

# Media Release



**Monday, 17 June 2019**

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## **Illawarra believes it benefits from its refugee community**

A recent IRIS Research survey of Illawarra residents found that two-thirds (66%) of respondents believe that the Illawarra benefits from accepting refugees into the community.

The main benefits of refugees in our community that respondents identified included: cultural diversity; workplace skills; different perspectives and life experience. Respondents who believe the Illawarra benefits from accept refugees also believe that it makes the area a more vibrant place to live. The costs of welcoming refugees were pressure on housing supply; assimilation; initial settlement costs; social cohesion and welfare costs.

Despite perceived costs and benefits, nine in ten respondents also welcome refugees into their local community.

Respondents were slightly less likely to agree when asked to consider the capacity of the Illawarra to accept more refugees compared to the nation. Fifty five percent (55%) of respondents answered either negatively or neutrally towards this question, with males aged 55-64 and LNP voters more likely to have this view. Women aged 24-44 and Green voters were more likely to answer that the Illawarra had capacity to accept more refugees.

Peter Watts, Chief Executive, IRIS Research said: "The survey results show we are welcoming of refugees in our community in the main and want refugee settlement to be successful for the whole community. But we also have concerns about the region's capacity to settle more refugees at this time."

When it comes to knowing our refugee facts though, we are on less solid ground. Almost one-third (32%) of respondents believe that refugees are economic migrants – they are not. A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence (UNHCR).

We are split in our knowledge of whether Australia meets its international humanitarian obligations in refugee settlement. Only half of all respondents correctly stated that we do. The research also demonstrated that we are not clear on the proportion of refugees we took last year

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MARKET RESEARCH

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COMMUNITY RESEARCH

(2018/19) as a proportion of our total immigration program – only 28% correctly answered this question (around 10%), with most (58%) believing it was 5% or less, while one in ten (11%) believing it was one in four immigrants and 3% believing it was 65% of our total annual immigration intake last year.

This #IRISVoxpop coincides with Refugee Week Australia (16-22 June 2019) to encourage community discussion about our perceptions and attitudes towards refugees this week and beyond.

We thank the 210 residents who completed the survey for their participation and encourage residents to join our local online survey community panel to participate in other surveys in future.  
<https://www.iris.org.au/online-panel/>

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## THE ILLAWARRA IS A WELCOMING PLACE FOR REFUGEES TO SETTLE



Half of the respondents gave a neutral rating of 3. This shows that a significant number are either unsure of how welcoming the Illawarra is to refugees or believe that the Illawarra is moderately welcoming.

This perception is widely held, as there are no significant differences by gender, age or voting patterns.

Whether a respondent knows that refugees live in their suburb or whether they personally know a refugee does not impact their agreement with this sentiment.

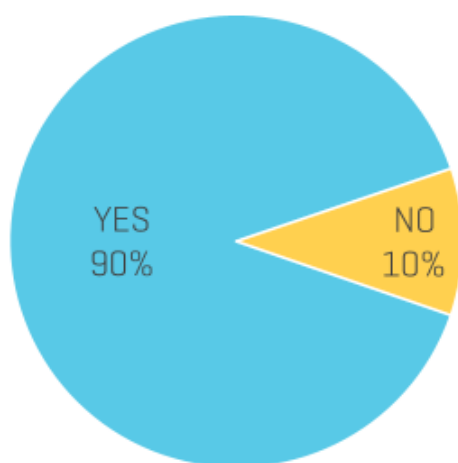
Respondents who agreed that the Illawarra had the capacity to accept more refugees did not necessarily agree that the Illawarra is a welcoming place to settle.

Gender	Average
Male	3.5
Female	3.5
Age	
25 to 44 years	3.5
45 to 54 years	3.7
55 to 64 years	3.3
65+ years	3.5
Vote in last election	
ALP	3.5
LNP	3.5
GRN	3.5
Other	3.5
Prefer not to say	3.3

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## I WELCOME REFUGEES INTO MY LOCAL COMMUNITY



Nine in ten respondents welcome refugees into their local community. These respondents agreed that Australia should accept more refugees and that the Illawarra has capacity to accept more refugees.

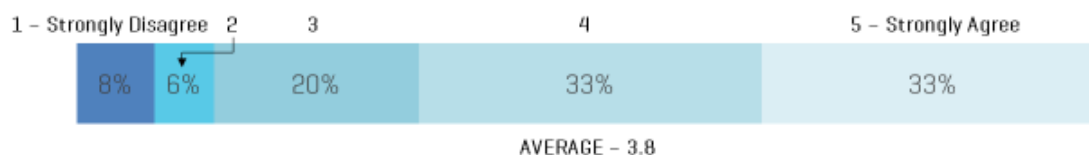
There was no difference in responses between those who personally know a refugee and those who do not.

Gender	Yes (%)
Male	88%
Female	90%
Age	
25 to 44 years	90%
45 to 54 years	94%
55 to 64 years	82%
65+ years	92%
Vote in last election	
ALP	97%
LNP	79%
GRN	100%
Other	79%
Prefer not to say	81%

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## THE ILLAWARRA BENEFITS FROM ACCEPTING REFUGEES INTO THE COMMUNITY



Despite neutral sentiment towards how accepting the Illawarra is of refugees, respondents agreed that the area benefits from accepting refugees into the community.

Respondents who personally know a refugee agreed with this sentiment significantly more than those who do not.

There is a very high correlation between agreement that the Illawarra benefits from refugees and agreement that Australia and the Illawarra should accept more refugees.

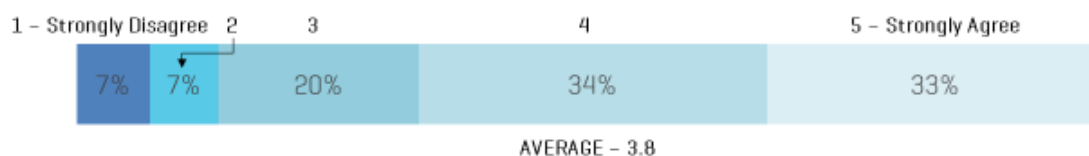
Respondents who agreed with this sentiment also agreed that refugees make the area a more vibrant place to live.

Gender	Average
Male	3.6
Female	3.9
Age	
25 to 44 years	4.0
45 to 54 years	4.0
55 to 64 years	3.6
65+ years	3.7
Vote in last election	
ALP	4.2
LNP	2.9
GRN	4.4
Other	3.4
Prefer not to say	3.4

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## REFUGEES MAKE THE ILLAWARRA A MORE VIBRANT PLACE TO LIVE



The breakdown in scores for this statement are close to identical to the previous slide. Respondents who believe the Illawarra benefits from accept refugees also believe that it makes the area a more vibrant place to live.

There is a strong, positive correlation between agreement that refugees make the Illawarra more vibrant and agreement that the Illawarra has the capacity to accept more refugees.

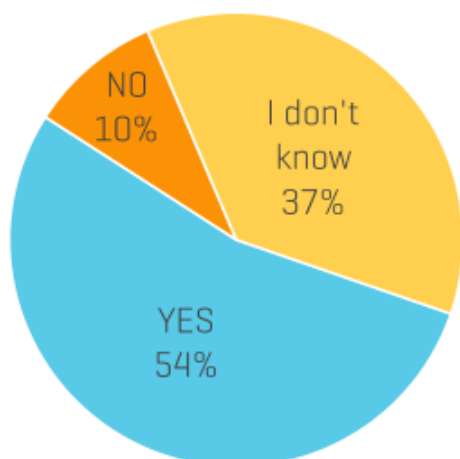
There was no difference in agreement depending one whether a respondents knows that refugees live in their suburb. However, respondents who personally know a refugee agreed with the statement significantly more than those who do not know a refugee.

Gender	Average
Male	3.6
Female	4.0
Age	
25 to 44 years	4.0
45 to 54 years	4.0
55 to 64 years	3.6
65+ years	3.7
Vote in last election	
ALP	4.2
LNP	3.1
GRN	4.3
Other	3.4
Prefer not to say	3.5

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## REFUGEES LIVE IN MY SUBURB



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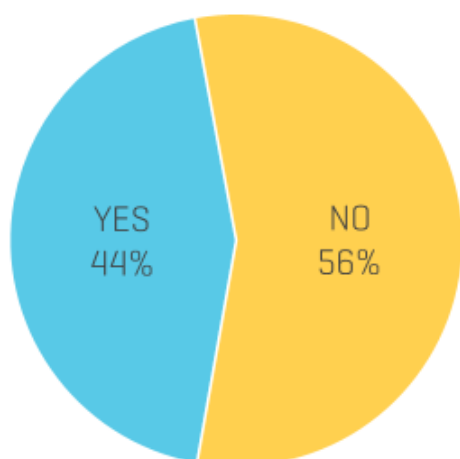
Over half (54%) of all respondents were aware of refugees living in their suburb. However, over one third (37%) were unsure. Those aged 25 to 44 years and 55 to 64 years were most unsure.

The response to this question is largely dependent on whether a respondent personally knows a refugee. 82% of those who don't know whether refugees live in their suburb don't personally know a refugee.

Gender	Yes (%)	I don't know (%)
Male	54%	36%
Female	54%	37%
Age		
25 to 44 years	57%	43%
45 to 54 years	65%	27%
55 to 64 years	47%	45%
65+ years	52%	31%
Vote in last election		
ALP	52%	38%
LNP	49%	40%
GRN	67%	29%
Other	42%	46%
Prefer not to say	56%	34%

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## I PERSONALLY KNOW A REFUGEE WHO LIVES IN THE ILLAWARRA



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Almost half (44%) of respondents personally know a refugee. This proportion does not depend on gender, age or any other factor.

Respondents who personally know refugees were more likely to agree that they make the Illawarra a more vibrant place and that the area benefits from accepting refugees.

Gender	Yes (%)
Male	45%
Female	44%
Age	
25 to 44 years	50%
45 to 54 years	49%
55 to 64 years	47%
65+ years	37%
Vote in last election	
ALP	46%
LNP	42%
GRN	50%
Other	50%
Prefer not to say	38%

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## BENEFITS &amp; COSTS



## BENEFITS

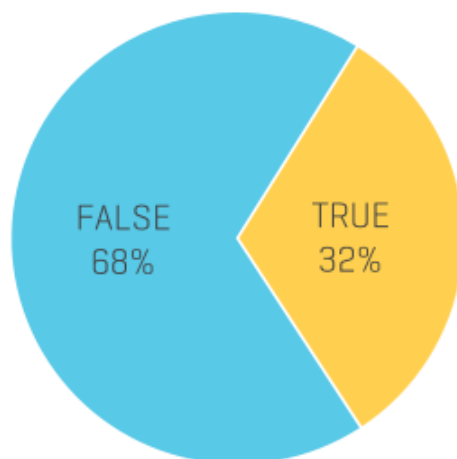
- Cultural diversity
- Workplace skills
- Different perspective
- Life experience
- Multiculturalism

## COSTS

- Pressure on housing supply
- Assimilation
- Initial settlement costs
- Social cohesion
- Welfare costs

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MOST REFUGEES SETTLED IN AUSTRALIA  
ARE ECONOMIC MIGRANTS**Answer: FALSE**

Economic migrants leave their country for financial/economic reasons, not fear of persecution. They cannot attain refugee status.

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Two thirds of respondents correctly stated that **most refugees settled in Australia are NOT economic migrants**.

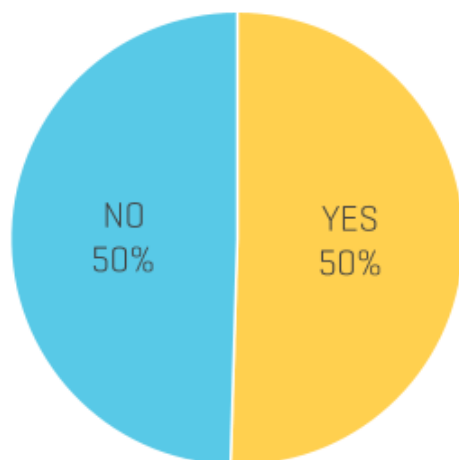
Less than half of the respondents aged 18 to 34 were incorrect. There were no differences across gender or politics that were statistically significant.

Gender	False (%)
Male	68%
Female	68%
Age	
25 to 44 years	43%
45 to 54 years	69%
55 to 64 years	73%
65+ years	74%
Vote in last election	
ALP	72%
LNP	63%
GRN	69%
Other	63%
Prefer not to say	69%

Statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

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## AUSTRALIA ACCEPTS ITS FAIR SHARE OF REFUGEES AS PART OF ITS INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN OBLIGATIONS



### Answer: YES

Australia meets its international humanitarian obligations in settlement of refugees.

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Only half of all respondents correctly stated that **Australia meets its international humanitarian obligations in refugee settlement**.

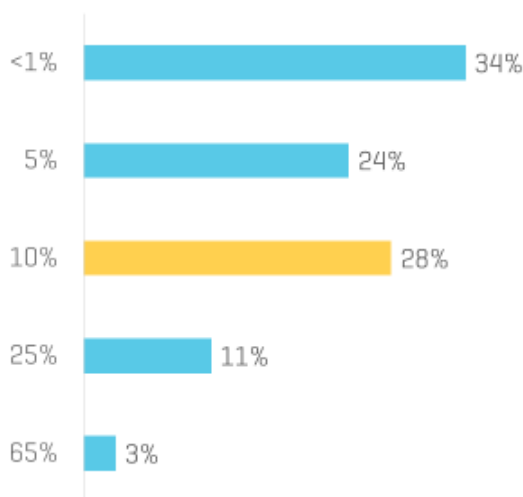
Those who answered 'NO' strongly believe that Australia **should accept more refugees each year** compared to those who answered 'YES'.

Furthermore, those who answered 'NO' had **lower perceptions** of the approximate proportion of refugees as part of the overall immigration intake.

Gender	Yes (%)
Male	54%
Female	47%
Age	
25 to 44 years	37%
45 to 54 years	37%
55 to 64 years	63%
65+ years	55%
Vote in last election	
ALP	32%
LNP	86%
GRN	21%
Other	67%
Prefer not to say	69%

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## WHAT IS THE APPROXIMATE PROPORTION OF REFUGEES AS PART OF AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION INTAKE IN 2018/19?



### Answer: 10%

In 2018/19, refugees made up approximately 10% of Australia's immigration intake.

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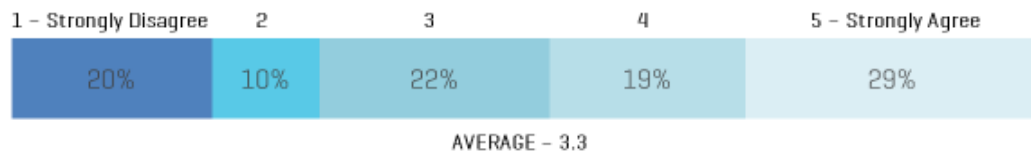
28% of respondents correctly selected 10% as the proportion of refugees as part of Australia's immigration intake in 2018/19.

Respondents generally thought that the proportion was much lower than the true value.

Gender	10% (%)
Male	29%
Female	26%
Age	
25 to 44 years	27%
45 to 54 years	22%
55 to 64 years	31%
65+ years	31%
Vote in last election	
ALP	29%
LNP	33%
GRN	29%
Other	17%
Prefer not to say	25%

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## AUSTRALIA SHOULD ACCEPT MORE REFUGEES EACH YEAR



**Opinion was split** regarding whether Australia should accept more refugees. As expected, those who think Australia does not current accept its fair share as per its international obligations believe that Australia should accept more refugees each year.

**Those that agreed with this sentiment also agreed that the Illawarra has the capacity to accept more refugees.**

There was no difference in agreement between those who personally know a refugee and those who do not.

Female respondents as well as Labor and Greens voters were significantly more likely to agree with the statement. Agreement tends to decline with age but this is not statistically significant.

Gender	Average
Male	3.0
Female	3.5
Age	
25 to 44 years	3.7
45 to 54 years	3.5
55 to 64 years	3.2
65+ years	3.0
Vote in last election	
ALP	3.8
LNP	2.0
GRN	4.3
Other	2.7
Prefer not to say	2.9