



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Canberra, Friday 22nd July 2005

UNHCR welcomes increase in visas allocated under the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme

UNHCR Regional Representative Mr Neill Wright today welcomed the Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone's announcement that the Government had delivered on its promise to increase Australia's refugee intake.

Senator Vanstone announced today that the Government had fully delivered on its increased Refugee and Humanitarian Programme for 2004-05 by granting more than 13,100 visas.

This includes 6,000 places for refugees referred by UNHCR, an increase of 2000 (or some 50%) in the quota from previous years.

Mr Wright also welcomed the increase from 10.5 to 15.3 percent for places made available for the Women at Risk programme. The programme provides protection to vulnerable women and their families.

Australia introduced the Women at Risk visa class in 1989 in recognition of the priority given by UNHCR to the protection of refugee women in particularly vulnerable situations. Since then, 6,016 Women at Risk visas have been granted.

"Australia is one of the leading countries in the resettlement of this high needs group, and UNHCR greatly appreciates Australia's generosity in giving these vulnerable women a chance to start life anew," Mr Wright said.

**UNHCR Regional Office, Canberra
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