



BRIEFING

Proposed approach to next three-year refugee programme

Date:	1 March 2016	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	2282 15-16

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Michael Woodhouse Minister of Immigration	Note the attached paper	
Hon Craig Foss Associate Minister of Immigration	Copy attached for your information.	N/A

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Christine Hyndman	Manager, Immigration Policy, MBIE	04 901 8575	<div style="background-color: grey; color: white; padding: 2px;">S 9(2)(a)</div> ✓
Floss Caughey	Senior Advisor, Immigration Policy	04 901 8583	

The following departments/agencies have been consulted					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Treasury	<input type="checkbox"/> MoJ	<input type="checkbox"/> NZTE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MSD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TEC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MoE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MFAT	<input type="checkbox"/> MPI	<input type="checkbox"/> MfE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DIA	<input type="checkbox"/> TPK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MoH

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

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Proposed approach to next three-year refugee programme

Date:	1 March 2016	Priority:	Medium
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Purpose

To respond to your request of Thursday 18 February 2016 for an outline of your proposed approach for the next three-year refugee programme. The attached document (or alternatively the two A4 pages) could be used as a basis for discussion with your colleagues.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (the Ministry) recommends that you:

- a) **note** that the attached outline of your proposed approach for the next three-year refugee programme and the two A4 pages provide similar information in different formats *Noted*
- c) **note** that on Monday 22 February 2016, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submitted recommendations "relating to the New Zealand 2016/2017 to 2018/19 planning cycle for the Refugee Quota" S 6(b)(ii) *Noted*
- d) **note** that the Ministry will provide a briefing on the UNHCR submission by Monday 7 March 2016. *Noted*

Christine Hyndman

Christine Hyndman
Manager, Immigration Policy
Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE

Hon Michael Woodhouse
Minister of Immigration

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RESPONDING TO YOUR REQUEST

1. At your meeting of 18 February 2016, you directed the Ministry to provide a synopsis of your proposals to amend the next three-year refugee programme for you to discuss them with colleagues. We have provided the synopsis in two formats: a written summary and similar, but briefer information, in two A4s. The proposals are grouped under six headings.
2. We have used the heading "refugee programme" but since one of the categories is the Refugee Family Support Category, who are the family members of New Zealand refugees but do not need to be mandated refugees themselves, you may wish to consider that a more accurate heading could be "humanitarian programme".
3. The proposed size of the next three-year refugee programme is shown in Table One. The only change from the current numbers (or in the case of Convention refugees, estimated numbers) is that, for 2018/19, the table shows a proposed increase in the number of the new category *Mandated refugees – non quota* from zero to 250 (that is, the same number as for 2016/17 and 2017/18). § 9(2)(f)(iv)
[REDACTED] We understand this to reflect your views, but will amend it if required.
4. The proposed new entry criteria would apply to the new category *Mandated refugees – non quota* only and would not be introduced until 2017, to allow sufficient time to arrange for the selection of refugees according to the new criteria. § 9(2)(f)(iv)
[REDACTED]
5. The benefits and risks of each of the six proposals are summarised.

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PROPOSED APPROACH TO THE NEXT THREE-YEAR REFUGEE PROGRAMME 2016/17 – 2018/19

Global context

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the global refugee population to be 20 million – the highest in 20 years. An estimated 4 million people have fled Syria, the largest single refugee crisis in 25 years. Over multiple years, Australia has pledged to resettle 20,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees, Canada 38,089 Syrian refugees and the United Kingdom 20,000 Syrian refugees. New Zealand has pledged to resettle a total of 850 Syrian refugees.

Size and composition of the refugee programme

The refugee programme (refugees and their families granted residence in New Zealand) has five streams:

- a 600 refugees each year mandated and referred by the UNHCR – referred to as *UNHCR-referred refugees - quota*. These include 50 places for large-scale refugee crisis situations approved by Cabinet in 2013
- b 150 places each year offered to Australia for refugees subject to Australian offshore processing legislation, referred to as *Transferees* and, if not needed by Australia, used for *UNHCR-referred refugees - quota* (a and b together are referred to as *Refugee quota*). While Australia has so far not taken up this offer, ^{§ 6(b)(1)}
- c 250 additional places approved for 2016/17 and 2017/18, ^{§ 9(2)(f)(iv)} in addition to the refugee quota. ^{§ 9(2)(g)(i)}
- d an estimated 125-175 each year who will be approved asylum claimants who have been granted refugee status on a case by case basis under the Refugee Convention (*Convention refugees*)¹, and
- e 300 extended family members of refugees in New Zealand granted residence each year under the *Refugee Family Support Category*. These family members may be in "refugee-like" situations but do not need to be mandated refugees.

The current numbers for each stream are provided in Table One below. It is estimated that around 1,475 refugees and their families will be granted residence in each of the years 2016/17 and 2017/18, reducing to 1,225 in 2018/19 (unless proposal 5, next page is agreed). While much public attention is focused on the refugee quota, *UNHCR-referred refugees - quota* comprise around 40-50 per cent of the overall refugee places that New Zealand accepts in the overall programme (depending on whether or not the offer of the 150 places for transferees is taken up by Australia).

Refugee quota (750) ^{§ 9(2)(f)(iv)} – will all spend their first six weeks at Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC) to undergo a reception programme to help prepare them for life in New Zealand. Up to 1,200 refugees a year can be accommodated at the MRRC, without needing to make changes to the operational management of the MRRC or expand facilities.

¹ The number of Convention refugees are estimates only as they are approved on a case by case basis and numbers vary from year to year. The estimates do not include immediate family members offshore.

Table One: Proposed next three year refugee programme

Financial year	Refugee quota		Mandated refugees – non quota	Convention refugees	Refugee Family Support Category	Total refugee programme
	UNHCR-referred refugees - quota	Transferees				
2016/17	600	150	250	175	300	1,475
2017/18	600	150	250	175	300	1,475
2018/19	600	150	250 ²	175	300	1,475
Total	1,800	450	500	525	900	4,175

Proposed changes

The setting of the next three-year refugee programme presents an opportunity for New Zealand to adopt new approaches to improve outcomes for refugees (more self-sufficiency, better integration and less dependence on State Support) sought by Government. I propose to seek Cabinet agreement to the following proposals to:

- Broaden awareness of the whole of the refugee programme** so that it encompasses a more comprehensive picture of New Zealand's overall commitment to refugees, expanding from the current narrow focus on the "Refugee quota".
- Allow some flexibility to adjust the numbers between streams or between years** within the overall three-year total. Although, in general, the numbers for each stream have remained stable, if there was a shock (such as a mass arrival³), other streams could be adjusted to manage the overall numbers.
- Introduce a new category from 2017 for refugees outside the quota (Mandated refugees - non quota)**. In 2016/17 and 2017/18 these places have been allocated to Syrian refugees S 9(2)(f)(iv) to allow sufficient time to make the arrangements for the selection of the refugees according to the new criteria. The new criteria would also apply to any future Mandated refugees - non quota approved, if proposal 5 is agreed.

S 9(2)(f)(iv)

The entry criteria are aimed at supporting the outcomes of the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (the Strategy) of more self-sufficiency, better integration and less dependence on State Support. The monitoring of the Strategy outcomes shows that 20 per

² No places for 2018/19 have been approved. If proposal 5 (below) is agreed, the number for *Mandated refugees - non quota* would increase from zero to 250 and the total refugee programme in 2018/19 would increase from 1,225 to 1,475. All other places would remain the same as the current places.

³ In the event of a mass arrival (more than 30 irregular migrants who claim asylum), consideration would be given to the quota programme being temporarily suspended to accommodate the group at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC). The mass arrival group would have their refugee status reviewed after three years and would not be eligible to apply for residence until after that three year period. Therefore, they would not impact on the overall number of refugees granted residence within the three year period 2016/17 – 2018/19.

S 9(2)(f)(iv)

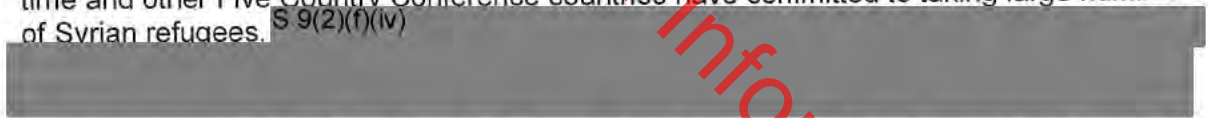
cent of refugees aged 18-64 are employed two years after arriving in New Zealand. It is expected that a higher proportion of refugees granted entry under the new criteria would gain employment sooner after arrival.

4. **Offer community groups the opportunity to support a certain number of *Mandated refugees - non quota*.** While the resettlement of quota refugees will remain fully Government-funded, I propose that under the community group supported approach, community groups would share the ^{S 9(2)(f)(iv)} responsibilities of resettlement support for a portion of the *Mandated refugees - non quota* refugees selected under new entry criteria.

S 9(2)(f)(iv)



5. **Increase the number of *Mandated refugees - non quota* places from zero to 250 places in 2018/19 and outyears.** Cabinet has already approved an additional 250 places each year for 2016/17 and 2017/18 for Syrian refugees. No increase has been approved for 2018/19. If Cabinet approved a further 250 places in 2018/19 and outyears for *Mandated refugees - non quota*, who would gain entry under the new criteria, it would allow sufficient time for the new entry criteria and the community-group approach to be tested. The size of the refugee programme would increase in 2018/19 to the same number - 1,475 - as the previous two years.
6. **Continue to respond to the Syrian crisis** – The Syrian crisis is likely to persist for some time and other Five Country Conference countries have committed to taking large numbers of Syrian refugees. ^{S 9(2)(f)(iv)}



There are also 50 *UNHCR-referred refugees - quota* places each year previously approved by Cabinet for large-scale refugee crisis situations that could continue to be used to resettle more Syrian refugees for this next three year period if Cabinet wished.

Table 2: Benefits and risks of these proposals

	Proposal	Benefits	Risks
1	Broaden awareness of the whole refugee programme rather than focussing on the <i>UNHCR-referred refugees - quota</i> .	Provides a more comprehensive picture of New Zealand's overall commitment to providing protection to refugees and their families.	^{S 9(2)(g)(i)}

⁵ Note that Cabinet approved full funding of refugee-specific services for the 250 Syrian refugees for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

	Proposal	Benefits	Risks
2	Allow some flexibility to adjust numbers between streams and between years	Provides assurance that the overall number of refugees granted residence in New Zealand are manageable.	§ 9(2)(g)(i)
3	Introduce new entry criteria for <i>Mandated refugees - non-quota</i>	<p>Supports achievement of the outcomes of the New Zealand refugee resettlement strategy (more self sufficiency, better integration and less dependence on State Support).</p> <p>The refugees are more likely to get jobs sooner after arrival and their English proficiency will help them more quickly participate in the community.</p>	§ 9(2)(g)(i)
4	Offer community groups the opportunity to support a certain number of Mandated refugees – non quota.	<p>Supports bonds between refugees, community-based organisations and local communities.</p> <p>Provides a shared model to possibly expand the refugee programme in the future, with community groups undertaking responsibility for some aspects of settlement while refugees remain eligible for publicly funded services.</p>	<p>The willingness and capacity of community groups to take on a greater responsibility for (and cost of) refugee resettlement has yet to be tested. § 9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>§ 9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>The Syrian crisis has raised awareness of refugee issues, however, and the response is likely to be positive.</p>
5	Increase the number of places for <i>Mandated refugees - non quota</i> places from zero to 250 for 2018/19 and outyears.	<p>Would allow sufficient time for the new entry criteria and the community-group supported approach to be tested.</p> <p>The size of the refugee programme would increase in 2018/19 to the same number – 1,475 – as the previous two years and demonstrate New Zealand's continued commitment to refugee protection.</p>	<p>§ 9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>The proposed increase may not satisfy refugee advocates who have been calling for a larger increase. The maximum the MRRC can take each year is 1,200 without requiring expansion of facilities. The <i>Refugee quota</i> (750) and the <i>Mandated refugees - non quota</i> (250) combined are 1,000.</p>
6	Continue to respond to the Syrian crisis by § 9(2)(f)(iv)	<p>Would demonstrate New Zealand's humanitarian response and willingness to share the global refugee burden.</p> <p>May mitigate criticism that the new entry criteria applied to Syrian refugees are undermining New Zealand's humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis.</p>	<p>There may be concerns about the possible security risk (but New Zealand's stringent security checks of Syrian refugees mitigate that risk.)</p> <p>There may be complaints that New Zealand's response to the Syrian refugee crisis is inadequate when compared with peer countries. There are 50 places annually approved for large-scale refugee crisis situations that could be allocated to more Syrian refugees.</p> <p>The proposed review in 2018/19 would check if a continued response to the Syrian crisis was required and at what level.</p>

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the global refugee population to be 20 million – the highest in 20 years. Syria is the largest single refugee crisis in 25 years – 4 million people have fled Syria.

Pledges for Syrian refugees (over multiple years)

Australia	20,000*
Canada	38,089
New Zealand	850
United Kingdom	20,000

*Syria/Iraq



A Syrian refugee child in Lebanon.

New Zealand's refugee programme 2016/17 – 2018/19 – Proposed

The UNHCR-referred refugees comprise 40 – 50 % of the places that New Zealand accepts in the total refugee programme (depending on whether Australia takes up the offer regarding the 150 places for transferees).

Financial year	Refugee quota		Mandated refugees non-quota	Convention refugees	Refugee Family Support Category	Total Refugee Programme
	UNHCR-referred refugees	Transferees				
2016/17	600	150	250	175	300	1,475
2017/18	600	150	250	175	300	1,475
2018/19 (1)	600	150	0/250	175	300	1,225/1,475
Total	1,800	450	500	525	900	4,175
(1) Two numbers are shown for the number of places for Mandated refugees – non quota for 2018/19:	<p>Priority protection places including general protection, women at risk, medical/disabled refugees.</p> <p>Includes 50 places for large-scale refugee crisis situations approved 2013.</p>	<p>While Australia has so far not taken up New Zealand's offer to resettle refugees subject to Australian offshore processing legislation (transferees), S6(b)(i)</p>	<p>This would be a new category of refugees outside the Refugee quota with specific entry criteria. Previously these places were announced by Government as additional to the Refugee quota up to 2017/18 and used to resettle UNHCR-referred Syrian refugees from Lebanon. None have been approved for 2018/19.</p> <p>S 9(2)(f)(iv)</p>	<p>Approved asylum claimants on a case by case basis – estimated 125 – 175 each year</p>	<p>Family members of refugees in New Zealand. They do not need to be mandated refugees.</p>	

- the number of places currently approved = 0
- the number of places proposed (proposal 5 next page) = 250

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Proposed changes to next three year refugee programme – benefits and risks

Proposed changes

1. Broaden awareness of the whole refugee programme rather than focussing on the UNHCR-referred refugees – quota.

2. Allow more flexibility to adjust numbers between streams or between years – e.g. if there was a mass arrival, other streams could be adjusted to manage the overall numbers

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

4. Offer community groups the opportunity to take a greater role in supporting a portion of Mandated non-quota refugees. The community group would pay for refugees travel to New Zealand, locate housing and provide settlement support in the community and help to find a job. Refugees would be eligible for the usual range of publicly-funded health care, education and social support.

5. Increase the number of places for Mandated refugees – non quota from zero to 250 for 2018/19 and outyears.

6. Continue to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis

S 9(2)(f)(iv)

Benefits

Provides a more comprehensive picture of New Zealand's overall commitment to providing protection of refugees and their families.

Provides assurance that the overall number of refugees granted residence in New Zealand is manageable.

Supports achievement of the outcomes of the New Zealand refugee resettlement strategy (more self sufficiency, better integration and less dependence on State Support).

These refugees are more likely to get jobs sooner after arrival

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Supports bonds between refugees, community-based organisations and local communities,

Provides a shared model to possibly expand the refugee programme in the future, with community groups undertaking responsibility for some aspects of settlement while refugees remain eligible for publicly funded services.

Would allow sufficient time for the new entry criteria and the community-group supported approach to be tested. The size of the refugee programme would increase in 2018/19 to the same number – 1,475 – as the previous two years and demonstrate New Zealand's continued commitment to refugee protection.

Would demonstrate New Zealand's humanitarian response and willingness to share the global refugee burden.

May mitigate criticism that the new entry criteria are undermining New Zealand's humanitarian response.

Risks

S 9(2)(g)(i)

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

S 9(2)(g)(i)

The willingness and capacity of community groups to take on a greater responsibility for (and cost of) refugee resettlement has yet to be tested. s 9(2)(g)(i)
But the Syrian crisis has raised awareness of refugee issues and the response is likely to be positive.

There would be associated ongoing fiscal costs from 2018/19 for the resettlement of 250 refugees each year. The proposed increase may not satisfy refugee advocates who have been calling for a larger increase. However, the maximum the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre can take each year is 1,200 without requiring expansion of facilities. The refugee quota (750) and the Mandated refugees-non quota (250) combined are 1000.

There may be concerns about the possible security risk but New Zealand's stringent security checks of Syrian refugees mitigate that risk.

There may be complaints that New Zealand's response to the Syrian refugee crisis is inadequate when compared with peer countries. There are 50 places annually approved for large-scale refugee crisis situations that could be allocated to more Syrian refugees.