

2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT

Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia





Our organisation and vision

Inspired by the successful Canadian community sponsorship experience, and first launched as a joint initiative of a group of leading Australian charities and non-profits,¹ Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) is now an independent Australian charity working across Australia, with staff based in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane and a board of directors based located across five states and territories.

CRSA's vision 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.

Through this work we aim to ensure that groups of everyday Australians provide refugee newcomers with a warm and personal welcome and high standard of settlement and integration support upon arrival, leading to strong social and economic integration outcomes. We hope that this effort will ultimately enable Australia to resettle more refugees each year, supplementing Australia's long-standing government-led humanitarian migration program.

Acknowledgement of traditional owners

CRSA acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Boon Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin, the traditional custodians of the land where our offices are located. We also acknowledge the traditional custodians of

other places where we work and where the impact of our work is felt. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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Contents

3. Chair's report
4. CEO's report
6. About CRSA
8. Our governance and people
10. Our financials and funders
11. Our programs and operations
11. Group Mentorship Program
14. Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP)
16. Community development
18. Internal operations

¹ Save the Children Australia, Refugee Council of Australia, Amnesty International Australia, Welcoming Australia, Rural Australians for

Refugees and the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce

Chair's report – Libby Lloyd AO



We have seen wonderful progress in the almost three years I have had the honour to chair Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA). From its primarily advocacy beginnings as the Community Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (CRSI) we now have a tangible program, the government supported Community Refugee Integration Sponsorship Program (CRISP).

The original vision of its founders to add resettlement value and additional refugees is well on the way to being realised. Over these past several years, we have seen their dream and our vision come alive. We now have an independent, incorporated organisation with an established board comprising a band of extremely able, enthusiastic, and generous contributors. All are well connected into the wider Australian community, and all have demonstrated their capacity and commitment to bringing the original vision to a realisation.

Daily we see outstanding results from our most committed and capable staff, led by founding CEO Lisa Button. Our highly professional team is gradually growing and is already demonstrating success in the long and demanding process of building a new, innovative, and nimble organisation that will contribute in a unique way to a new

settlement process for many newly arrived refugees to Australia.

Over the past two years a rapidly expanding welcoming community of Australians has been growing who, through our small support group model, the Group Mentoring Program, are participating across the length and breadth of this huge country. During the very trying times of the pandemic and through the political crises of Afghanistan and the Ukraine we have been able to trial our model by welcoming and helping resettle scores of refugees. We have also been able to offer support to some families who had arrived even before these crises.

In undertaking this growth, we now have built a wonderful 'community of practice' comprising more than 100 groups (approximately 800 people) across the country who are actively engaged in refugee settlement. It has been a great triumph of the organisation to find clever ways to train groups, match refugees and groups, and to assist local groups to support each other.

This coming year, and the years beyond, offer even greater opportunities for us to become engaged and partner in the refugee resettlement journey. We all know that this is a two-way process - while giving, we frequently receive even more in return. The delight of welcoming individuals and families to Australia so enriches our own lives.

On behalf of the board, I would like to express our huge thanks to all the refugees we have already met and those we are yet to welcome; our CEO and staff; our partner agencies; and the Australian government and the staff within who have helped us build so solidly and consistently. And to the many extraordinarily generous philanthropists who had faith in us and set us on way. But most of all, we thank and acknowledge the people who make up these groups who have signed up and aligned themselves with our programs. Together we will ensure this coming year has even greater growth and is an even greater success than the significant successes of this past year.

CEO's report – Lisa Button



It is with great pleasure and excitement that I write this update in the lead up to CRSA's second Annual General Meeting on 10 November 2022.

2021-22 was a very significant year in the journey of CRSA and its mission. Having only become established as an independent entity in late December 2020, the year saw CRSA gain significant capacity, momentum and impact through:

- Launching operations as an independent, tier one, ACNC-registered charity in July 2021 and further consolidating our reputation and standing with government, members of the public and settlement sector as thought-leaders on community-led settlement approaches².
- Securing new policy settings and the commitment of funding to co-design and then deliver the four-year Community Refugee Integration &

² CRSA also became an associate member of the Settlement Council of Australia

³ Community Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, a joint project of the Refugee Council of Australia,

Settlement Pilot (CRISP) on behalf of the federal government, which was launched in May 2022.

- Following an independent evaluation of our 2020 pilot Group Mentorship Program, relaunching the program in 2021 and rapidly scaling up the program to address the needs of hundreds of evacuees/refugees from Afghanistan in late 2021, with support from ANZ, TPG Telecom and other new philanthropic donors.
- Expanding the capacity and skillset of our board and staff through a number of new appointments including new directors Achol Madong (WA) and Bishop Cameron Venables (Qld).
- Establishing a working partnership with Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB), to train local groups to provide settlement support to skilled refugees entering Australia through TBB's skilled migration pilot program (September 2021 onwards).

In addition, CRSA contributed to broader advocacy efforts that led to announced reductions to the visa application charge for the existing Community Support Program (CSP) as well as to efforts led by Afghan-led organisations and faith groups in securing an announcement from the Australian government of 16,500 new additional humanitarian visas for Afghan refugees.

Of all of these developments, the design and launch of CRISP was the most significant and sees the vision of CRSA (and its predecessor CRSI³) finally enlivened and funded by the federal government as a 'first of its kind' program in Australia. While securing additional visas for community sponsored places remains an important organisational objective, we are delighted with the

Save the Children Australia, Amnesty International Australia, Welcoming Australia, Rural Australians for Refugees and the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce.



program's foundations which embed a number of important core principles, strong 'safety net' features and allow flexibility for local-level innovation. Achieving 'additionality' remains a very important objective to CRSA.

2022-23 and beyond

2022-23 will see the first refugee households arriving through the CRISP and require CRSA to adapt and innovate as the model is implemented in practice for the first time. Key goals in the early stages of the CRISP will be to ensure that the program remains true to its guiding design principles and provides effective settlement support to refugee newcomers and a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants.

CRSA will be aiming to see 425 refugees matched with community supporter groups by June 2023⁴ and either living in or soon to arrive in Australia through the program. The CRSA team will continue to work closely with the Department of Home Affairs to refine the program model and develop increasingly sophisticated tools and processes to enable the program to scale in 2022-23 and beyond. CRSA will also provide support to the team leading the independent evaluation of the program, led by the University of Queensland (appointed by the department).

Under the newly appointed Albanese government, we are likely to be called upon to significantly scale up our operations to meet the ALP's ambition to build towards 5,000 additional 'community sponsored' places per annum (details of which are not yet known). As part of this, and in addition to our work on the CRISP, we expect to be key participants in discussions between government and civil society about the future

of 'named' refugee sponsorship and the future of the Community Support Program (CSP).⁵

While this work continues, the staff and board of CRSA will consider the role of community-led support for refugees within Australia's settlement sector more broadly, and whether the model that underpinned the Group Mentorship Program might have ongoing relevance and application beyond the CRISP. CRSA will also continue to partner with TBB to train and support groups providing settlement support to refugee families entering Australia under TBB's skilled migration pilot.

Whatever the policy and funding environment, CRSA is a young organisation that now needs to invest in developing frameworks, structures, policies and systems that will ensure its success and good standing as a valuable contributor to Australia's humanitarian migration program long into the future. This will also be a priority for the year ahead.

I wish to thank our wonderful chair Libby Lloyd AO, her fellow directors, members, ambassadors and staff of CRSA for their steadfast support, hard work and belief in CRSA's vision. The most significant thanks, however, goes to the hundreds of everyday Australians who have put their faith in the 'community sponsorship' model and are working to welcome and support refugees in their local communities through our program. The success of our programs is a truly collective achievement.

I look forward to working with you all in the year ahead and to seeing our shared vision for community sponsorship of refugees in Australia growing further as a success story that we all feel proud of.

community groups to use the CSP to sponsor refugees who are known to them. CRSA has expressed a willingness to provide those groups with training and support, so that they can provide effective welcome and settlement support in line with our community-led model.

⁴ Year One Cohort - 100 individuals. Year Two Cohort - 325 individuals.

⁵ The CSP is Australia's current program for 'named' sponsorship of refugees. The announced cuts to the visa application charge for the CSP (due in July 2022) will likely prompt more grass roots



About CRSA

Our history

Community sponsorship of refugees is a growing global phenomenon which can improve and expand refugee resettlement opportunities through harnessing the resources and networks of local volunteer groups, who are trained and supported to provide holistic settlement support to refugee newcomers.

Community refugee 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-funded resettlement program. The practice is now spreading around the world with countries including the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, New Zealand, Spain and Argentina all having established community sponsorship schemes. The United States also looks likely to launch a scheme soon!

Inspired by the successful Canadian community sponsorship experience, and first launched as a joint initiative of a group of leading Australian charities and non-profits, Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) is now an independent Australian charity playing a leading role in encouraging, developing and supporting the implementation of a holistic community-led refugee support program in Australia.

CRSA is working to harness the power of community across Australia to play a central role in providing refugee newcomers with a warm welcome and high standard of settlement support upon arrival, leading to strong social and economic integration outcomes. We hope that this effort will ultimately enable Australia to resettle more

refugees each year, supplementing Australia's long-standing government-led humanitarian migration program.

Getting started as CRSI

In 2018, driven by the desire to find ways to expand and improve refugee resettlement in Australia and to create greater opportunities for connection between Australian citizens and refugee newcomers, a group of leading Australian charities and non-profits⁶ came together to launch a joint project – the Community Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (CRSI).

CRSI's mission at that time was to work with the Australian government and local communities to develop a shared vision in implementing a community refugee sponsorship program in Australia. CRSI's work was made possible through the generous support of the Sidney Myer Fund and other philanthropic donors.

Trialling community-led support during the pandemic

Although the Coronavirus pandemic saw Australia's international borders closed to refugees and other migrants in 2020, CRSI decided to press ahead and launch a pilot program that would test and demonstrate the viability of the community sponsorship approach in Australia.

CRSI mobilised, screened and trained groups of local volunteers to mentor refugees who had arrived in Australia prior to the pandemic and who were in need of additional settlement support. The pilot, called the 'Group Mentorship Program,' put the sponsorship model into practice in Australia and CRSI led in coordinating the efforts of dozens of local volunteer groups and NGOs in a successful 'first of its kind' experiment in Australia. Given its early success, and the ongoing closure of Australia's international borders, the program continued in 2021

⁶ Save the Children Australia, Refugee Council of Australia, Amnesty International Australia, Welcoming Australia, Rural Australians for

Refugees and the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce



during which time a large number of additional mentor groups were mobilised and activated to support Afghan evacuees arriving in Australia, following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021.

‘CRSA’ is launched and funded by government to deliver a national pilot

In mid 2021, an independent charity was launched to carry this work forward – Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia Ltd (CRSA). CRSA inherited the staff, assets and role of CRSI and was established to continue working with government and community representatives to achieve the original vision of CRSI.

In December 2021, the coalition government announced its plan to work with CRSA in the

co-design and implementation of a new Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP), inspired by the Canadian model. CRSA was contracted and funded by the federal government to deliver this new program, which was publicly launched in May 2022 with a view to supporting the arrival of the first cohort of refugee households in August 2022. Interest in the CRISP is heightened by the change of government in May 2022, with the Albanese government having a stated objective of 5,000 ‘community sponsored’ humanitarian visas in addition to a larger annual government-funded humanitarian quota.

Our governance and people

Governance

CRSA is a company limited by guarantee and is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). CRSA's members are currently the directors of CRSA along with CEO Lisa Button and individuals nominated by the four organisations that founded CRSI, the predecessor of CRSA.

Board

CRSA's board of directors currently consists of independent, non-executive directors including individuals with lived experience as former refugees.⁷



Libby Lloyd AO
Director & Chair



Achol Madong
Director



Ali Reza Yunespour
Director



Cindy Carpenter
Director



Ian Smith AM
Director



Cam Venables
Director



Noel Clement
Director

⁷ Noel Clement became a director in October 2022, after the year covered by this report.



Key personnel



Lisa Button
Chief Executive Officer



Nicole Watkins
Community Development &
GMP Program Manager



Romy Vitalien
CRISP Program Manager



Sophie Bosch
Operations Manager



Rebecca Payne
Communications Manager



Blaise Itabelo
Community Engagement
Manager



Shabnam Safa
Community Development
Training Lead

CRSA's ambassadors



**Professor Peter
Shergold AC**



Tim Costello AO



Nyadol Nyuon



Om Dhungel



Andrew Kaldor AM



Arash Bordbar



Phoebe Wynn-Pope



Financials

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income For the Financial Period Ended 30 June 2022

	Notes	2022 \$
Revenue		
Revenue from contracts with customers	4	649,422
Other income	5	464,386
Total revenue		1,113,808
Expenses		
Administration		(77,400)
Advertising and promotion		(19,637)
Employee benefits		(432,658)
Lease payments for short-term/low-value leases		(8,338)
Other program and client costs		(147,526)
Total expenses		(685,559)
Net surplus for the period		428,249
Income tax expense		-
Surplus after income tax		428,249
Other comprehensive income		-
Total comprehensive income		428,249

Our funders

CRSA's role in delivering the CRISP is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs.

CRSA's broader work relies on significant donations from the following companies and philanthropic organisations in 2021-22, along with many smaller donations from other entities and individuals.



and the Berg Family Foundation

OUR PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS

Group Mentorship Program (GMP)

From its launch in mid 2020 until mid 2022, the GMP has provided support to approximately 300 people across 94 newly arrived refugee households, by harnessing the energy of everyday Australians. As at June 2022, 102 groups had been mobilised, screened and trained by CRSA to provide holistic, wrap-around support under this program, with 63 groups matched and activated.⁸

The Group Mentorship Program was launched by CRSA in mid 2020, coinciding with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a 'proof of concept' for community sponsorship of refugees in circumstances where our borders were closed to new arrivals.

Throughout late 2020 and early 2021, CRSA mobilised and trained groups to work with newly arrived refugee households already in Australia, supplementing any case management support that they were receiving through government-funded programs. These included individuals who held permanent protection visas as well as some on Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs) and Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs). The role of mentor groups was to walk alongside their mentee households over a six-month period and assist all members of the mentee household in an integrated manner to meet personal settlement goals in a holistic manner.

⁸ As of 30 October 2022 CRSA has now screened and trained more than 102 local mentor groups in

The role of mentor groups was underpinned by the following key principles:

1. **Groups of volunteers:** Mentorship support was provided by organised groups of volunteers (minimum 5 people), with the emphasis on individual mentors coming together around a shared purpose of providing support to one or more refugee households.
2. **Self-directed innovators:** Mentor groups were encouraged to engage in innovation and problem solving using the available resources in their local context.
3. **Screened, trained and trusted:** Mentors were screened via police and Working With Children checks, then trained by CRSI/CRSA and entrusted to provide appropriate settlement support in close collaboration with professional case managers (where involved) and the mentee household itself.
4. **Well supported:** Mentor groups were given a point of contact to access ad hoc advice from settlement professionals when required.

Embedded throughout the program was an understanding that the autonomy and agency of refugees in the program were to be respected at all times, and that support was to be given that recognised and built on their strengths and aspirations.

A total of 26 refugees (with 11 dependent children) across 15 households became mentees in the program. A total of 172 individuals across 21 groups completed the screening and training to become mentors in the program. Of the 21 groups, 14 were matched with a mentee household.

A report of an independent evaluation of the initial pilot was published in August 2021, which was overwhelmingly positive but also

six states and territories (approximately 850 individuals) to provide this support



included recommended discrete program improvements. Of note:

- Every mentee who participated in the evaluation reported that their involvement in the GMP had positive impacts on their quality of life.
- Mentees were provided a range of practical assistance tailored to their needs, as well as social and cultural experiences. Importantly, mentees received support in the areas they indicated they most needed help, often including developing their English language skills, accessing education and employment opportunities, driving lessons and making social connections in their new community.
- Mentees described that assistance from their mentor group helped them feel supported and provided a sense of security. This helped increase their confidence in themselves and their future in Australia.
- Several mentees described that the support they received from their mentor group had exceeded their expectations and had helped them transform aspects of their lives.
- Almost every mentor (94% of those who participated in the evaluation) reported that they enjoyed being part of their mentor group and would recommend refugee mentoring to friends.
- Two-thirds (66% of mentors surveyed) reported that their engagement in the mentorship program influenced others in their community to show more favourable or compassionate responses to refugees.

Due to the success and positive feedback received from the 2020 pilot of the program, a second iteration of the GMP was launched in July 2022, incorporating learnings from the independent evaluation. The aim was to grow the program to 40 groups and engage organisations to help us do this as Supporting

Community Organisations (SCOs). Key changes included:

- Removing the use of logbooks for groups to track time spent supporting households.
- Stopping using STAR tool to monitor progress.
- Developing an internal survey to track progress of support.
- Updating training materials to include a handbook, additional resources and new topics.
- Testing the use of an online learning management system for training.
- New ways for refugees to be referred into the program.
- Creation of a private Facebook group to host the Community of Practice.

On 15 August 2021 Kabul fell to the Taliban. Allied forces evacuated thousands of people and left the country on 31 August, with more than 4,000 evacuees arriving in Australia in the weeks that followed. During this time CRSA received an extraordinary response from the community. From August 2021 to June 2022 CRSA received 83 group applications. Of those groups, 53 have supported, or are still actively supporting, a recently arrived refugee household. Of these 83 groups, 30 have not been able to actively support a refugee family as their regional location meant that CRSA has not been able to match them with a refugee household.

CRSA trained 498 volunteers between September 2021 and June 2022 via 28 workshops. The training program was further adapted in response to feedback and the need for it to remain as virtual training due to continued Covid-19 restrictions across Australia. A training manual was developed to further assist with information sharing in training and to allow some elements of the program to be self-guided. CRSA also experimented with an online Learning Management System, EdApp, for delivery of some of the training content. Due to the app's poor performance use of this platform was paused.



All training program participants reported feeling equipped to begin mentoring after the training, with 65% feeling very equipped and 35% somewhat equipped.

The GMP has continued to provide additional community-based support to refugee newcomers in a variety of ways. As at June 2022, 250 refugees across 85 households were receiving support through the program. Main areas of support sought by the households included finding education and employment opportunities, obtaining a driver's licence and securing suitable housing. Of the refugee households referred into the program approximately 80% were from Afghanistan, with the vast majority of those arriving in Australia via the evacuation.

CRSA has also engaged with 15 organisations as Supporting Community Organisations (SCOs) for the GMP. These SCOs have supported groups in various ways, including with accessing banking support, fundraising and DGR status and additional insurance coverage. Some SCOs have also been in a position to assist with guidance and advice given their knowledge of and experience in the settlement sector.

Through monitoring activities by CRSA staff at the month five mark, the following themes have been identified:

- 97% of mentees report mentorship is still active
- 70% of mentees reported regular or very regular contact with group members
- 55% of mentees reported significant progress towards goals, with a further 25% reporting some progress
- 65% of mentees suggest mentorship is either moderately or very effective
- 70% of mentees reported moderate or high levels of satisfaction with support provided

The GMP continues to fill a gap in settlement support; groups are connecting newly arrived refugees with potential employers, education opportunities, additional medical support and assisting them to navigate the various health systems (including ante-natal support).

"Since we arrived [one year ago], they have helped us so much. They have totally changed our lives in Australia. It is not easy for someone from Afghanistan to recover so soon. We were at the airport for 3 days, with the Taliban firing, kids crying... We had some counselling, because we were not sleeping, we had nightmares nightly, now only twice per month. It changed since we met that group. They are now our family. When we met, we weren't sure how it was going to be, but it changed everything for us." (Mentee)

"I first thought it would be good if we had younger people in the mentor group. But when the [mentee] said '[I] don't know about being pregnant and [I] don't have [my] mother and grandmothers and aunts, [I] just have you.' I could see we fill another role." (Mentor)

2021/22 proved to be a more challenging year for the GMP than any of us had imagined or prepared for, but with new tools such as a tailored CRM and our learnings from 2020, we were able to respond in a timely and methodical way to a program three times the scale we anticipated.

Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP)

CRSA joined the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs in co-designing⁹ the CRISP in April and May 2022, having secured the contract to deliver the ground-breaking four-year pilot earlier in the year. The CRISP will empower groups of everyday Australians to welcome and support the settlement and integration of 1,500 UNHCR-referred refugees from 2021-22 to 2024-2025.

After years of research, consensus building and advocacy, the introduction of a new community refugee sponsorship program in 2021/22 represented a significant milestone for CRSA and its partners, following years of research and advocacy, and a watershed moment for Australia's broader settlement landscape.

In December 2021 the coalition government announced plans to introduce a four-year 'Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot' ('the CRISP'), inspired by the successful Canadian program and others like it around the world. The announcement responded to recommendations in the 2019 'Shergold Report', and findings in the Department of Home Affairs' 2019 review of the Community Support Program (CSP).

CRSA was invited to submit a tender response for the CRISP, and entered into a contract with the Department of Home Affairs ('the department') in March 2022. The contract included a CRSA/department co-design of the CRISP, allowing CRSA to bring learnings to the

CRISP from the implementation of the Group Mentorship Program, and from its knowledge of established and emerging programs around the world.

The CRSA team began the co-design of the CRISP in April 2022, with a dedicated team from the department's settlement and coordinator-general's offices, over a series of facilitated workshops. A child safety consultant and members of the department-appointed evaluation team from University of Queensland also contributed to the co-design.

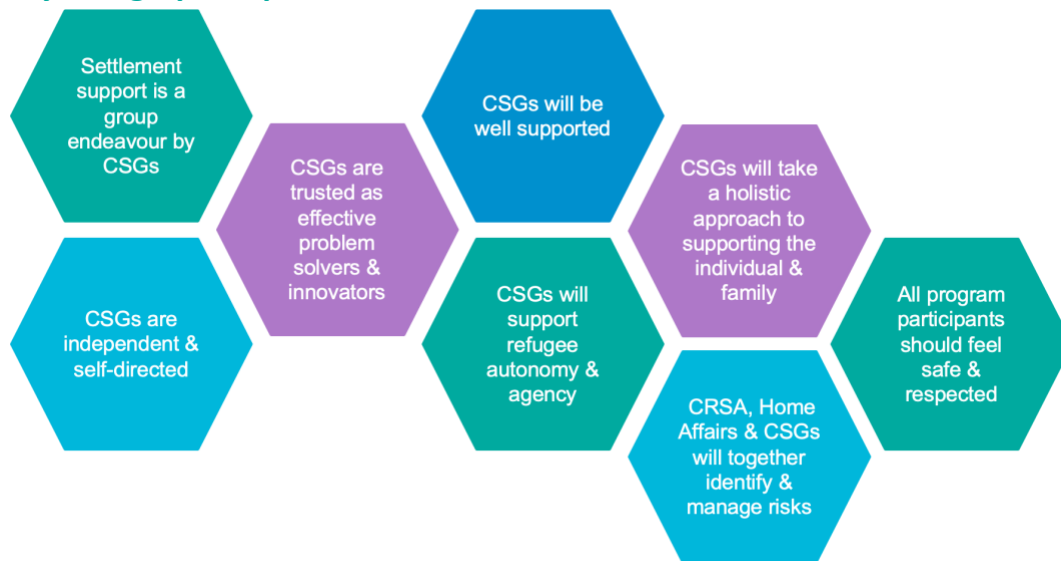
The co-design covered a range of policy settings including program eligibility, the level of support CRSA would provide to program participants, and how risk would be managed. CRSA and departmental staff both noted a strong alignment in attitudes and approaches across the two organisations, and the clear shared excitement about aspirations for the CRISP.

In May 2022, CRSA presented the CRISP program framework to stakeholders throughout the settlement sector in an online forum, and to members of the general public at a virtual soft launch event, with over 150 attendees. Over 350 people had registered and received relevant follow-up correspondence.



⁹ Image: CRSA and Department staff at the initial CRISP co-design workshop

Key design principles



With great excitement, CRSA received its first referrals from the department - the 'Year 1 cohort' of 100 refugee participants - in late June 2022. The referrals included names, demographic data and photographs and, in some cases, a few words about individuals' employment or education histories.

CRSA contacted the 23 refugee households offshore to obtain more information to assist with the matching process. The information obtained, including the importance of proximity to a place of worship or diaspora community, hobbies and aspirations, was invaluable in facilitating appropriate initial matches.

The collegiate approach between CRSA and the department, developed throughout the co-design process, continued throughout the implementation phase, with weekly meetings and regular, casual contact continuing a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement in working together to operationalise the shared model.

CRSA's focus in the balance of 2022 will be on ensuring that all individuals within the initial cohort are matched and supported on their arrival in Australia, and preparing for the arrival of the next cohort of 350 individuals in 2022-23.

As CRSA embedded the CRISP model with its first cohort of matches and arrivals, a change of government in mid-2022 brought with it strong statements from the new Immigration Minister and other members of the Albanese government of an aspiration to progressively expand community refugee sponsorship, in addition to an expanded government-funded humanitarian intake.

We enter year two of the pilot with great confidence in the model and in the appetite of the Australian community to get involved.



Community development

The community development work of CRSA evolved significantly during 2021-22 as the number of people involved in our programs grew rapidly.

We have established bi-monthly peer forums to support groups in the program, as well as developing an ever-increasing collection of tools and resources that assist groups to better support newly arrived refugees. As per the ethos of the program, we encourage groups to be local problem-solvers, but to reach out when needed for guidance and advice.

Group engagement

In 2020 we established a WhatsApp chat for all mentors to join to ask questions and learn from one another. It quickly became apparent that this was not going to be suitable for the scale of the program post August 2021. In January 2022 we created a private Facebook group, the 'CRSA Community of Practice' and migrated the WhatsApp participants over. By June 2022 we had a total of **179 members** in the Facebook group.



Capacity building

In January 2022 CRSA recruited an intern to assist with the further development of the Community of Practice. Our intern assisted with setting up the Facebook group, scheduling Peer Forums, assisting with administrative tasks and mapping and updating resources on our Community Hub.

We have continued to host the bi-monthly online peer forums established during the pilot. These forums are designed to allow group members an opportunity to meet, share and learn. During 2021-22 we hosted

three forums in December 2021, February 2022 and April 2022. The June 2022 forum was used as a platform to launch and promote the new CRISP.

Peer Forums have been a key feature of the support provided by CRSA to groups within the program, with an **average 120 people registering** to attend. Attendance varies depending on the topics for discussion and the time of day the session is hosted. Peer Forums are recorded and shared with those who aren't able to attend.

In January 2022 we implemented a bi-monthly email update. To June 2022, we have sent three updates in January, March and May 2022. These updates have an **average open rate of 62%** (unique opens). These email updates were **sent to over 700 people** engaged in the GMP. The updates include new resources available on the Community Hub, refreshers on topics from training or a previous peer forum, and articles of interest. For example, our most recent update included links to an Afghan-developed stage production of Persian love poems, *Dorr-e Dari*, which provides group members some insights into this culture and a way to further engage with mentees.

There were over **2800 visits to the community hub** over the course of the 21/22 financial year. (2857 page views and 2227 unique page views), indicating this is a space where groups are finding relevant and useful information to assist with supporting their mentees.

Community leadership

Together with our direct support we've seen a regional approach develop organically across Adelaide (SA) and the Mornington Peninsula (VIC). In these regions groups are connecting outside of CRSA-organised events to share experiences, resources and learnings. Groups in the Blue Mountains (NSW) have also been working towards something similar. This is a model that CRSA will continue to learn from so as to encourage other groups to engage in a similar way.



Groups have been actively promoting the program in their communities as well, demonstrating leadership and a willingness to be the face of a movement. We've heard from groups across the country that during fundraisers, or any other community event, they endeavour to recruit more people to get involved. Groups are committed to this approach and genuinely want to see this model succeed. CRSA has supported groups with resources to assist their efforts, including slide decks and fliers. Groups reported back that the use of our short promotional films were highly beneficial to highlight what the program is all about.

Groups have assisted with the development of tools and resources for the community hub, for example:

- **Adelaide City Mentors** developed three fact sheets to assist groups with preparing for a first visit, personal documentation and gifting.
- **Ballina Region 4 Refugees** developed a settlement guidebook for their region for us to share with the network.
- **Landers and Rogers** (employer of some mentor group members) has assisted us in developing incorporation toolkits for groups in both Victoria and New South Wales.

We have engaged with external stakeholders to further build skill and capacity within the mentor groups via training opportunities, for example:

- **Berry St** (one of Australia's largest independent family service organisations) via its **Money Minded** program, which aims to upskill volunteers in the community to assist people in setting and maintaining a personal budget and better manage their money.
- **Delivery of 'Accidental Counselling' workshop** via the **Settlement Council of Australia**.

We have used recordings from Peer Forums to create resources for groups to access at later dates:

- **STARTTS (The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors)** video clips - **133 views** across all short clips developed on YouTube channel.
- Fact sheet on supporting young people developed by the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

CRSA's community development work will continue to evolve as we respond to the developing needs of groups engaged in our programs. We're excited to expand and improve our offerings in this space to allow the community to grow, share and learn from one another in Australia and the globe.





Internal operations

The beginning of the 2021-22 year marked the launch and establishment of CRSA as an independent entity and registered charity, with its own governance structures, systems and resources. Key focus areas for CRSA's operations team throughout FY 21-22 were the continued establishment of efficient and scalable operational systems and the development of policies and procedures to support CRSA's governance, integrity and effectiveness as a newly established independent non-profit entity accountable to an increasing range of regulators, donors, suppliers and other stakeholders. The operations team also undertook key projects to support the sustainability and growth of CRSA's programs.

Systems overview

The operations team managed the integration of CRSA's data and former systems into the Zoho One operating system in July 2021 with the support of an external IT provider. Zoho One's apps, including CRM, projects, campaigns, forms and analytics supported the rapid growth of the Group Mentorship Program at a systems level.

The number of people volunteering in the GMP grew by 400% in six months (compared with 2020) as a result of the groundswell of community support following the crisis in Afghanistan in August 2021. Continuous improvement and customisations in the way CRSA was using Zoho One's systems for communications and data management helped CRSA's small team to deliver the program as efficiently as possible. This integration also laid the groundwork for an operations-led project starting in March 2022 focusing on improvements to the CRM blueprint, program data management and automated workflows which supported the effective implementation of the CRISP in mid 2022.

Highlights:

- Implementation of e-learning modules through a new Learning

Management System to deliver select training modules to local groups.

- Set up of a payments platform and automated tax deductible gift receipts for online donations.
- Improvements to internal ways of working as the CRSA team grew from five to ten people through improved use of project management and internal comms software (via Zoho).
- Improvements to external communications through user journey workflows and campaigns (via Zoho).

Governance and compliance overview

In the lead up to signing the CRISP contract and to support the good governance of CRSA, the operations team focused on developing and refining a range of CRSA policies, procedures and processes in FY 2021-2022.

Policies were revised and developed at the employee, board and organisation level and included:

1. **CRSA's internal policies and procedures** including CRSA's WHS policy and procedures, HR policies, Internal Code of Conduct, Procurement Policy, Cyber Security Policy, Data Breach Response Plan, Child Safeguarding Procedures and Conflict of Interest Policy; and
2. **CRSA's external facing and publicly available policies** including CRSA's Child Safeguarding Policy and Privacy Policy.

Alongside this work, the operations team focused on ensuring CRSA's compliance obligations were being met (most notably those set by the ACNC and the CRISP service contract with the Commonwealth) and were incorporated into CRSA policies, procedures and planning.

Highlights:

- Child Safe Audit commenced by Child Safeguard in April 2022.



- CRSA granted NSW Social Sector Transformation Fund grant and connected with managed IT service provider to assist CRSA to comply with the Information Security Manual's Small Business Guide in May 2022.
- Financial Audit commenced by SDJA in June 2022.
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) audit completed by Centre for Accessibility Australia in June 2022.
- Fundraising Authority granted in all states and territories except QLD (where CRSA's charity application is pending).

(developed for CRSA by Child Safety lawyers) to program groups.

- Development of initial program and organisation dashboards for tracking key metrics.



CRISP Co-design Workshop 2 in Melbourne in May 2022

General operations and program support overview

FY 2021-2022 was a year of rapid growth for CRSA, with the scaling up of the Group Mentorship Program, the expansion of the CRSA team from five to ten employees and the commencement of the CRISP contract. The operations team supported the recruitment and onboarding of a Community Engagement Manager, CRISP Program Manager, CRISP Community Liaison Officer, Media and Communications Manager and Program Support Officer between April and July 2022 which required the building of more robust employee systems and processes. The operations team also offered strategic and planning support in the Co-design of the CRISP program with the Department of Home Affairs between March and June 2022, and supported the implementation of CRISP through the management and design of new systems and processes.

Highlights:

- Umbrella public liability insurance policy negotiated with insurer and now available for all program groups (CRISP and GMP).
- Learning Management System V 2.0 launched using TalentLMS to deliver Child Safe Training module

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