



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



Humanitarian Settlement Services

Regional Profile #1
Southern Tasmania

Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Humanitarian Settlement Services | 1 |
| Contents | 2 |
| About Southern Tasmania | 3 |
| Service providers | 4 |
| Accommodation | 4 |
| Education | 5 |
| Health Services | 6 |
| Employment Opportunities | 6 |
| A welcoming community | 7 |

DSS wishes to express its thanks to Centacare for compiling this material.

While every care has been taken, DSS makes no guarantees that the information provided is up to date.

For further information on the Humanitarian Settlement Services programme see:
Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS)

About Southern Tasmania

Tasmania is an island and a state, 240 km south of the mainland and separated by Bass Strait. Southern Tasmania includes Hobart, the state capital, and the Greater Hobart area has a population of about 215 000. It has a reputation as a quiet and safe city and because it is relatively small, travel by bus between the suburbs and the city centre is easy and quick. Local beaches and nature areas are easily accessible by public transport. Hobart has a mild temperate climate and four distinct seasons with an average annual rainfall of 615 mm, most of which falls in the winter months.

The population includes many who migrated from the United Kingdom, Poland, India and Greece and there are an increasing number of refugee communities from countries that include Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Bhutan, Burma, Iran and Afghanistan. In general, newly arrived refugees settle in suburbs near the central business district to the north of the city. There is also a thriving community of international students who live close to the University of Tasmania.



Service providers

Humanitarian Settlement Service (HSS) services provided in the region focus on helping refugees to gain access to mainstream services such as Centrelink, Medicare, banks, general and specialist health and medical services, English language tuition, training and employment, in addition to links to the community and community organisations.

Centacare Tasmania is the service provider in Southern Tasmania delivering services on behalf of the Department of Social Services (DSS). Centacare is a not-for-profit organisation that delivers a range of services to assist migrants and refugees from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to settle in Hobart and the region. Centacare has a friendly team of caseworkers and volunteers. Each client and family is allocated a case worker and volunteers to help them settle. Centacare serves as a general referral point and provides support in finding accommodation and accessing orientation programmes. Other services that Centacare offer include the Settlement Grants activities and a complex case service.

Accommodation

Rents in Hobart are generally cheaper than in mainland capital cities. Housing located closer to the city centre is generally more expensive than housing in the outer suburbs. The most popular suburbs for new arrivals tend to follow the northern suburbs bus route, and most are within 30 minutes of the central business district by bus.

Approximate costs of rental accommodation as at September 2012 are:

- one bedroom units: \$145 a week
- two bedroom units: \$210-\$250 per week
- three bedroom units: \$280 per week
- three bedroom houses, usually including a yard: \$280-\$350 per week
- four bedroom houses, usually including a yard: \$360-\$410 per week.

Single people have the option of renting a small unit or bedsit on their own, but these are usually located further from the city and cost at least \$145 a week. As a consequence, single people tend to be placed in share houses and boarding house-style accommodation, which is cheaper and better located. Most humanitarian entrants initially have short-term accommodation, and then move to the private rental market. The short-term accommodation provided by Centacare includes:

- a large double-storey six-bedroom house, usually allocated to large families, or two families sharing the house
- three bedroom cottages with fenced yards
- a three bedroom brick house
- a block of eight terraced units, with individual gardens and a play area.

Types of accommodation available in southern Tasmania



Short-term



Long-term

Education

There are preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions in Hobart and Southern Tasmania.

Polytechnic courses

The Polytechnic, formerly the College of Technical and Further Education (TAFE), provides a number of different pathways for students.

Adult English Migrant Program (AMEP)

The Polytechnic delivers the only AMEP in Hobart. Students start classes as part of a mixed group, on three days a week for six weeks, receiving orientation about Hobart shops and visiting places of interest such as Mt Wellington and Russell Falls. After six weeks, they are placed in classes on the basis of their proficiency in English, and the number of classes increases to six a week.

- Youth programme: intensive study for students 18-25 years of age, usually for those who have not completed high school, but want to undertake tertiary studies, with the focus on English, numeracy and science.

Polytechnic Pathway courses (non-AMEP)

Students can access these pathways after completing the AMEP. They will often have been given introductory 'tasters' to various industries during the AMEP. Popular pathways include aged care, nursing and horticulture. Students receive career counselling and support in accessing trade certificates offered outside the Polytechnic, such as hospitality courses and traineeships.

Students wishing to proceed to university after AMEP can complete a bridging course which prepares them for tertiary education. A Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) support worker at the University of Tasmania can provide information and advice to students enrolled in university courses.



Polytechnic in Hobart

Health Services

Humanitarian entrants can access the same general practitioner (GP) services as the wider community. Most GPs in Hobart bulk bill HSS clients and some have received training in meeting the special needs of humanitarian entrant families, including the procedure for accessing interpreters.

All humanitarian clients are offered a free comprehensive health check by the Refugee and Humanitarian Arrival Clinic at the Royal Hobart Hospital. A Migrant Liaison Officer in the hospital provides patients with specialist support and advocacy, and ensures that interpreters are available when needed.

The Phoenix Centre is a free counselling service for people who have experienced torture or trauma. Clients are offered specialist counselling, as well as practical assistance, workshops and complementary therapies.

Employment Opportunities

Clients who have acquired a moderate level of proficiency in English have a better chance to find work. Because of its relatively small size, Hobart can provide fewer jobs than mainland capital cities, but humanitarian entrants are considered to be valuable workers.

There are only a few factories in Hobart and therefore limited opportunities for fast access to minimum-wage work, so clients require training to assist them in finding work. Ultimately, this leads to accessing jobs with better working conditions and more opportunities for advancement, but it takes significantly longer. Humanitarian entrants usually do not find work during their initial settlement period, unless it is seasonal farm work, such as fruit picking or tying hops.

The Migrant Resource Centre offers a specialist employment support service for our clients, and again clients with proficient English skills usually have a better chance of successful placement.

Service providers who specialise in assisting humanitarian entrants include:

- MRC Hobart
- Hobart Polytechnic, AMEP
- Department of Education, liaison officer
- Centrelink, Migrant Support Worker
- Royal Hobart Hospital, Migrant Liaison Officer
- Hobart City Council, Community Development Officer
- Augusta Road Medical Centre.

A welcoming community

Many of the existing cultural communities have organised themselves into groups, hold regular and formal meetings, and have a strong interest in promoting a positive presence in Hobart for humanitarian arrivals. These groups include Councils for Bhutan, Ethiopia, and Karen. Other cultural groups have less formal gatherings.

Many community groups are involved in welcoming humanitarian clients, often providing a special meal on arrival and helping them to make connections. Humanitarian clients often receive visitors in the first few weeks of arrival. HSS in Hobart employs bicultural workers from the communities, who assist in delivering the settlement programme.

The MRC in Hobart offers a range of services for all migrant communities, including migration support, case management, driving lessons (run by volunteers), workshops, and summer school programmes.

The University of Tasmania, Centrelink, the Department of Education and the Royal Hobart Hospital all have specialist migrant support workers who work within their organisations to support humanitarian clients.

Church groups take a close interest in humanitarian clients, notably the Hobart Baptist Church and the Uniting Church, and a Pentecostal Church which provides a bus service for these clients. There is a Sunni mosque in the city, and plans are being made to build a Hindu temple. There are also a number of Mahayana Buddhist organisations and temples, most of them Chinese or Tibetan.