



NEW ZEALAND
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RIPEKA WHERE AOTEAROA

Migration
Programmes
Ngā kaupapa hunga whakarere

A warm welcome: The role of councils in refugee settlement in New Zealand



FRONT COVER: Rose (Bishnu), who featured as one of New Zealand Red Cross' Essential Kiwi Legends spoke at Parliament on World Refugee Day in 2020.

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Foreword

from Meng Foon,
Race Relations
Commissioner



From my experience as Mayor of Gisborne (2001-2019) I know how local government is at the coal face of our communities. For those new to Aotearoa, being acknowledged by the Mayor and City Council goes a long way in giving people confidence to participate and engage.

City councils can play an essential role in welcoming newcomers, but also going further by engaging with communities and ensuring diversity is considered in all council activities. One way is by attending community events which helps councils understand the diversity and richness in culture people bring to the regions.

I always had an open-door policy and because of this people felt confident to approach the Mayor and Council for their needs. I encourage all City

Councils who are welcoming former refugees to their communities to consider what role Council can play to ensure a welcoming community for newcomers to experience.

It also requires everyone in the community to support this kaupapa. By being an 'upstander' to any anti-migrant sentiment and for people to be willing to dispel the myths and generalisations that sometimes exist about migrants. Give nothing to racism.

Our county and our communities are richer for having people who have come from refugee backgrounds. Let us show them the manaakitanga that Aotearoa is well known for.

Meng Foon

RACE RELATIONS COMMISSIONER
New Zealand Human Rights Commission

Introduction

from Sarah Stuart-Black,
Secretary General of
New Zealand Red Cross

Tēnā koutou katoa,

2022 marks a decade of New Zealand Red Cross settling former refugees in communities across Aotearoa New Zealand. We have a long history of working with former refugees, that began by sending supplies to displaced people and refugee camps overseas. Many will know of New Zealand's welcome to more than 700 Polish children, many of whom were orphans, who arrived in 1944. New Zealand Red Cross provided much needed help for those children, both on arrival and in the Pahiatua camp.

The last decade has been a time of considerable change for New Zealand's refugee resettlement programme. We have seen an expansion of both our annual quota of former refugees and of settlement locations. These increases have been met by strong commitments from local government to ensuring former refugees have the best possible start.



I am pleased to share with you this overview of the lessons we have identified from our day-to-day engagement with the established settlement regions and want to acknowledge their considerable engagement and support we have experienced from working with Mayors, Councillors and their council staff.

I look forward to us continuing to build on our experiences and to apply lessons we have learned from the past ten years. It is a privilege for us to support and transition our newest kiwis into our communities here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ngā mihi nui,

Sarah Stuart-Black

SECRETARY GENERAL
New Zealand Red Cross

Executive Summary

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As a young adult, Sahra Ahmed stepped off a plane in Auckland to claim asylum. Now she is a nurse, international humanitarian aid worker and mental health advocate. She was profile as part of our #KiwiLegends campaign in 2018, alongside other former refugees who are playing an important role in the community.

This report has been compiled by New Zealand Red Cross to support the role of local authorities in the successful settlement of refugees. It provides background information, examples of good practice and recommendations to guide councils that are working to help settle refugees in their communities.

The settlement of refugees in Aotearoa New Zealand has come a long way since the early days of sponsorship and one-off responses to crises. Whilst we know that settlement starts with providing the basic legal protection of permanent residency, we also know that this is only the beginning of a long process. The successful settlement of former refugees is not a one-way street and integration depends on the actions of the newcomer as well as the actions of the host community.¹

In this report we examine the crucial role of councils, as part of the host community, in assisting with integration.² We ask: *What roles are councils currently playing in refugee settlement in New Zealand, how can they do better and what lessons can be shared?*

This report provides a snapshot of what practice currently looks like, both nationally and internationally, and what it could look like based on best practice. The report takes a wide view of council engagement with the settlement process

by also considering anti-racism initiatives, involvement in civic life and support for multicultural activities. It also highlights 'bright spots' of practice that can inform councils just beginning to settle former refugee communities.

The findings of the report indicate councils across New Zealand's current settlement locations are supportive but are rarely involved in the strategic planning around it. Community integration of refugees is often considered the responsibility of the individual or family and NGOs, with coordination provided by central government agencies funded to provide settlement support. In recent years central government, through the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment, has brought many councils on board both to provide new settlement locations, and to assist in selecting service providers.

We hope this report will encourage councils in all settlement locations to share good practice approaches to settlement, particularly for the benefit of those towns and cities that are just beginning on their refugee settlement journey. We hope that it will also assist councils to develop strategic approaches to the long-term integration of settled communities.

Overall, we hope this report will contribute to better settlement outcomes for refugee background communities and support greater integration between these groups and host communities.

We know that settlement and integration is a long-term process that continues well after the funding from central government ends. In that context, councils have the potential to play a significant role in achieving good outcomes for this group of new New Zealanders.

1 The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) describes the integration of refugees as "a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process which requires efforts by all parties concerned, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse population." For a more detailed description see, UNHCR (2013) 'The Integration of settled refugees: essentials for establishing a Resettlement Programme and fundamentals for Sustainable Resettlement Programmes' accessed online: <https://www.unhcr.org/52a6d85b6.pdf>

2 The current document considers the work of six city councils and Auckland Council, a unitary authority. While many other types of local government – district councils for example – are part of the Welcoming Communities initiative and are beginning to help settle former refugees in new settlement locations, they have not been surveyed for this report as they have only recently become involved in settlement. In terms of the potential use of this report we refer to district and city councils, or simply 'councils' where appropriate.

Method

This report began in 2019 as a broader research essay written at Victoria University of Wellington by Rachel O'Connor, then-General Manager of Migration at New Zealand Red Cross. That study also included a wider and more theoretically grounded analysis of what impedes the integration of refugees on the receiving country's side, with special attention paid to the experiences of New Zealand in the wake of the Christchurch Mosque Attacks.

The material that this current report is based on comes from:

- a literature review of relevant theories and experiences of councils becoming involved in refugee settlement
- an analysis of New Zealand council reports, committee meetings, funding grants, media and websites that point to policies and practices on refugee settlement
- contact with relevant representatives of every council with a request for any material that was missing from the analysis.

The analysis of council engagement was undertaken using council websites to access committee minutes, press releases, strategies, and policies. Council's official social media sites and other mainstream media and websites were also surveyed. A gap-analysis was then undertaken that identified a range of strengths as well as some opportunities to improve integration outcomes and practice. While the gap analysis is not included in this report, we have shared the broader review with individual councils and drawn some examples of good practice out of that analysis for section three of this report.

In addition to the first iteration of research, a second scan was conducted in 2021, as well as a follow up with representatives from each of the seven councils. This work was incorporated with the original essay and an updated and public-focussed version of the research is presented in this report. The report is a snapshot in time and does not claim to be definitive or exhaustive.



Acknowledgements

New Zealand Red Cross acknowledges the generous input of councils to this report and the Migration Group at New Zealand Red Cross for their participation in this process. Particular thanks to Murdoch Stephens, Tim O'Donovan, Gabrielle Ryan, Rachel Lutz and Eliza Cummings. We thank Rachel O'Connor, former General Manager Migration at New Zealand Red Cross, for the work undertaken for her Master's dissertation, which has been used substantially in this report.

New Zealand Red Cross settlement youth workers – Deven Rai, Shabana Sharifi, Sara Bakhtiari, Elizabeth Magabbo, and Yogesh Timsina – gather at Red Cross House in Wellington



1. Refugee settlement in Aotearoa New Zealand

A brief history

Near the end of World War II more than 800 Polish nationals, the majority of whom were orphaned children, arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand. When the war ended and they were unable to return home, they became our first large scale effort in refugee settlement.

In the following decades we received refugees from many other countries, though the settlement process was ad hoc and based on a decentralised sponsorship system that largely operated through local interest groups.

These groups were organised through a range of non-government organisations. First, in 1975 the Inter-Church Commission for Immigration (ICCI) was established, and this evolved into Refugee and Migrant Services. In 1987 New Zealand introduced an annual refugee resettlement quota of 800 places each year, and this allowed for stronger planning and co-ordination. In 1997, the quota was cut to 750 places. In 2012, Refugee and Migrant Services (by then renamed

Refugee Services Aotearoa) merged into New Zealand Red Cross.³

Refugees find a home in New Zealand through the resettlement quota but can also be accepted as asylum seekers or through other complementary pathways. Immigration New Zealand determines the number of arrivals and the composition for each settlement location.⁴ In the 2019/20 year, 1,008 people from 23 countries of origin, across 50 ethnic groups, arrived through the quota.⁵ 2021 has also seen a large group of Afghan Nationals arrive who are settling into communities here and will receive integration support from both Afghan community navigators and New Zealand Red Cross.

Until 2015, former refugees were settled across the larger urban areas of New Zealand: Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Nelson and Christchurch.⁶

³ For an in-depth history of these changes see Beaglehole A. (2013) *Refuge New Zealand: a nation's response to refugees and asylum seekers*. Dunedin: Otago University Press. For a full history of refugees in New Zealand is also worth noting the discussion in Beaglehole's opening chapter on the internal displacement of Māori, and the under-studied aspects of Māori granting protection to people from other iwi who were fleeing war.

⁴ The exact cases are selected by the UNHCR along the composition guidelines established triennially by Cabinet. Individuals are then interviewed and assessed by INZ and screened against international databases for security considerations.

⁵ Immigration New Zealand (2021) *Refugee and Protection Statistics*, January, accessed online: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/statistics/statistics-refugee-and-protection.pdf>

⁶ After the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes settlement was paused in Christchurch, resuming in 2019. For a more detailed history of refugee settlement, policies and challenges see Ann Beaglehole (2013) *Refuge New Zealand: a nation's response to refugees and asylum seekers*. Otago University Press, Dunedin.

Recent expansion into new regions

While there are global differences in how refugees are placed around cities and regions, one major trend is countries moving to more diverse settlement sites meaning more refugees are now settling in smaller towns and cities.

In North America, this has been driven by an attempt to reduce the pressure on existing cities and to respond to the decline of many smaller towns due to ageing populations and skills shortages.⁷ This global trend is also consistent with the current strategy in both Australia⁸ and now, New Zealand. New Zealand is currently undergoing the most significant growth of settlement locations and numbers in a generation. This growth has taken the number of regions settling refugees from five in mid-2015, to thirteen as we enter 2022.

In September 2015, in response to the broad public outcry in New Zealand around the refugee crisis,⁹ an emergency resettlement quota was established on top of the annual intake. This emergency quota required additional settlement locations and in November of that year, Dunedin was selected.¹⁰ Dunedin was the first new location since implementation of the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy. The Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) encouraged the Dunedin City Council to take an active role in establishing the city as a settlement location¹¹ The Dunedin City Council was the first

council to work through a Refugee Steering Group and participate in the coordination of integration initiatives.

In 2018, Invercargill was announced as the next new settlement location. Then, in March 2019, Christchurch was reopened as a settlement location, having not settled any refugees since the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes.

In 2018, the Government announced an increase to the refugee quota from 1,000 to 1,500 and, in 2019, Immigration New Zealand announced six new settlement locations: Whanganui, Levin, Masterton, Blenheim, Ashburton, and Timaru. Of the six locations, only five have been fully engaged, with Whanganui not proceeding beyond the initial announcement.¹² While COVID-19 has delayed the settlement of refugees in these regions, as of late 2021, Blenheim and Masterton had formal council-based steering groups.¹³

Patterns in refugee settlement

At present, former refugees are allocated to a settlement area based on where housing is available, where there are existing family links, where co-ethnic communities are settled, and any specific health service requirements. These placements occur in consultation with New Zealand Red Cross.

The table below shows refugee quota settlement by region from 2012 to 2022. The notable fluctuations across regions are a result of numerous factors including the increase in the quota to 1,500 places, new settlement locations opening, and availability of jobs and housing in each region.

7 Bose, P. (2018). Welcome and hope, fear and loathing: The politics of refugee resettlement in a small Vermont town. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 24, 320–329.

8 Boese, M. & Phillips, M. (2017).

9 The 'refugee crisis' is a term used to describe the mass movement of people from the Middle East and North Africa to Europe in the northern hemisphere summer of 2015. While some describe this as the migrant crisis, the large number of asylum claims, and subsequent acceptances, indicate that while the term migrant functions as a useful catch all, it does not indicate the validity and legality of the process of seeking asylum. Similarly, we haven't used the term Europe migrant crisis as that tends to centre the crisis as something dealt with by European states unable or unwilling to accommodate large numbers of asylum seekers. So, for purposes of brevity and to foreground that the crisis is for those claiming asylum, we use 'refugee crisis' in this report.

10 Radio New Zealand (2015) *New refugee centre to be set up in Dunedin*, 26 November, accessed online: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/regional/290641/new-refugee-centre-to-be-set-up-in-dunedin>

11 The Dunedin City Council iteration of the refugee steering group, first emerged from the community as described by the Dominican Family Aotearoa New Zealand (n.d.) *Dunedin Welcomes Refugees*, accessed online: <https://www.dominicans.org.nz/dunedin-welcomes-refugees/>

12 Martin, R. (2019) 'Meeting halted after iwi leader says city not ready for refugees' *Radio New Zealand*. Accessed online: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/395631/meeting-halted-after-iwi-leader-says-city-not-ready-for-refugees>; for Hawke's Bay, see Hendery, S. (2016) Napier and Hastings rejected for refugee settlement over 'safety concerns' *Stuff*. 11 February. Accessed online: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/76781805/napier-and-hastings-rejected-for-refugee-settlement-over-safety-concerns>

13 See Trigger, S (2019) 'Marlborough organisations prepare for first refugee intake'. *Marlborough Express*. June 29. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/marlborough-top-stories/114492893/marlborough-organisations-prepare-for-first-refugee-intake> and Masterton District Council (2020) *Council Agenda*:

Refugee quota settlement by region

Location	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2021-21	2021-22
Auckland	263	238	234	185	103	86	106	131	55	62
Waikato	70	84	116	115	175	165	161	103	31	24
Manawatu	87	112	115	113	157	162	143	101	43	35
Hawkes Bay			3							
Masterton										10
Wellington	224	246	212	277	245	243	168	92	27	68
Nelson	105	65	75	89	127	127	117	88	23	20
Blenheim								10	14	16
Christchurch	2	5	1	3	14	11	47	97	42	23
Ashburton									9	25
Timaru								16	9	7
Dunedin				94	196	182	178	90	10	25
Invercargill						44	87	69		29
Total	751	750	756	876	1017	1020	1007	797	263	344*



Figure 1: Refugee Quota Settlement by Region - source: Immigration New Zealand. *current to December 2021.¹⁴

¹⁴ Immigration New Zealand (2021) *Refugee and Protection Statistics - December 2020*, accessed online: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/statistics/statistics-refugee-and-protection.pdf>

With the refugee quota growing to 1,500 places – and five new locations just beginning to resettle people during the COVID-19 pandemic – the locations for refugee settlement over the coming decade may be substantially different.

The proposed 2021/22 intake of 903 people – with only Auckland (105) and Wellington (100) settling 100 people or more indicates this change is likely over the coming year. The five new locations are scheduled to take 30% of the new refugees.¹⁵

It is important to note that refugees may move from their original region to elsewhere in the country. These movements mean the role of councils is even more important, particularly if former refugees move early in their settlement journey and to areas where settlement support is not provided. Similarly, when small numbers of people are settled in one area there is not a critical mass to justify specialised settlement support.¹⁶ In cases where there is not adequate support, further transience and poor settlement outcomes become more likely.

Supporting councils through Welcoming Communities

The Welcoming Communities initiative provides support and sets standards to improve local government engagement with refugee and other migrant communities.¹⁷ The initiative is being led by Immigration New Zealand in partnership with the Ministry of Ethnic Communities and the Human Rights Commission¹⁸ and is grounded in mutual benefits to both those being welcomed and to the host communities:

Communities that make newcomers feel welcome are likely to enjoy better social outcomes, greater social cohesion and stronger economic growth. In this environment, everyone can fully participate in the economic, civic, and social life of the community. Building connections between locals and newcomers means everyone feels included and knows they belong.¹⁹

Welcoming Communities devolves more settlement processes to local councils. First piloted in five regions from 2017, with the support of ten councils across five regions, these initial Welcoming Communities included one new refugee settlement location – Ashburton – and two established settlement locations – Invercargill and Palmerston North.²⁰ There is currently scope to extend the programme by up to 30 additional councils.²¹ As of February 2022, 8 of the 13 settlement locations are part of the Welcoming Communities initiative.²²

Draft commentary from the Productivity Commission's 2021 immigration policy review indicates support for the expansion and extension of the initiative.²³ The ninth recommendation from the report reads:

“The Government should proceed with expanding the Welcoming Communities programme. MBIE should manage the expansion to ensure adequate resourcing, close engagement of participating communities, and strong ownership and involvement from local iwi in the delivery of welcoming plan activities.”²⁴

15 These figures are provisional and allow for a plus or minus 10% leeway, as do the actual intake numbers. The settlement of Afghan evacuees, not yet referred to as 'refugees' by MBIE, the August-December Covid-19 lockdown and Managed Isolation and Quarantine challenges have introduced further uncertainty.

16 Boese, M., & Phillips, M. (2017).

17 Immigration New Zealand (2017) Welcoming Communities Te wāhāroa ki ngā hapori Standard for New Zealand, December, accessed online: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/14036-welcoming-communities-standard-for-new-zealand-te-waharoa-ki-nga-hapori>

18 Prior to this initiative, there had been attempts at co-ordination between central and local government for migrant and refugee settlement, notably the Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy launched in 2007 (with a Wellington iteration released a year later). When the strategies were reviewed in 2013, an independent reviewer noted “the national and regional settlement structure has not been put into effect and sustained to achieve the intended results over time.”

19 New Zealand Immigration, (n.d.) 'What is Welcoming Communities?' accessed online: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/welcoming-communities/what-is-welcoming-communities>

20 In some areas councils have formed regional alliances that can act as a hub for the sharing of Welcoming Communities policies throughout a region. For example, Great South – Southland's regional development agency – produced the Southland Murihiku Welcoming Plan, which covers not only the Southland Regional Council, but also makes recommendations to the Invercargill City Council (ICC) and the Gore District Council.

21 MBIE (2020) *Briefing to the Incoming Minister*, November, accessed online: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/12539-briefing-for-the-incoming-minister-of-immigration>

22 So far in 2021, two batches of extra councils were named: first, Hamilton City Council, Horowhenua District Council and Masterton District Council; second, Rangitikei District Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council and Central Otago District Council.

23 Productivity Commission (2021). *Immigration – Fit for the future: Preliminary findings and recommendations*. NZPC. November. Accessed online: https://www.productivity.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Immigration_draft-report.pdf

24 *ibid.* p.60



Bangladesh, Sirajganj district, Adere Begum, aged 34, was one of those who received food and safe drinking water from Bangladesh Red Crescent Society during a distribution on a small island on the Jamuna River following the devastating floods which impacted the region in 2017.

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2. Toward a local approach

Refugees in Aotearoa New Zealand arrive at the end of one journey with great hopes and aspirations for the next. The reality of settling and integrating into a new country and community can be quite different from what was hoped for or even expected. Successful resettlement depends on broad community support — including that of councils.

This section outlines the roles of central and local government in refugee resettlement and presents international approaches to local settlement.

The role of central government

In most refugee settlement countries, central government legislative and policy settings determine border and immigration controls. The ability of local governments to either accept or decline refugee arrivals in their regions varies greatly among countries depending on their degree of autonomy from central government.

In New Zealand, a range of legislation sets out mandated roles for local government including regulations and other legislative instruments. The Local Government Act, Building Act, Civil Defence Emergency Management Act are examples. The role of local and central government in many situations, including in refugee settlement are interdependent and require cooperation.

The case for local government participation

A top-down policy approach can restrict local variations in approaches to settlement. There is evidence that cities and towns that create their own integration policies tailored to their setting demonstrate greater inclusivity and innovation.²⁵

Being local provides councils with greater opportunities to collaborate with local migrant groups and non-governmental organisations while also observing emerging trends and issues. Evidence suggests that providing councils with greater scope for action can result in more effective local integration strategies.²⁶ Councils may also benefit from this broadened scope as it allows them to demonstrate a multicultural, diverse, or integrated profile that may not match with central government policies, as we have seen internationally.²⁷

Policy positions between political parties can differ significantly, and there have been a number of examples internationally where a political party voted into Government changed the policy settings (up or down) for refugee arrivals and the next Government reversed or changed quota numbers inline with their policy positions.²⁸

The ability for local authorities to actively engage in refugee settlement is often restricted by finances. Canada has provided funding that has enabled its municipalities and community associations to develop strategic plans focused on ensuring welcoming communities.²⁹

In New Zealand there is no central government funding allocated to local government to provide refugee settlement support. However, through the Welcoming Communities project, it has begun to provide funding for the initial years when councils join the programme.

While there are numerous positives in settling people in smaller locations – such as the experiences in Nhill in Australia³⁰ – there are also challenges for refugees in small centres including:³¹

- the availability of culturally competent services
- a very small co-ethnic group, which contributes to social isolation
- difficulty developing social networks
- a fear of discrimination

Local government approaches around the globe

As the authors of a report from Canada's Cities of Migration note, 'While migration policy is often discussed nationally, the lived reality of settlement and integration is uniquely local and urban.'³² The three settlement countries with the greatest intakes of quota refugees over the past ten years³³ have different approaches in terms of the roles of local and central bodies.

Australia

In Australia, settlement is solely the domain of the federal government, however local government

25 See Dekker, R., Emilsson, H., Krieger, B., & Scholten, P. (2015). A Local Dimension of Integration Policies? A Comparative Study of Berlin, Malmö, and Rotterdam. *International Migration Review*, 49(3), 633–658.

26 Myrberg, G., Zapata-Barrero, R., Caponio, T., & Scholten, P. (2017). Local challenges and national concerns: Municipal level responses to national refugee settlement policies in Denmark and Sweden. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 83(2), 322–339.

27 Jørgensen, M. (2012). The Diverging Logics of Integration Policy Making at National and City Level. *International Migration Review*, 46(1), 244–278.

28 For more on these changes, see Ramakrishnan, K and P Gulasekaram (2015) *The law is clear: States cannot reject Syrian refugees*, Washington Post, 20 November, accessed online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/11/19/the-law-is-clear-states-cannot-reject-syrian-refugees/>; Pejic, D., Kosovac, A and M Acuto (2020) *New Foreign Relations Bill Puts 'city Diplomacy' At Risk*, University of Melbourne - Pursuit magazine, 10 September, accessed online: <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/new-foreign-relations-bill-puts-city-diplomacy-at-risk>

29 Tossutti, L. (2012). *Municipal Roles in Immigrant Settlement, Integration and Cultural Diversity*. 45(3), 607–633.

30 Regional Australia Institute (2018). 'Migration Community Narrative: Nhill', May, accessed online: http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/home/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Nhill_CommunityNarrative_WEB.pdf

31 Hynie, M., & Moghaddam, Fathali. (2018). Refugee Integration: Research and Policy. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 24(3), 265–276.

32 Cities of Migration, *United Nations Network on Migration website*, accessed online: <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/resources/cities-migration>

33 A combination of circumstances including the European Union response to the 2015 refugee crisis as well as decreases and offsetting of the Australian quota has led to changes in the last years of settlement. France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom are now all above Australia in UNHCR statistics for resettlement, though, on a per capita basis, Australia is led by Ireland, Sweden and Norway. See UNHCR (2021) *Projected Global Resettlement Needs*. Accessed online: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/5ef34bfb7/projected-global-resettlement-needs-2021.html>

has increasingly taken a role in supporting multiculturalism and social cohesion through interfaith dialogues, cultural festivals and other initiatives. A report from the State of Victoria³⁴ highlighted exemplary practice in local projects that included:

- A VicHealth local government action guide that aims to reduce race-based discrimination³⁵
- A Racial Diversity Workplace Audit Tool piloted by the City of Whittlesea³⁶
- Thirteen councils, and the Municipal Association of Victoria, have signed up for the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Racism. It Stops with Me!* campaign³⁷
- In 2015, Yarra City Council revised and updated their Refugee and Asylum Seeker Statement which outlines a commitment to a respectful and compassionate approach to asylum seekers.³⁸

United States

In the United States, settlement work is undertaken by nine settlement providers approved and funded by the federal government. There is very little coordination between federal and state government regarding selection or placement.

Some smaller towns – such as Clarkston, Georgia and Lancaster, Pennsylvania – have shown how small centres can build an identity of hospitality around being a national leader in refugee settlement. Smaller towns often act as a staging post, with former refugees often choosing to move to nearby cities after the first five years.³⁹

Canada

In Canada, the control of immigration has historically been solely at a federal level. However, in the 1990s, several states negotiated to have full responsibility for settlement and consultative rights on selection. Canada now has an active network of cities and mayors taking a leadership role in and coordinating settlement activities. Examples include:

- Big City Mayors Caucus is a group of mayors from Canada's largest cities showing collective and inclusive leadership on refugee settlement in their communities. They advocate for the provision of national resources and provide toolkits to local communities to ensure a welcoming response.⁴⁰
- The Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities created a toolkit for municipalities to help one another with practical ideas and support.⁴¹

Global networks

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has historically dealt with settlement states at a national level. However, in recent years political pressures around increased refugee numbers have led to increased engagement with mayors and cities.

More recently, global networks and resources for local communities and local government have often been led by Canada (as described above) and/or a United Nations group. Some prominent examples from the last decade include:

1. **Cities of Migration** which 'seeks to promote city-to-city learning exchange and create links between the many actors who are involved in the practical day-to-day work of making integration a key component of urban success.' This online platform – based at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada – creates opportunities for cities to share best city-level practices, build connections and provide resources.⁴²

34 Boese, M., & Phillips, M. (2017). The role of local government in migrant and refugee settlement in regional and rural Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 52(4), 388-404

35 VicHealth (2012) *Reducing race-based discrimination: Local government action guide no. 5*. accessed online: https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/Indicators/Overview-sheets/10/VH_LG-Guides_RBD_web.pdf?la=en&hash=2552C566C1B3BEB7A9BA9541A72A928EA93FCCD0

36 City of Whittlesea (2015) *Building Respect: Whittlesea's Anti-Racism Strategy 2015 – 2019*. Accessed online: <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/1493/anti-racism-strategy-graphic-designed.pdf>

37 Australia Human Rights Commission (nd) *Racism. It stops with me!* Accessed online: <https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/>

38 Refugee Council of Australia (2021) 'Refugee Welcome zones: City of Yarra.' Accessed online: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/city-of-yarra/>

39 See Long, K. (2017) "This small town in America's Deep South welcomes 1,500 refugees a year" *The Guardian*, 24 May, accessed online: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/may/24/clarkston-georgia-refugee-resettlement-program>; Strasser, F. (2017) "Lancaster, Pennsylvania: America's Refugee Capital," *BBC*, 27 January, accessed online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-38776233>

40 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2017) *Big-city mayors reach out to newcomers and refugees*, In News, 31 January, accessed online: <https://jimwatsonottawa.ca/en/big-city-mayors-reach-out-to-newcomers-and-refugees/>

41 Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (2019) *Networks*, accessed online: <https://en.ccunesco.ca/networks/coalition-of-inclusive-municipalities>

42 Cities of Migration, *Global Forum on Migration and Development*, <https://gfmdd.org/pfp/ppd/6024>



The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society's community centre in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, offers women at risk and who have experienced violence to meet in a safe place with other women who have lived similar experience. The centre teaches women to sew and make finishing next. The camps of Cox's Bazar hosts close to 1 million people who have fled violence from Rakhine State, Myanmar.

2. **The Mayors Migration Council** is an international network that gives cities a voice in international debates about refugees and migrants. 150 mayors signed the Marrakesh Mayor's Declaration at the same time as the Global Compacts on Refugees, promising to "leave no one behind" and to make cities "inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable."⁴³
3. The United Cities and Local Government, alongside UN-Habitat and International Organisation for Migration, facilitated the **Global Conference on Cities and Migration** that aimed to 'combine current thinking around international migration and sustainable urban development'.⁴⁴
4. The **Global Forum on Migration and Development Mayors Mechanism** has identified migration as a key issue where local leaders are at the forefront. In 2020 they released a comprehensive overview of local government involvement in migration.⁴⁵
5. In the **Cities of Light** project, the UNHCR promotes examples of cities using good practice in integrating asylum seekers and refugees.⁴⁶
6. As part of monitoring the Global Compact on Refugees, an inaugural Global Refugee Forum was held in December 2019. In the lead up to this event, the International Organisation for Migration organised an open letter to the UNHCR, which was signed by a dozen mayors. Less than a year after the initial forum 33 pledges have been made by cities, municipalities and local authorities.⁴⁷

43 Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development (2018), *Marrakech Mayors Declaration*, Adopted 8 December, Marrakesh, accessed online: <https://migration4development.org/en/resources/marrakech-mayors-declaration-cities-working-together-migrants-and-refugees>

44 UCLG (2017) *Mechelen Declaration on Cities and Migration*, 17 December, accessed online: https://www.ion.int/sites/default/files/press_release/file/Mechelen-Declaration-final.pdf

45 Landau, L. (2020) *Local Inclusion Of Migrants And Refugees: A Gateway To Existing Ideas, Resources And Capacities For Cities Across The World*, accessed online: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/01/local_inclusion_multipartner_guidance_.pdf

46 United Nations High Commission on Refugees, (2019), *Cities of Light*, accessed online: <https://www.unhcr.org/cities-of-light.html>

47 Most of these pledges were from East and West Africa, with multiple contributions in Europe also coming from Turkey and Lithuania. The 100 Resilient Cities initiative also called for greater engagement with municipalities when engaging with refugee issues. Pledges will be tracked over the four years up to the 2023 follow-up forum. For real time tracking see: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/channel/pledges-contributions> For more details see, Brandt, J. & Henderson, J. (2017), *The Global Compact on Refugees: The Role of Cities*, Brookings Institution & International Rescue Committee, accessed online: <https://www.unhcr.org/5c18b5f44.pdf>

3. Current council practice in refugee settlement in New Zealand

This section links current council practices around refugee settlement to standards set out by Welcoming Communities. These are set within a series of action areas required for successful settlement, which have been drawn from the work of Canadian academic Livianna Tossuti. These are:⁴⁸

- settlement on the council agenda
- diversity and anti-racism policies
- accessible of information
- inclusive leadership
- civic involvement of communities

Each of these action areas is broken down into individual policies and practices, and examples of council work in each is provided.⁴⁹

We examine Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington⁵⁰, Nelson and the ‘new’ locations of Dunedin and Invercargill. Christchurch was not included as, at the time of writing, it was only just beginning to take part in settlement again following the earthquakes and the COVID-19 pause on welcoming refugees⁵¹.

We expected Dunedin and Invercargill to have shown greater engagement than other regions as both were established after Immigration New Zealand’s New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy led to wider and more diverse stakeholder engagement. Most specifically, the Strategy noted that central government would “engage with employers, local councils, economic development agencies and chambers of commerce, industries and sectors in the settlement locations to identify and maximise opportunities for collaboration,”⁵² particularly around employment priorities. We also expected that the larger councils would be more likely than smaller councils to have higher rates of engagement due to their greater access to resources and capacity.

Below is an outline of the action areas for successful refugee settlement broken down into recommended policies and practices. Examples of New Zealand local council activity for each are provided.

48 To evaluate the New Zealand local authority engagement, this report uses Tossutti’s 2012 typologies of immigration, diversity and integration. See Tossutti, L. (2012), ‘Municipal Roles in Immigrant Settlement, Integration and Cultural Diversity’, *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 45(3), 607–633.

49 As noted in the method section, this review was a snapshot of practice from 2019 and 2020 and is not intended to be exhaustive.

50 People are settled across the wider Wellington region which encompasses four city councils. For brevity’s sake, this report only reviews Wellington City Council involvement as the largest council in the region and historically where most people were settled.

51 Furthermore, the Christchurch terror attacks occurred only two weeks after settlement resumed and the first group of people arrived through the refugee quota. This act of terrorism also significantly changed the settlement process and the local priorities that make reviewing the council’s engagement challenging. There will be value, most likely in the medium term, in analysing the way the Christchurch City Council has responded to settlement in light of those attacks, particularly with reference to section 3.2 on diversity and anti-racism policies.

52 New Zealand Immigration (2018) *New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy: Priorities to 2020*, April, accessed online: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/refugees/settlement-strategy-priorities-2020.pdf> (p. 6)

1. Settlement on council's agenda

Welcoming Communities standards:

#1 Inclusive Leadership:

Local government, tangata whenua and other community leaders work together to create, advocate for and continue to foster a welcoming and inclusive community. They lead a shared plan to increase connections between newcomers and existing residents.

#8 Culture and Identity:

There is a shared sense of pride in being part of a culturally rich and vibrant community. People feel their culture is respected and valued by other members of the community. There are opportunities to learn about each other's cultures.

Councils need to have migrant settlement embedded into the council work agenda. This can be achieved through:

Existence of formal immigrant settlement policies adopted by council

- The Auckland Council⁵³ 30-year plan recognises that Auckland's ethnic and culturally diverse population makes it 'a vibrant and inclusive place to live.'⁵⁴ The priority of this plan is to foster belonging and participation and it makes specific mention of outcomes that support diversity and inclusion.

Establishment of council advisory bodies dedicated to diversity

- Palmerston North has established a Council Advisory Group for their Established Welcoming Community. The advisory group released the *Welcoming Communities Advisory Group Plan 2020-2023* that sets out where the city is at in terms of Welcoming Communities goals and where they would like to be.

Prominence of migrant and refugee issues in strategic plans and vision statements

- Auckland Council includes 21 Local Boards that provide governance and leadership at a community level. In July 2019, for example, the Whau Local Board launched the *Whau Ethnic Peoples Plan* aimed at 'helping it to better meet the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse ethnic community'.⁵⁵ As the first local board's strategic immigration-related local government policy in New Zealand, it is a bright spot of strategic approach to engagement.

Establishment of separate administrative structures responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring related policies

- Auckland Council's Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel offer experience-based advice to help Auckland Council improve outcomes for the ethnic community. An impressive website provides resources, advice and guidance.⁵⁶

Council internal and external policies, services, programmes, and activities recognise and address cultural diversity

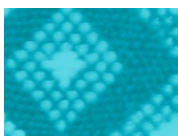
- In 2020 Hamilton City Council adopted a vision that recognises the diversity of the population, committing to "shaping a city where our people thrive – specifically we'll empower and enable our diverse communities to share their voice, and shape their city".⁵⁷
- The *Safe in the South 2016-19* strategy lists 'support the cultural diversity of Southland', including Invercargill, as one of its four goals.

53 In New Zealand local government is comprised of district, city, regional councils and unitary authorities. In some part of New Zealand a city or district council which is also responsible for regional council roles is a unitary authority. Auckland Council for example is a Unitary Authority.

54 Auckland Council, *Auckland Plan 2050*, accessed online: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/Pages/default.aspx>

55 Auckland Council (2019), *Whau Ethnic Peoples Plan*, accessed online: <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/media/28409/19-pro-2349-ethnic-peoples-plan-summary-a4.pdf>

56 Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel, <https://www.advisorypanels.nz/>
57 Hamilton City Council (2020) *Our Vision for Hamilton Kirikiriroa*, accessed online: <https://www.futurehamilton.co.nz/>



2. Diversity and anti-racism policies

Welcoming Communities standards:

#8 Culture and Identity:

There is a shared sense of pride in being part of a culturally rich and vibrant community. People feel their culture is respected and valued by other members of the community. There are opportunities to learn about each other's cultures.

Formal embedded policies that support diversity and cultural competency will in turn support successful refugee settlement in the community.

Adoption of multicultural policies

- Auckland Councils' recognition that they are a 'super diversity' city has resulted in multiple strategic plans that consider a multicultural approach, including the *30-year plan, I am Auckland, Thriving Communities, Toi Whitiki*, and the Events strategy.

Anti-racism and or anti-harassment policies

- Wellington City Council's Diversity and Inclusion strategy *Mō te katoa – For everyone, for all* was launched in October 2018,⁵⁸ though it is not publicly available and is focussed more on internal diversity and inclusion of staff. They have also hired a new manager for the Diversity and Inclusion process in late 2020 and are developing an Inclusion Strategy.

Different cultures are celebrated, and people are supported to express their cultural beliefs and customs, including language and religious practices

- Wellington City Council's community event fund priorities contribute to local identity, social cohesion, and resilience.⁵⁹ This fund engages with ethnic communities to provide resources that support a wide range of festivals and events. The Multicultural Council of Wellington also holds meetings and events free of charge in Council rooms and spaces.

3. Access to welcoming information

Welcoming Communities standards:

#2 Welcoming communications:

People of all cultures and backgrounds feel included, listened to and well informed through a range of ways that take into account their different communication needs.

#3 Equitable access:

Opportunities to access services and activities and to participate in the community are available to all, including newcomers.

Migrants and settled refugees need easy access to clear council information in an appropriate language.

Corporate communication – provision of translation and interpreting

- Dunedin City Council teamed up with Southern District Health Board to offer Arabic interpretation services, in addition to the existing translation services for a range of languages.⁶⁰

58 Wellington City Council (2018), *Annual report 2018/19 - Section Four, Governance and Management*, accessed online: <https://wellington.govt.nz/-/media/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-and-policies/annualreport/2018-19/annual-report-2019-section-4.pdf?la=en&hash=5F2D025E4771EC53B92F1462815B79A69068A6A9>

59 Wellington City Council (2018), *Community Events Sponsorship - Past Allocations*, accessed online: https://wellington.govt.nz/~/_media/services/community-and-culture/funding/files/community-events-sponsorship.pdf?la=en

60 Staff reporter (2019). 'Dunedin refugees offered Arabic interpreter service', *Stuff* 11 March. Access online: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/111192744/dunedin-refugees-offered-arabic-interpreter-service>

Public consultations

- Dunedin City Council staff undertook consultations on online information for newcomers with migrants and former refugees as well as for the people who are supporting those groups.

All community members are well informed about the services available in the community. Newcomers are made aware of and are using these services

- In conjunction with New Zealand Red Cross, Hamilton City Council created a Settlement Service information plan for refugee communities that shows what services are available while also playing a key role in supporting many of those services.

Council communication materials and messages are inclusive and reflect the diversity of the local community. Council encourages other agencies, businesses, and organisations to follow this model

- Motivated by the Welcoming Communities initiative, Palmerston North City Council facilitated a Chamber of Commerce event with a guest speaker on Cross Cultural Intelligence. The Council also undertook staff training for human resources and front desk teams on cross cultural competence.

The community is well informed about the local benefits of immigration

- For a new settlement location, Invercargill City Council has been very proactive in providing information to the community as to the benefits of immigration. There are regular posts on their social media pages highlighting immigration related stories such as citizenship ceremonies, ethnic holidays and celebrations and the website has multiple photos of ethnic diverse communities.

4. Leadership

Welcoming Communities standards:

#1 Inclusive Leadership:

Local government, tangata whenua and other community leaders work together to create, advocate for and continue to foster a welcoming and inclusive community. They lead a shared plan to increase connections between newcomers and existing residents.

Councils need to take a leadership role in refugee settlement in their own communities.

Local government leaders model the principles of inclusiveness, openness, tolerance, respect, and acceptance of all cultures in the community

- Palmerston North City Council is the only city council that was identified as having a multicultural portfolio. Their annual report notes that they are arguably the most ethnically diverse provincial city in New Zealand and that they celebrate and value this diversity. They were also the first council in New Zealand to sign up to the #WithRefugees UNHCR pledge.
- Dunedin City Council has consistently maintained positive inclusive leadership regarding refugee settlement and inclusion. The Council was very active in supporting civic calls for Dunedin to become a settlement location. This proactive approach included the former Mayor, the late Dave Cull,⁶¹ reaching out to MBIE to offer support for a 'refugee centre' in Dunedin.⁶²
- Auckland Council's Diversity and Inclusion unit has also engaged with the 'Courageous Conversations about Race' initiative and rolled out a number of these workshops, as well as supporting presentations.

61 Dave Cull was Mayor of Dunedin from 2010 to 2019, and sadly passed away in April 2021.

62 Dunedin City Council, News and Events, *Mayoral statement on refugee centre*, accessed online: <https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/council/mayor-and-councillors/mayor-dave-cull/mayors-speeches/statements/mayoral-statement-on-refugee-centre>



Ruben, a former refugee from Colombia, now living in Hamilton gained work as a bike mechanic.

© New Zealand Red Cross

5. Civic involvement

Welcoming Communities standards:

#6 Civic engagement and participation: Newcomers feel welcome to fully participate in the community. Newcomers are active in all forms of civic participation.

#7 Welcoming Public Space: Newcomers and receiving communities feel welcome in and comfortable using public spaces.

Settled refugees need to be given opportunities to be involved in civic activities.

Newcomers' efforts and achievements in civic participation and community life are acknowledged and celebrated

- The Hamilton City Council Civic Awards have recognised several ethnic community leaders and people working in the settlement sector including the late Ismail Gamadid. The Council has also promoted former refugees' civic activities through their 30 Under 30 years youth recognition awards.

- Members of the Wellington Islamic Association and community were recognised in the recent Absolutely Positively Wellington Awards.⁶³ A Wellington based refugee-led organisation was runner up in the Health and Wellbeing category Civic Awards in 2019.

Coordinated, comprehensive and appropriate initial welcoming support services are available from council, other agencies, and community organisations

- Dunedin City Council facilitates the Dunedin Refugee Steering Group that was established to consider long term strategies to support settlement and is chaired by one of the city councillors. It includes representatives from government and non-government organisations and community representatives with refugee backgrounds.⁶⁴ The Steering Group's Terms of Reference have been recently reviewed and an expression of interest process has been undertaken to select two new community representatives to the group who have lived experience as former refugees.

⁶³ Wellington City Council (2019), *Wellington awards to four members of Muslim community*, Scoop Press Release, 20 June, accessed online: <http://wellington.scoop.co.nz/?p=119838>

⁶⁴ Dunedin City Council (2019) *Afghan Families to be Welcomed*, News and Events, accessed online: <https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/news-and-events/news/october-2019/afghan-families-to-be-welcomed>

4. Conclusion

This report began by outlining the importance of the two-way nature of integration and how the host community's contribution to ensuring successful integration has not been given enough consideration. The host community plays a significant role in creating the environment into which newcomers settle. Inclusive leadership can result in our newest kiwis feeling well-informed, welcomed and supported by accessible engagement and resources at community level.

There is a growing international movement for more involvement from local government in refugee settlement. Around the world, local government is offering creative and well-tailored local solutions to local challenges. Numerous initiatives show that good integration is no longer solely the concern of central government. Local government is now engaging in integration not only in local and national dialogues but also internationally, such as through the Global Refugee Forum. Since the establishment of the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy, Immigration New Zealand has taken a lead on bringing councils into the planning and settlement of refugees, especially for new locations.

Today, refugee settlement in New Zealand is happening in a changing landscape. The recent increases to the refugee quota, the establishment of five new settlement locations, the impacts of the Christchurch Mosque Attacks, changing attitudes to multicultural values, and COVID-19 disruptions have created uncertainty and flux for both refugee settlement and the locations in which they are settling. We are seeing the value of the following to councils in settlement locations:

- The Welcoming Communities initiative;
- New settlement locations leveraging the experiences of established locations; and
- Reflecting community ethnic diversity across organisations from strategic plans through to everyday services

We have 75 years of refugee settlement experience in New Zealand. Our experiences in support of refugee settlement provide opportunities in the years ahead to continue to adapt, evolve and leverage a collaborative approach to supporting successful refugee settlement together.



Naing Naing Tun, who fled Myanmar many years ago and now works at Wellington's famous Monsoon Poon restaurant, is being interviewed by TVNZ One News.

