

A nighttime photograph of the Sydney Opera House, illuminated and reflected in the water. The city lights of Sydney are visible in the background and foreground, creating a vibrant urban scene.

Being Young and Knowing Your Rights

A Reflection on Integration from Refugees in Towns
Sydney, Australia

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Cover photo: The Sydney Opera House – a landmark of the city.

Acknowledgments: I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land from which I wrote this report, the Cabrogal people of the Darug Nation, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

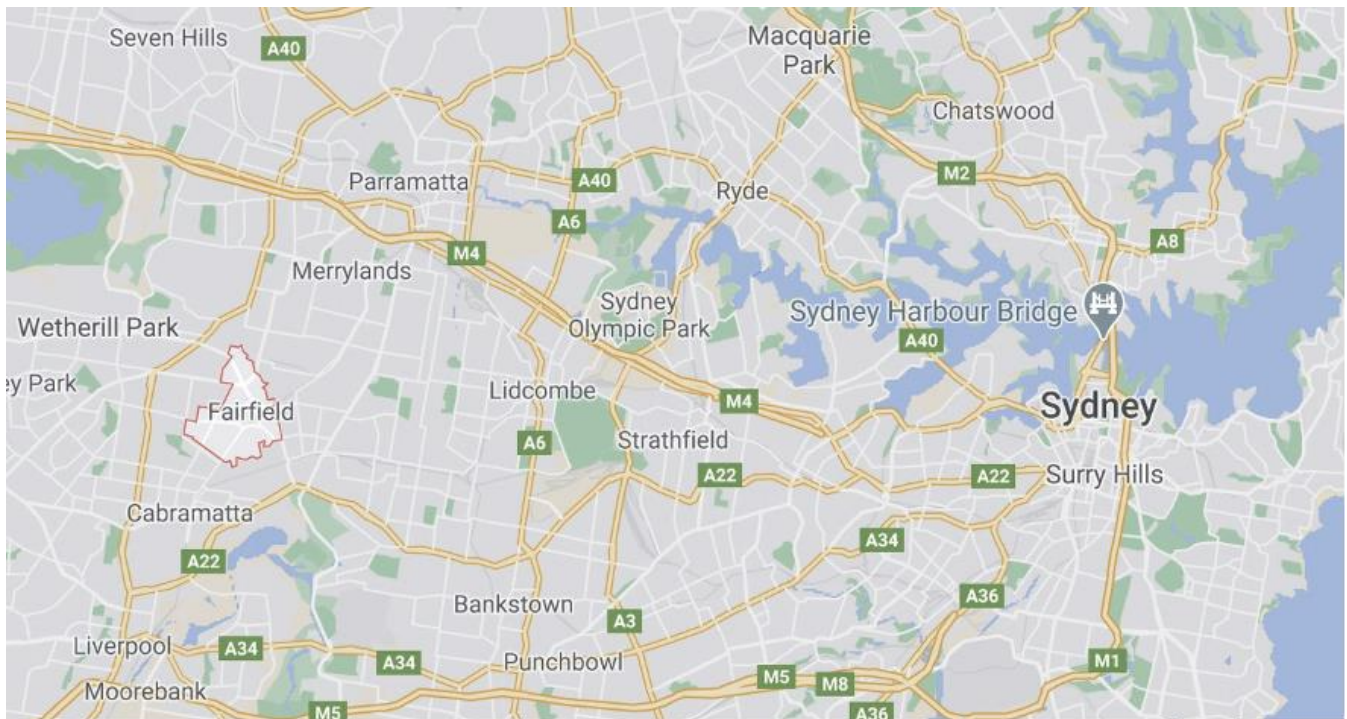
Location



New South Wales (abbreviated as NSW, left) is a state on the east coast of Australia. The state capital of NSW is Sydney, which is also Australia's most populous city. In March 2019, the population of New South Wales was over 8 million, making it Australia's most populous state.

The City of Fairfield (below) is a local government area in the west of Sydney, where more than half of residents were born overseas.

Base map imagery © Google 2020.



For more background on refugees in Australia and Sydney, continue to the appendices.

Introduction

Every time I searched the term “Australia” or “Fairfield” in Google, two webpages were the first to pop up: “Fairfield is one of the most multicultural and culturally diverse cities in Australia,” and “What you CAN and CAN’T do in Australia.”

I fled from Syria to Lebanon, and then from Lebanon to Australia. When I arrived in Australia, I left the airport and got into the car about 30 minutes after landing by plane, and the driver boomed at me, “PUT THE SEAT BELT ON!” That was the first law that I was exposed to in this new country.

My journey of building a new life in Sydney, Australia began with learning about the law. I arrived in June 2015 from Syria (after traveling through Lebanon) when I was 23 years old with my father after my auntie’s family—who already lived in Australia—sponsored us on a Special Humanitarian Visa, which is an offshore visa for applicants with links to Australia who have faced serious human rights violations.

The first interaction I had was with Ghassan, my Arabic speaking case manager from Settlement Service international (SSI), the refugee resettlement agency in Fairfield. I knew English from school and could communicate in English, but Ghassan speaking Arabic made it easier for my dad to speak with him. Ghassan waited for us in Sydney

International Airport standing next to our family members holding a folder of papers in both English and Arabic and his business card. He gave me the folder and said he would come to pick us up from our home in two days to start one of our many appointments. The first appointment was with “Centrelink” where we received the Customer Reference Number (CRN) to apply for payments and services.

After the appointment with Centrelink, Ghassan took my father and me to check out the main shopping center, the bank, and the train station where he taught us how to use the public transportation (including which card to use to board the train) as well as the consequences for what happens if you do not follow the rules. After the tour, we went back to the Settlement Service International (SSI) office where we had our first discussion about the settlement plan, and during the meeting, we developed the

Centrelink



Centrelink, located in the Fairfield Service Centre, helps provide payments and services to refugees. Photo by author.

Crescent Park



Located in Fairfield, Crescent Park illustrates the mixed-use layout of this suburb of Sydney. Photo by author.

plan of how my dad I and would find a house to rent, access healthcare, register for education, access mental health services, and find a job.

Even before I arrived in Australia as a young person, understanding the law and passing the knowledge on to my dad (who doesn't speak English) became an important part of my life. Now I work as a Community Engagement Officer specializing in refugee service with the organization Legal Aid New South Wales (Legal Aid). This service helps improve refugees' legal literacy through community legal education and increased access to legal services to prevent their legal problems from escalating.

This case report will examine how young people, like myself, interact with the legal system in Australia and focus on the three areas of law practiced by Legal Aid: Civil, Criminal, and Family. It will look through the lens of my experience moving to Fairfield as a refugee and now working in refugee services.

A Note on Terminology

Centrelink: Part of the federal government's Department of Human Services that provides a range of social, welfare, and health payments to seniors, refugees, job seekers, students, trainees, families, parents, the disabled, and Indigenous Australians.

Special Humanitarian Visa: An offshore visa for applicants with links to Australia who are subject to serious human rights violations.

Solicitor: In Australia, we have both solicitors and barristers who provide legal assistance and are collectively called lawyers. Solicitors provide legal advice and assistance directly to clients, whilst barristers appear in court instructed by solicitors.

Youth: The 2010 National Strategy for Young Australians defines youth as 12-24 years of age.

Driving While Disqualified: Occurs when a person drives a motor vehicle on a public road after having received certain license sanctions.

Fairfield Station



Fairfield Station is a heritage site located in the center of the city. Photo by author.

Neeta City Shopping Centre



Neeta City Shopping Centre gives a feel for the mixed residential and retail spaces in the area. Photo by author.

Housing NSW: An agency of the Department of Communities and Justice that is responsible for the provision and management of public housing services to socially and economically disadvantaged people within the state of New South Wales.

Client Assessment & Referral Services (CARS): An independent, in-house service which provides referrals, case plans, psychosocial reports and other reports to Legal Aid clients.

A Note on Methodology

The information in this report came from my own experiences and the relationships I have built with my co-workers and clients at Legal Aid. I have worked as a Community Engagement Officer with the Refugee Service of Legal Aid NSW for the past three years, which has given me the privilege to meet different groups of clients, some of whom have had good experiences with the legal system and some who have not. These clients do not write reviews on Google or talk to service evaluators on the phone, but they will speak with someone like me from their community.

In addition, I deliver Community Legal Education in schools and to community groups that aim to introduce youth to Australian law so they understand their rights and responsibilities. I also help youth and their teachers to access the justice system. In my role I get to work from different offices, schools, interagency meetings, and courts, which helped me build knowledge of legal issues that young people from refugee background face, whether through comments raised by youth workers, or from casual conversations with solicitors after a long day in court, or when young people chatted with me after I finished presenting a session.

While some of the examples in this report were written from my personal experience, others come from the perspective of solicitors at Legal Aid. All the names of clients and solicitors have been removed and replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identities. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions I could not conduct face to face interviews with young people in youth centers or schools, so interviews were done by telephone and online video meetings.

The Author's Position in Fairfield and Experiences Researching this Case

I was born in Hasaka, Syria, where I grew up and attended primary school, high school, and university for three years studying Agricultural Engineering. I lived with my parents and two older brothers, however, my mother passed away when I was 17. Growing up I remember thinking that things were so normal that it was almost boring, and I wished that something interesting would happen. When I went into university, the conflict in Syria intensified, and we began to fear for our safety. We heard stories of ISIS kidnapping families and young girls and doing horrible things to them. The terrorism and destruction grew, and nobody was safe regardless of what culture or religion you were from.

My father and I moved to Lebanon for a year and I was fortunate enough to find work in retail, so we had money to survive. Living in Lebanon as a refugee without workplace rights and needing to renew our visas every six months (amongst other challenges) was very difficult. However, with the support of the refugee community in Lebanon, and through international organizations like the UN and Caritas we were able to navigate the system.

We applied for a visa for Australia because we had family there, after a year we were granted a Special Humanitarian Visa, and we arrived in winter 2015. The country was very generous and supported us through community organizations where I met many amazing people. I knew some English from my studies at school, and from watching the American TV show "Friends," but had lots more learning to do so I could engage with the community.

My dad was 65 years old and battling depression, and because we were without my mother and separated from my brothers who were living in northern Iraq, he felt alone. I was eager to find a job and asked lots of people for advice, spending many hours doing internet searches. People I spoke with suggested that I start with volunteering to get some local work experience, so I started volunteering for Settlement Services International (SSI). I had to create a new future for myself and support my father.

In Syria, my father knew how to work the system and get around bureaucratic rules to help the family. He supported the family, often making decisions on behalf of all of us. During the journey to Australia, he kept my IDs in his pocket, as for him it meant he was taking care of me. There was a role-reversal in the family when we started living in Australia, as my dad did not speak any English. I was the one answering the phone calls, translating the letters we received, and organizing the payments for rent, bills, and groceries. The transition was not only about a child taking care of a parent but also the fact a girl/woman was now making the decisions, having her own voice, and holding her own IDs.

Young Refugees Integrating to a New Legal System

How Young People in Fairfield Interact with the Law Everyday

Some of the challenges with the legal system faced by people from refugee backgrounds in Australia include:

- Knowing employment rights and responsibilities,
- Dealing with fines,
- Laws protecting against racism and discrimination,
- Centrelink issues,
- Laws and processes for reuniting or visiting families in their home country and/ or countries of asylum (particularly if/where the family remains in a conflict situation),
- Visa insecurity (temporary visa holders),
- Domestic and family violence,
- Rights and responsibilities with police.

Young people face particular challenges because of their age and experiences. They carry the scars of war and displacement with them. Sometimes young people are forced to flee alone and arrive in Australia as unaccompanied minors. In addition to these challenges, young people face difficulties with limited or disrupted education, issues with their sense of identity and not belonging, and changing family responsibilities going from being the recipient of care from parents to the ones providing parents with care.

Culture and the Law

Many refugee families in Sydney experience intergenerational conflict as parents expect their children to adopt traditional values and roles, while young people feel pressure directly from friends and indirectly from social media, popular entertainment, and their social environment to adopt "Western" or "Australian" values and roles. Samirah's story was told to me by a civil lawyer working with the Refugee Service of Legal Aid and reflects the kinds of tensions young migrants experience from growing up in a new legal system while straddling two or more different cultures.

Samirah, her seven siblings between the ages of seven and twenty-two, and their mother were granted Special Humanitarian visas in 2015. On arrival in Australia, it was discovered that Samirah was pregnant. It was also discovered that the date of birth provided by her mother on the application [through an interpreter, as her mother is illiterate] was incorrect and that she was in fact 18, not 15 as her visa stated.

Samirah's daughter was born soon after arrival. Because she was apparently 15 years of age, the hospital social worker became involved, concerned that the confluence of her youth, her status as a single mother in a deeply religious community, and her newly arrived status would be extremely challenging for her. Samirah also wished to leave Australia to marry her daughter's father, and then sponsor him to come to Australia. In the course of providing her with assistance there were factors at play that required more than just a legal lens.

There was a social, cultural, and moral disconnect between the community Samirah grew up in and the new community she was becoming part of in Australia. Matters like pregnancy outside of marriage were a cultural, moral, and religious disgrace in her country of origin, whereas Australia has a more relaxed attitude to sex before marriage. Samirah, in trying to navigate where she sat morally, was clearly conflicted. On the one hand, she was happy to be pregnant and to be having a baby with a man she loved, although he was still overseas. On the other hand, she felt a deep sense of shame and wanted to protect her family honor.

We helped Samirah navigate the issues around her date of birth, which needed to be resolved so that she could be identified accurately, and importantly so that she could get married and sponsor her husband to join her in Australia.

For young refugees, their understanding of the law and life is under construction. As they adapt to their new life and meet their basic needs, they are also growing in a new environment. Some young people stay fixed on their parents' way of life, others rebel, while some want to remain in the middle.

What Happens when Young People Break the Law

Young refugees often come into contact with the Australian criminal justice system that they are unfamiliar with. The story below is about Sam, a 21-year-old refugee, and was told to me by a criminal solicitor who I work with at Legal Aid NSW. The story exemplifies the difficulties experienced by many other young refugees. Sam's story shows the difference of how courts handle young people when they are over 18 (Sam's story) compared to the story of a young person that is a minor, in this case 16 years old (Simon's story, further below).

Sam was a 21-year-old Syrian refugee of Bedouin ancestry. Legal Aid represented him for many Driving While Disqualified offences that could have placed him in custody. He arrived in Australia in 2014 as a refugee seeking asylum after he and his family were displaced during the Syrian civil war. Before the war erupted in 2012-2013, he lived a peaceful and communal life with family, however this was shattered when his house was bombed by air attacks and his brother suffered significant burns over his entire body.

...[Sam] was separated from his family for three months during which he experienced isolation, stress, and anxiety...[D]uring his journey across the [Lebanese-Syrian] border he was captured, interrogated, and tortured by army officers, and was detained in inhumane conditions for one month...He was 16 years old when he and most of his family were approved to seek asylum in Australia in 2014.

Upon arrival in Australia Sam became lost and disoriented: he could not speak English and he was unfamiliar with Australia's environment, systems, law, infrastructure, culture and diversity...In 2019, Sam's family relocated from Sydney to Adelaide in South Australia, finding it more affordable there. However, Sam remained alone in Sydney, having experienced conflict with his parents, and resided with housemates from Sudan. He was unemployed, in significant debt, and struggled to obtain a job without a drivers' license.

What led to his many Driving While Disqualified offences was his misunderstanding of the road rules, as well as the effects of trauma from conflict-ridden Syria and Lebanon. He believed that he could pay off police officers in order to drive and he ran away from a car collision because of his fear of abuse and torture from the authorities. Unable to find a job because of his limited English language skills, poor education, and difficult adjustment to Australian society, Sam attempted to earn extra income from fixing cars that needed to be registered and resold. He was caught several times by police trying to transport these cars to his customers at a time when he did not have a driver's license and faced up to 12 months of imprisonment for each driving-while-disqualified offence.

Legal Aid used its Client Assessment and Referral Service (CARS) to prepare a psycho-social report to highlight Sam's background and upbringing for mitigation purposes, helping Sam avoid full-time imprisonment. The law in Australia provides that offenders who could demonstrate that they experienced a background of deprivation and disadvantage may rely on this to lessen their moral culpability, and thus lessen their sentence. Sam's background as a Syrian refugee was presented to the judge and the court was satisfied that his horrific experiences from the Syrian civil war, displacement abroad, and experiences in Australia lessened his moral blameworthiness. His sentence was reduced, and he avoided full-time imprisonment. He was also disqualified for only the minimum period possible and he had a chance at obtaining his license and getting a worthwhile job within six months. Legal Aid further helped Sam engage with local mental health and English-language services in order to address his social isolation.

Sam's story highlights how his trauma from war-torn Syria informed his upbringing and impacted his development as a young man, and how the disorientation he experienced easily led him into family conflict and breaches of the law.

Language and the Law

Children's Legal Service (CLS) of Legal Aid represents young people in the Children's Court and also provides free legal advice over the phone to young people between the ages of 10-17 years old in Juvenile Detention Centers. I attended the Children's Court with a CLS solicitor to support a client (Simon, 16 years old) and his mother, both of whom arrived in Australia in 2015 on refugee visas. The following story was told to me by the solicitor for Simon:

Simon was charged with a number of offences: intimidation, armed with intent to cause intimidation, custody of a knife in a public place, and being in possession of a t-shirt reasonably suspected of being stolen. The offences arose from two separate incidents on different dates with different victims, and both cases were defended at court. The outcome: Simon was sentenced to good behavior bonds and a probation order supervised by Youth Justice [case workers for young people who are under criminal court orders] during the term of the court orders.

The Children's Court of NSW



The Children's Court of NSW is in Parramatta, 20 minutes' drive from Fairfield, Australia. Photo from Legal Aid NSW.

The challenging aspects in my dealings with Simon and his mother were the language and cultural barriers. It took some time to explain to Simon how criminal proceedings work and how the law works. It would have been challenging for Simon too, given it was his first time in the criminal jurisdiction. Simon's English was very good, however, there were times when he struggled. His mother had very little understanding of English, and also no experience with the criminal legal system in Australia. Understandably, she was very concerned about the outcome for her son. Thankfully, the Community Engagement Officer from the Refugee Service, Nohara, had engaged with Simon and his family. With the help of Nohara, communication between myself, Simon, and his mother improved considerably because Nohara was able to translate. It was also notable that Simon's mother became more comfortable with Nohara by her side translating everything that was being said in court and by me. It made my job easier and Nohara was a settling influence on all of us because she became the bridge to overcome the language and cultural barrier.

Young people regularly struggle with the legal system because of language barriers, exemplified by Simon's story. But even those who speak English well struggle with concepts that have a cultural context, like criminal law. As I worked with Simon's family on this matter and other legal issues, we had conversations before and after the hearing. It seemed to me that the family was trying their best to adjust and integrate in the new country, but during the process they found it hard to learn the new system, and it was taking them longer to adjust as they did not have much initial support. On the other hand, they found that there are many services to help them after getting into trouble, and they felt they would not be left alone.

Young People, the Law, and their Families

Family law is a critical and challenging area for many recently arrived refugees since there are significant cultural differences between countries of origin and Australia. Many refugee women also have histories of sexual and gender-based violence and abuse (Heineman, 2011). A family law solicitor in the Refugee Service shared with me the following story:

As part of my role with the Refugee Service, I have developed and presented a number of community legal education seminars on family and domestic violence. This is often a contentious and sensitive topic. For this reason, I present this topic under the title: “Healthy Relationships,” to recently arrived adolescents aged about 15 to 16 years old.

One activity of the seminars focuses on scenarios involving family and domestic violence where students are asked whether the actions are legal or illegal. I introduced scenarios focused on consent where the students had correctly identified that a romantic relationship did not revoke the need for obtaining consent to kiss the other person. The scenario of sexual abuse within the context of a marriage was also raised, and I asked whether a husband forcing a wife to sleep with him was legal or illegal. A male student almost automatically raised the “legal” card and almost instantly another male student said “No, you’re wrong.” The first student explained that it was the wife’s moral duty to be with her husband. The other student, who was of the same cultural background, then said, “but she [the lawyer] said marriage doesn’t change our rights and responsibilities, and a relationship doesn’t change anything: you need consent.” The second student implemented his newly acquired knowledge to understand that regardless of the context, consent is always required and that forcing a spouse to have physical intimacy is illegal.

I took this opportunity to interject and reminded students that the focus was not what was wrong or right as this invariably invokes cultural and social aspects of morality, but what was legal or illegal, a factual consideration of the law. By using this terminology, the students understood that it was not an attack or critique of their religious or cultural views. The two students continued their discussion and had peers from both sides commenting on the topic. A few minutes later the first student conceded that the behavior was illegal in Australia. Where some would have found it slightly alarming to hear a young male adamantly believing what we consider to be sexual abuse to be justified in certain circumstances, I saw how my “Healthy Relationships” seminar provided that student and his peers with the opportunity to confront their pre-existing beliefs and understandings of appropriate behavior, in turn slowly changing their views in a positive way.

Domestic Violence Presentations



An image used in a domestic violence presentation. Photo from Legal Aid NSW.

Conclusion

The journey towards feeling settled is like a roller coaster: up, down, no certainty, and questionable safety, but deep inside you know it is going to stop eventually. New South Wales, and especially Fairfield, has a strong record of proactive programs intended to support refugees between 15–25 years of age to make this journey easier.

Young refugees want the same things young people everywhere want: to be consulted, to be listened to, to contribute, to engage, and to be part of solutions. Day to day life in a new country can bring a lot of legal problems which can be frightening and stressful for young people. It is important that they ask and search for help. At Legal Aid and through my own experience, I learned there are many services available to support and refer people for assistance. Anyone can make mistakes and read the laws differently. Whether you are new in a country or you were born there, you might get a fine, have issues with insurance, or a fight with your family to the point that police become involved. Young refugees here have the responsibility to avoid those problems, but also have the right to get professional support.

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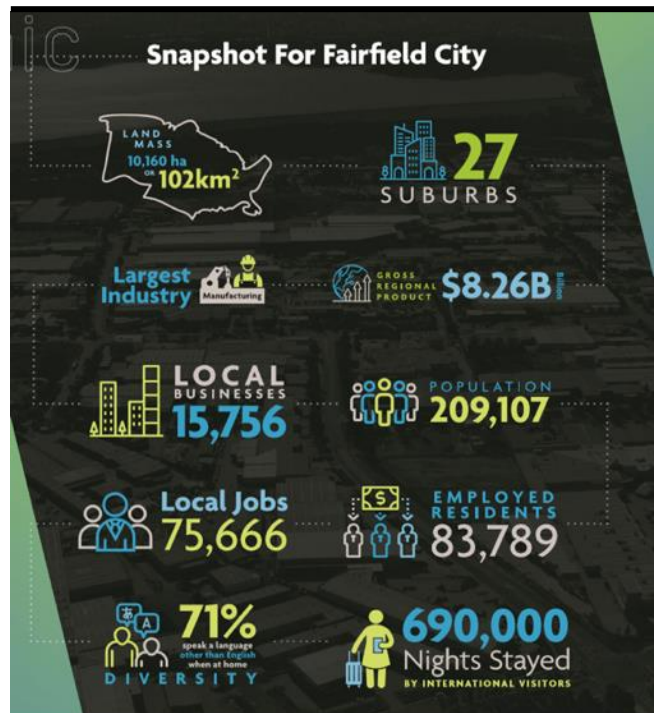
Appendix A: The History and Demographics of New South Wales

Since European settlement began, the population of New South Wales (NSW) has been representative of Australia as a whole. Nearly two-thirds of NSW residents are people of British origin, but since 1947 there has been a major influx of immigrants, first from Britain, then from the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, the Balkan region, and Turkey. Since the 1980s, large numbers of Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants also have arrived. Although Aboriginal people and those from the Torres Strait Islands make up only a small fraction of the state's population, New South Wales has the highest proportion of Australia's Aboriginal population, and their numbers in the early 21st century were increasing at a greater rate than those of other groups of Australians.

Many immigrants have prospered and there are recognizable national and ethnic concentrations in Sydney and the country's other large regional urban centers. In the early 21st century New South Wales had one of the highest proportions among the states of residents born overseas. This included refugees or other immigrants associated with humanitarian programs, mostly from Iraq and southern Asia.

The City of Fairfield is a local government area in the west of Sydney. In Fairfield, more than half of the residents were born overseas. Fairfield is considered one of the most ethnically diverse suburbs in Australia. For example, in the 2016 census, the proportion of residents in the Fairfield local government area who stated their ancestry as Vietnamese and Assyrian was over of sixteen times the national average. The area is linguistically diverse, with Vietnamese, Arabic, Assyrian Neo-Aramaic, and Cantonese languages spoken in households between two to seventeen times the national averages.

A Demographic Snapshot of Fairfield City

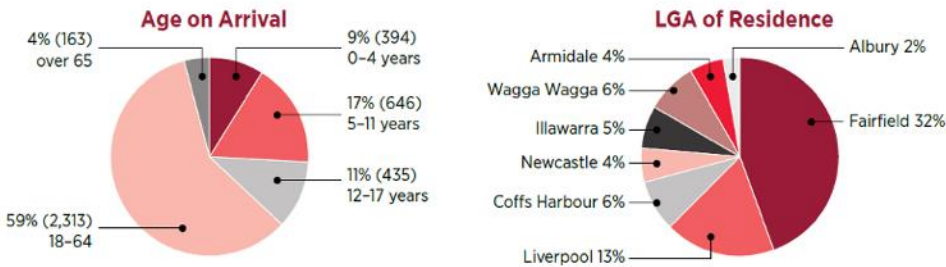


Some demographic data on Fairfield City. Infographic used with permission from Fairfield City Council.

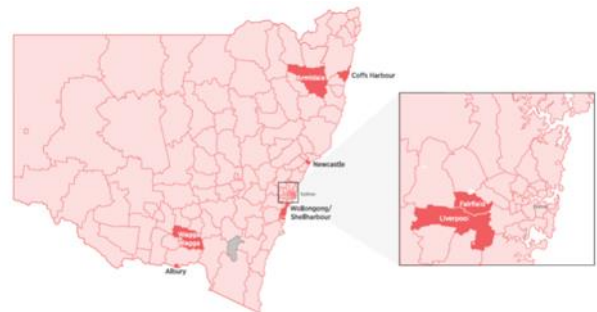
Appendix B: Refugees in NSW

New South Wales (NSW) resettles the most refugees of any Australian state or territory with 43% of Australia’s total humanitarian intake. NSW successfully settled around 11,190 arrivals in the 2016-17 financial year (DHA 2019). From November 2015 to July 2017, around 6,570 people displaced by conflict in Syria were resettled in NSW. The top five countries of origin for refugees coming to Australia are Iraq, Syria, Burma, Afghanistan, and Iran (DHA, 2019). Regional areas such as Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Newcastle, Wollongong, and Wagga Wagga are significant regional areas of settlement.

Resettlement in New South Wales



Data		1 Jan 1994- 1 July 2019	
Age on Arrival		15-25	27%
		16-17	14%
		18-25	58%
Top 10 Ethnicities		1. Iraq	18%
		2. Hazara	6%
		3. Arab	5%
		4. Chaldean	5%
		5. Assyrian	5%
		6. Serbian/Serb	18%
		7. Syrian	4%
		8. African	3%
		9. Dinka (Sudanese)	3%
		10. Kurdish	2%
LGA of residence		Fairfield	24%
		Liverpool	13%
		Blacktown	9%
		Auburn	8%
		Parramatta	7%
Humanitarian Youth Arrivals language		Arabic	63%
		Assyrian	14%
		Dari	9%
		Persia	8%
		Serbian	6%
Gender		Male	56%
		Female	44%



Areas of resettlement in NSW.

Source: Australian Department of Human Affairs (2019)

Appendix C: Refugees in Fairfield

More than half of residents living within the Fairfield area of Sydney were born overseas. Fairfield is a significantly diverse part of Sydney with 56.1% of residents born overseas. This is a slightly higher proportion than Fairfield LGA (53.7%) and a significantly higher proportion than Greater Sydney (36.7%). A significant number of new arrivals to Australia have settled within Fairfield over the last census period (2011-2016). Fairfield plays a significant role in welcoming new migrants and refugees to Australia. This is reflected in the census data which records the year of arrival to Australia: 7,086 people, or 13.1% of Fairfield's total population, arrived within the last five-year period. This is almost double the proportion of Greater Sydney (7.9%) and is also significantly higher than Fairfield LGA (8.7%), suggesting that Fairfield has absorbed the majority of the LGA's migrants and refugees.

In Fairfield, 19.9% of the total population, or one in five people, arrived within the last five years. Fairfield Heights (14.7%) and Carramar (10.7%) also experienced a significant number of new arrivals to Australia. It is also important to note that according to the Department of Social Services, a significant number of refugees have settled since the census date, approximately an additional 3,000 people. Our own observations suggest that most of these arrivals would have settled within Fairfield due to existing social, cultural, and familial networks.

Fairfield City is a vibrant place to live, work, and grow. It is a community of many cultures and people with a rich history of cultural traditions. Fairfield City celebrates diversity and feels like it has all the world in one place. Residents show an appreciation for different cultures and different communities who all live side by side as Australians under the Australian national flag. In my experience, Fairfield City is a place where you can celebrate diversity, but also new arrivals have combined their cultural backgrounds with Australian values. These values include respecting each other's heritage and culture, and the freedom of cultural expression.

About the RIT Project

The **Refugees in Towns (RIT)** project promotes understanding of the migrant/refugee experience in urban settings. Our goal is to understand and promote refugee integration by drawing on the knowledge and perspective of refugees and locals to develop deeper understanding of the towns in which they live. The project was conceived and is led by Karen Jacobsen. It is based at the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University and funded by the Henry J. Leir Foundation.

Our goals are twofold

Our first long-term goal is to build a theory of integration from the ground up by compiling a global database of case studies and reports to help us analyze and understand the process of immigrant/refugee integration. These cases provide a range of local insights about the many different factors that enable or obstruct integration, and the ways in which migrants and hosts co-exist, adapt, and struggle in urban spaces. We draw our cases from towns in resettlement countries, transit countries, and countries of first asylum around the world.

Our second more immediate goal is to support community leaders, aid organizations, and local governments in shaping policy, practice, and interventions. We engage policymakers and community leaders through town visits, workshops, conferences, and participatory research that identifies needs in their communities, encourages dialogue on integration, and shares good practices and lessons learned.

Why now?

The United States—among many other refugee-hosting countries—is undergoing a shift in its refugee policy through travel bans and the suspension of parts of its refugee program. Towns across the U.S. are responding in different ways: some resist national policy changes by declaring themselves “sanctuary cities,” while others support travel bans and exclusionary policies. In this period of social and political change, we seek to deepen our understanding of integration and the ways in which refugees, migrants, and their hosts interact. Our RIT project draws on and gives voice to both refugees and hosts in their experiences with integration around the world.

For more on RIT

On our website, there are many more case studies and reports from other towns and urban neighborhoods around the world, and we regularly release more reports as our project develops.

www.refugeesintowns.org

About the Authors

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Refugees in Towns is a project of the Feinstein International Center. More information on the project, including more case study reports, is available at <https://www.refugeesintowns.org/>

The Feinstein International Center is a research and teaching center based at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. Our mission is to promote the use of evidence and learning in operational and policy responses to protect and strengthen the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of people affected by or at risk of humanitarian crises.

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