

The Strategic Use of Resettlement

*Margaret Piper AM*¹

1 Introduction

In Australia for many years now, irregular migration and asylum have dominated refugee-related discourse in the media, in political debate and in dealings between our government and other governments. The uninitiated would be forgiven for thinking that this is all there is to refugee policy. And Australia is not alone in this.

Meanwhile, other areas of refugee-related activity such as resettlement have largely been ignored. This is regrettable as resettlement is not only about giving vulnerable refugees the chance of a new life; it has a variety of other uses as well that have a far wider application than simply assisting those who are resettled. Resettlement is an issue that deserves to be taken seriously by those charged with shaping its policy and those delivering it on the ground. The better it is understood, the more effectively it can be used.

In 2002 Garry Troeller, a senior member of the staff of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), wrote a seminal article in which he outlined the history of resettlement and reflected upon how it was being used within the broader framework of refugee protection. Since then, with the exception of some limited circulation documents, writing about this area has been scant, and often specific to a particular situation (Ott, 2011; Jubilut and Carneiro, 2011). A decade without work such as Troeller's has taken its toll, not least in international fora, where discussion about resettlement too

¹ This chapter has been adapted from a longer paper, *Resettlement: 2012 and Beyond*, on which the author collaborated with Paul Power from the Refugee Council of Australia and Dr Graham Thom from Amnesty International Australia. It can be found on the RefWorld website at <www.refworld.org/docid/510faac32.html>.

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