

Some Background Information on Refugees and Migrants in this Region

(Source: Department of Infrastructure and Planning, Planning Information and Forecasting Unit www.dip.qld.gov.au)

Languages

The most common languages (other than English) spoken in Toowoomba in 2006 were Mandarin, German, Arabic, Cantonese and Italian.

Country of birth

The most common countries of birth for overseas born residents of Toowoomba in 2006 were North-West Europe (5,084); Oceania and Antarctica (2,401); Sub-Saharan Africa (1,227); South East Asia (1,080); North Africa and the Middle East (667); and the Americas (667)

CALD characteristics

People born in Sub-Saharan Africa represent 9.5% of Toowoomba's overseas born population -5.2% for QLD). North Africa and the Middle East represent 5.2% of Toowoomba's overseas born population -1.8% for QLD.

Compared with the state-wide distribution, in Toowoomba, there was a higher share of people from North-West Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, Southern and Central Asia, the Americas and Sub-Saharan Africa -but the lowest of the top 10 LGAs for people born in Southern and Eastern Europe. ***There's a similar age distribution to Queensland but a higher proportion of Toowoomba's overseas born residents were more recent arrivals -more than 25% since 2000.***

After Townsville Toowoomba is the number 10 in the top ten LGAs by number of overseas born -there are 12,879 (9.1%)

457 Visa Holders granted in 2007-2008

There were 560 visas granted as follows:

South East Asia (150); Americas (100); Sub-Saharan Africa (100); North East Asia (90); North-West Europe (70); Southern and Central Asia (30); Balance of areas (20). Many people with 457 visas convert to permanent residence -although numbers are down on previous periods.

457 Labour Force top occupations

Top occupations for primary applications granted in 2008-2009 (to 31 May 2009) nominated positions in Queensland are as follows: Registered nurses (720); Skilled Meat Worker (430); Civil Engineer (340); Medical practitioner in training (320); Chef (310); General medical practitioner (220); Welder first class (220); Motor mechanic (210); Fitter (160); Computing professionals (160); University lecturer (130)

Overseas students

USQ was the 10th ranked institution in Queensland by proportion of overseas student with Toowoomba post code 4350 ranked 8th in Queensland by the number of overseas students. (In 2007 there were 1,098 overseas students (7.7%) and 13,233 Australian students).

Source of workers in jobs in Toowoomba

Most of the labour force (88%) of the Darling Downs/Maranoa lived and worked locally. Only 12% of workers worked outside of the region. The source of workers in jobs in Toowoomba comes from Toowoomba (56,093); Southern Downs (274); Dalby (193); Goondiwindi (21) Roma (29) Balonne (3). There were approximately 3,100 from other areas including around 1,600 from Gatton.

Main industries for workers in the Darling Downs/Maranoa in 2006 were:

- Public Administration, Health, Arts (28%)
- Accommodation and other services (16%)
- Wholesale and retail trades (16%)
- Manufacturing, Electricity, Gas, Water and transport (16%)
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (13%)
- Mining, Construction and Professional, Scientific and technical services (10%)
- Not stated (1%)

Population growth

Projections indicate that by 2016 the expected population of Toowoomba Regional Council will be between 176,740 and 188,270 people. By 2031 this is expected to change between 214,580 and 252,040 people. Toowoomba is projected to have the 4th largest growth outside South east Queensland with an increase of more than 77,000 people in the 25 years to 2031.

By 2031- 63% of all households will NOT have children – only one third will have children.

Migration from overseas will continue to be the main driver of growth

Birthplace of all People in Major Centres in Toowoomba Diocese

Major Centres	Birthplace									
	Oceania and Antarctica	North-West Europe	Southern and Eastern Europe	North Africa and the Middle East	South-East Asia	North-East Asia	Southern and Central Asia	Americas	Sub-Saharan Africa	
Charleville	4,113	70	8	0	46	0	0	6	18	
Dalby	8,690	191	14	7	38	18	7	14	52	
Goondiwindi	4,110	53	7	3	7	0	3	3	35	
Roma	5,968	94	11	0	30	8	10	17	28	
Stanthorpe	8,389	556	471	17	28	15	7	80	27	
Toowoomba	77,429	3,221	389	635	900	599	466	447	875	
Warwick	19,094	775	80	16	105	44	21	84	64	

Birthplace of Catholics in Toowoomba Diocese

Australia	57600
New Zealand	390
U.K.	558
Ireland	175
South Africa	93
North America	89
Italy	452
Malta	28
Netherlands	206
Germany	176
Austria	19
Croatia/former Yugoslavia	88
Poland	62
Hungary	43
Eastern Europe	78
Other Europe	95
Vietnam	22
Philippines	410
Indonesia	20
Malaysia	81
South East Asia	48
India	31
Sri Lanka	9
Chinese Asia	27
Korea	37
Egypt	20
Lebanon	18
Iraq	3
Middle East and North Africa	161
Mauritius	9
Chile	13
Central America	146
Other	282
ID / At Sea / NEC / NS	1360

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – 2006 Census of Population and Housing; Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Pastoral Projects Office

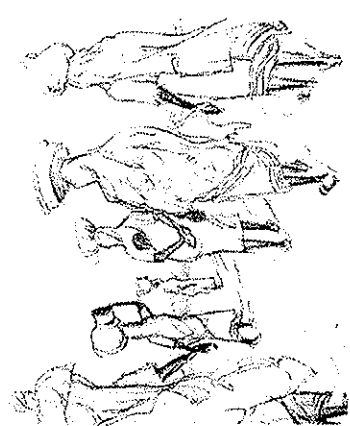
MYTH 6: Africans are given cars, mobile phones, clothes, free education, houses and jobs when they arrive in Australia.

FACT: Members of Toowoomba's Sudanese community often arrive in Toowoomba with the clothes that they are wearing and one small bag of belongings. The federal government provides them with a basic settlement kit. This includes a washing machine, refrigerator, television, cutlery, crockery, linen, simple table and chairs, beds, and other basic furniture. These items are not always new. They are adequate but the bare basics for starting a new life in a new country.

Members of refugee families have particular needs with regard to education, especially learning English. All schools are able to access a small amount of government funding for the provision of support for learners of English as a Second language. Primary and Secondary school students who are refugees receive support through these programs. All newly arriving adult refugees are entitled to 510 hours of English classes at TAFE.

People from a refugee background receive no special welfare benefits. They are entitled to the same benefits as all Australian residents. There are programmes to support refugee background people finding employment but there are no "refugee identified" positions in any workplace. Similar programmes exist for a range of people from disadvantaged backgrounds living in the Australian community.

Newly arrived people stay in short-term accommodation but after a short period find a house through the private rental market and may also apply for public housing. Once again there are no "refugee identified" houses. Any cars, clothes, mobile phones, computers or other such items belonging to these people have been purchased through savings or loans in the same way as the rest of the Australian community provide for their personal belongings. Within the broader community, people of different backgrounds and with different experiences have different priorities when it comes to decisions about spending their money. This applies also to families of refugee background.



Pshina and bishlama

Myths and Facts about African Refugees in Toowoomba

Welcome



Toowoomba has a much more multi-cultural face these days than perhaps ten years ago. This is partly due to the arrival of a large number of African families, who have arrived in Australia under the Humanitarian Resettlement Program—that is as Refugees.

A refugee is defined as a person outside of his or her country of origin who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinions. Nobody willingly chooses to be a refugee.

Many residents of Toowoomba have offered a generous and supportive welcome to newly arriving refugee families from Africa. However, there is still much misunderstanding about these people and their situation. Many Myths can be contradicted by a clarification of the Facts.

Ahlan—Wa Sahahlan

MYTH 1: There is an African invasion happening. They are coming day and night – we are always seeing new people. There are too many of them and we can't cope.

FACT: It is true that a significant number of new arrivals in Toowoomba have come from Africa, and, specifically from Sudan. More recently, families have also come from Liberia, Chad and some other North African countries. It is estimated by a number of service providers that the African population with a refugee background in Toowoomba would number around 1200. This would be 1.2% of the total population.

Toowoomba has excellent health, education, sport and cultural facilities, and a relatively low unemployment rate. In a global sense we are a wealthy community and well and truly have the capacity to support a number of people from a refugee background. It is true that some support services need to be better targeted and improved but as a community we can be proud of the story of refugee resettlement to date. And we have the capacity to continue to accept refugees looking for a safe home.

MYTH 2: African Refugees all live in the one area and refuse to integrate.

FACT: The 2005 study of the local situation, *Finding a Home on the Range*, found that families of refugee background live in a variety of suburbs throughout the city. Some of the locations where rent is more affordable have a larger proportion of newly arrived residents. There is not one identifiable "African" suburb. A small number of African community members are now in the process of purchasing their own homes.

Over the past ten years people with a Sudanese background have become involved in the broader life of the community. On a weekly basis they participate in churches, schools and sporting clubs. They are keen to find work in Toowoomba, or in the surrounding areas. Many adults spend a significant amount of time learning English so that they can fully participate as community members.

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MYTH 3: Refugees in Australia receive significantly more financial support than age pensioners.

FACT: Refugees arriving in Australia are eligible for Centrelink payments as are any other Australian residents. There are no separate rates of payment for refugees, and they are not eligible for more assistance from Centrelink than any other customers. As with any other people who access financial support through Centrelink, the rates of payment available to a person of refugee background depends on individual circumstances. A refugee from Africa who is eligible for the Age Pension would receive exactly the same rate as an Australian citizen whose income, assets and relationship circumstances were the same. Similar criteria apply to other Centrelink payments.

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We Care For You

MYTH 4: African refugees are violent and bring crime to our city.

Fact: Local Police report that they have no reason for greater concern about the members of the Toowoomba Sudanese community, than about any other sectors of the community, in terms of their willingness to abide by the law. Sometimes Sudanese people are involved in traffic incidents; so are the rest of Toowoomba's citizens! From time to time crimes occur involving Sudanese people. This is simply because they are part of our community and the same factors are operating for them as for other members of society. There is nothing "Sudanese" or "African" that is inherently violent or criminal.

Bienvenue

Dobro pozhalovat

MYTH 5: There is now peace in Sudan so they should go back home.

FACT: When the government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) signed a peace agreement in January 2005 it brought Africa's longest running civil war to an official end. The previous twenty years of conflict have left the country with an almost complete lack of infrastructure which makes healthcare and basic education beyond the reach of most people. While the Darfur region of Sudan is not the place of origin of most of the Sudanese families who have settled in Toowoomba, recent developments in this region add to the instability in the country as a whole. The peace is still very fragile.

Cholera, meningitis, and malnutrition remain prevalent throughout many parts of Sudan. Some Toowoomba Sudanese residents have family members living in villages where there is no access to safe drinking water. A number of newly arrived people in Toowoomba have been on the move for over ten years. Many have encountered violence, hunger and trauma along the way. In Toowoomba they have finally found a secure place to call home. To take children from schools, leave jobs and education and return to Southern Sudan would cause enormous hardship and create an added burden to an already struggling nation.

Awa-Nah