



Special Humanitarian Programme (SHP)



Australia's Humanitarian Programme in 2013–14

Australia's Humanitarian Programme in 2013–14 has 13 750 places, of which a minimum of 11 000 places are for the offshore component.

The 11 000 places are for refugees, most of whom are referred by the UNHCR, and for people in humanitarian need overseas seeking to reunite with their family in Australia under the Special Humanitarian Programme (SHP).

Australia will continue to resettle from three key regions: Asia, the Middle East and Africa. People granted visas in 2013–14 will include among others, people who have fled Iraq, Syria, Burma, Afghanistan, Bhutan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Government has already announced that in 2013–14, 500 Refugee places will be for Syrian refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries in the Middle East.

Increased number of places for the Special Humanitarian Programme (SHP)

The 2013–14 Humanitarian Programme will include more places for SHP entrants than in recent years. This will allow more people to bring their family to Australia. In some locations, while there will continue to be a large number of resettlement places available, there will need to be a mix of both Refugee and SHP places.

The priority for Refugee places will be for new and emerging refugee populations, women at risk and individuals identified by UNHCR who have urgent protection needs.

The SHP will continue to be a large part of Australia's humanitarian intake into future years.

Australia's commitment to resettle 5000 Bhutanese refugees from Nepal

In 2008, the Australian government announced that it would join with other countries to resettle Bhutanese refugees from Nepal. Australia made a commitment to accept 5000 Bhutanese refugees and is now very close to meeting this commitment. Other countries resettling Bhutanese refugees from Nepal include the United States, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Since this commitment was made, Bhutanese have consistently featured as one of the top five nationalities resettled under Australia's offshore Humanitarian Programme.

Visas granted to Bhutanese in Nepal 2007-08 to 2012-13

Programme Year	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Number of visas granted	205	614	1141	1000	695	1023

Will Australia continue to resettle Bhutanese once the 5000th visa has been granted?

Australia remains committed to the resettlement of Bhutanese refugees from Nepal beyond the grant of the 5000th visa. Australia will not stop granting visas to Bhutanese refugees in Nepal when the 5000th visa is granted this year.

It is likely that most of the Bhutanese resettled by Australia in future will be through the Special Humanitarian Programme (SHP) component of Australia's Humanitarian Programme.

While there will continue to be a small number of refugee visa places available for Bhutanese refugees referred by UNHCR, this is likely to be limited to vulnerable individuals. Most places for Bhutanese in the future will be under the SHP. This will still allow for Bhutanese refugees in Nepal who are registered with UNHCR and who have close relatives in Australia to be resettled here.

The SHP allows more established refugee communities in Australia, such as the Bhutanese, to work with the government to identify people for resettlement and provide support for them after arrival.

Why am I being asked to provide an SHP proposal for my family member in Nepal?

As there are likely to be fewer Refugee places but more SHP places available for many groups in future years, including Bhutanese, the department is approaching those people already under consideration for a Refugee visa who have close relatives in Australia to see if they wish to be considered under the SHP this year.

This will involve the relative in Australia becoming their proposer, completing a form and agreeing to help support their relative once they arrive in Australia. The proposer will also be responsible for paying for their relatives' airfares to Australia. There is an interest-free loan available from IOM to help proposers pay these costs.

The Australian government will continue to pay for your relatives' medical checks if they are considered for an SHP visa and they will also continue to be eligible to use HSS services.

Applicants who choose to be considered under the SHP are likely to have their application finalised more quickly provided they meet all requirements.

This is not compulsory and applicants who do not wish to be considered for an SHP visa or who do not have anyone in Australia who is willing to propose them will continue to have their existing Refugee application processed. This may take some time to finalise as it will depend on how many Refugee places for Bhutanese are available in future Programme years.

Who can propose me?

Any person who is an Australian citizen, an Australian permanent resident or an eligible New Zealand citizen who lives in Australia can propose you for an SHP visa. You can also be proposed by a community organisation in Australia. Those people who have the closest links to Australia will have their applications considered first.

What is different under the SHP?

If you are proposed by a relative or community organisation in Australia, they must pay the costs of your travel to Australia (and the travel costs of all of your family members accompanying you).

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) will operate a package scheme to arrange for concessionary airfares, exit permits, domestic transfers and transit requirements for Bhutanese applicants under the SHP and it is recommended that your proposer approaches IOM in Australia to avail these. IOM also operates a scheme to loan money to SHP proposers to pay for these services. There is no interest for the loan and your proposer can repay the money in regular instalments. There is further information about this scheme on the IOM website: www.iomaustralia.org/projects_nils.htm

The Australian Government also expects your proposer to assist you and your family to settle in Australia. This can include:

- meeting you at the airport
- arranging for your accommodation
- helping you and your family to adjust to your new life in Australia in other ways.

You will still be eligible for assistance by the Government just like all other refugees resettled in Australia, but the Australian Government also expects your proposer to help you settle.

What forms does my proposer need to complete?

Your proposer must complete form 681 – ‘Refugee and Special Humanitarian Proposal’ and provide evidence that they are an Australian citizen, an Australian permanent resident or an eligible New Zealand citizen. There is further information on the form about what kinds of other documents your proposer needs to provide. The direct link on the website for form 681 is: <http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/pdf/681.pdf> or you can request a form from UNHCR Damak.

Where does my proposer send the completed forms?

Once your proposer has completed the form 681 – ‘Refugee and Special Humanitarian Proposal’, they can either:

scan and email the form and accompanying documents directly to the Australian High Commission in New Delhi at india.refhumvisas@dfat.gov.au (please ask them to write your application file number on the top of the form 681) OR

mail it to an office in Sydney. Please ask your proposer to write your application file number on the top of the form.

The address in Australia to send the completed form 681 and the other documents is:

By Post:

NSW Offshore Humanitarian Processing Centre
GPO Box 9984
SYDNEY NSW 2001
AUSTRALIA

By Courier (no hand deliveries):

NSW Offshore Humanitarian Processing Centre
26 Lee Street
SYDNEY NSW 2001
AUSTRALIA

TELL YOUR PROPOSER THAT THEY DO NOT NEED TO SEND THE FORM BACK TO YOU

What happens next?

As soon as a proposer form is received by the office at the Australian High Commission New Delhi, your application will be considered for a SHP visa.

Even if you are proposed under the SHP, you will still need to meet all requirements before a visa can be granted to you.

What if I don't have anyone to propose me?

If you do not have anyone in Australia who can propose you or if you do not wish to be considered under the SHP, your application for a Refugee visa will continue to be processed by the High Commission.