



Refugee Council
of Australia

2018-19 FEDERAL BUDGET: WHAT IT MEANS FOR REFUGEES AND PEOPLE SEEKING HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION

KEY POINTS:

- *The 2018-19 Humanitarian Program will increase in 2018-19 to 18,750 places, although it is unclear whether there will continue to be a numerical target in future.*
- *Operation Sovereign Borders will continue with an extra \$62.2 million, and another \$294 million for border security at airports, and \$6.9 million for two years to continue operation of the Airline Liaison Program to detect and prevent unauthorised entry to Australia.*
- *The Department of Jobs and Innovation will save \$68.1 million over four years by making newly arrived refugees eligible for jobactive services after 26 weeks of income support payments, rather than 13 weeks.*

HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM

The Humanitarian Program (which is how the Department of Home Affairs now refers to the Refugee and Humanitarian Program) will increase again in 2018-19 to 18,750 places, as originally committed.

However, the Program number is now being referred to as a "ceiling" in performance targets for 2017-18. For 2018-19 the target is even vaguer, requiring only that the Program is delivered "in accordance with priorities and informed by program parameters set by the Government". This is consistent with changes to performance targets across immigration, which generally remove numerical targets for broader and more qualitative assessments.

OPERATION SOVEREIGN BORDERS AND BORDER ENFORCEMENT

The Department will provide \$62.2 million over two years from 2018-19 to continue Operation Sovereign Borders, including paying for an Australian Border Force Cutter. Another \$294 million will be invested in border security at airports and for screening cargo and mail. Another \$130 million has been allocated for the Department to upgrade its IT systems, including for visa processing and identity management. The Airline Liaison Program has been allocated \$6.9 million over two years to detect and prevent unauthorised entry to Australia.

DETENTION AND PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM IN AUSTRALIA

Funding for onshore detention and compliance will cost the Australian Government \$1.15 billion in 2018-19, with costs expected to be over \$1 billion for each of the following three years.

The performance targets for 2018-19 have changed, indicating that the Department intends to have less than 10% of people engaged with the Status Resolution Program in immigration detention. More significantly, the target also indicates that the Department aims to either resolve the status of more than 85% of people detained for not having a valid visa, or to release them in the community within 90 days of being detained. Further, a new target is that 100% of decisions to detain should be reviewed in 48 hours.

The Department has allocated \$1.2 million over four years from 2018-19 to the Commonwealth Ombudsman to implement the Australian Government's ratification of the Optional Protocol on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

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However, the cost of this measure will be met from within existing resources within the Department of Defence and the Department of Home Affairs.

The allocation for providing financial support to people seeking asylum in the Department of Human Services budget has been reduced again. While last year it was budgeted at \$191.1 million (dropping from \$245.8 million in 2016-17), only \$139.8 million is estimated to have been spent this year. This is forecast to reduce further to \$123 million in 2018-19. Some of this reduction is to be expected, as protection decisions are made and as people get work, but it is consistent with a reduction of the program overall.

OFFSHORE PROCESSING

In 2017-18, \$714 million was forecast to be spent on offshore processing, but it is now estimated that more than double this (\$1.48 billion) will be spent in 2017-18. This is expected to halve in 2018-19, to \$760 million, and then under \$400 million in the following three years.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

The Government has allocated slightly less, \$91 million (down from \$100.9 million), for all regional cooperation activities, including:

- supporting the Bali Process by co-managing and contributing to the Regional Support Office which implements a range of practical initiatives to combat people smuggling, human trafficking and transnational crime;
- supporting the Regional Cooperation Arrangement with Indonesia to manage "potential illegal immigrations" in Indonesia through the International Organization for Migration (IOM);
- working collaboratively with the international community to enhance the migration, identity, immigration intelligence and border management capabilities of partner governments;
- facilitating international exchanges on approaches to trade and revenue techniques and best practice, and
- enhancing international systems, information sharing and analytical capabilities to support better threat and risk assessments in the flow of people and goods.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Funding for settlement services will remain \$199 million in 2018-19, as projected in last year's budget. Settlement Grants have been allocated \$203.3 million over the next four years (2018-19 to 2021-22).

The Department is providing \$5 million in 2018-19 for "Fostering Integration" grants, which will go to community organisations to help newly arrived migrants to integrate into Australia society, including for support through practical neighbourhood activities.

JOBACTIVE

Refugees will now be eligible for Jobactive services after 26 weeks of being registered for income support, rather than 13 weeks. This is intended to allow refugees to focus on settlement services including the Humanitarian Settlement Program and the Adult Migrant English Program in the first 26 weeks of settlement. Those who already have good English skills can choose to access stream A of Jobactive (basic access to job-seeking facilities) within six weeks. This is expected to commence on 1 January 2019.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Funding for the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) will increase from \$257 million to \$303 million in 2018-19, although funding for the Skills for Education and Employment Program will decrease from \$103.6 million to \$93.2 million.

In a minor measure, migrants aged between 15 and 17 will be able to seek an extension to the time limit of 12 months from arrival to access the Adult Migrant English Program, as with adult clients of AMEP. This is expected to commence in October 2018.

MIGRATION PROGRAM

Australia's permanent migration program (the skill, family and special eligibility streams) will "maintain 2017-18 levels (up to 190,000 places)". Of those, 128,550 places will be in the Skilled Stream. The Refugee and Humanitarian Program (18,750 places), the migration of New Zealand citizens (uncapped) and child visas are in addition to this program.

Places for parents in the Migration Program may be affected by the quarantining of places to transition people on retirement visas to permanent residency, although the numbers on these visas are likely to be small.

OVERSEAS AID

The Australian Council for International Development's analysis of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) allocations shows that, after cuts of \$1.1 billion over the past three years, aid spending will increase by \$249 million in 2018-19 to \$4.16 billion and then to \$4.17 billion in 2019-20. Aid spending will be cut in 2020-21, being capped at \$4.0 billion for that year and from 2021-22. Australia's aid as a contribution of Gross National Income will be 0.23% in 2018-19 and will reduce to 0.22% on 2019-20 and then to 0.19% by 2021-22, its lowest level ever.

While aid to the Pacific region will increase by 14% (to \$1.284 billion), assistance to every other region of the world will be cut substantially: by 6% in South-East and East Asia (\$1.027 billion); by 11% in South and West Asia (\$284.8 million); by 11% in the Middle East and North Africa (\$137.4 million); by 12% in Sub-Saharan Africa (\$121.1 million); and by 35% in Latin America and the Caribbean (\$5.9 million).

DFAT's allocation for Humanitarian Program funding will increase by \$10 million to \$409.7 million. As DFAT estimates that only \$373.1 million of the \$399.7 million allocated for the current financial year will actually be spent, this allocation of \$409.7 million represents a 10% increase on 2017-18 spending. Funding for protracted crises and strengthening humanitarian action will increase by \$38.9 million to \$87.2 million and the Emergency Fund will remain at \$150 million. Funding for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response will be cut by \$3 million to \$39 million and Global Humanitarian Partnerships funding cut by \$8.7 million to \$133.5 million. The Global Humanitarian Partnerships allocation funds DFAT's annual contributions to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, World Food Program, International Committee of the Red Cross, UN Central Emergency Response Fund and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

ESTABLISHMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS AND SPENDING

The establishment of the Department of Home Affairs is expected to achieve efficiencies of \$256.3 million, which will be redirected into operational activity. There will also be a \$7 million strategic review of the Home Affairs portfolio.

In 2018-19, the Department of Home Affairs will allocate \$4.37 billion for expenditure across its three main outcome areas. This represents a 17.8% cut on estimated expenditure for 2017-18. The largest cuts are for offshore processing arrangements for people seeking asylum (cut by 48.7%), onshore compliance and detention (10.7%), refugee and humanitarian assistance (9.8%) and regional cooperation (9.8%).

Department staffing levels will increase by 3.4% from 13,950 to 14,420 staff, mostly uniformly across the three outcome areas involved in Immigration.

SPENDING IN 2018-19 BUDGET

DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

1. BORDER ENFORCEMENT	2017-18 (estimated actual)	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
DHA staffing level for Border Enforcement	8,754	9,047			
1.1 Border Enforcement	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Departmental expenses	1,055,930	1,049,914	1,049,826	1,017,888	1,004,263
Total	1,055,930	1,049,914	1,049,826	1,017,888	1,004,263
1.2 Border Management					
External expenses	8	8	8	8	8
Departmental expenses	242,082	265,930	268,796	250,860	256,859
Total	242,090	265,938	268,804	250,868	256,867
1.3 Onshore Compliance and Detention					
External expenses	851,668	762,606	708,329	648,795	642,135
Departmental expenses	444,571	395,325	389,404	380,671	377,155
Total	1,296,239	1,157,931	1,097,733	1,029,466	1,019,290
1.4 IMA Offshore Management					
External expenses	1,443,167	726,957	347,405	355,425	363,754
Departmental expenses	38,818	32,896	30,954	30,749	30,992
Total	1,481,985	759,853	378,359	386,174	394,746
1.5 Regional Cooperation					
External expenses	79,710	70,401	28,547	29,261	29,993
Departmental expenses	21,199	20,657	18,785	15,009	14,891
Total	100,909	91,058	47,332	44,270	44,884
1. Total for Border Enforcement					
Total External expenses	2,374,553	1,559,972	1,084,289	1,033,489	1,035,890
Total Departmental expenses	1,802,600	1,764,722	1,757,765	1,695,177	1,684,170
Total	4,177,153	3,324,694	2,842,054	2,728,666	2,720,060
2. CITIZENSHIP, MIGRATION, VISAS, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE					
DHA staffing level for Citizenship, Migration, Visas, Humanitarian Assistance	4,612	4,769			
2.1 Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
External expenses		5,416	422	425	428
Departmental expenses	60,189	58,595	56,135	56,784	53,828
Total	60,189	64,011	56,557	57,209	54,256
2.2 Migration					
Departmental expenses	323,842	290,333	265,278	246,517	236,734
Total	323,842	290,333	265,278	246,517	236,734
2.3 Visas					
Departmental expenses	456,728	409,383	393,741	366,088	360,233
Total	456,728	409,383	393,741	366,088	360,233

2. CITIZENSHIP, MIGRATION, VISAS, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
2.4 Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
External expenses	32,769	42,711	33,508	34,145	34,718
Departmental expenses	127,947	102,268	98,689	98,516	97,818
Total	160,716	144,979	132,197	132,661	132,536
2. Total for Citizenship, Migration, Visas and Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance					
External expenses	32,769	48,127	33,930	34,570	35,146
Departmental expenses	968,706	860,579	813,843	767,905	748,613
Total	1,001,475	908,706	847,773	802,475	783,759

3. BORDER REVENUE COLLECTION AND TRADE FACILITATION	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
DHA staffing level for Border Revenue Collection and Trade Facilitation	584	604			
3.1 Border Revenue Collection	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
External expenses	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500
Departmental expenses	68,768	68,800	63,381	62,778	62,599
Total	82,268	82,300	76,881	76,278	76,099
3.2 Trade Facilitation and Industry Engagement					
Departmental expenses	59,720	58,571	55,523	51,918	51,459
Total	59,720	58,571	55,523	51,918	51,459
3. Total Border Revenue Collection and Trade Facilitation					
External expenses	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500
Departmental expenses	128,488	127,371	118,904	114,696	114,058
Total	141,988	140,871	132,404	128,196	127,558
TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON 3 OUTCOME AREAS					
	5,320,616	4,374,271	3,822,231	3,659,337	3,631,367
Total DHA staffing level	13,950	14,420			

REFUGEE RELATED PROGRAMS IN OTHER PORTFOLIOS

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
2.1 Families and Communities	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Settlement Services	204,691	198,969	201,501	200,277	203,197
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING					
2.8.3 Access to Training	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Adult Migrant English Program	275,037	303,568	303,481	308,033	311,786
National Foundation Skills Strategy	50	-	-	-	-
Skills for Education and Employment Program	103,642	93,158	87,960	88,198	90,971
Total	378,729	396,721	391,441	396,231	402,757
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES					
Payments on behalf of Dept of Home Affairs	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Asylum Seeker Support	139,811	122,922			