



**NEW ZEALAND  
IMMIGRATION**

# National Refugee Resettlement Forum 2023

POST-FORUM UPDATE



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,  
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**  
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

## **Foreward from Andrew Lockhart**

Thank you for your involvement in the National Refugee Resettlement Forum 2023. Your participation and contribution played a vital role at the event.

The Forum was an important platform for the various stakeholders and partners like yourself to reconnect and to discuss meaningful partnerships and participation. It was inspiring to witness the dedication, passion and enthusiasm with which everyone engaged in the various discussions and shared their valuable insights. This level of engagement and thoughtful contributions truly enriched the event, and fostered a sense of collaboration, understanding and commitment among the participants.

Throughout the Forum, we witnessed courageous and honest conversations. Thank you for this. The willingness to engage in such dialogues demonstrated the collective commitment to ensuring refugee voices are heard, to genuine inclusion, and to meaningful partnerships and participation.

Once again, I extend our appreciation for your valuable time, expertise, and active engagement at the National Refugee Resettlement Forum.

## **National Refugee Resettlement Forum 2023 update**

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) and the New Zealand Refugee Advisory Panel (NZRAP) wanted to take this opportunity to update you on what has taken place since the National Refugee Resettlement Forum (“the forum”) in July 2023 and the progress made in a number of areas.

The theme of the 2023 National Refugee Resettlement Forum was Meaningful Partnerships and Participation, and it was explored through a series of workshops, panel discussions and presentations. The agenda was co-developed by a planning team consisting of former refugees with lived experience, including members of the NZRAP, local Councils, service providers, NGOs, and staff from INZ’s Refugee and Migrant Support. Please refer to the programme for specific details on presenters and agenda items.

The forum highlighted three key themes for continued discussions and consideration towards work programmes. The round table that the NZRAP facilitated included a number of these themes and recommendations.

### **1. Strengthening Meaningful Refugee Participation and Partnerships:**

- Meaningful participation is when initiatives are refugee or community-led and inclusive
- Building relationships and trust is essential to meaningful partnerships
- “By Us, For Us” - working in partnership with agencies
- Intentional growth of refugee representation (local, national and international)
- Establish regional or national bodies of refugee groups
- Engage, include, listen, follow through, and financially support initiatives
- Co-designing projects and policies with the communities
- Intentional effort to promote cultural competency in recruitment processes
- A long-term vision would involve creating an ecosystem where refugees are not just beneficiaries but active contributors in societal fabrics
- Collaboration between NGOs, government bodies, and community leaders is essential for the long-term success of meaningful refugee participation and partnerships

### **2. Community based approach to refugee resettlement:**

- There is strength and value in a community-based model (with refugee communities, iwi, local councils, schools, health providers etc....) in refugee resettlement
- Building and strengthening relationships with agencies involved in refugee resettlement to build trusting relationships
- Refugee-led organisations at local and national levels can partner and collaborate with improved operational funding
- Working in partnership with mana whenua in settlement regions

### **3. Equitable treatment for all refugees**

- Refugees under different visa categories do not receive the same support and treatment
- Consideration should be given to including all refugee categories under the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategies

Since the forum, several work programmes have either continued or been initiated to progress key themes from the forum:

Themes	Work Programme
<p>Meaningful Refugee Participation and Partnership</p>	<p><b>Refugee Community Engagement</b></p> <p>Work is underway to support the settlement and participation goals for communities across several locations and community groups. This includes work with the Syrian communities across several locations, the Rohingya community in Blenheim and the Iranian community in Auckland.</p> <p><b>National and international participation</b></p> <p>The NZRAP continues to engage with government on identified priority policy and strategic issues. The NZRAP is currently working in partnership with MBIE Policy and INZ Refugee and Migrant Support to develop Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledges this year. A member of the NZRAP will participate in the GRF as part of the New Zealand Delegation this December.</p> <p><b>Partnering through Resettlement</b></p> <p>A new work programme has been initiated following the forum to engage with local areas to develop or strengthen their refugee resettlement steering groups/networks. A key part of this is about the inclusion of refugee voices as part of regional and local strategic frameworks.</p>

Themes	Work Programme
Community approach to refugee resettlement	<p><b>Partnering through Resettlement</b></p> <p>Implementing a community-engagement approach to refugee settlement engaging with local councils, refugee communities, agencies, and iwi partners at a local level to support strategic leadership in resettlement regions.</p> <p><b>Welcoming Communities</b></p> <p>34 councils and 3 iwi partners have now signed up to be “Welcoming Communities” for newcomers in their region.</p>
Equitable treatment for all refugees	<p><b>New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy Refresh</b></p> <p>Cabinet has approved the inclusion of other refugee and refugee-like cohorts under the Refugee Resettlement Strategy. This now includes Convention Refugees and Protected Persons, Community Sponsored Refugees, Refugee Family Support Category Resident visa holders (including partners and dependents) and Afghan Evacuees and Interpreters resident visa holders (including partners and dependents, and any other one-off humanitarian residence categories that may emerge in the future).</p> <p><b>Welfare Support for Asylum Seekers</b></p> <p>Cabinet has approved 2-year funding to support the welfare needs of Asylum Seekers.</p>