

*Amended 4/07/06*

*Note: This document has been provided by Armidale Sanctuary Humanitarian Settlement Inc. as an example of their settlement procedures in 2006. It should be taken as an example of how a group might organise to settle a refugee, not as an accurate description of current settlement procedures.*

## **ARMIDALE SANCTUARY HUMANITARIAN SETTLEMENT INC.**

### **Settlement Procedures**

*(Jobs to do prior to and soon after the arrival of Humanitarian Visa 202 holders)*

- 1. Paperwork before arrival [deleted]**
  
- 2. Just prior to arrival** *(when you know the date of their arrival and have a copy of their visa number)*
  
- 3. On arrival**
  
- 4. Early after arrival** *(perhaps second day after they have had some sleep)*
  
- 5. In the first few weeks following arrival**

## 1. Paperwork before arrival [deleted]

## 2. Just prior to arrival (when you know the date of their arrival and have a copy of their visa number)

- i. Rent and furnish an appropriate house or flat. The family's wishes may be sought if time permits. Make it clear to the family that the minimum rental time is 6 months (Armidale estate agents will not rent for less and if this is broken Sanctuary might have to pay the remaining time). The bond and first 2 weeks rent will be paid by Dept. of Housing (*see note below*)

*Estate agents will differ re their arrangements/agreement for this payment. Some will accept a Sanctuary cheque for the above amount but not cash it and agree to refund it when the Dept. of Housing cheque arrives (when the family is here they apply for and receive the bond and 2 weeks rent). This needs negotiation. Forms given by the Dept. of Housing must be completed and returned to that Dept. as they request. Ensure that all this is done according to the Dept. requirements. **NB Under no circumstances should Sanctuary pay the bond directly to the Rental Board.** Consult with the Treasurer if you have any queries.*

- ii. Arrange the delivery of major furnishings with Anglicare, Coffs Harbour. (*St Vincents de Paul might provide us, free of charge, with extra blankets and clothes. [redacted]*). Insist on an 8 seater dining table for a large family (not 2 x 4 seater). Purchase of small items (crochery, cutlery, sheets etc) will have to be negotiated with Anglicare – it has been the practice for us to purchase these at K Mart and that is much more satisfactory as we can decide what is best to buy as we might have some donations of listed items. We will need at least a couple more lounge chairs (more if large family) from donors as well as other items to complete the house and make it comfortable prior to the family's arrival. The provision of a television set is important from the points of view of both socialisation and acquisition/improvement of English.
- iii. Obtain the information folder provided to each new arrival by Anglicare and the New Residents' kit provided by Armidale Dumaresq Council (*obtainable from council offices or Armidale Visitors' Centre*).
- iv. Start the rental at least 3 days before the family arrives in order to receive deliveries of large items some of which will be in flat boxes and need assembly (might not be easy so have a couple of handipersons ready). We also will need to make beds, fill fridge, provide flowers and other welcoming frills. Have first meal ready for them as well as breakfast ingredients and other basic foods. This initial expenditure of approximately \$150 is a gift from Sanctuary. Similarly if there is a wood-burning stove, the first load of wood will be paid for by Sanctuary as a gift to the family.
- v. Arrange meeting of family at Sydney Airport and over-night stay if that is necessary. Organise their travel to Armidale and meeting them on their arrival in Armidale. If travelling by train they will need money for food during the journey.
- vi. Book Centrelink appointment for the second day after their arrival (the first day they may be too shellshocked). If any one of the adults is not a competent English speaker this will require a Centrelink interpreter and this has to be pre-booked.

[Redacted] and [redacted] will probably be the initial interviewers and the meeting will take 1-2 hours. A Sanctuary person will need to be "the named person" for legal reasons if the family are not English speakers. [Redacted] will take over this after 6 months if still needed.

- vii. Connect electricity and, if necessary, gas. In the past this situation has varied and has on occasion required some payment and the necessity for an individual Sanctuary member to do so in their own name. In order to avoid this situation, we are trying to negotiate a sanctioned procedure with [redacted] and [redacted]. Please check the current situation.
- viii. Obtain a copy of the form *Rentstart by Phone* from the Dept. of Housing know about the family's pending arrival and book an interview for, again, the second day after arrival. (*The purpose of this is to get back the bond and 2 weeks' rent or pay directly to the estate agent if that has been the arrangement. See note about this in 2i. NB Do NOT pay bond directly to Rental Board*) Fill in as much of this form as is possible including asking the real estate agent to fill in the relevant section.
- ix. Advise neighbours that a new family is arriving and encourage their support. Make sure they have written information of who to contact in Sanctuary if any problems arise.

### **3. On arrival**

- i. Ensure that the house is warm and welcoming and that there is sufficient warm clothing if it is winter. We have found it best to provide some warm clothing and then take an early opportunity to escort family members to St. Vincent de Paul/Salvation Army to choose their own additional clothes (*see 2 vii*).
- ii. Have about 6 –10 Sanctuary members meet the family and escort to house and then after half an hour or so leave them with the core group of 2 or 3 to go over essentials before leaving them to settle in and sleep. Ensure that they feel secure, warm and know how to contact someone (Sanctuary member, neighbour?) if they have any concerns.

### **4. Early after arrival (perhaps second day after they have had some sleep)**

- i. Adult members of the family will need to (*taking travel documents with them*):
  - a. Open bank account(s) – Sanctuary will need to advance a small deposit and share (\$10). NB Each person receiving Centrelink payments should have a separate bank account. If young person receiving payment, this will be paid into the mother's account until the young person turns 18.
  - b. Sign on with Medicare
  - c. Sign rent agreement at estate agents and get evidence of this (may be eligible for rental allowance from Centrelink)

- d. Then do Centrelink appointment. NB. Evidence of the 3 above will be necessary in order, with travel document, to establish identity and qualification for Centrelink payments.

*Request part payment immediately and rest in fortnight's time from Centrelink. This is possible because though the family tax benefit is linked to obtaining a Tax File No. the rest of the payments are not. Also be aware that Intensive Assistance for job seeking (with the requirement of reporting on a 2-weekly basis) is a possibility if that would benefit an individual more than attending English classes. Request referral to Salvation Army for vouchers for food and clothing.*

- e. Submit form *Rentstart by Phone* to the Dept of Housing. This can be done by fax – need to include copy of Visa, Centrelink Income Statement and the section completed by estate agent. This is to obtain rental bond and first 2 weeks' rent.
- f. Arrange appointment with Salvation Army to obtain vouchers and assist with exchanging vouchers for clothing and food. (*\$30 food and \$10 clothing in April 2006*)
- ii. Go food shopping with the family. They may need an advance of money until all Centrelink money comes through and this may take 2-3 weeks as the tax file number is needed before all payments can be made. Centrelink will organise Tax File Number. (*Liaise with treasurer who will provide money and give you a budget. This advance is added to the loan.*)
- iii. Familiarise the family with the town especially schools, parks, church, shops etc.
- iv. Organise electricity account to be in their name (if not already) and gas if connected.
- v. Organise phone connection. It is probably best if they are connected only to local and STD and use a phone card for overseas. Make sure on Day 1 they know who to ring and how if there is an emergency.
- vi. Ask all members of incoming group who will be receiving Centrelink payments to sign documents acknowledging their debt and agreement to repay at an agreed sum through Centrepay. Do this in consultation with treasurer.

## **5. In the first few weeks following arrival**

- i. Make social connections as needed e.g. soccer teams, arrangements for church attendance if they wish this, neighbours (advisable re emergencies), Sanctuary members, library if they speak English and the internet there if they are able to use this. Contact [redacted] for a free computer after a couple or so weeks if the family wants this. Eligibility might depend on the family having student members.
- ii. Check whether new arrivals have brought x-rays and other health records with them (NB likely to be in IOM plastic bag if they have one). Those without records can request them under the Freedom of Information legislation (can be accessed from DIMA [now Department of Home Affairs] website but speak to committee member [redacted] if in doubt about how to proceed with this). Connect the family with a medical service and contact [redacted] re the need for an early intervention medical health check and

especially all family members' vaccinations. Explain medical services in Australia e.g. when to use doctor and when to go to Hospital Outpatients. Stress the requirement that children have all necessary vaccinations before commencing school. *(At present [redacted] is the nominated 'health' person on the Sanctuary Committee. She will be up to date with a changing situation and will assist with this).*

- iii. The treasurer will work out with the family, after the Centrelink payments are established with the regular amount, their broad budget and what their costs will be (electricity, phone, etc). S/he will organise a direct debit fortnightly for their rent and then perhaps after about week 5 organise a direct debit for their repayment of their fares (maybe \$150 per fortnight or what ever seems reasonable).
- iv. Ensure that each member of the family is aware of the relevant Australian social, legal and cultural practices. This must necessarily be a gradual process but the following have been noted in the past: *(NB Very useful DVDs have been obtained from Anglicare and passed to local [redacted] Office – make arrangements to view. At present held in English and Arabic only)*

Legal *(stress that offences which lead to a criminal record will make it difficult to find employment)*

- It is illegal to hit children in Australia
- Need to tell Centrelink when getting a paid job, even if for only a few hours. Failure to do so means incurring a debt and may lead to prosecution and a criminal record.
- Need to wear helmets when riding a bike (good idea to get a bike rider to give a few tips and lessons)
- Need to obtain driver's licence before driving a car. Cars MUST be insured.
- Go over the requirements of a lease (inspections, standards of cleanliness etc.) and costs involved in moving house: moving, repairs, bond if earning more than allowed amount or have savings exceeding allowed amount (currently \$1000).

#### Social

- There is no obligation to invite anyone into your house who comes to your door.
  - It is the custom to say please when making requests and thank you when someone hands you something or does something for you.
  - When being served in shops, banks etc. it is the custom to form a queue.
- v. **Schools / Language Training.** When the family has settled a little and is ready to consider school, discuss options with them and then organise enrolment, uniforms etc. (schools can be generous re second-hand or even new uniforms).

*Involve [redacted] (DET) in school enrolment. This will ensure that the school is aware of all possible forms of assistance for the student.*

Organise adult English classes if needed (LTC or TAFE or both) – eligible for 510 hours of tuition with a fairly automatic extension of 100 hours. Students 16-25 are eligible for 910 hours. *NB* LTC is relevant for people who have a good command of English and are aiming at tertiary study. If in doubt start with TAFE who will do an assessment and pass on to LTC if that is the relevant place.

Preschool age children should be eligible for 13 weeks of childcare (helps re learning English and socialising) if this is wanted. TAFE arranges childcare at TAFE for mothers (of children not at school) learning English at TAFE.

Family Day Care runs a playgroup Mon – Thu 10.00am to 11.30. People who are enrolled, even if on waiting list, are eligible to attend.

Several Sanctuary members are trained as Home Tutors. Check with them about the possibility of additional tuition at home.

- vi . **Job Seeking:** If adult new arrivals have good English and are keen to seek work immediately, assist to liaise with jobs agency: [redacted] in Armidale. *NB [Redacted], Manager of [redacted] has been asked by [redacted], Mayor of Armidale, to get jobs for refugees. [Mayor of Armidale] has asked to be notified [redacted] when we have new arrivals who are seeking jobs i.e. identify them with Sanctuary. This agency has the link with [redacted] which is a potential employer.*