# Refugees Welcome

As recent participants in Techfugees 2017, we are aware that there is no data compilation about humanitarian migrants, also know incorrectly as refugees.

Refugees Welcome began in Germany and has spread to other countries. We seek to house refugees in people’s spare rooms.

It’s not working well because

* we’re asking people to forgo payment they could receive from AirBnB
* matching hosts with guests takes a huge amount of volunteer time
* awareness is low
* trust is low

So Refugees Welcome Australia, Adelaide branch, is working on an app to

* help guests offer services in lieu of payment
* streamline the matching process
* publicise the availability of refugees/hosts to each other
* build trust with frequent safe exposure by enabling sharing of information before revealing identity

# The importance of social capital

The GSS measures resources that reflect the wellbeing of individuals and communities, with social capital being a particular focus. Social capital is conceived as a resource available to individuals and communities, and founded on networks of mutual support, reciprocity and trust. Research links strong social capital to increased individual and community wellbeing. It includes elements such as community support, social participation, civic participation, network size, trust and trustworthiness, and an ability to have a level of control of issues important to them. The 2014 GSS results show changes in the levels of involvement in activities connecting people to their broader community and the way people are interacting with the community outside their household. These changes appear broadly consistent with ABS [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2013](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1370.0%7E2013%7EMain%20Features%7EHomepage%7E1) (cat. no. 1370.0) data showing a decrease in the time and opportunity that Australians have for recreation and leisure, and social and community interaction (ABS, 2013). <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/C6BF68E57D3A308CCA256E21007686F8?Opendocument>

# Volunteering rate declines

Voluntary work is one indicator of community support. This is unpaid help that is willingly given in the form of time, service or skills to a formal organisation. In 2014, volunteering rates declined for the first time since the ABS began national voluntary work surveys in 1995. Between 1995 and 2010, volunteering rates increased, reaching a peak of 36% in 2010, but in 2014, the proportion of people aged 18 years and over who were volunteering fell to 31%. Both men and women were less likely to volunteer in 2014 than they were in 2010. This decline is also seen in a drop in the proportion of people providing less formal help and assistance to others outside their household, although this difference was not statistically significant. In 2014, 46% of people helped those in other households, such as their neighbours, with activities including home maintenance jobs, gardening, running errands and unpaid child care, compared with 49% in 2010 (Table 1). <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/C6BF68E57D3A308CCA256E21007686F8?Opendocument>

# Recent and other migrants

From the variety of information collected by the GSS, migrants who arrived in Australia in the past 10 years (described here as recent migrants) reported different social and economic outcomes relative to people born in Australia. On some measures, there were also differences between migrants who spoke English only and those who spoke other languages. In 2014, almost a third of Australia's population aged 15 years and over were born overseas, with recent migrants representing 28% of these people (Table 12).  
  
In 2014, recent migrants were less likely than people born in Australia to have done voluntary work in the last 12 months (22% compared with 34%) and less likely to have cared for a person with disability, a long term health condition or old age in the last four weeks (5.7% compared with 21%). These findings seem to be connected to the relatively short length of time that recent migrants have been in Australia. This is reflected in GSS data showing that migrants who had been in Australia longer (other migrants) were more likely than recent migrants to have done voluntary work in the last 12 months (28%) and to have cared for a person with disability, a long term health condition or old age in the last four weeks (18%). Other migrants were also more likely than recent migrants to have participated in civic and political groups (13% compared with 8.6%). These changes suggest migrants accrue more social capital as their networks in Australia develop over time. [ABS research](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/3416.0Main%20Features12012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3416.0&issue=2012&num=&view=) using GSS 2010 data has shown that the extent to which migrants participate in social and support groups is greater the longer they reside in Australia (ABS, 2012a) (Table 12).   
  
In 2014, recent migrants were less likely than people born in Australia to have someone outside the household they could confide in. Additionally, they were more likely to have experienced some form of discrimination, but less likely to have experienced two or more incidents of crime in the last 12 months (Table 12).  
  
For some measures, outcomes were different for migrants who spoke English only, compared with those who spoke other languages. For example, recent migrants who spoke other languages were less than half as likely to actively participate in civic and political groups than recent migrants who spoke English only (6.3% compared with 14%) (Table 12). <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/C6BF68E57D3A308CCA256E21007686F8?Opendocument>

# Case study 2 - people who have experienced homelessness

Homelessness can have a large impact on individuals, families and communities. People who are experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness can face reduced opportunities to interact with other individuals and groups, and to participate in activities such as employment or education. These reduced opportunities may be temporary, or they may continue to affect people after their experience of homelessness.   
  
There are many complex issues involved in measuring homelessness, as outlined in [Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness, 2012](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4922.0) (cat. no. 4922.0). The GSS provides information about people who have been homeless in the past, but who are now usual residents of private dwellings. As the GSS only enumerates usual residents of private dwellings, it will not include: people currently living in shelters; people sleeping rough; people 'couch surfing' (staying temporarily with other households); nor people staying in boarding houses. It may include some people staying in transitional housing (including Transitional Housing Management programs) if the resident considers the dwelling as their usual residence. The GSS does not specifically ask about the experience of living in severely crowded dwellings.  
  
The GSS asked people about episodes in their lives where they had been homeless and the reasons for those circumstances. In 2014, 2.5 million people aged 15 years and over had experienced homelessness at some time in their lives. About 1.4 million of these people had experienced at least one episode of homelessness in the last 10 years, of which 351,000 had experienced homelessness in the last 12 months. In 2010, the [GSS: Summary Results, Australia](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/4159.0Main%20Features12010?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4159.0&issue=2010&num=&view=) (cat. no. 4159.0) showed that an estimated 1.1 million people aged 18 years and over had experienced homelessness in the previous 10 years (Tables 3 and 17, and GSS 2010 Table 40.1).  
  
In situations of homelessness, 68% of people had stayed with a relative, 52% with a friend, 13% had slept rough or in an abandoned building, and 7.7% had stayed in a shelter or refuge (Table 17).  
  
The most common reason for experiencing homelessness in the last 10 years was family, friend or relationship problems, affecting about 622,000 (44%) people in their most recent experience of homelessness. Other reasons included a tight housing or rental market and financial problems (14% and 13% respectively). These reasons were also commonly cited in the 2010 GSS (Table 17 and GSS 2010 Table 39.3).  
  
Far fewer people aged 65 years or more had experienced homelessness in the last ten years (52,600) than people aged 35-64 years (612,200) and people aged less than 35 years (759,900). People aged 15-34 years were more likely to have last experienced homelessness within the last 12 months (31%) compared with people aged 35-64 years (17%) (Table 17).   
  
About 28% of people who had experienced homelessness in the last 10 years had been homeless for six months or more during their most recent experience. A further 15% had been homeless for three to six months and 23% had been homeless for one to three months (Table 17 and Graph 7). <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/C6BF68E57D3A308CCA256E21007686F8?Opendocument>