



Community
Refugee
Sponsorship
Initiative

Group Mentorship Program Public information session

6 August 2020



@AusCRSI

www.ausrefugeesponsorship.com.au

Generously supported by

A stylized, cursive signature in blue ink that reads "Sidney Myer".

SIDNEY MYER FUND

CRSI's aims and policy objectives

Aims (2019 – 2022):

- Demonstrate viability and benefits of community sponsorship and secure necessary policy settings
- Oversee successful implementation of community sponsorship as a common practice
- Through doing the above, maintain and build public support for forced migrants and Australia's humanitarian migration program and promote positive narratives about refugees in Australia

Policy objectives:

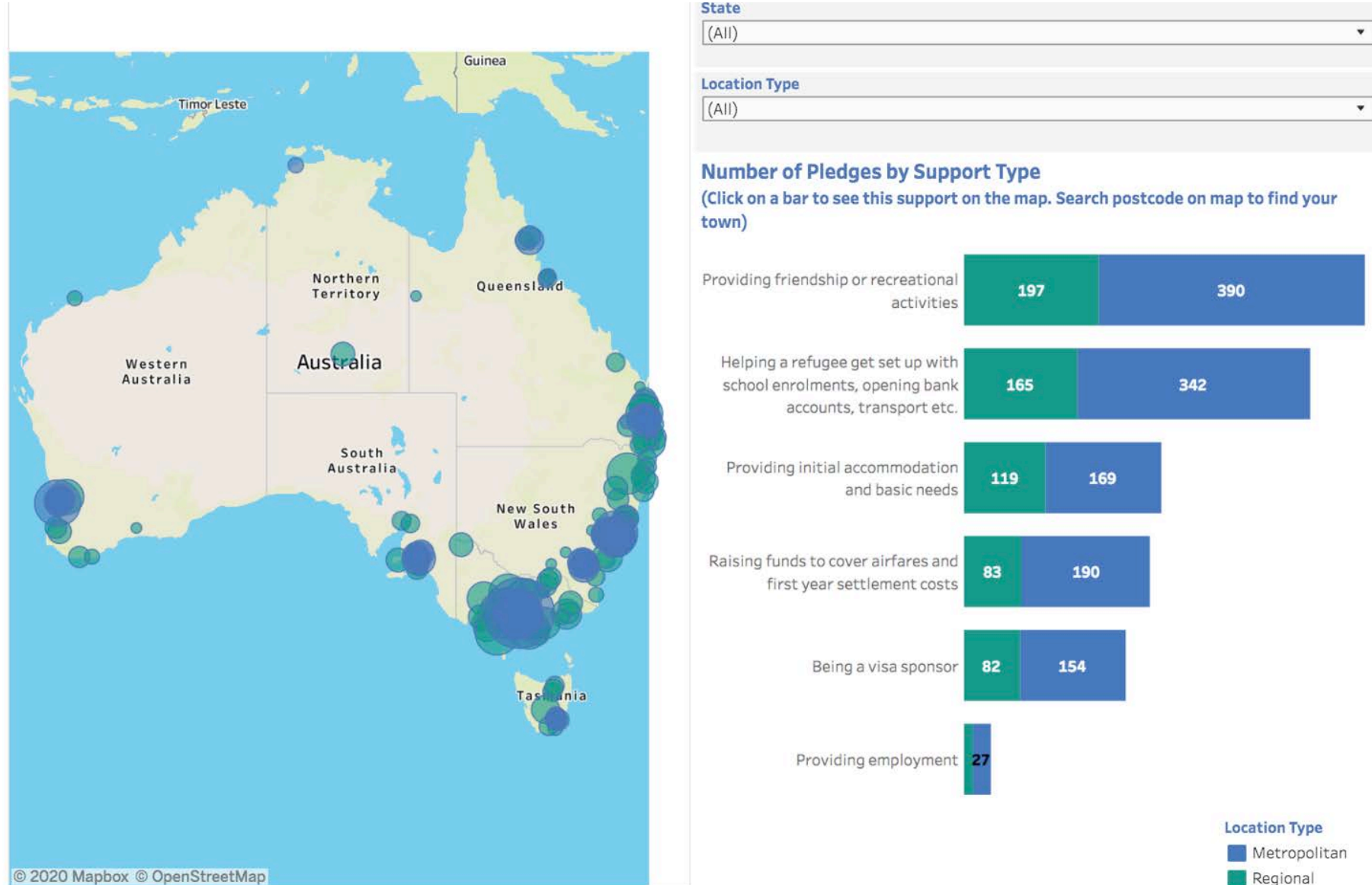
The successful implementation of a community refugee sponsorship scheme which:

- Fosters connectedness, cohesion and community revitalisation in Australian communities, including in regional Australia
- Prioritises those refugees in most urgent need of resettlement (UNCHR referred)
- Enables diaspora communities to sponsor refugee family members or other 'named' individuals, with deep practical mentoring and support from the broader local community
- Expands the number of refugees who can rebuild their lives in Australia each year in addition to the government-funded program

Global Refugee Sponsorship Video
(see <https://youtu.be/FpPj0CapM-s>)



Indications of support from across the country

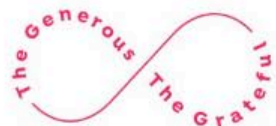


Civil society pledges to support an affordable and accessible sponsorship program



See <http://www.ausrefugeesponsorship.com.au/how-you-can-help/civil-society-pledge/>





“We’ll be looking further at those promising results from the Canadian community sponsorship model when we undertake a review of Australia’s current community support program early in the new financial year.

Its clear that community sponsorship encourages strong partnerships between governments and the broader community and that that drives much better settlement outcomes – so communities really makes a difference in the experience of refugees and their settlement outcomes.”

Ms Alison Larkins, Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services,
Welcoming Cities Symposium (3 June 2020)

CRSI's vision for a future Community Refugee Sponsorship Program



- Local group formed (at least 5 people)
- Group raises money for first 12 months
- Group receives information and training from a professional settlement agency
- Group makes application to sponsor a refugee



Australian Government



- Group vetted and matched with refugee/family via UNHCR (unless refugee already identified by the group)
- Group prepares tailored settlement plan
- Application approved
- Refugee(s) undergo health checks and receives visa



- Travel arrangements are made and local group prepares for refugee's arrival
- Group welcomes refugee on arrival (allow for COVID quarantine, if necessary)
- Group provides practical settlement support for 12 months (with regular 'check ins' by settlement professionals)
- Enduring informal relationships

See our sponsorship 'Explainer' for more information on this vision

Australia has a proud tradition of offering refugees the chance to rebuild their lives in safety throughout resettlement.

Community refugee sponsorship can unlock the goodwill of ordinary Australians to help refugees successfully settle and integrate in their local communities and supplement the government-led resettlement program.



What is community refugee sponsorship?

Community refugee sponsorship is a practice that enables individuals in a local area to come together to form a sponsor group, which commits to providing financial, emotional and settlement support to refugee newcomers over a 12 month period. The sponsor group becomes deeply and directly involved in supporting refugees to apply their skills, realise their goals and ultimately contribute back to their new communities. **Sponsor groups help newcomers with:**

- ✈ local orientation, including meeting refugees at the airport
- 🏠 enrolling children in school
- 🚗 finding housing
- 📄 registering with government services
- 😊 accessing social opportunities and emotional support
- 🏦 opening bank accounts
- 🗣 learning English
- 🚆 using public transport
- 📄 getting a drivers license
- 💼 finding a job or starting a business

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 300,000 refugees since the late 1970s, 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.

What are the benefits of sponsorship?

Sponsorship is great for refugees, who can benefit from **personal connections** to help them find their feet in a new country. Refugees benefit from **intensive, individualised and holistic support** provided by committed **local volunteers**.

And sponsorship is great for sponsors, who develop new networks and relationships by coming together to pursue a **powerful shared purpose**. Through sponsorship, ordinary citizens uncover and **build capacities** and communities, and often develop lifelong friendships. Many former sponsors say that sponsoring a refugee is one of the most meaningful things have ever done and sponsored refugees often go on to become sponsors themselves.

Community sponsorship can **enrich civic life** and also **foster social cohesion** and the **full economic participation** of humanitarian migrants in Australia.

Sponsorship can **help regional communities attract and retain migrants** to boost their populations and expand their workforces. It can enable sustainable settlement in regional locations lacking professional settlement infrastructure.

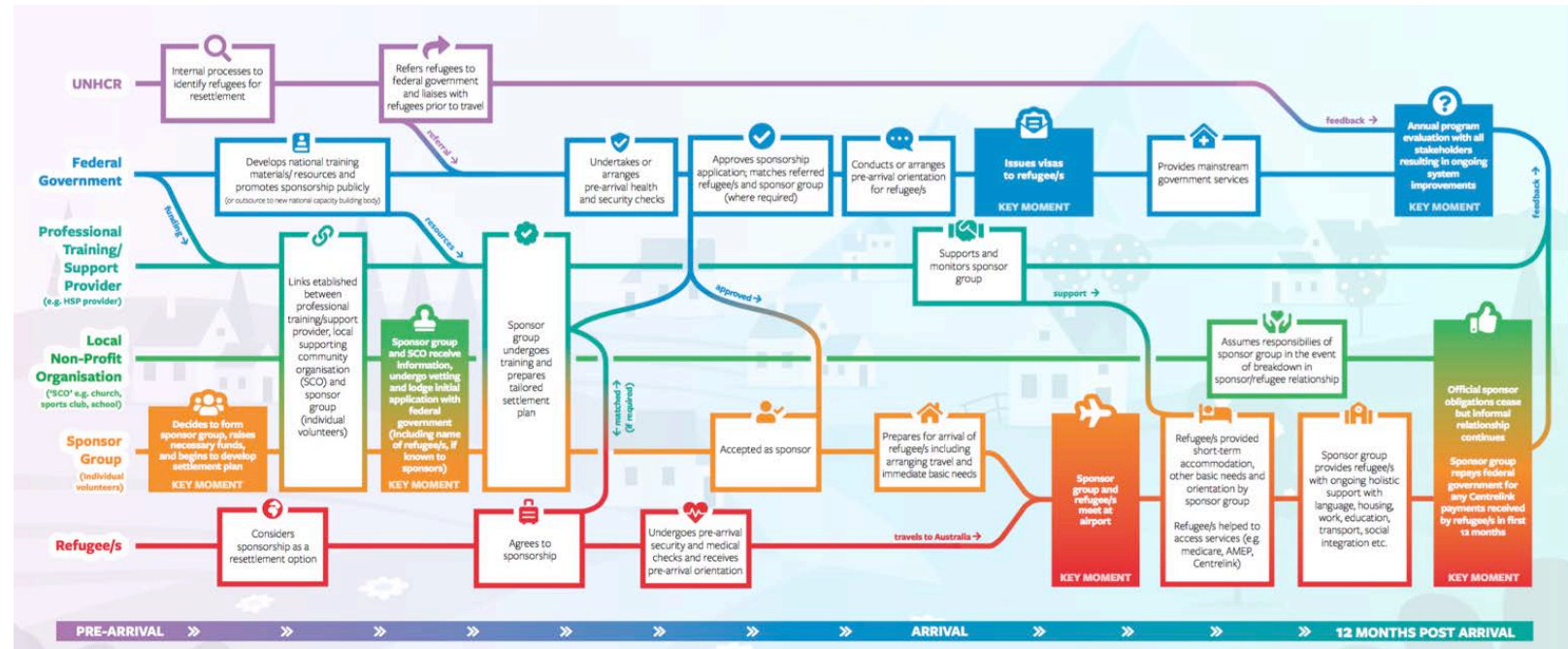
Sponsorship provides a **model for expanding Australia's refugee resettlement program** by drawing on the time and resources of compassionate Australians to supplement the long-standing government-funded resettlement program.

For more information:

🌐 www.ausrefugeesponsorship.com.au
 🐦 @AusCRSI



Community Refugee Sponsorship Initiative



See <http://www.ausrefugeesponsorship.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CRSI-Sponsorship-Explainer-web.pdf>

Objectives of launching Group Mentorship Program in 2020

To further encourage and prepare for implementation of a successful future community refugee sponsored visa pathway by:

- **demonstrating the viability and benefits** of holistic community-led support for refugees to support the goal of establishing a new/reformed Australian community refugee sponsorship program (with visa pathway)
- maintaining and further **building community enthusiasm** for supporting refugee newcomers through sponsorship
- **preparing a number of local groups** to become sponsors under a new/reformed federal community refugee sponsorship program in 2021
- **testing and refining a training program** and **other elements** of a future community refugee sponsorship program
- **further refining** the civil society vision for such a program
- providing **additional support** to a small number of refugees who could benefit from this approach
- **learning about successful practices from local groups** already experienced in working with refugees

Overview of Group Mentorship Program

- ❑ **10-12 'mentor groups'** (targetting at least 50% outside of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane)
- ❑ each **matched with a refugee individual/family** (recent arrivals or moving within Australia in need of additional support, already holding a refugee-type visa and not already well-known to mentor group)
- ❑ **6 months practical support** (holistic and individualised mentoring) starting October 2020
- ❑ Groups **trained and supported by CRSI and partner organisations** (including leading settlement agencies)
- ❑ **Building community capacity and know-how** to feed into future community refugee sponsorship program for refugees currently overseas

Mentor Group - Requirements



- Form a local group of at least 5 people or express your interest in being connected to other prospective mentors in your local area
 - Australian citizens/permanent residents
 - No criminal record
 - Can commit time for training & mentoring (variable depending on needs, estimate 4-8 hours per week per group)
 - Diverse expertise an asset (relevant skills/experience/networks, languages)
- Apply (including detailed information about your group members and your local area)
- Undergo basic vetting (police checks and working with children checks)

Mentorship - Scenario 1



Family already residing in your area

- Have:
 - Housing
 - Kids enrolled in school
 - Good health
 - Basic English
- Need help with:
 - Finding employment
 - Navigating school and online learning/digital literacy
 - Improving English
 - Helping young adult child get drivers licence and explore post-secondary options

Mentorship - Scenario 2



Single refugee keen to move to your area

- Has:
 - Employment offer from local employer
 - Good English
- Needs help with:
 - Housing
 - Local orientation & community engagement
 - Specialist medical treatment for a recently diagnosed heart condition

Mentor Groups - Roles & Responsibilities

- Mentorship training (~8 hours in September) & peer-to-peer learning (ongoing)
- Practical support for a refugee/family (October 2020 - March 2021)
- Fundraise a small amount of financial support for a refugee/family (flexible, suggest \$1,000 - \$3,000)
- Participate in information-sharing and M&E activities
- Consider the opportunity to sponsor a refugee/family from overseas in 2021 (subject to implementation of new policy settings and other conditions)

Refugee criteria and program targets

Loose criteria:

- ✓ Single adult or family group
- ✓ Early in settlement journey:
 - ☐ Recently arrived in Australia (arrived after 1 April 2019) (the more recently arrived the better) **OR**
 - ☐ relocating to a new Australian community and in need of community support to achieve settlement goals
- ✓ Living or moving to a location near to an identified mentor group (say, 20 minute drive)
- ✓ Not already well-known to the mentor group
- ✓ Granted a refugee or a protection visa (incl TPV/SHEV)
- ✓ In need of additional support of a nature that could be provided by a local mentor group

Refugee criteria – relevant settlement needs

Individual/family member has needs in at least two of the following areas (these become 'settlement goals' for mentor groups to assist with):

- Need to improve English language proficiency in order to achieve other settlement goals
- Need support for initial settlement in a new area (eg school enrolments, securing housing, AMEP enrollments, local orientation)
- Complex needs that require additional support eg single-parent households, disability/complex medical needs
- Assistance with engaging with school or tertiary education
- Additional need for social interaction and support from local community members, for social integration and personal well-being
- Seeking employment, with no formal barriers to securing suitable employment (eg qualifications) or other identified barriers to securing employment that cannot be overcome in next six months with support from the mentor group
- Seeking to establish or growing a small business, with no obvious barriers to establishing a business that cannot be overcome in next six months with support from mentor group (eg qualified, no major capital requirements)
- Requiring support to work successfully in a new job/role

Next Steps

