (82%) with only 3 percent saying that they were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied.

**Figure 1 Migrant satisfaction with life in New Zealand by region of settlement**

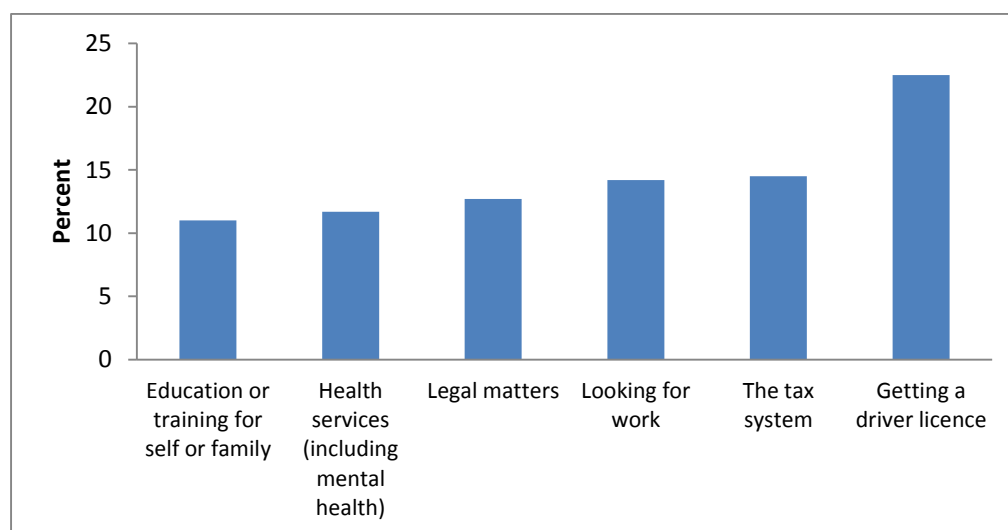
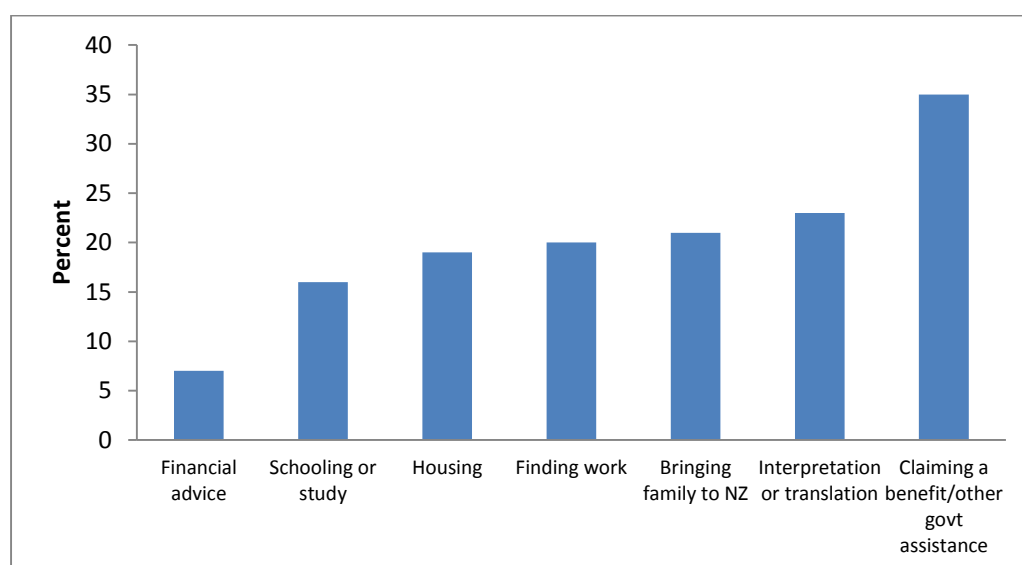


When migrants and refugees first arrive in New Zealand there are a number of areas in which they require assistance. These areas vary depending on the groups and are shown below in Figure 2 for migrants and Figure 3 for former refugees. These surveys did not ask exactly the same questions so the two graphs are not directly comparable but rather indicative of the issues faced by these two groups. People from these backgrounds do not always like asking for help so the figures may be an underestimate.

<sup>7</sup> Masgoret A, Merwood P, Tausi M. 2009. New Faces, New Futures: New Zealand. Department of Labour. <http://dol.govt.nz/publications/research/lisnz/> Accessed 05.06.12.

<sup>8</sup> Searle W, Gruner A, Duke T. 2011. New Land New Life: Long-term settlement of refugees in New Zealand, Department of Labour. <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/research/new-life-new-land/report-01.asp> Accessed 05.06.12.

<sup>9</sup> Masgoret, 2009 op cit

**Figure 2 Main types of help, advice, or assistance migrants needed<sup>10</sup>****Figure 3 Areas where former refugees had needed help<sup>11</sup>**

### **Impact on inequalities**

Migrants are generally well educated. Sixty-seven percent of all migrants held a post-school qualification and nearly half of all migrants (47 percent) held an advanced vocational qualification or university degree.<sup>12</sup> Refugees do not have the same levels of education though over one-third (36 percent) of former refugees had gone on to study at post-secondary school level. Fifteen percent of former refugees had received no formal education, while primary school was the highest level of education for 17 percent.<sup>13</sup>

Skilled migrants are those most likely to be in work. A high percentage of refugees have been working in the New Zealand since their arrival 73% though a much lower proportion had been working for pay in the past seven days (38%). Fifty one percent of former refugees received most of their income from a government benefit. Difficulties finding work and

<sup>10</sup> Masgoret, 2009 op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Searle 2011, op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Masgoret, 2009 op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Searle 2011, op. cit.

consequently access to adequate incomes, creates significant inequalities for former refugees.

### **Solutions**

The NZ Settlement Action plan identifies a number of important actions. The first is to realise economic potential by settlement strategy the contributions of migrants and refugees and their ability to realise their personal aspirations by: accessing appropriate education and employment; utilising their skills and knowledge. The second looks at families and ensuring migrant and refugee families have equitable access to the support and choices they need to be secure and able to reach their full potential in all aspects of social and economic life. The importance of national identity and acceptance is also identified. Actions are identified at the national regional and local level.<sup>14</sup> The Department of Immigration is carrying out a review of resettlement of refugees to understand how current policies are working.

Within Christchurch there is strong collaboration between agencies working alongside refugee and migrant populations supported by government and private funding to ensure positive settlement outcomes for new migrants and refugees in the city.

Mental health issues can be of significant concern to new populations. A report from 2008 looked specifically at these issues and identified a number of research requirements looking forward.<sup>15</sup>

### **Data limitations**

There is limited data easily accessible for Christchurch.

### **Connections with other issues**

Education, Employment, English as a Second Language (ESOL), Income, Racism

### **Impact of the earthquakes**

*As time passes and these papers are updated the initial sections on the impact of the earthquake are going to be kept as an archive. Updates are provided where possible.*

#### **As at June 2012**

Directly following the February earthquake there were a number of refugees who left Christchurch for other centres. The exact number is unknown and agencies working within the communities identified that many have returned. There are no new refugees going to be located in Christchurch for the next few years as the housing stocks are too damaged to manage. These refugees will be settled in other parts of New Zealand.

Existing collaborations of agencies worked together to support the refugee and migrant populations after the February quake. Many of the communities also assisted with clearing liquefaction and providing meals where needed.

As noted above migrant figures for New Zealand were slight lower in the past year and it has been identified in those statistics that the Christchurch earthquake may have had an impact.

The overall impact of the earthquakes on the city migration will not be known for a number of years.

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<sup>14</sup> Department of Labour. 2007. Settlement National Action Plan: New Zealand Settlement Strategy. <http://www.ssnz.govt.nz/publications/NZSettlementActionPlan.pdf> Accessed 05.06.12.

<sup>15</sup> Te Pou. 2008. Refugee and Migrant Mental Health and Addiction Research Agenda for New Zealand 2008-2012. Te Pou, The National Centre of Mental Health Research, Information and Workforce Development. <http://www.tepou.co.nz/file/Research-projects/Final-draft-refugee-and-migrant-research-agenda.pdf> Accessed 05.06.12.