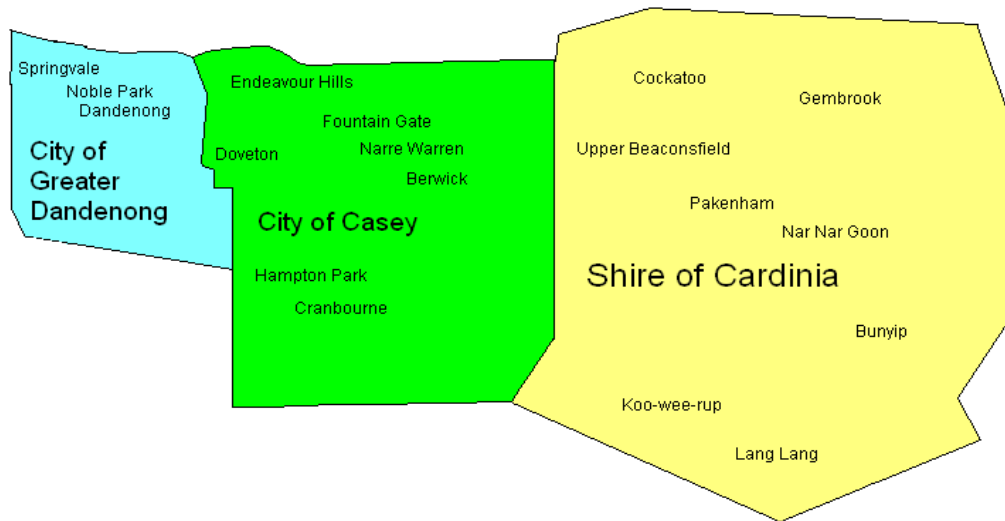


Sudanese in south east Melbourne: *Perspectives of a new and emerging community*



A community profile provided by
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Front cover courtesy of *The Age* © 2007

Sudanese refugees Kuol Deng (above right) holding baby Okony and his wife Nyapadeng with (from left) Jina, John, Victoria and Paul at their Springvale home

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Disclaimer

Opinions expressed by community representatives in this document are personal perspectives of settlement in Australia.

These opinions do not necessarily reflect Australian Government policy on migration or settlement, nor those of the MRC.

Abbreviations used in this document

| | |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| DIAC | Department of Immigration and Citizenship [formerly DIMA] |
| DIMA | Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs |
| MRC | Migrant Resource Centre |
| SERMRC | South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre |
| DHS | Department of Human Services |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| SCAA | Sudanese Community Association of Australia |
| AMEP | Adult Migrant Education Program |
| IHSS | Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy |
| AMES | Adult Multicultural Education Services |
| NCDA | Nasir Community Development Agency |
| VFST | Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture and Trauma |

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1. Introduction

After leaving their homeland, and forced to leave loved ones behind, refugees face many challenges upon arriving in Australia. A new and unfamiliar home provides both a sanctuary and a threat to traditional ways of life. Adapting to new laws, customs and social standards, and needing to learn about unfamiliar monetary, regulatory, medical, education and employment systems places enormous pressure on individuals and families. For these reasons, we have designed this document to assist service providers develop a greater understanding of refugee needs. We hope that improved knowledge will shape the ways in which providers can deliver better and more culturally appropriate services to the various Sudanese communities. This document is not intended to be formal research; rather it is a collection of personal perspectives by members of the various Sudanese communities on their settlement experiences. To do this, we have documented aspects of community development by the Sudanese in Victoria, specifically in the south-eastern region of Melbourne.

People settle here for a variety of reasons: affordability and suitability of accommodation, access to services and transport, and a chance to live near family, friends and others of similar background and culture. Of all the recently arrived humanitarian refugee groups in Victoria, the Sudanese are the largest in number. It is our intention that this profile will highlight particular issues facing the Sudanese settling in this region.

To this end, we have sought to include a broad representation of wide-ranging views and perspectives from members of Sudanese communities. Not all Sudanese respond to their new life in Australia in the same way. People may arrive from the same birth country, but they do not always have the same cultural background and experiences. This situation has parallels with other refugee and migrant groups, in that everyone has individual life experiences, but we hope to demonstrate, through the voices of the Sudanese people, some aspects of their particular settlement. By providing readers with a selection of Sudanese community opinions and experiences, it is our intention to demonstrate the scope and diversity of this new and emerging community. We believe that this document will prove a useful resource for service providers, educators, students, government agencies and general readers.

Aims of this profile

To canvas issues relevant to Sudanese communities settling in the south-east of Melbourne

To provide information on specific issues which have an impact on the settlement of Sudanese community in the south east region

To assist service providers in developing culturally appropriate services that meet the Sudanese communities' needs

To assist in developing effective relationships between Sudanese community members and service providers