

Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP)

Snapshot Report 1

March 2023



1. Methodology and sample demographics

Snapshot Report 1 presents the findings for Arrival Group 1. Arrival Group is defined as the period in which CRISP refugees must arrive in Australia in order to have their data collected in time for inclusion in a specific report. For Snapshot Report 1, CRISP refugees arrived in Australia between 24 August and 30 November 2022.



Arrival Group 1

CRISP refugees who arrived between **24 Aug-30 Nov 2022**

Arrival Group 1 included 18 CRISP refugee households (a total of 82 refugees, including children), as well as 18 Humanitarian Settlement Program (referred to as HSP1) refugee households that were matched to the CRISP households, and the respective community supporter groups (CSGs) providing support to the CRISP refugees.



Sample data

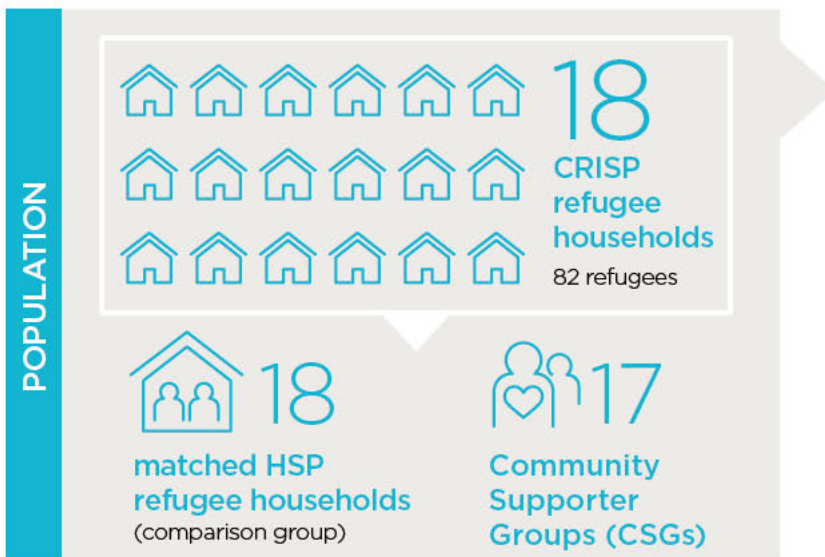
Table 1 details the data included in Snapshot Report 1. Members of all 18 CRISP households and 16 of the 18 HSP1 households completed the survey. At least one CSG member from each CSG participated in the survey i.e., all 17 CSGs are represented.

Table 1: Data included in Snapshot Report 1

	Survey	Interview
CRISP	n=35* (97%)	n=6 (100%)
HSP1	n=32* (89%)	n=6 (100%)
CSG	n=62** (44%)	n=3 (100%)

*Two adults from each refugee household (n=36) were invited to participate in the survey

**At least one CSG member participated from each CSG



CRISP and HSP1 refugees sample demographics

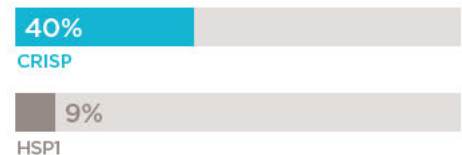
Key characteristics of the CRISP refugees were used to find a comparison group in HSP, called HSP1. The key matching characteristics were: unlinked (don't know anyone in Australia), family type, and country of origin. Compared to HSP1 refugees (the comparison group), CRISP refugees have lower levels of English language proficiency and years of education, which should be considered when interpreting the results.

English proficiency 'nil'



Almost three-quarters of CRISP refugees have no English proficiency.

Education - less than 7 years



CRISP refugees have lower education levels compared to HSP1 refugees. Forty percent of CRISP refugees have less than 7 years of education compared to 9% of HSP1 refugees.

CSG demographics

The CSG survey sample is representative of the CSG population for Arrival Group 1, although fewer CSG members who worked full-time, and a higher percentage of older CSG members completed the survey, likely due to time commitments.

Of the CSG members:



almost half **were retired**



close to three-quarters were **female**



two-fifths were **employed full- or part-time**



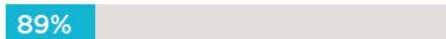
close to three-quarters were **55 years or older**

2. How appropriate was the training and support provided by CRSA* to CSG members? (KEQ 7**)



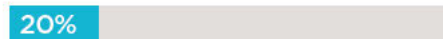
Most CSGs received the **training** they needed to enable them to settle their refugee family (PL outcome*** 37), however, some CSGs needed additional training and resources to support their family in securing long-term accommodation and accessing essential services, work opportunities, and study options

Of the CSG members:



many **rated the CRSA training sessions as good to excellent**, the remaining members rated the training as average

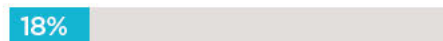
The training and resources they were **least satisfied with** (rated as poor) were:



securing **accommodation**



accessing **job opportunities** or support



accessing **essential services**



accessing **educational options**

One CSG member who faced significant challenges finding accommodation for their refugee family, questioned the advice provided by CRSA in the **CSG paperwork that advised against securing accommodation ahead of time**, wondering if it would have been better to seek accommodation much sooner.

Another CSG member, when reflecting on the support they needed, pointed to the need for official documentation from the Department about the program, including a statement about the community supporters, to legitimise the supporters and refugees in the eyes of the real estate agent.



Most CSGs received the **support** they needed from CRSA to enable them to settle their refugee family, however, for some CSGs the type of support they needed was not always available

Of the **CSG members**:



more than two-thirds only **needed 'some support'** from CRSA



more than two-thirds found the **support they received from CRSA useful**



one-third reported that the type of **support they needed was only available some of the time**

*CRSA refers to Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia **KEQ refers to Key Evaluation Question

***PL outcome refers to the outcome (and it's associated placement number) depicted in the Program Logic (PL) developed for the CRISP evaluation.

3. What impact did participating in CRISP have on the CSG members? (KEQ 8)



Most CSGs **feel fulfilled** because of their participation in CRISP (PL outcome 35) and, importantly, were willing to recommend CRISP and support additional households

The **majority of the CSG members** have found supporting the refugee household thus far has:

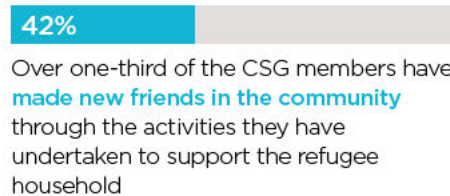


Most of these **members** indicated that they would:



Participating in CRISP has **increased CSG members' social networks**

(PL outcome 43)



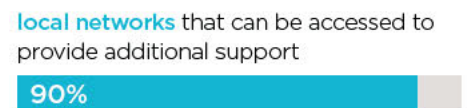
Some CSG members had not expected to make friends with their refugee family. Many commented that the refugee family had become like family to them.



Participating in CRISP has **increased CSG members' understanding of the settlement landscape** (e.g., opportunities, challenges, and support required to settle)

(PL outcome 41)

For **most CSG members**, participation in CRISP has resulted in an increased (a little to a lot) understanding of the:



One CSG member suggested that the Department educate the wider public about CRISP to correct assumptions concerning the use of public funds.



CSG members seemed to have the **skills and confidence to independently provide settlement support** (PL outcome 39)

CSGs described the natural evolution of members taking on different roles and learning from other CSGs during the settlement journey.

Most CSG members felt **confident in their ability to cope with difficult tasks or problems** whilst supporting the refugee household (M=4.3 / 5)



Most of the CSG members indicated their **group has the skills and experience to support the refugee household.**



Providing support was **time consuming, emotionally draining, and challenging**

Almost two-thirds of the CSG members found **supporting the refugee household challenging**



A few CSG members reported in the survey's open responses, that they had underestimated the amount of time and resources required to support the refugee household.

More than one-third found **supporting the refugee household emotionally draining**



Notwithstanding the onus on their time, most of the CSGs described the experience as positive for both the refugee family and their group.

4. How appropriate was the support provided by the CSG members to meet the needs of the refugees? (KEQ 6)



CRISP refugees have received **more support** compared to HSP1 refugees. CRISP refugees with **larger CSG groups** tended to receive a **wider range of support** as well as **more hours of support**

CRISP refugees received on average **8.9 hours per week** of support compared to **2.3 hours** for HSP1 refugees.

Those with a smaller CSG (<10 members) received support with an average of **9.8 settlement activities**, whereas those with a larger CSG (10+ members) received support with an average of **11 settlement activities**.

Those with a smaller CSG group received on average **6 hours** of support compared to an average of **15 hours** for those with a larger CSG.

There were two key challenges some CSGs faced in providing support to their refugee family. First, some members felt the refugee household had unrealistic expectations about what support their group could provide (22%). Second, a few members were unable to help the refugee household at times due to language barriers (14%). Despite these challenges most CSG reported positively about the support they provided to the refugee family.

CRISP refugees frequently cited that they did not need anything because CSGs provided a comprehensive level of support to them. In contrast, HSP1 refugees frequently cited the lack of support to access everyday essentials and essential services.



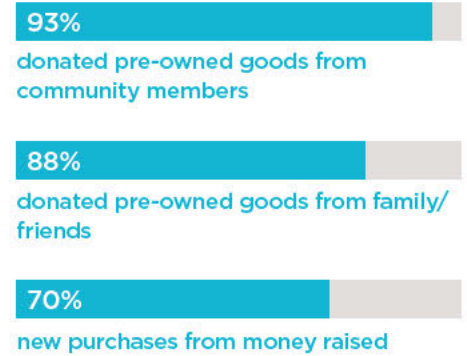
CRISP refugees have received **appropriate support to access essential services** (e.g., Centrelink, banks, doctors) (PL outcome 18) and **everyday essentials** (e.g., household goods, school resources, personal care) (PL outcome 33) on arrival

Most CRISP refugees report that they were **satisfied (97-100%)** with the CSG facilitated access to essential services and everyday essentials.

CSGs would **go out of their way to source additional services and support** for CRISP refugees. One CRISP refugee described that he was gifted a laptop because he mentioned it would be useful for his future career aspirations to be a graphic designer.

Those resettled in **major cities** were significantly **more likely to be involved in decisions about household goods** than those resettled in inner regional locations. None of the refugees interviewed reported any cultural issues related to decisions about household goods made on their behalf.

CSG members sourced the **household goods** through:



The **proximity of the CSG** to the family **created opportunities to intervene immediately** whereas if they had been supported by an HSP service provider it may have taken longer to receive the support

Working closely with the refugee family allowed the CSG to identify needs and mitigate any challenges. For example, by helping with school pick ups, a CSG member was able to identify an issue and advocate on behalf of the refugee family with the school. Similarly, during an after hours emergency, the CSG was able to support the refugee family to get the help they needed.

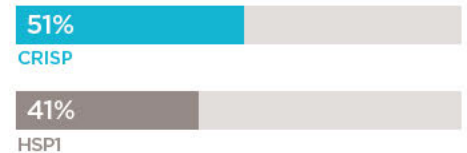


CRISP refugees received support to access **stable housing** (PL outcome 28) more quickly through CSG networks, compared to HSP1 refugees who had to secure housing on their own or through new social

Most HSP1 refugees reported limited knowledge about the process as well as limited support to secure housing from their caseworkers. As a result, they had to look for housing on their own or use their newly developed social networks.

One HSP1 refugee described their caseworker as unreliable in their housing search and got support from the priest at their local church.

There were 6 CRISP households who were not in long-term housing who had not received assistance from their CSG to apply for long-term housing. This may be due to the challenges CSGs experienced in securing housing. CSGs reflected that the greatest challenge was securing housing, particularly the availability and cost. Some communities impacted by the floods experienced exacerbated housing shortages, and many were homeless. A few CSGs also had to deal with stereotyping and potentially discriminatory attitudes from real estate agents worried the refugee family would 'trash the place' or allow too many of their relatives to stay with them. In many instances the CSG drew on community connections to secure housing for the refugee family.



More CRISP refugees compared to HSP1 refugees secured **long-term housing** (not statistically significant)



89% of CRISP refugees secured long-term housing in **1 week or less** compared to **92%** of **HSP1 refugees who took 1 month or longer**

CRISP refugees were supported by their CSGs who often used their own local networks and resources to secure long-term housing.



Some CRISP refugees have had **support to access transport and/or obtain a driving licence**

(PL outcome 30)

However, it is imperative to provide support to refugees in regional locations to learn to drive

Only one CRISP and no HSP1 refugees have **obtained an Australian driver's licence**, and only 39% of CRISP households had at least one member who reported that they received support to learn to drive from their CSG.

CRISP refugees were more likely to report receiving **support to learn to drive** if:

they had **more hours of support** from their CSG



have a **larger CSG (10+)**



live in **regional location**



CRISP refugees living in a **Major City** were more likely to report having **received help using public transport** than refugees living in Inner Regional locations. This likely reflects the availability/necessity of public transport use in cities.



Given that CRISP refugees reported much **higher levels of confidence to use public transport if they had received help from their CSG** (M=2.0 vs M=1.0 / 3), there is potentially a need to provide help to use public transport to all CRISP refugees.

CSGs in regional locations stressed the importance of providing the refugee family with a car and for them to be willing to drive, due to the limited public transport options in regional locations.

5. What early signs of social integration are we seeing compared to HSP? (KEQ 1)



Compared to HSP1, CRISP refugees were more likely to feel welcome, make friends, and build up their **social networks** through participation in local sport and/or leisure activities with a wide range of ethnic groups

(PL outcome 17)



All CRISP refugees reported **feeling welcome in their local community**



CRISP refugees were more likely to agree that **making friends has been easy** than the HSP1 refugees



Many more of the CRISP refugees reported **participating in sport or leisure activities** in the previous 4 weeks compared to HSP1 refugees

Early signs suggest that CRISP and HSP1 refugees are **developing social networks in different ways** and turning to **different types of social networks**. CRISP refugees, with the help of their CSGs, reported connecting with a wide range of social networks outside their own ethnic group. Whereas HSP1 refugees were developing social networks through social media, English classes, and work, predominantly within their own ethnic group.



Compared to HSP1, CRISP refugees were finding it easier to get help from the community and reported having a wider community **support network** to draw from

(PL outcome 15)



More CRISP refugees agreed that it has been **easy to get help from others in the community** compared to HSP1 refugees.

CRISP refugees drew on the support from their CSG, which consisted of at least 5 individuals and their families, each with a support network that they could link CRISP refugees to. HSP1 refugees who have one caseworker, often need to draw on support from their own newly formed social networks.



Compared to HSP1, CRISP refugees' **relationship** with the CSG is informal and flexible rather than transactional

(PL outcome 16)

Compared to the **informal and flexible relationship** that CRISP refugees reported they have with their CSG, HSP1 refugees' relationship with their caseworker was reported to be more transactional.

HSP1 refugees described their interactions with their case worker to be predominantly over the phone or via text messages, which was in contrast to the physical presence of the CSG members who could, by being nearby, identify and mitigate issues quickly.

CRISP refugees were more likely to have their **issues resolved immediately**, whereas HSP1 refugees waited longer periods to react to their needs once identified.



Both CRISP and HSP1 refugees reported that their **cultural identity** is respected and valued by the local community

(PL outcome 14)



Almost all of the **CRISP and HSP1 refugees** reported that their **culture is valued by others** in their local community. This sentiment came through strongly in the qualitative data as well. None of the refugees reported any discrimination. However, it became apparent in interviews that many of the refugees had experienced extreme forms of discrimination prior to settling in Australia and, by comparison, Australia was seen as embracing and respectful of their cultural identity.



Both CRISP and HSP1 refugees reported a high **sense of belonging**

(PL outcome 19)

In comparison to HSP1 refugees, CRISP refugees were more likely (but not statistically significant) to **feel like they belong** (M=2.9 vs M=2.6 / 3).



Both CRISP and HSP1 refugees reported feeling **connected to, and trusting of their local community**

(PL outcome 11) but **differed in who they connected with or asked for help from**

Both **CRISP and HSP1 refugees:**

felt connected to people in Australia



trusted others in the community



In comparison to HSP1, **CRISP refugees:**

found it easier to **get help from others**



were more likely to **ask for help from CSG/case worker**



were less likely to **source help** from friends or people in their cultural community



Most CRISP refugees connected with their CSGs and had been helped by their CSG to connect with others in the local community. CRISP refugees were bonding with their CSG and referred to them as family.

Not surprisingly, HSP1 refugees who were mainly in major cities with large ethnic groups, sought out co-ethnics. Several referred to co-ethnics as family. In addition to reducing the language barriers they may experience with locals, they may trust co-ethnics more than their caseworkers as they have developed a relationship with them.



Compared to HSP1 refugees, CRISP refugees reported better **social and emotional wellbeing**. However, women, refugees living in Major Cities, and those that received less than 10 hours of support from their CSG reported lower social and emotional wellbeing

(PL outcome 12)

Compared to HSP1, **CRISP refugees** were **less psychologically distressed** (not statistically significant) (M=0.4 vs M=0.7 / 5).

However, both CRISP and HSP1 refugees reported that their daily lives were not impacted by their physical or emotional health.

All refugees were able to get healthcare when required, and reported a **positive healthcare experience** (M=2.9 vs M=2.6 / 3).

Psychological distress was higher (not statistically significant) for **CRISP refugees** if they were:

- female (M=0.5 vs M=0.2 / 5)
- living in Major Cities (M=0.6 vs M=0.3 / 5)
- receiving less than 10 hours of CSG support (M=0.5 vs M=0.2 / 5)



Both CRISP and HSP1 refugees reported feeling **optimistic about their and their family's future**

(PL outcome 13)

Thinking about future employment, finances, housing, their children's future, and life in Australia in general, both **CRISP and HSP1 refugees** **felt hopeful** (M=2.9 vs M=2.9 / 3).

6. What early signs of economic integration are we seeing compared to HSP? (KEQ 2)



Both CRISP and HSP1 refugees are showing early signs of either **workforce participation** or aspiring to work in the next 12 months

(PL outcome 24)

Workforce participation is possible where English proficiency is not needed, but for most refugees, improving their English was the first priority. Two exceptions stand out. One CRISP refugee found a job in the hospitality industry as a kitchenhand despite not being proficient in English. This job was secured through the CSG who identified job gaps in the community and deliberately sought a CRISP family who met the need.

Similarly, one HSP1 refugee who was otherwise not looking for work at the time, was fortunate to accidentally meet a co-ethnic migrant who could provide the social networks to find him a job in a car crushing yard.

Most CRISP and HSP1 refugees are **not currently looking for employment**



However, in about three-quarters of the **households**, at least one refugee **plans to work in the next 12 months**



For both CRISP and HSP1 refugees, **men were more likely** to say they **plan to work** in the next 12 months than women. In many cases, this difference in aspiration was reportedly due to caring responsibilities



Compared to HSP1, CRISP refugees were slightly less likely to report that they plan to **work and/or study** in the next 12 months

(PL outcome 24)

Less than half of the CRISP refugees (41% of males and 44% of females) **plan to undertake future study** (other than English language classes). This number was slightly lower than those in the HSP1 group



Considering work and study intentions combined, more than three-quarters of CRISP and HSP1 households have at least one member who is either **currently working and/or intends to work and/or study** in the next 12 months



7. What early signs of integration in terms language acquisition are we seeing compared to HSP? (KEQ 3)



Compared to HSP1, CRISP refugees were more likely to be studying or intending to study to improve their **English proficiency**

(PL outcome 26)

CRISP refugees were **more likely** than the HSP1 refugees to:

have studied English in the previous 4 weeks



be planning to study English in the next 12 months



Both groups reported that they have access to support to improve their English proficiency. However, CRISP refugees were more likely to have commenced English language courses. One CRISP refugee mentioned that his entire family (2 adults and 2 children) were already attending English courses.

In contrast, many HSP1 refugees were not enrolled in English classes, and among those who were enrolled in English courses, they were not planning to commence the course until later the following year (2023). HSP1 refugees seemingly delay enrolling in English classes either because of caring responsibilities, or because they were still focussing on settling in, which may be because they are getting less support compared to CRISP refugees.



Both CRISP and HSP1 refugees aspired to learn English so they could be **less reliant on interpreters**

Both groups described using Google translate and interpreters to communicate. The CSGs, according to CRISP refugees, were good at arranging the interpreters when needed for more complex circumstances such as setting up Centrelink accounts. There was one HSP1 refugee who indicated that their family did not know how to get an interpreter.

Overall, CRISP refugees aspired to learn English so that they could become more independent and less reliant on interpreters.

8. What early signs of integration in terms self-sufficiency are we seeing compared to HSP? (KEQ 4)



Both CRISP and HSP1 refugees reported a desire to be more **self-sufficient** and were working towards this (PL outcome 32)

Compared to HSP1, **CRISP refugees:**

- were slightly **less confident** to do tasks independently (M=1.6 vs M=1.8 / 3)

Confidence was higher for CRISP refugees if they were receiving:

- support from a **larger CSG** (10+ members) (M=1.6 vs M=1.8 / 3)
- more than **10 hours of CSG support** (M=1.8 vs M=1.5 / 3)

Both CRISP and HSP1 refugees were showing signs of becoming more self-sufficient, however, they appear to be happening under different conditions.

For CRISP refugees, most were developing self-sufficiency by being shown how to do something by their CSGs. For example, one CRISP refugee recounted how her CSG initially took her to the markets and now she can go on her own.

In contrast, HSP1 refugees were developing self-sufficiency because they did not have any support and had no choice but to learn. These range from navigating Medicare and medical appointments, to finding their way around the local areas to attend appointments.

9. What do we know so far about the commitment and capability of regional communities to support the refugees to settle in Australia? (KEQ 12)



Early findings seem to suggest that **regional communities have the capability to support refugees through CSGs** (PL outcome 51)

Of the **18 CRISP refugee households** who have settled in Australia:

half have been matched to **Inner Regional locations**



almost half were in locations that **do not have HSP service providers**



External factors outside the immediate control of the CSG e.g., flood-affected and housing deprived regional locations, and stereotypical attitudes that refugees “take away from the local community”, may impact on the capability of regional communities to support settlement.

All **CSG members** located in regional communities indicated that their group has been able to **meet the needs of the refugee household**, however, **local services did not always have the breadth of services needed** for non-English speaking residents



Work opportunities, transport, childcare, and community attitudes may impact the **capability of regional communities to support refugees**



The findings suggest that careful consideration needs to be given to matching the refugee family, not only to the CSG, but their skills to the area that the family is being placed in to ensure the employment opportunities match the skills of the refugees being placed there.



Regional communities have been generally very accepting and welcoming of CRISP families.



Some potential barriers to workforce participation in the regional areas could be lack of childcare facilities in regional locations. Two families who have settled in Inner Regional locations stated in the survey that they are struggling to access childcare for their young children.

10. Key insights and recommendations



Key insight 1

Early evidence suggests that CRISP refugees with larger CSGs (10+ members) have better outcomes e.g., self-sufficiency, social and emotional wellbeing, and learning to drive and obtaining a licence.

A larger CSG reduces the burden on supporters. Many found providing the support to be time consuming and emotionally draining. Therefore, having more people in the CSG to share the load, particularly supporters with young families or who work full-time, would reduce the load each member has. A larger group size also buffers the impact of supporters leaving the group.

Recommendation 1

Consider increasing the recommended CSG size



Key insight 2

Some CSGs need additional training relating to securing long-term accommodation, accessing essential services, work opportunities, and study options, as they struggled to support the refugee family in these areas.

One-third of the supporters found it emotionally draining which could highlight the need for emotional support and/or mental health training.

Recommendation 2

Consider reviewing the training and resources to better prepare supporters



Key insight 3

Negative public perceptions of refugees, at times, is impacting the CSGs ability to support the refugee family. For example, negative perceptions of refugees from real estate agents is adding to the challenges faced by supporters in securing long-term accommodation.

Recommendation 3

Consider creating a fact sheet for CSGs to give to real estate agents about the program that outlines some of the benefits of resettlement to the community and some findings to date. Explore whether there are ways to build relationships with, and promote the involvement of real estate agents, for example as members of the CSG. Formal documentation legitimising the CRISP program and the CSG could help mitigate some of the challenges the CSG is experiencing.



Key insight 4

Only 33% of CRISP refugees living in a regional location have been provided support from their CSG to learn to drive (during the first 2 months post settlement).

Recommendation 4

Consider following up with the CSGs to ensure that they are supporting the refugees to learn to drive. If applicable, identify barriers and support needs. The qualitative interviews with Arrival Group 2 need to include some of the households where refugees have not had support to learn to drive to explore the barriers and support needs with both the refugee and CSG.



Key insight 5

In approximately three-quarters of the households, at least one household member plans to work in the next 12 months. The qualitative data provides insights into the reasons some of the women choose not to study or work due to caring responsibilities. However, understanding the reasons both partners are not planning to study or work (22%) in the next 12 months needs further exploration.

Recommendation 5

Qualitative interviews with Arrival Group 2 need to include some of the households where neither adult intends to work or study in the next 12 months to understand some of the barriers facing these households. This will provide important insights for CRSA to target their training of CSGs to address some of these barriers.



Key insight 6

Some groups may be at an increased risk of psychological distress, such as women and those in Major Cities. The sample size is too small to say anything with statistical certainty, but it may be something that becomes significant as we get larger numbers, and less screening is done by the Department.

Recommendation 6

Qualitative interviews with Arrival Group 2 need to include some of the households where there are refugees who are comparably more psychologically distressed to ensure the support that is provided by the CSG meets their needs.



Key insight 7

An important part of the CRISP model was to place refugees in regional locations that do not have HSP service providers. The findings from Arrival Group 1 show that regional communities have the capability to support refugees through the CSGs, and many of the CSGs indicated their willingness to continue to support additional families, including inviting refugee families to join their CSG groups. However, the ability of regional communities to support refugees has only been tested on refugees who do not have high needs and supported by very experienced CSGs. In order to scale up CRISP and potentially consider places without the safety net of HSP, the capability of regional communities to support refugees with high needs, should be tested in the next 6 months.

Recommendation 7

Continue to monitor regional communities capability to support refugees when refugees have high needs and are supported by less experienced CSG members. Qualitative interviews with Arrival Group 2 need to include some of the households where the refugees are in a regional location that does not have HSP services, where refugees have high needs, and are supported by less experienced CSGs.



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Institute for
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The University of Queensland
80 Meiers Road, Indooroopilly
Queensland 4068 Australia

T +61 7 3346 7471

E issr@uq.edu.au

issr.uq.edu.au

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