



Community  
Refugee  
Sponsorship  
Australia

## Submission Australia's Humanitarian Program 2023-24



31 May 2023



## Background and Summary

This submission is made in response to the Discussion Paper published by the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) in connection with Australia's 2023-24 Humanitarian Program. Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) is a leading independent Australian charity working on a national basis to encourage, develop and support programs that expand and improve refugee settlement in Australia by harnessing the generosity, goodwill and social capital of groups of everyday Australians.

Australia's humanitarian migration program is an important and celebrated part of Australia's post-colonial history and has enjoyed support across the political spectrum over many decades. Australia has resettled more than 900,000 refugees since the Second World War – migrants who have made enormous contributions to the social and economic fabric of Australia. In recent decades, every year has seen the number of refugees and other forcibly displaced people in the world grow to new record levels, and over recent years the resettlement of refugees has been at a recent historic low due to the pandemic and other factors. Never has the need been greater for the peaceful and prosperous countries of the world to do more to respond to the needs of refugees.

The Albanese government and future Australian governments of all persuasions will continue to face international and domestic pressure to progressively expand our national resettlement response to the growing challenge. This pressure no doubt informs the Albanese government's stated ambition of increasing the government-supported humanitarian program to 27,000 places per annum over time, and provide an additional 5,000 community sponsored places to humanitarian migrants each year. The government should waste no time in implementing this aspiration.

There is also a growing consensus among policy makers and experts that Australia needs new frameworks and programs to facilitate the active involvement of everyday Australian citizens and other non-traditional actors (such as clubs, schools, businesses, faith organisations and others) in welcoming and supporting the integration of refugee newcomers. Such approaches are needed to address a number of important policy objectives including:

- Maintaining public support for Australia's humanitarian migration program and the related social license of government with respect to sustaining and growing our humanitarian migration program
- Enabling Australia to do more in its response to the global refugee challenge by harnessing the energy and resources of private actors to supplement government-funded efforts
- Ensuring that when refugees settle in Australia they are well supported to achieve their aspirations and realise their full social and economic potential as soon as possible, including by maximising their contribution to the Australian labour market

Furthermore, early evidence suggests that community sponsor groups are helping to overcome the challenges faced by refugee newcomers in securing permanent housing in the context of Australia's well documented affordable housing crisis, by tapping into 'hidden housing', securing discounts, providing top up financial support and finding other creative ways to address the housing needs of refugee newcomers.

'Community sponsorship' is a tried and tested way to do this. It is an approach successfully practiced and developed in Canada for over 40 years and now practiced in more than a dozen countries around the world. The concept refers to a system through which groups of everyday citizens are empowered to prepare for and welcome the migration of a refugee individual or family from overseas directly into their local communities. These groups, working in a voluntary capacity, take on responsibility for some of the costs involved in resettlement as well as committing to provide practical settlement and integration support for a set period of time.

The social capital, local knowledge, diverse experience and independent problem-solving abilities of these groups of everyday citizens and the networks and organisations that they belong to is the ‘secret sauce’ that makes community sponsorship work. Canadian studies reveal that community sponsorship of refugees fast-tracks the economic participation of refugees and that those with less initial advantages are the ones that benefit the most.

In the last decade, successive Australian governments have experimented with different models to engage members of the community in sharing the cost of refugee settlement with government. These have included the Community Proposal Pilot (CPP) (2013 - 2017) and Community Support Program (CSP) (2017 to present). In practice, however, both of these programs have operated primarily as privately-funded family reunion programs and neither has successfully engaged significant numbers of everyday Australians, beyond the refugee diaspora, in welcoming and assisting refugee newcomers.

A breakthrough was made, however, in 2022 when we and others celebrated the introduction of Australia’s first ‘designed for purpose’ community sponsorship program – the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP). This four year pilot program, co-designed by the Department and CRSA, enables groups of everyday Australians to take the lead in supporting the settlement and integration of 1,500 refugee newcomers – families and individuals referred to Australia for resettlement by the UNHCR. This ‘sponsor a stranger’ program was launched in mid 2022 and has already seen dozens of households successfully welcomed by groups of everyday citizens in four different states, with many more to come in the months and years ahead. The Department has access to early independent evaluative data on the initial success of the program compiled by the research consortium led by the University of Queensland which it can draw upon in considering the recommendations made in this submission.

The introduction of the CRISP is an important and welcome first step towards more fully engaging the broader Australian community in contributing to Australia’s resettlement effort as part of a ‘whole of society’ response to the global refugee challenge. However, there is so much more that could and should be done to sustain, scale and fully harness the potential benefits of broader community engagement in refugee resettlement including:

1. Making the CRISP program ‘additional’ to the current humanitarian intake quota of 13,750 places per annum – This is needed to provide a compelling reason for community members to engage (ie every refugee sponsored is one more person who can rebuild their lives in safety) which will ensure ongoing public support for the CRISP and not have the program dismissed as a government ‘cost-shifting’ measure.
2. Making the CRISP a permanent feature of our migration program – This would maintain the momentum of efforts to promote this approach and mobilise the groups of volunteers who are the real engine behind community sponsorship.
3. Using the CRISP as a blueprint (and drawing on any relevant learnings/tools from the CPP and CSP), work with CRSA and other key civil society representatives to co-design and launch a new ‘linked’ sponsorship stream that encourages and enables members of the community to sponsor refugees known to or identified by them. This will motivate even more civil society group (including those with an interest in supporting women at risk or LGBTIQ+ refugees) to become involved as they would be able to sponsor refugees known to them or with particular profiles.
4. Developing a new educational migration pathway through which tertiary institutions and the communities around them could offer both resettlement and educational opportunities to refugees who are keen and capable of continuing their education in Australia. Such a pathway could sit under the umbrella of a new ‘linked’ sponsorship program.



5. Continue to develop skilled and employment-driven migration pathways for refugees (noting the successful work already undertaken by Talent Beyond Boundaries) and explore the potential synergies between such programs and the 'community sponsorship' model.
6. Scaling up both the existing CRISP and new named-sponsorship pathway to meet the Albanese government's ambition of 5,000 community sponsored visas per annum, and potentially even more in the future.



## Our organisation and the role of the broader Australian community

CRSA is an independent Australian charity working on a national basis. Our mission is to lead in encouraging, developing and supporting programs that expand and improve refugee settlement in Australia by harnessing the generosity, goodwill and social capital of groups of everyday Australians.

After many years of research, advocacy and independent piloting of community-led settlement, CRSA was contracted by the Department of Home Affairs in March 2022 to co-design and deliver the new national Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP).<sup>1</sup> Our role in delivering the CRISP was informed by the unique know-how that we developed through independently developing and piloting a first-of-its-kind 'Group Mentorship Program' while borders were closed during the pandemic in 2020 and following the arrival of Afghan evacuees in 2021. The Group Mentorship Program mobilised and trained self-directed local volunteer groups to provide practical settlement and integration support to refugee newcomers, inspired by Canada's community sponsorship experience. These groups were then paired with households in need of support, with approximately 100 households benefitting from increased support through community-led efforts.

Given our mission and history as an organisation, CRSA's contributions in this submission are focussed on why and how the resources and goodwill of members of the Australian community should be harnessed to support the settlement and integration of refugees.<sup>2</sup>

## Greater community involvement is needed to support a large, successful and sustainable humanitarian program

One of the key observations that our organisation has made in the context of implementing the CRISP and precursor Group Mentorship Program is that many members of the wider Australian community have little or no understanding of or meaningful involvement in Australia's humanitarian program or settlement services. Despite a high level of interest in supporting refugee newcomers, many individuals, clubs, businesses, philanthropic organisations and others report that it's hard to find a way to practically help with the settlement of refugees and humanitarian entrants. There are simply few opportunities for everyday Australians to systematically meet and engage with newly arrived refugees in a meaningful, substantial and mutually rewarding way.

This is a missed opportunity for both refugee newcomers and the Australian community. In particular:

- The significant financial and other resources that community members would like to channel towards supporting refugee resettlement are not being fully harnessed. Aside from the potential contribution of time, money, and social capital, we are seeing how effective community members can be in finding suitable permanent housing for refugees in the context of Australia's well documented affordable housing crisis.
- Refugees and members of the Australian community from different backgrounds find it difficult to meet and get to know each other as everyday people who live in the same community, and instead too often remain 'strangers' or 'others' to one another.

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<sup>1</sup> The pilot is currently due to conclude in June 2025, having been launched in May 2022.

<sup>2</sup> In this submission we use the term 'refugee' to refer to any person who would meet the criteria for a permanent visa under a stream of Australia's humanitarian migration program.



- Refugees miss out on tapping into the social and professional networks that could otherwise help them achieve their aspirations and reach their full potential to contribute fully to Australia's economy and communities.
- Established members of the Australian community miss out on fully enjoying the sense of pride, satisfaction and purpose that would otherwise come from experiencing first-hand how Australia's humanitarian program (and related budgetary investment) benefits refugees settling here from around the world and contributing to this effort. Instead, people often feel only dismay and hopelessness when faced with news about refugees.
- Refugees start their Australian settlement journeys in locations determined by government policy makers, and not in other parts of Australia where they might also be welcome and needed.

## Community sponsorship is tried and tested with 'win-win' benefits

Community sponsorship has been working successfully in Canada for more than 40 years. Ordinary community members in Canada have sponsored and welcomed more than 325,000 refugees since the late 1970s. This number is in addition to those entering under the government-assisted resettlement program. The multiple benefits inherent in this approach has seen the practice spreading around the world in countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, New Zealand, Spain and Argentina.

### The concept of 'community sponsorship'

The concept of 'community sponsorship' is still being refined by governments and civil society actors around the world, but most would agree that at its heart, the term refers to a programmatic framework through which a group of individuals are empowered to work together to prepare for and welcome a refugee family to their local area, providing refugees with holistic and organic support from a local network of volunteers from 'day one' in the country and sharing some of the costs involved in the resettlement experience as part of a shared-cost approach with the federal government.

The role of 'the group' is of critical importance as so many of the benefits of community sponsorship flow from the social capital of the group of local volunteer supporters. The involvement of a group of volunteers (rather than just an individual sponsor) is also protective for refugees and volunteers alike, and establishes a reliable and robust source of support. We use the term 'private sponsorship' to refer to circumstances where private individuals, rather than government, bear a significant portion of the costs associated with the migration of a refugee to Australia (for example, through the CSP). We reserve the term 'community sponsorship' for circumstances in which the sponsorship is initiated or supported by a group of people rather than a single individual or private entity.

Of equal importance to the concept of 'the group' is the idea that the group be empowered and trusted to support the settlement of the newcomers. They are not simply individual volunteers being directed by a large organisation, but rather a self-directed group of innovators and problems solvers with expertise in their own fields of endeavour and local communities.

### The benefits and 'ripple effect'

The obvious benefits of this approach include:

- The expansion of national resettlement capacity
- The diversification of settlement locations for refugee newcomers, noting that more and more 'regional' communities are becoming home to pioneer refugee households and 'clusters' through the CRISP



- The social and emotional benefits of strong community-led support on arrival for refugee newcomers.
- The benefits for fast-tracking the economic participation of refugee newcomers (see more below)
- The benefits to community members who contribute their time and energy to sponsoring refugees, who find the opportunity an antidote to loneliness, disconnection within their community and feelings of despair or hopelessness in the face of the global refugee challenge.

The benefits to refugees of engaging the broader Australian community do not just flow to those directly involved as program participants – there is a broad and powerful ‘ripple effect’ from community sponsorship. Once members of the community begin meeting and getting to know one another through community sponsorship, the network of relationships and connections can expand exponentially. One of the Afghan evacuees who has recently benefited from CRSA’s Group Mentorship Program recently recounted to our team how he had been able to pass on a treasure-trove of local knowledge to other evacuees - knowledge that he had absorbed from his mentor group and then shared with other Afghan evacuees who didn’t have the support of such a group. Added to this we frequently hear of how both mentor groups and refugee mentees pull their wider networks into the web of new relationships that they develop through the program. Friends, family, neighbours and co-workers become drawn in by program participants and in doing so find themselves meeting people from other walks of life and other cultural backgrounds whom they might never have otherwise met.

### Economic/labour market benefits

The contribution that refugees have made to the Australian economy as employees, entrepreneurs and consumers is well documented, but despite high levels of motivation and a diversity of skill-sets among refugee newcomers, there is a widely held concern that ‘[i]f there is a weak link in Australia’s settlement record, it is getting refugees into jobs soon after they arrive.’<sup>3</sup>

Decades of data from Canada offers strong empirical evidence that community sponsorship offers a way for Australia to resettle more refugees who, with the help of local community supporter groups, will find appropriate work more quickly than they currently do and help to ease skills shortages in local areas. Whatever the profile or background of the refugee newcomer, community sponsorship enables newcomers to tap into the extensive social and professional networks of their sponsor group members, as well as learn from their sponsors about local employment conditions, expectations and opportunities. As community sponsorship typically involves refugee newcomers receiving support from a group of five or more local volunteers, there is a much wider network of knowledge and support available to the individual newcomer and family unit than that experienced by a refugee newcomer who is initially only supported by a single professional caseworker or close family members. Canadian data indicates:

- A strong beneficial effect of sponsorship on employment outcomes, especially in the first two years of arrival, even after taking into account demographic differences between privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) and government-assisted refugees (GARs), especially for disadvantaged refugees such as women with little education (Kaida, Stick & Hou, 2020 – See Annexure 1).<sup>4</sup>
- 70% of sponsored refugees find employment within their first full year post arrival (IRCC, 2016)<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Centre for Policy Development, [Settling Better Report](#) (2017) p 5

<sup>4</sup> Kaida, Hou & Stick, [The Long-term Economic Outcomes of Refugee Private Sponsorship](#) (2020)

<sup>5</sup> Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [Evaluation of the Settlement Program](#) (2016)



Anecdotal evidence from the first year of the CRISP program is consistent with the Canadian experience. We are regularly hearing reports of refugee participants securing employment and other vocational opportunities with the help of their community supporter groups and we expect that evaluation data will reflect this in due course. As an example, one of the first refugees arriving under the program in late August 2022 had four potential job opportunities lined up before even landing in Australia thanks to the efforts and networks of his community supporter group and is currently working as a chef in the hospitality industry in regional NSW, continuing the career that he began in Syria. In another regional community, both husband and wife recently secured ongoing employment in local businesses. Another Melbourne-based refugee participant is currently establishing her own business with the help of her community supporter group.

## Australia has a new blueprint for larger scale community sponsorship

The CRISP was announced in December 2021 as a four-year pilot in response to the findings of the Shergold Review and the Department's 2021 review of the CSP. It was co-designed in the first half of 2022 by the Department and CRSA, specifically to enable genuine community-led settlement and integration of refugees, inspired by the Canadian approach and similar programs that have been implemented in other countries around the world. Dozens of refugee households have now arrived in Australia to be welcomed and supported by community supporter groups in large cities and regional towns across the country, with many more to come over the next three years. To date, our monitoring work indicates that the model is working very successfully, with refugee participants and community supporter groups all playing their expected roles and sharing many positive reports and anecdotes with our team.

CRISP provides a very sound blueprint for the future of community sponsorship in Australia under the Albanese government and beyond (see Annexure 2 for a summary of design principles and key features). There are, however, two key limitations that need to be overcome if we are to fully harness the power of community in the settlement of refugees and meet the Albanese Government's stated aim of 5,000 additional humanitarian entrants per annum through community sponsorship.





## Lack of ‘additionality’ in the CRISP

Currently visas allocated to the CRISP are not additional to the pre-existing humanitarian intake quota. This means that, unlike sponsorship programs in Canada and other countries, groups who might be interested in refugee sponsorship cannot be reassured that their contribution is the decisive factor in enabling one more refugee family to have an opportunity to find safety Australia. Members of the Australian public typically see refugee resettlement as the responsibility of government given that it has been that way for so many years. While the CRISP offers a range of benefits to refugees, their supporters and the Australian community notwithstanding this lack of ‘additionality’, some would-be sponsors take the view that because refugees arriving in Australia under the CRISP remain within the government’s humanitarian quota, sponsoring refugees through the CRISP involves doing the work of government as part of a cost-shifting exercise.

A simple decision by the Commonwealth to make an additional allocation of visas available to the CRISP each year would introduce the feature of ‘additionality’ and remedy this concern.

## A new stream is needed to enable ‘named’ or ‘linked’ sponsorships

There are many individuals and groups in the Australian community who are looking for an affordable and accessible way to help facilitate and support the settlement of a refugee/family already known to them through community connections. By design, the CRISP doesn’t currently allow for any ‘named’ sponsorships in that there is no capacity for community supporter groups to be able to nominate who they would like to sponsor. The CSP does not provide a fit-for-purpose solution either as it is simply not designed to encourage and enable broad community engagement and is widely acknowledged to be operating mostly as an expensive family reunion program for refugees. While expanding family reunion opportunities for refugees is important, it is also important to recognise that the broader Australian community has little if any involvement in the CSP due to:

- Its significant costs to proposers including visa application charges and intermediary feeds<sup>6</sup>
- Its eligibility criteria, that excludes many refugees who are in clear need of protection and durable solutions
- The absence of mechanisms that actively encourage or require the involvement of a ‘community’ in the sponsorship of an individual or family.<sup>7</sup>

Many of these features were the subject of analysis and critique in the Department’s own review of the CSP following the 2019 report of the ‘Shergold Review’<sup>8</sup>. In short, it is widely accepted that the CSP is not fit for purpose as a ‘community sponsorship’ program in Australia.

Creating a fit-for-purpose ‘linked’ sponsorship program that attracts widespread public involvement would involve developing a new stream for ‘named’ or ‘linked’ sponsorship, using the CRISP as a blueprint but also drawing on any useful know-how or tools developed through the CSP. Such a named program would still require the support of a national civil society partner but would also benefit from the involvement of a network of more locally based organisations to support the strength and scale of the program.

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<sup>6</sup> While the visa application charge has been reduced to approximately \$8,000 per family with effect from 1 July 2022, the remaining charge combined with fees charged by ‘Approved Proposing Organisations’ remain significant and a barrier for many would-be proposers. These expenses are in addition to migrant agent fees and the cost of direct support to the humanitarian migrants entering under the CSP (such as airfares and the assurance of financial support).

<sup>7</sup> A CSP application can be made by just one Australian proposer without the involvement or support of any other individuals or community groups.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/files/csp-review-findings.pdf>



The CRISP framework could be readily adapted to facilitate ‘linked’ or ‘named’ sponsorship, whereby community supporter groups can sponsor a refugee individual or family known to them. Following this approach, the sponsorship would need to involve a group of Australians (not just a single private proposer) – this could be friends or family of the refugee(s) concerned or people who have a less personal connection but are interested in supporting refugees from a particular background (eg a particular country or faith community) or introduced to them through community connection. Special interest groups could also use this model to assist refugees who face unique challenges such as women who are at risk or refugees who identify as LGBTIQ.

Such an approach could feature the same or different cost sharing arrangements between the CSGs and Commonwealth to that of the current CRISP. Sponsors who seek to assist an individual or family already known to them will generally be more willing to bear the financial costs associated with this. This could result in the CRISP program potentially having two streams: (i) the current CRISP stream to enable sponsorship of those referred via the UNHCR at a modest cost to the community supporter group; and (ii) a new CRISP stream to enable sponsorship of refugees known to their Australian supporters, with more significant (but still affordable) costs borne by the group. The end result would be similar to Canada’s current community sponsorship framework that has two key programs – the Private Refugee Sponsorship program (for ‘named’ sponsorships, under which sponsors cover a range of costs including up to 12 months of income support) and the BVOR<sup>9</sup> program (for sponsorship of UNHCR-referred refugees, under which sponsors only need to cover 6 months of income support).

There are other important factors to consider when contemplating a future ‘named’ community sponsorship program:

- a) While community members may be prepared to bear additional financial responsibilities if they can ‘name’ the refugee(s) they wish to sponsor, they will have low tolerance for paying significant visa application charges and ‘middle-man’ fees. Community members, in our experience, wish to see their time and resources having a direct impact on the wellbeing of the refugee(s) that they sponsor rather than being paid to the government or large organisations.
- b) A future ‘named’ sponsorship program should still involve a group of Australian citizens or permanent residents doing the welcoming and providing settlement support – some of these could be family members but some should be unrelated to the refugee newcomers. So many of the settlement and integration benefits of community sponsorship flow from the refugee newcomers having immediate access to a broad social network on arrival.
- c) An affordable and additional ‘named’ sponsorship program is likely to be oversubscribed as soon as it becomes available as there are so many members of the Australian community searching for visa pathways for refugees who are known to them. As a result, we would advise that the government ring-fence a certain number of visas for unnamed sponsorship (ie UNHCR -referred refugees, as per the current CRISP) and allow the balance of visas to be available for ‘linked’ or ‘named’ sponsorship.

## What is needed to realise these policy objectives?

### CRSA’s recommendations

In establishing the framework for the future of Australia’s humanitarian program, and in achieving the stated objectives of the Albanese government, we recommend a number of short and longer-term steps, working

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<sup>9</sup> Blended Visa Office-Referral Program



primarily from the blueprint provided by the current CRISP, but informed by experiences and tools developed through the CSP and CPP.

### Short term (2023)

1. *Make the current CRISP and CSP programs additional to the annual humanitarian intake*
2. *Co-design a new 'linked' or 'named' sponsorship pathway using CRISP as the blueprint, to commence in mid 2024, in partnership with CRSA and other key civil society representatives*
3. *Support the development of a new 'educational migration pathway' under the umbrella of a 'linked' sponsorship pathway, in partnership with CRSA, RESIG (Refugee Education Special Interest Group) and education sector representatives*
4. *Determine how many visas will be available under the CRISP and a new 'linked' or 'named' sponsorship pathway in 2023-24 and beyond, noting the aspiration of 5,000 per annum*
5. *Establish the CRISP as a permanent program following review of initial evaluation data and the implementation of any necessary program refinements*

### Medium and Longer Term (Mid 2024 on wards)

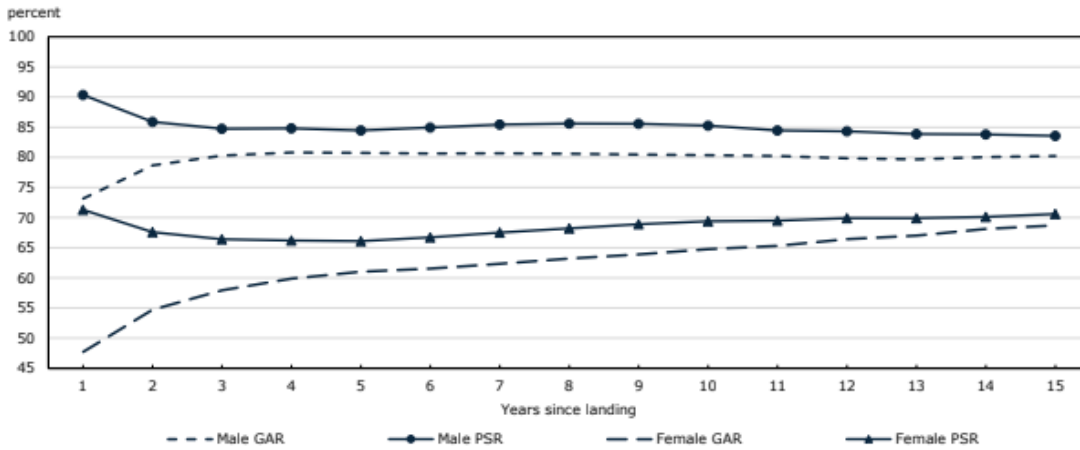
6. *Launch the new 'linked' or 'named' sponsorship stream (including an educational migration pathway).*
7. *Steadily increase the number of community sponsored visas available under community sponsorship streams to meet the government's target of 5,000 additional community sponsored humanitarian visas each year.*



## Annexure 1

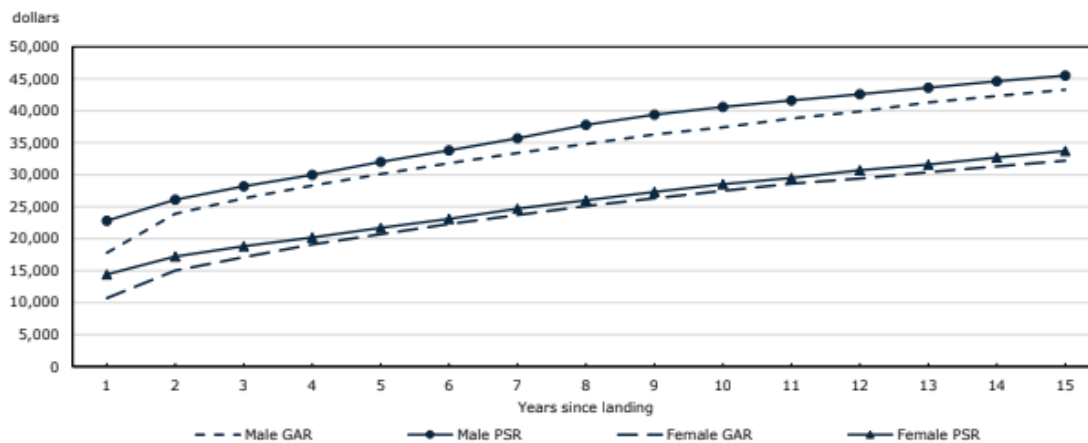
### Extracts from Kaida, Hou & Stick, *The Long-term Economic Outcomes of Refugee Private Sponsorship* (2020)

**Chart 1**  
Observed employment rates by entry class, for male and female refugees, 1 to 15 years since



**Note:** GAR: government-assisted refugee; PSR: privately sponsored refugee.  
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Longitudinal Immigration Database, 1980 to 2015.

**Chart 2**  
Observed annual earnings of male and female refugees by entry class and years since landing



**Notes:** GAR: government-assisted refugee; PSR: privately sponsored refugee.  
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Longitudinal Immigration Database, 1980 to 2015.



## Annexure 2

The development of the CRISP was guided by eight guiding principles, many of them relating to the role of community supporter groups ('CSGs') (the Australian equivalent of a 'sponsor group'):

1. Settlement support is a group endeavour by the CSGs
2. CSGs are independent and self-directed in their work
3. CSG are trusted as effective problem solvers and innovators
4. CSGs will support refugee autonomy and agency
5. CSGs will take a holistic approach to supporting the individual and family
6. CSGs will be well supported
7. All program participants should feel safe and respected
8. CRSA, the Department of Home Affairs and the CSGs will work together identify and manage risks involved in providing support to the refugee families

Other important principles that inform CRSA's delivery of the CRISP include the need to take strength-based approaches to supporting refugee settlement and for all actors to be informed about the impact that trauma can have on settlement.

Having been involved in the design and early stages of implementation of the program, CRSA is confident that structurally it provides a very sound blueprint for the future of community sponsorship in Australia under the Albanese government and beyond.

The following features, in particular, are very welcome:

- The program helps to settle those in most urgent need of resettlement (as identified by UNHCR and referred to the Australian government), as compared with the CSP which only assists people who have a strong connection with a proposer in Australia
- There is no age, language, skills or country of origin criteria applied in assessing refugee eligibility
- The program not only encourages but requires the involvement of a group of local volunteers
- The program allows groups based anywhere in Australia to initiate the process of receiving a refugee family into their community, rather than locations being chosen by policymakers
- The government has invested in promotion of the program and in ensuring that CSGs receive screening, training and support by funding CRSA to perform these roles on a national basis
- The financial commitment of CSGs is material but still affordable owing to the fact that refugees in the program have access to government-funded travel to Australia, income support through Centrelink, Medicare, the Adult Migrant English Program and other mainstream government services
- Settlement support through the Humanitarian Settlement Program is available as a safety net in the event that the CSG is unable to provide suitable support to the refugee (eg the refugee family moves to a new area or there is interpersonal conflict with the CSG)
- Refugees in the program may also access Commonwealth-funded 'Specialised and Intensive Services' program, Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) and torture and trauma support on an individual/as-needs basis



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- CSGs have access to free translation and interpreting services via 'TIS'
- CRSA has established a national community of practice that links CSGs from around the country with one another, providing a peer network for learning and support.



## Annexure 3 – Policy Objectives

POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS	
'Unlinked' and 'linked' programs <sup>10</sup>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Global Engagement:</b> Enlarge Australia’s global resettlement by harnessing the resources of private citizens, businesses and civil society organisations.</li> <li>• <b>Strengthening the social license underpinning humanitarian migration</b> - Increase awareness of and public support for Australia’s humanitarian migration program by fostering meaningful contact between refugee newcomers and established Australians in communities large and small across the country.</li> <li>• <b>Boost social capital to unlock refugee potential and protect against exploitation:</b> Humanitarian migrants can better help address the labour and skills shortage if connected to local networks, knowledge and opportunities.</li> <li>• <b>Support successful settlement and social cohesion:</b> Community sponsors can effectively provide additional settlement capacity. This approach also establishes meaningful connections between newcomers and established Australians from ‘day one’ of the settlement journey, plus broader societal ‘ripple effect’.</li> <li>• <b>Volunteer Benefits:</b> Enrich the personal wellbeing, social networks and capacity of individual Australians, by providing a satisfying and meaningful way to join with others to ‘be part of the solution’, countering disengagement, despair and loneliness</li> </ul>	
Unlinked	Linked
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support resettlement of more UNHCR-referred refugees</li> <li>• Provide a sponsorship avenue for sponsors without links and who do not ‘wish to play god’ by selecting refugees for resettlement</li> <li>• Migration into more parts of Australia: Enabling more local Australian communities to meet population, diversity and labour market objectives by ‘opting in’ to resettling refugees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support resettlement of humanitarian migrants with profiles not recognised or prioritised by UNHCR, as identified by Australian individuals or NGOs</li> <li>• Avenue for reunion of family/close contacts that do not qualify under other family reunion streams</li> <li>• Avenue for resettlement in times of unexpected or acute need (eg Afghanistan evacuation)</li> <li>• Can facilitate educational migration pathways for refugees (ie for refugees who can secure post-secondary educational opportunities in Australia)</li> <li>• Can support employment-based sponsorship of refugees, supplementing more tailored pathways for skilled humanitarian migration</li> <li>• Can support greater cost-sharing of larger humanitarian migration program with government</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> ‘Unlinked’ refers to ‘sponsor a stranger’ programs like the CRISP, where sponsors are matched with refugees referred into the program by government drawing on referrals made by the UNHCR. ‘Linked’ refers to programs which enable Australian sponsors to select the person or family whom they wish to sponsor to come to Australia.