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Immigrants Services in Auburn Local Government Area in Australia

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Mohammad Rajab Hasan Alzahrani<sup>(1)</sup>

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background Information

Australia is predominantly an immigrant country with the exception of a low proportion of the original people of the land, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Landers. Since the first settlement of the European white people mainly from the United Kingdom (UK) in 1778, a continued flow of people from Europe and subsequently from other parts of the world have formed the vast majority of the current population of Australia; making Australia as one of the most diverse and multi-cultural countries of the world. Generally speaking the white immigrants mainly from the UK is considered as the main stream Australians and others as the people of ethnic origins.

While immigration to Australia is mainly skill based, family migration as well as adoption of refugees and asylum seekers forms important components of Australian migrant societies. Australia is considered generous in opening its doors to tens of thousands refugees and asylum seekers over the last few decades. For every 1000 Australian residents, about 1.1 of them are believed refugees which is a significant number (AHRC,2010). Protecting the interests of the newly immigrants including refugees and asylum seekers through providing efficient an adequate services remains to be one of the most important responsibilities of the Australian government. This is particularly important because the newly immigrants have left their homes and are uprooted. The situation of refugees and asylum seekers are even worse because almost all of them are victims of war, internal conflicts and abuses so they are very vulnerable.

What naturally comes with such a high intake of migrant population each year including refugees a complex dynamics of needs and demands requiring effective delivery of important settlement services. Such services are required to satisfactorily meet the complex needs of the immigrants which they face at their first point of arrival into the country as well as over the few years that follow.

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<sup>(1)</sup>محمد رجب حسن الزهراني: محاضر بقسم الجغرافيا ونظم المعلومات الجغرافية في كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية - جامعة الملك عبد العزيز.

The newly immigrants may have difficulties in meeting their basic needs of day to day living, including finding appropriate accommodation, maintaining general health and children education. In addition to the problems of daily living they may face more complex challenges including feeling of insecurity, mental and emotional disturbances overcrowding due to lack of appropriate and adequate accommodation, social and economic exclusion as a result of short-term and long-term unemployment, social isolation experienced especially by women, lack of access to appropriate services including educational and vocational training opportunities as well as lack of information and language proficiency that require targeted services. Addressing these issues by providing direct service provisions is crucial for the newly immigrants and refugees so that their safety, security, physical and emotional health ,social and economic wellbeing are ensured as well as they develop skills and capabilities that will help them to support their long-term goals. Some special services may be required to help refugees deal with the trauma of abuse and displacement, the mental and physical health issues that are more often experienced by refugees and asylum seekers (Kelaher and Manderson, 2000).

The Auburn Local Government Area (LGA) of the Sydney city is recognized as one of the most culturally diverse area with very high concentration of people of various ethnic origins and humanitarian entrants including refugees and asylum seekers. Considering the complexity of the issues that the newly immigrants and refugees face during their settlement periods in Australia including their immediate and long-term needs that must be met in order that they can enjoy a high quality of life in Australia, creation of relevant service provisions is imperative in an area like Auburn .Such services may include direct social, educational, health, employment, settlement, housing, family, youth and child support and services .Apart from direct services delivery of community development and information based programs and activities may help to reduce the isolation problems that are often experienced by newly immigrants and refugees trying to settle into a new country. Being in close proximity and having the opportunities for direct access to services and programs are also very important for their normal and healthy living.

Given the demographics and diverse nature of Auburn LGA and in the light of the complex and multiple needs of the communities that live in the area, Auburn LGA is selected as the target population for this study; because the population may well represent the multicultural communities of the wider Sydney city. Keeping Auburn in focus, quantitative and qualitative research methods, including surveys and interviews will be used

in this study to explore the types, quality and effectiveness of the services available to the newly immigrants and refugees and further the study will explore the scope of the services and how the services are offered to the target communities. Finally the gaps in the service provisions that may currently exist will be examined and recommendations will be developed aiming for the minimization of the gaps.

### **1.2 Purpose of Study**

The main focus of this study is to examine the challenges facing immigrants and their families and the immigrants' views and experiences on the adequacy and quality of the settlement services they receive in the Auburn LGA. Availability of vital services such as in the areas of health, employment and social services including counselling and language support for the immigrants will be examined. Another aim is to identify the roles of different organizations providing the services. The final aim of the project is to shed light on the missing services and develop recommendations depending on the experiences of the individuals, families and groups so that appropriate and optimal services can be provided.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following questions are asked in order to explore the aims and develop methodologies for this research:

- What are the different services provided to the newly immigrant groups in the Auburn LGA?
- What specific services do they need and whether the current services are meeting their needs?
- How frequently the target people using the services and whether they are satisfied with the quality of services?
- How the gaps in the services can be minimised aiming to ensure the quality of services?

### **1.4 Organizations of the chapter of this thesis:**

The chapter of this thesis is organized in a meaningful way. After the introduction as above, a literature review illustrating different aspects of the primary focus of the study the Auburn LGA that included Geography, Demographics, Diversity of Language, Religion and Culture, Current Community Services and the service gaps has been presented. The review is conducted in the context of Australian immigration situation. In the chapter following introduction a comprehensive detail of the methodology including

ethical consideration has been presented. After that the results of the interviews and survey with some critical analyses are described. In the final chapter of general discussion in the context of all the chapters that included conclusions and study limitations has been outlined. Obviously at the end a list of references that have been consulted in this study is given.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview**

Australia has experienced a major influx of immigrants since the early settlement of British people, in particular after 1940s. Demographic research in Australia indicated that more than ninety per cent of its population can trace their original countries with a minor exception of close to two per cent, which is made up of Torres Strait islanders and Aborigines (Castles, 1992, p. 549) who are believed living on this land for many thousand years. The most of the immigrants have tried to settle in the major cities like Sydney creating difficulties for the government in providing adequate infrastructure support including housing and other resources and the government's ability to cope with the demands of additional resources has been a major issue (Murphy, 2011).

According to Castles' survey in 1992, immigration has remained a central point of concern for many leaders in Australia, and this is mainly attributed to the need for nation building and planning. He further noted that one of five people in Australia is a relatively recent immigrant with cities like Sydney and Melbourne being highly populated by recent immigrants.. As a result, immigration policy Australia has become one of the most cultural diverse countries in the world (Murphy, 2011). It embraces a myriad of identities from around the world including from America, Europe, Asia and Africa. This immigration from diverse population has provide Australia with some potentials to grow and at the same time many important challenges to face. The question, which researchers have always tried to answer is the major causes of influx of people to Australia and how this movement impacts the country's development. A further question arises whether the government and the relevant organizations face challenges in providing services in regards to the settlement issues to the immigrants in Australia?

According to Waxman, effective communication is considered to be a major challenge for the immigrants from non-English speaking nations. Commonly affected people are usually from Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia who are mainly from war torn zones and are settled in Sydney (Waxman, 1998, p. 761). His study further identified Afghans may have the highest

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level of English proficiency, a factor attributed to their longest period of time spent in the country as compared to their counterparts from Iraq and Bosnia. Language is known as a key communication tool which undermines many immigrants in Australia. For those who are not proficient in the language, access to important information like health becomes a major problem. This is seen as a major challenge that faces new immigrants from the three mentioned countries.

Besides difficulties in accessing essential services, immigrants in Sydney and other cities struggles to fit in the society with a lot of other difficulties. English being the language of day to day communication in the offices, academic environments and wider communities, immigrants from non-English speaking background view it as a major interaction barrier because they are not able to communicate well with people of their host country (Dunn & Forrest, 2008, p. 98). Many immigrant families become isolated from host communities because of communication barrier, an observation which some analysts view as an obstacle towards social integration. The government together with the Migrant Resource Centres and Refugee Resettlement Working Groups work in helping immigrants to achieve a valuable level of English proficiency during early days of settlement in the country (RCA, 2010). Nevertheless, the program is faced with a wide range of challenges which have been attempted to be addressed at various stages to ensure that language and cultural training and tutorials in language and culture become a major tool in improving English proficiency among immigrants.

Similarly, the welfare of immigrants receives significant attention with the government's settling up programs that are aimed at improving the smoother and better resettlement of immigrants into the new societies and environments. For example, the federal Government's On-Arrival-Accommodation (OAA) in Auburn LGA promotes the resettlement services for the immigrants contributing to a higher concentration of Iraqis and Bosnians in the region (Khoo, 1994, p. 68). On the other hand, the concentration of Afghans in Auburn has augmented by Community Refugee Settlement Scheme, which facilitates the resettlement of refugees and immigrants from Afghanistan.

With the concentration of immigrants in many Australian cities, unemployment has become a major challenge with most of the recent immigrants remaining jobless. Although lack of proficiency in English contributes to this case, it is important to note that other factors hinder

immigrants from securing jobs in Australia (Dunn, Kamp, Shaw, Forrest & Paradise, 2010, p. 20). These factors include but not limited to inadequate skills, immigrants' state of health and inability of the host country to recognize their qualifications. Poor English proficiency also makes immigrants to be more vulnerable to health dangers like mental illness and accidents. This is due to lack of awareness and failure to communicate using English.

To deal with the problem of English proficiency, flexible tuition programs are necessary to allow immigrants to complete their classes (Dunn, Kamp, Shaw, Forrest & Paradise, 2010, p. 22). The need for sensitivity towards learning difficulties is important in addressing problems encountered by immigrants during tuition sessions. Additionally, the role played by media cannot be ignored; it should be considered as a teaching tool since most people have access to radios and television sets with almost every media program being aired in English (McMaster, 2001, p. 46).

## **2.2 Multiculturalism**

Cultural diversity of the immigrant population is also seen as one of the major problems facing immigrants and service providers in Australia. While the country is considered to have the highest number of immigrants in the region, there are concerns over the impact of cultural diversity and the perception of both the indigenous people and immigrants (Dunn & Forrest, 2008, p. 82). Dunn & Forrest (2008) further noted that multicultural policies have played a major role in promoting cultural pluralism. These policies mainly formulated by the federal government have the objective of closing the gaps between immigrants and native Australian inhabitants. It is clear that culture encompasses a wide range of social identity parameters including beliefs, thoughts ideas and views and like language identifying and addressing cultural needs are also very important issues for settling in and integration of the immigrants into the new societies. .

Additionally, many Islamic immigrants in Australia experience religious conflicts where they feel discriminated by some host communities because of the religious grounds. For example, the use of hijab and headscarves among Muslim women has not been achieved well by some existing residents Australians (Dunn, 2009. P. 31). This leaves the government with the task of promoting the importance of cultural diversity and needs for supporting the cultural differences among different communities. The politics in regards to gender issues also affect Australian immigrants leading to debates on matters like freedom of women from

oppression which sometimes is perpetuated by religious beliefs ( Ghena Krayem , 2010).

Moreover, a lot of research has concentrated on the challenges encountered by the government and other service providers when dealing with immigrants, has remained a matter for national concern. This has shaped several societal and economic structures with the planners being forced to consider other approaches that would efficiently address the issues. Provision of housing services tops the list with many service providers finding it to be an uphill task based on high economic standard and inflation rates. Under The Federal Government, OAA and other immigrant services are identified for the purpose of providing possible accommodation services. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) expresses that 747 000 refugees were in need of accommodation in the year 2010, yet the resettlement states offer only 79000 chances every year (Waxman, 1998, p. 762). It therefore, implies that the problem of housing is a major one since the majority of service providers are unable to effectively deal with it.

Besides housing services, access to land is a major challenge to non-indigenous people in Australia with the natives assuming the right of land ownership. Unlike the services like medication and education, which could be provided by volunteer groups and the non-government organizations (NGOs) in conjunction with the government, it is not easy to solve the land ownership problems which significantly affects millions of immigrants (Murray & Skull, 2005, p. 26). In addressing the issue of gender balance, mobilization of women has highly been encouraged in order to allow women to have access to various services like medication through organized groups. Nevertheless, the capacity of the government to finance affordability of urban infrastructure has continuously deteriorated because of the overwhelming number of entrants from other nations. The government is, therefore, unable to finance basic needs to all immigrants, an issue viewed to be chronic in the country. High food prices, unaffordable medical care and housing problems characterize the lives of millions of immigrants in the country (Khoo, 1994, p. 68).

As a result of high population emanating from the influx of immigrants, providing adequate nutrition to all its citizens has also become a major problem in Australia (McMaster, 2001, p.9). This is particularly because of limited resources while there is increasing population caused by immigrants every year. Given this scenario, nutritionists have raised an

alarm to become cautious in avoiding humanitarian crisis which may potentially occur in the future. Services are being provided by dieticians to prevent nutritional problems in Australia. Some of these services include advocacy at local and national levels in order to create public awareness as well as effective policy development in ensuring that matters regarding nutrition are handled adequately by the leaders. However, a major challenge towards the success of these strategies has been lack of finances and lack of motivation (Booth & Smith, 2001, p. 150). One of the aims of the current study is to examine the issues that the immigrants and refugees are facing as they seek services, which are essential for their wellbeing.

### **3. Profiling Auburn LGA**

#### **3.1 Overview of the chapter**

This chapter seeks to explore the different factors that make Auburn LGA unique mainly focusing on the geographical location, demographic data and the socio-cultural environments. In addition, the chapter will also provide a brief overview of the services available and the gaps that exist in service provision.

#### **3.2 Geography**

Auburn Local Government Area is located 20 kilometres to the west of the Sydney Central Business District. As shown in Table 3.1 below, it has a coverage area of 31 km<sup>2</sup>, and its boundaries are Parramatta Road and Duck River in the North and West, Homebush Bay and Powell's Creek to the East and the Sydney Water Supply Line to the South (ACC, 2009, p.1). Auburn has common boundaries with the local government areas of Parramatta with a significantly large commercial zone, Bankstown and largely residential Stratified. Suburbs within Auburn LGA include Berala, Homebush Bay, Lidcombe, Newington, Regents Park, Rookwood and Silverwater" (ACC, 2009, p1).



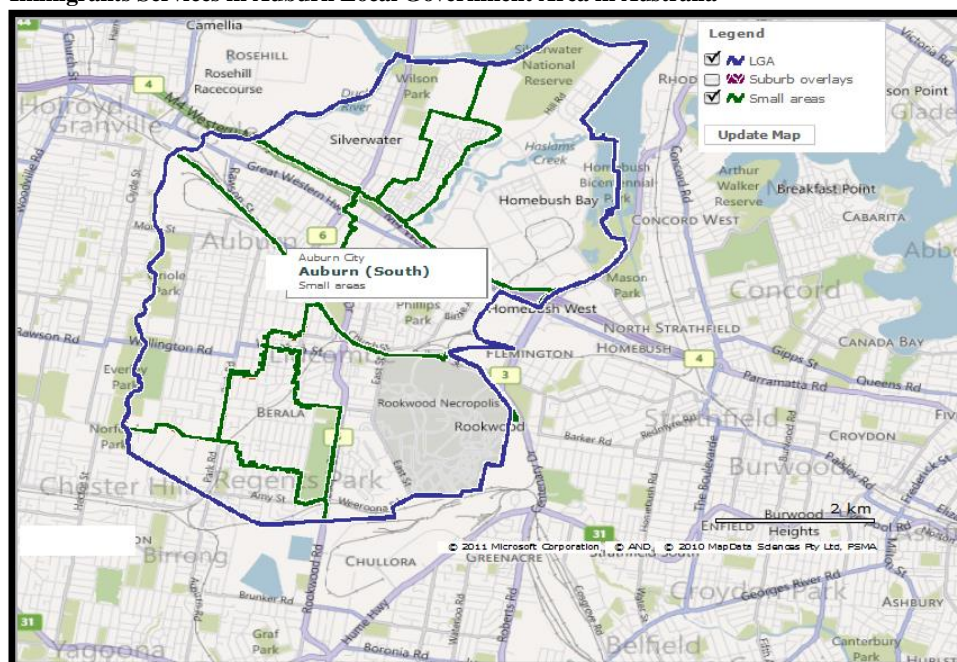
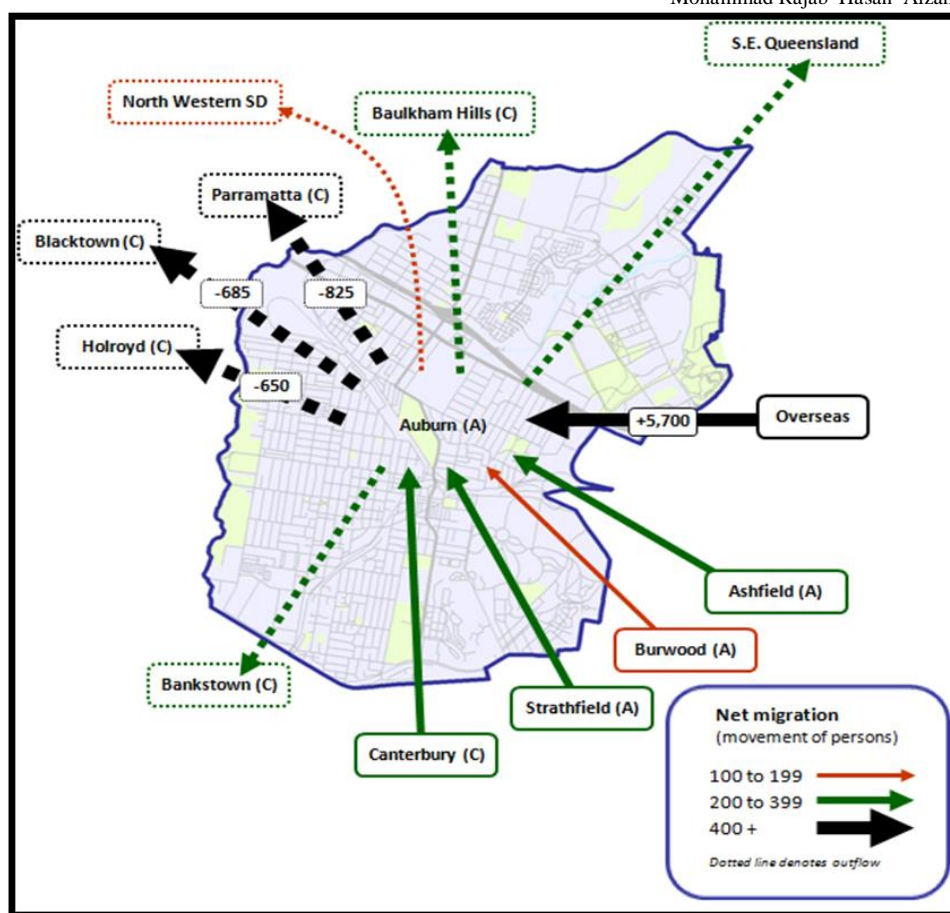


Figure 3.1. shows the geographical boundaries of Auburn LGA within the city of Sydney

### 3.3 Demography

Auburn is described “as an older and a well-established area, and its population has increased due to substantial development in the suburbs of Newington and Homebush Bay as well as the redevelopment of areas such as Regents Park with increasing residential densities” (ACC, 2009, p1). Auburn’s population as at 30 June 2010 was 78,597 which included 39,763 male and 36,756 females (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010). This region has been experiencing a high population growth in the last ten years. Further an extrapolation of Auburn’s current statistics projects that, by the year 2021, Auburn’s population will be approximately 92 523 with an expected growth rate of 1.4 per cent per annum. By contrast, the population growth rate of Sydney as at 2021 will to be 0.9 per cent per annum (ACC, 2010). Such a growth rate identifies the LGA as being in need of more services to keep up with the future demands; hence the need for this study.



**Figure 3.2 shows net migration of people to the Auburn LGA**

(Unpublished source provided during a consultation with an Auburn Council representative on 1/11/2011).

The data shown in the above table is very useful as it explicitly shows the numbers of migrants that have arrived in the area from overseas in the financial year 2010/11. More than 5 700 is a large number of overseas arrivals and it is expected to put immediate pressure on services and facilities including housing, health and education, as well as long term pressure on things like employment services. Moreover, these arrivals will be competing for such services and facilities with local arrivals numbering up to 1400 additional residents from nearby areas.. Yet, in the statistics of

Table 3.1 (see below) it is clear that in just 4 years, over ten thousand residents have been added to the area.

**Table 3.1 Population Growth Statistics 2006-2010**

Year	Population	Population Change
2006	68 231	
2007	70 293	2 062
2008	71 658	1 365
2009	73 791	2 133
2010	78 597	4 806

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

The migration of people within the Auburn LGA also was based on the developments of the new areas Newington and Homebush. Development of these areas have invited new residents from nearby areas such as Canterbury, Strathfield, Burwood and Ashfield. People living in these areas are generally of middle to upper middle class and they preferred to relocate to the less crowded areas of the LGA. In contrast, most of the newly arrived migrants are concentrated in the dense areas close to public transport and may never benefit from the facilities that may be created in the newly developed areas like Newington. This does not indicate that residents of the LGA who are not in the low-socioeconomic category are satisfied with the services and facilities;

### **3.4 Socio-Cultural, Linguistic and Religious Diversity**

Socio-cultural environments of Auburn LGA is dynamic and thus constantly changing. This constant evolution can be attributed to the continuous arrival of people from different parts of the world. These immigration patterns are mainly influenced by the presence of a major location for overseas arrivals, a significant amount of development and the Olympic precinct in Newington.

Despite the locality having deep ancestral and historical roots attached to the Aboriginal community through the Darug nation and culture, the population of the existing residents Aborigine people is just a handful in comparison to the non-Native Australian (ACC, 2009). In the 2006 census, about 53 per cent of the inhabitants were born outside Australia or have parents originating from other nations. Amongst these nations, the first ten include “China, Turkey, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Vietnam, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines” (A CC, 2009, p.2).

### 3.4.1 Language

Even though the primary language in Auburn is English, more than 66 per cent of the residents prefer communicating with their ancestral dialects at their residential places (ACC, 2009). These secondary most spoken languages, which have contributed greatly to the linguistic diversity of the Auburn residents, are shown in Table 3.2:

**Table 3.2 Linguistic diversity of Auburn residents**

Language	Percentage (%)
Arabic	11.1
Cantonese	10.1
Turkish	6.7
Mandarin	6.6
Korean	3

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

### 3.4.2 Religion

Auburn LGA hosts a significant representation of religious communities. This is because it has more than 70% of the population professing to at least one of the mainstream religions (ACC, 2009). The major religions in Auburn region are Christianity and Islam with 36.3% and 24.8% of the population respectively as its followers. There are many denominations of Christians living in Auburn. While there are over 40

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churches within the area such as Russian, Romanian and Syriac Orthodox, or Catholic or Baptist, others such as Ethiopian Orthodox or Coptic Orthodox travel outside the area for centres of worship.

For Muslim communities there are at least seven mosques/musallah in Auburn; at least one of which is Shiite (ABC online). There is also a Bahai center. Muslims of all ethnic groups attend Gallipoli and Omar mosques. Other religious groups in the area include Hinduism adhered to by Indians, Tamil Sri Lankans, Nepalese and Bangladeshis and Buddhism adhered to by Chinese, Vietnamese, Nepalese, and Sinhalese Sri Lankans (ACC, 2009).

As a consequence of the religious diversity, ACC and community services have a responsibility to providing equal opportunity for all residents to interact and participate in their own religious activities either by creating such opportunities or supporting ones that already exist. Further, days of worship and all major religious festivities such as Ramadan, Eid, Naroz, Diwali and Chinese New Year are deeply respected in the locality, and the concerned people are given time to celebrate with other believers of their faith in such festivities. For example, Fridays are considered a worship day for the Muslims and hence most activities are halted between 1.00 p. m. to 2.00 p.m. to allow Muslims to worship. In addition, the catering system is designed to accommodate all the dietary requirements for the existing religious factions, and correct etiquette for interaction at all times (ACC, 2009) were encouraged. Even the local McDonald's decided to provide a halal menu in the recent time..

According to Auburn Council (2009, p1), the cultural diversity and differences such as growth and change can be viewed as "sources of energy and creativity in a local community." In addition, most of the local residents perceive diversity as strength, owing to the absence of overt racism or ethno-cultural conflict in the area (ACC, 2009, p.1). However, diversity and difference can equally be a burden to a local population. This can be witnessed in instances whereby the cultural differences are too large and cannot be intervened by the shared socioeconomic conditions, culture, education or language. In such cases, there is a likelihood of cultural diversity turning out to be a source of misunderstanding, mistrust and resentment (CC, 2009, p.6). Such examples of this potential can be seen in three very public incidents in the area's history. Auburn Gallipoli Mosque has had some minor attacks of vandalism by Islam phobic youth. Following the Cronulla riots in 2005, some Muslim youth attacked and burnt down the Pacific Islander Uniting Church on the corner of Harrow Rd (The Age: Dec

14, 2005). Similarly, Australia's oldest Hindu Temple was attacked in 2011 following racial conflict between Lebanese and Indian youth in other pockets of Sydney (Sydney Morning Herald: March 30, 2011). Notably, however, in all three cases the instigators were from outside the Auburn LGA. Also, the said Uniting church has been rebuilt with funds donated by the Muslim community (<http://www.affinity.org.au/>).

### **3.4.3 Culture**

Auburn LGA has one of the highest rates of settlement of refugees and humanitarian entrants in the country as well as people born overseas and those with foreign parents (ACC, 2009, p.2). This makes the area to be one of the most "culturally multifaceted or diverse" localities in Australia with the largest number of people who are "overseas born" as compared to the rest of Local Government Areas in NSW (ACC, 2009, p.2).

The culture of Auburn is considered diverse due to the complex issues arising from the arrival and settlement of people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This also has led to the fragmentation of Auburn and its communities. This existing diversity, enormous cultural gaps and deficits, has contributed to its multiple social, economic and other disadvantages. Thus, it has led to the build-up "of negative social boundaries such as exclusion, stigmatization and disrespect" (ACC, 2009, p.6). Further, such great differences and cases of disadvantages have substantially contributed to the overall "undermining of the social wellbeing of Auburn residents" (ACC, 2009, p.6). In addition, the diversity has immensely contributed to identity crisis as witnessed amongst many young people, and lack of meaningful engagement of the residents leading to poor interaction and understanding.

In reference to the 2006 census, approximately 17,000 people - accounting for 22% of Auburn LGA's population - are 12 - 25 years of age. A high proportion of these young people are school dropouts, and about 50% of the young people aged 15 -24 are not employed.

The statistics of the young and unemployed people is expected to increase significantly and proportionately with the growing number of refugees and humanitarian immigrants in Auburn from 2006 (ABS, 2010). Such growing in the number of unemployed persons is likely to have negative connotations for the future. Poverty level and underequipped workforce are some of the possible outcomes.

According to the SEIFA index, Auburn is the second most disadvantaged local government area in the Sydney statistical division after

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nearby Fairfield LGA (ABS, 2006). This is because most of its inhabitants are either new arrivals or refugees, and most of whom have either poor command of English language or cannot communicate at all in English. The Auburn local government area is home to one of the largest refugee populations in Sydney. More than 2000 humanitarian entrants have settled here in the last five years. They have come from places of civil unrest, including the African continent, the Middle East, the Balkan States and parts of South East Asia (ACC, 2010). Moreover, almost all inhabitants lack an understanding of the local networks and have little or no familiarity with 'western' civic, political and social systems.

These and other factors have significantly added weight to the burdens of poverty and housing stress. Other major issues faced by residents of Auburn LGA include unemployment and under-employment of skilled migrants and refugees (ACC, 2009).

### **3.5 Current Community Services**

#### **3.5.1 Current Community Services Provision**

The population of the Auburn LGA derives benefits from the "cooperative networks" interpreted as organizations with a pool of volunteers or relief services like ACDN or Food Bank which caters for the area, as well as from "dense social ties" within the community (ACC, 2009). This area has a stable network of non-profit cultural organizations as well as community and civic organizations. There are more than one hundred and seventy funded and unfunded groups, services, organizations, networks and societies, varying in sizes and core purposes including welfare, social, cultural, religious, educational and arts groups. For example, the "playgrounds, rotary clubs, youth centres, inter-agencies and groups such as writers, poets, artists and historical societies" are some of non-profit organization (ACC, 2009, p.8). About 76 per cent of groups in Auburn have a strong 'volunteer element' (ACC, 2009, p.8; email correspondence with ACC Cultural Plan 2007-2017).

ACC, as stated in its' Cultural Plan 2005-2010, recognizes that a "personal approach", interpreted as direct engagement with residents, is an effective way of making sure that there is the broadest contact as well as inclusive participation of all community sectors (ACC, 2009, p.8). It is evident that the high level of voluntary cultural activities happening across the Auburn area is a significant asset. Therefore, the local council has worked to ensure that these voluntary activities are accessible to all, and the groups that run such activities engage a large number of people from diverse

communities (ACC, 2009, p.8). For example, Peacock Art Gallery or Auburn Centre for Community established 2010. Although here information from Auburn Council is focused, it is recognized that the council may have its own agenda. As will be addressed in chapters 5 and 6, there are other voices in the community which can be identified in sources like the Auburn Review local paper and who may have different opinions regarding the positive and negative developments in the area.

The local council takes into consideration factors such as means of communication, committee groups, networking and the locality of prior to an engagement process. Thus, through such an organized process, the local council has also contributed notably in the sharing and dissemination of information. This success has been attained through engaging local leaders at the grass root levels hence the ease of information reach to a greater number of people (ACC, 2009, p.8). In addition, local council explores other possible avenues for community engagement. For example, regular “Festivals and events within the Auburn’s cultural calendars have been used as additional opportunities of engagement with community member” (ACC, 2009, p.8).

### **3.5.2 Gaps in Community Services Provision**

The ACC Cultural Plan recognizes that “access to facilities that provide opportunities for lifelong learning and creative arts skills development, and appreciation are important in fostering community cohesion and community understanding” (2009, p.7). Despite this and the recent development of the Peacock Gallery and Artists Studio in 2010, the availability of committed and accessible facilities for arts and cultural programs, and educational activities are limited in number throughout the Auburn LGA. Most of the existing venues in Auburn are designed to serve multiple functions and hence sharing of venues by a wide variety of users is a common practice and has been for many years based on the histories of AYC, ACDN, Bardardos and MRC who have subleased to one another at different times (discussion with Ryan Pickard 10/11/2011, active member of AYC since 1996). However, most of the few available facilities are inadequately resourced. They are characterized by limited amenities such as little or no kitchen facilities or public toilets.

In general, there is economic discrimination and marginalization in the Auburn LGA. This is expressed in the form of uneven provision and distribution of community facilities and services by the Auburn Local Government Area (ACC, 2009, p.7). [debates between party representatives at election time could be telling examples to mention here] The most



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important facilities such as libraries, adequate childcare facilities as well as free and accessible community halls and recreational facilities need to be more developed. There are a quite few parks, in the area, but may not be easily accessible or not uniformly distributed throughout the area. In a more specific expression, there is a crucial need for, as pointed out, “meeting rooms, multipurpose halls, cultural facilities and office space which are available, accessible and affordable” (ACC, 2009, p.7). This issue arises as an important theme in the interviews and surveys which will be elaborated on in the analysis below.

#### **3.5.3 Conclusions**

Auburn LGA continues to experience a high population growth rate in comparison to other areas in Australia. The area is characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity because most people living there are of different socio-cultural origins from various parts of the world. This diversity is expected further in the future due the current immigration patterns.

A significant number of Auburn young people have low levels of formal education and a large number of them are unemployed. However, the residents have benefited from the community services that are offered to them by various groups, most of which are run by volunteers. Although much effort has been put in place by the local council, volunteers and the community at large, there are still significant shortfalls in some services with identified gaps in service provision. These shortfalls need to be addressed in order to meet the future demands of the increasing population in the Auburn LGA. Over the following chapters, this paper will address them by collecting and analysing survey and interview data to identify such shortfalls as perceived by residents and organizations and will attempt to develop recommendations aiming to minimize the gaps.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

This research utilized both qualitative and quantitative research as part of its methodology, which were used as a way of thinking about and studying social issues. In depth interviews were undertaken and surveys collected as two key methods of collecting data. A literature review was also undertaken as part of the research.

##### **4.1 Interviews**

In-depth interviews were conducted face to face with key people in the community service sector as well as with local council staff. As part of a semi-structured interview approach, open-ended questions were asked so

as to get as much information as possible about the research topic in order to explore it in more detail. Having open-ended questions allowed an opportunity for interviewees conceptualize, convey and interpret their thoughts regarding the research topic.

Two interviews were also conducted with two residents, one male and one female, both between the age of 36 and 45 years and both identified as being a refugee or immigrant.

#### **4.1.1 Reasons for using interviews**

The main advantages of conducting interviews is that they allow for probing and follow up as well as provide an opportunity to gather in-depth information on the given topic.. However, interviews also have many disadvantages, including consumption of time and the costly administration that comes with undertaking interviews. The number of interviews being conducted is also limited due to the time each interview takes to complete, depending on the nature and sensitivity of the topic or questions being asked, the interview can also be taxing on the interviewee and on the interviewer, and more importantly, the chances of interviewer bias are high especially in cases where responses to open-ended questions by the interlocutor are awkward and closed; such as experienced with the Auburn Council interview. Analysis of data may also take a lot of time; especially data from open-ended interviews, and respondents may not remember important information or may lack self-awareness.

In this study, a sample of interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders within the Auburn LGA, including the Community Development Officer – Cultural Diversity at , ACC, and two staff from two different community organisations offering different services to the immigrants including the Executive Officer of the AYC and a community support worker from the local Turkish Welfare Association. Surveys conducted at Auburn train station also included users of immigrant services. This approach was employed so as to determine the level of effectiveness of the services being provided by the various groups and agencies in the Auburn LGA.

#### **4.2 Surveys**

There are two major types of surveys used in collecting data for a given study. They are cross-sectional and longitudinal survey. I have chosen the cross-sectional survey study because of time constraints and the intended scope of the project. In cross- sectional surveys, the aim of the researcher is to get a snapshot of views and thoughts from a different variety

of respondents. Just like other surveys, the cross-sectional surveys gathers information from a sample representative of the whole population (Hay: 2010). It also involves collecting information at one point in time. In longitudinal surveys, information is gathered at different points in time to study change over that given time. The major aim of this kind of survey is to compare differences in practices and opinions of the population over a given period (Hay 2010). The survey type used in this study is cross-sectional as it seeks to gather quantitative and some qualitative information from a variety of respondents. A longitudinal survey would be ideal for this study to help determine the effectiveness and scope of services available in the Auburn LGA and provide a comparison as to how this has changed over time. Unfortunately, the lack of time and scope of this research did not allow for the undertaking of a longitudinal survey but it is hoped that this research sets the starting point and parameters for any future long-term research that may be undertaken.

#### **4.2.1 Equal Chance of Selection**

Surveys were undertaken with a random selection of people ensuring that every member of the population involved in the study had an equal opportunity of selection. Hence, ensuring a well representative sample was used. Each survey / questionnaire included twenty-two (22) questions each seeking to get different information related to the study. Generally, they addressed the themes of available services and their providers, and unavailable or inadequate services or providers. Forty questionnaires in total were returned responding to the issues. They reflected the opinions of a random selection of participants between 10am and 4pm on a weekday at Auburn train station. Other locations where residents loiter were attempted but the people approached did not respond. These challenges to data collection will be elaborated in later chapters. The factors of time and size of this study were the main reason to choose such a small number of the Auburn population. Each questionnaire took approximately ten minutes to complete.

#### **4.2.2 Country of Origin and Duration of Stay in Australia**

The breakdowns of the basic demographics of the survey respondents are as follows:

**Table 4.1 Country of Origin and Duration of Stay in Australia**

	Middle East %	North Africa %	Asia %	Other %	Total %
Less than year ago	5	2.5			7.5
1-5 years ago	2.5	5	15	2.5	25
6-10 years ago	7.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	15
11-15 years ago	7.5		7.5	5	20
More than 16 years ago	17.5	2.5	2.5	10	32.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 4.1, most of the survey respondents came from the Middle East, followed by those from Asia, Africa, and from other areas. Out of the 16 participants who originally came from the Middle East, two had come to Australia less than a year ago; one had been in Australia between 1 and 5 years ago, while three survey respondents in total had been living in Australia between 6 to 10 years and 11-15 years. Seven participants had been in Australia for more than 16 years. Looking at the five survey respondents from Africa, one had come to Australia less than a year ago, two had stayed between 1 and 5 years, while only one survey respondent had been in Australia between 6 to 10 years and one had been in Australia for more than 16 years. Out of the eleven survey respondents from Asia, there was only one person who had been in Australia between 6 to 10 years and one person for more than 16 years. Six people surveyed had been in Australia between 1 to 5 years and three people had come to Australia between 11-15 years ago. This demonstrates how diverse the area is and illustrates the complexities of the demographic including issues related to varying lengths of time spent in Australia which would correlate with depth of awareness of socio-cultural and civic standards and expectations.

### 4.2.3 Age

As shown 4.1 below, most of the people surveyed are between the ages of 36-45 years(42.5%), followed by those aged between 25-35 years (35%) and persons under 25 years of age (17.5%).

**Table 4.2. Age distribution of participants**

Age group (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
Under 25	7	17.5
25-35		
36-45	17	42.5
46-55		
56 +	0	0
Total		

### 4.2.4 Gender and Marital Status

Among the participants of the survey, there was only one female and 39 males. This translates to 97% of the participants being males and 3% being females. Whether the reason for this was cultural aversion to female engagement with the researcher or other factors, one can reasonably assume that this low statistic implies issues regarding lack of services for women such as childcare and health may be underrepresented. The survey conducted also asked about the marital status. Most of the participants were (65%) and were living with their marital partner. This would indicate that families of these refugees and immigrants are in fact growing and better services are needed in place to cater for the specific needs of whole households.

### 4.2.5 Key Challenges

Because of the diversity of research participants, the researcher faced many difficulties during the survey component of the research. On the other hand, whilst such diversity and difference posed many challenges, it

allowed the researcher to gain new experiences and more information about these differing points of views. Due to this being the first survey that the researcher has conducted, some issues were faced due to the lack of background experience in undertaking similar surveys. Although the study had prior ethics approval from Macquarie University's Human Research Ethics Committee, the research topic was still sensitive to members of organizations who feared participating in the research due to the potentiality of being de-funded or being victimized by their supervisors for answering the questions incorrectly or in contradiction to their organization's agenda. This limited the sample of surveys completed and collected to only forty surveys, which therefore limited the researcher in extrapolating the survey findings as an accurate representation of migrants and refugees living in Auburn.

More specifically, the main reason for the small number of surveys collected was that some of the respondents surveyed feared answering the survey questions because of previous experiences in their own countries. People of some nationalities expressed xenophobia, such as the Sudanese, for example, were not enthusiastic or interested in this study and thought that all 'foreign people' were 'spies' who would use information against them. The second issue in collecting surveys was the expectation of some respondents, mostly people of Indian descent, of getting a monetary reward in exchange for completing the survey. Some people thought that Macquarie University supported this study and paid the researcher too much money to undertake the study.

What impact do the above-mentioned issues have on the survey findings? Essentially, it appeared that people did not take due consideration to answer these survey's questions and took longer than expected or allocated to return completed forms to the researcher. Finally, the survey was time consuming which posed some difficulty on the respondents, while others refused to answer some important questions. This therefore affected the results, as it would have led to a possible misrepresentation of the results. It also did not entirely satisfy the survey's initial objective.

### **4.3 Ethical Considerations**

According to research ethics, research is not supposed to reveal the identity of the participants, therefore, throughout this study, utmost confidentiality of all participants was ensured to comply with the stipulations in the Human Research Ethics Committee approval. Where organizations are named, they were done so with approval by the organization. No names or any other information that were identifiable was

made public or used in any part of this research as part of the findings or report. Each respondent was given an identification number that was used to record the information and all records of interviews and identifiable information have been destroyed after they have been transcribed and analysed to ensure that the information is not accessible to anyone except the researcher.

#### **4.4 Conclusions**

The methodology used for data collection, while encountering some difficulties, was a sound approach as shown in prior studies. The results which will be analysed in the following chapters satisfied expectations and provided useful in gaining information with regard to residents and organizations' opinions about the quantity and quality of services in the area. While some information was not acquired due to imbalance in gender responses or due to organizational politics, as a whole relevant information was obtained. The following chapters will elaborate and analyse the data that emerged from both the interviews and the surveys. The information obtained provides important insights into the wants, needs and concerns of residents and organizations in the area.

#### **5. Residents' Reflections on Services in Auburn**

In order to explore the nature and effectiveness of services available to refugees and immigrants from the perspective of the users of those service and further explore how these services are offered to residents and gain a better understanding of the services that are still missing in the area, interviews were conducted with a sample of two residents who identified themselves either being a refugee or immigrant. In addition, surveys were undertaken with a random selection of Auburn residents where quicker and easier questions focusing on the research topic were asked from a more diverse cross-section of the community.

##### **5.1 Interview Results**

Two interviews were conducted with residents and service users of Auburn. From these interviews participants show cultural diversity is one of the major problems facing immigrants and service providers in Auburn, while Auburn LGA is considered to have one of the highest number of immigrants in NSW, there are concerns over the impact of cultural diversity and the perception of both existing residents and immigrants; whereas some participants note that multicultural policies have played major roles in promoting cultural pluralism.

## 5.2 Survey Results

Apart from basic questions to gather the demographics of the survey respondents, a number of questions were asked about the relationship survey respondents had with their neighbours, about what they felt were the positive aspects of living in Auburn and what aspects they felt were less positive. Following this interpretation of respondents' views, in section 5.3 we will discuss the views of the actual services themselves.

**Table 5.1 Duration of stay in Australia and relationship with neighbours**

	Very Good %	Good %	Neutral %	Bad %	Very Bad %	Don't Know %	Total %
< a year ago	5	2.5	5	0	0	2.5	15
1-5 years ago	15	2.5	5	0	0	2.5	25
6-10 years ago	5	7.5	5	0	0	0	17.5
11-15 years ago		10	7.5	0	0	0	17.5
> 16 years ago	7.5	15	0	2.5	0	0	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

The relationship with neighbours and duration of stay (Table 5.1) indicates that 32.5% of survey respondents (thirteen people) had a 'very good' relationship with their neighbours. Of these thirteen people, two had lived in Australia for less than a year, six people had been living in Australia between 1 to 5 years, two had been in Australia between 6 to 10 years and three had lived in Australia for over 16 years. These results illustrate a positive aspect about living in the Auburn community; whereby despite lack in many services and facilities, help is found in the formation of informal



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relationships. This finding also correlates to the findings in the following two tables where social interaction is identified as the most positive aspect of living within this LGA; ‘social environment’ and ‘social events’ combining to make up 40% of the positive evaluation by residents.

Table 5.2 provides an overview of the relationship between the survey respondents’ country of origin and how they felt their relationship was with their neighbours.

**Table 5.2 Relationship and country of origin cross**

	No Response	Middle East	North Africa	Asia	Other	Total
Very Good	5.5	11	8.4	11	0	35.9
Good	2.8	16.6	5.5	5.5	2.8	30.4
Neutral	5.5	13.9	0	5.5	0	25
Bad	2.8	0	0		0	2.8
Don't Know	0	0	0	2.8	0	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2.8</b>	

One limitation of the survey design was the vague definition of ‘neighbour’, which means that we cannot ascertain for certain which neighbours were seen as friendly or why. However, the tables can be interpreted to suggest that the number of residents from each ethnic-regional group was a factor in feeling belonging. It could also indicate that certain networks are more closely-knit than others; although further research would need to be done to confirm this and parameters for evaluating levels of engagement could be rather arbitrary and may not prove anything at all, or even worse be used to support ethnocentric ideas and reinforce negative stereotypes.

**Table 5.3 Positive aspects of living in Auburn**

<b>Positive Aspect</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Social environment</b>	26
<b>Social events</b>	14
<b>Restaurants</b>	12
<b>Youth services</b>	5
<b>Sports Events</b>	5
<b>Neighbourhood Centre/Youth Drop in Activities</b>	4
<b>Local service providers/organizations</b>	4
<b>Other</b>	4
<b>Medical services / hospitals</b>	3
<b>Child Protection/Child Care</b>	2
<b>Aged/Disability Services</b>	1

When asked about the positive aspects that attracted them to live in Auburn, most survey respondents (26 %) identified social environment as being the most positive, 14% of people who completed the survey stated social events as being the most positive aspect, restaurants (12%), shopping (11%), sports events and medical services/hospital as positive aspects respectively. Youth services, neighbourhood centre / youth drop in activities, local service providers/organizations and other aspects were chosen by four participants each as positive aspects that influenced them to live in Auburn. It can be observed that only two respondents stated child protection/ childcare as being the most positive aspect, but as already

mentioned it is highly probable that this is the result of low representation by female respondents.

The concentration on social aspects related to commercial activity in Auburn shows that economic drive has generated better quantity and quality of services and facilities accessed by local residents. The retail prices of clothing and food may be more competitive and therefore low in this LGA. The variety is most certainly a factor where most people can find some cuisine from their culture in the main centre. This is in contrast to public and non-profit organization activities; apart from social events. Costly services such as health, childcare and care for the elderly are neglected and marginalized from quality provision.(Booth& Smith2001) In other areas of Sydney where people can independently afford to access these, satisfaction may be higher. However, the large number of low-socioeconomic families and the linguistic and cultural barriers they face disadvantage them from such services and facilities.

### **Negative aspects of living in Auburn**

As shown above, residents of Auburn are satisfied with the social life and the commercial activity of the area possibly due to competitive prices and variety of choices. From table 5.4, however, it can be noted that traffic (42.5%), crime (14%), noise (32.5%), and employment services (25%) were considered great negative aspects that discourage the participants from living in Auburn.

Aspects including safety (10%), childcare (2.5%), transport (10%), discrimination, / racism (2.5%) and other (37.5%) were noted as being the most negative aspects by less than five participants. Disability services appeared to be an aspect with little consequence as none of the survey respondents chose it.

**Table 5.4 Negative aspects of living in Auburn**

	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Traffic</b>	<b>42.5</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>37.5</b>
<b>Noise</b>	<b>32.5</b>
<b>Employment service</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Crime</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Safety</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Transport</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Discrimination / Racism</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Child care</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Disability services</b>	<b>0</b>

Given the media representation of Auburn, it is interesting that discrimination and racism are not major concerns for residents. However, despite crime being a concern, other concerns are more manageable with proper resources and infrastructure. Auburn Council has responded in various ways to demands to improve the flow of traffic through the area, and parking issues. However, the statistics show that the measures taken so far are not enough and traffic and noise pollution are still a major problem. As predicted in earlier data, employment services are not able to cope with current demand with 25% of residents dissatisfied.

### 5.3 Services

A significant amount of information was gathered in the survey data as well as in the interviews about the services provided, the accessibility and use of services available, barriers to accessing these services and the gaps in service provision that currently existed.

### 5.3.1 Frequency of Use

Table 5.5 shows how frequent survey respondents used particular services. As indicated, day care and transport services appear to attract participant use daily while the frequency of using other services varied.

**Table 5.5 Frequency of access to services and facilities**

Services	Percentage						
	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Rarely	Never	No Response
Social events	15.0	12.5	0.0	12.5	30.0	12.5	17.7
Doctor	2.5	7.5	20.0	20.0	25.0	5.0	20.0
Child/Day care	10.0	7.5	2.5	5.0	5.0	41.5	28.5
Mother's group	2.5	2.5	5.0	7.5	12.5	40.0	30.0
Youth programs and activities	2.5	10.0	5.0	7.5	17.5	25.0	32.5
Public Transport	27.5	7.5	5.0	7.5	20.0	10.0	22.5
Parks and Leisure	10.0	20.0	10.0	17.5	22.5	2.5	20.0
Library	2.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	5.0	27.5
Venues and Facilities	7.5	25.0	2.5	17.5	15.0	12.5	20.0
Sporting activities	7.5	15.0	7.5	20.0	12.5	12.5	38.0
Festivals, events	0.0	2.5	0.0	20.0	47.5	12.5	30.0

The large number of residents relying on public transport daily could represent a number of factors. Firstly, some residents may be unable to afford their own vehicle due to unemployment or newly arrived status and not having a license. Secondly, the dissatisfaction with the heavy traffic and noise pollution may influence residents to choose not to take their car to work; especially if their work is far away from the area. This would also be the case if the cost of petrol was too taxing on their household budget. It would be of interest to find out average distances in commuting to work in a future study.

Residents access to social venues, facilities and the library are positively high and indicate that these places contribute constructively to local cohesion and quality of life. However, the high frequency of access to doctors indicates that many people in the area have a number of health concerns. This researcher approached STARTTS which is an organization that address issues of trauma that effect many migrants who have come on boats or have experienced war. These factors could be influencing the frequency of doctor consultations mentioned in the table.

### **5.3.2 Time in Australia and the level of importance of services**

Research participants were asked about what services they felt were most important to them and their families. Research results found that, the doctor (27 %), social events (15%), transport (14%), library (13%), parks and leisure (10%) and sporting activities (10%) were identified as the most important. Other services had less than five participants use them. People, who had been in Australia for many years appeared to use services such as day care, attend festivals and events a lot more than those who had been in Australia for short periods of time. Table 5.6 provides the cross section of information about how long survey respondents had been in Australia and the type of service they used, providing some indication of whether or not the time in Australia has had any influence on the type of service being accessed.

**Table 5.6 Importance of services and country of origin**  
**Cross Table of importance of services and time in Australia**

	No response	Middle east	North Africa	Asia	Perce ntage
Social events	2.5	15	5	12.5	35
Doctor	5	20	7.5	10	42.5
Mother's group	0	0	0	2.5	2.5
Child care services	2.5	0	0	0	2.5
Transport	2.5	0	0	0	2.5
Parks and leisure	0	5	0	0	5
Sporting activities	5	0	0	0	5
Total	17.5	36	12.5	24.5	100

### 5.3.3 Accessibility

The results of the study indicate that Doctors, Social events, Day Care, Mother's groups, Childcare services, Youth programs and activities, Transport Parks and Leisure, Library, Venues and Facilities, Festivals events and Sporting activities were all accessible as evidenced by the 80% of the people who participant positively. Only 10% of survey respondents said that the facilities and services were inaccessible, with the remaining (10%) providing no response.

**5.4 Barriers to accessing services**

**Table .5.7: List of barriers that prevent access to services.**

	Percentage
Language	2.5
Cultural issues	10
Fear of using services	7.5
Cost	2.5
Lack of knowledge of services	7.5
Location/lack of transport	2.5
Other	12.5
No response	52

It is expected that there will naturally be challenges and barriers when it comes to service provision with the aim of service providers being to reduce or eliminate such barriers and negative impacts of access issues to service users or communities more broadly. This is particular true of an area as diverse and complex in its service needs and provision as Auburn. This research has found that barriers to these services include fear of using the services due to poor orientation and cultural issues where some cultures restrict usage or acceptance of some services. The cost associated with using the service can also limit the number of people who are likely to benefit from it due to indirect economic discrimination. Furthermore, language barriers (Murray& Skull,2005; Waxman,1998) and inadequate knowledge of the services can also contribute to the limited usage of and access to services. Table 5.7 shows the number of survey respondents who felt there were particular barriers that existed in accessing services. The table below shows the distribution of participants.

**5.5 Discussion of Findings**

Based on the data collected with participants' belonging to different associations and organizations in Auburn LGA, there are different views



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about the services provided to residents and organizations within Auburn City Council. In general, there was a consensus that essential services in the Auburn LGA were inadequate compared to other areas. Research participants felt there are few hospitals, schools and colleges to cater for the needs and growing number of Auburn LGA residents. However, the primary reason for people moving to the area was the services available to residents, including social services, restaurants and food, shopping, and places of worship. Research participants felt that services are easy to access in this region, compared to other parts of Sydney, and are provided free of charge to residents which were important to them.

However, a significant number of survey respondents, in particular people of Muslim faith, found religious facilities and places of worship inadequate while others felt that some specific services were not of high quality. For example, many people believe that childcare services and physical therapy are the most important health-care needs. Moreover, people surveyed also felt there is a clear lack of parking and language classes, and there has been an increase in noise and crime in the area. People surveyed believed that some of the difficulties they face personally are due to a lack of some of these critical facilities, leaving them more exposed to the hazards and the social problems that exist within the Auburn LGA.

According to research participants, the majority of the services available in the area are repetitious such as sports, family childcare, social events, shopping, and food. Therefore, while some services are available in excess, there are vital services missing including schools, colleges and hospitals. Such educational and health facilities are vital with the growing population and Auburn having the highest birth-rate in the state as in table below (Fertility in NSW) .

**Table 5.8 Fertility Rate in NSW Suburbs**

Suburb	Rate
Auburn	2.35
Wyong	2.26
Blacktown	2.23
Camden	2.23
Liverpool	2.20
Wollondilly	2.20
Campbelltown	2.20
Canterbury	2.14
Hawkesbury	2.13
and Gosford	2.07
Remainder	0.73

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

When refugees, immigrants and their children have access to better and more educational and health facilities, they are better able to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills that will help them find employment. This will help them have a source of livelihood and lead a better quality of life in Australia.

Participants between 25-35 years of age experienced difficulties in accessing housing services, particularly by African refugees.. This was possibly due to the scarcity of housing facilities in Auburn.

Refugees generally find it difficult to adapt in the new community of settlement because they face both economic and housing exclusion. Some of them have skills that they acquired from their countries; however securing employment is a problem because of the requirement that they must provide their identification (Ley and Murphy, 200, p.193).

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It is apparent in the research findings fr that it is important for the Australian government to find a way to assist community members in obtaining the right documents that will help people find and secure employment in Australia. It is also important that people who do not have formal skills should be allowed access to training facilities to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to help secure employment and those who have gained their knowledge and skills overseas should not have the barriers that currently exist in obtaining overseas skills recognised here in Australia.

### **5.6 Conclusions**

It is evident that immigration services in Australia face challenges due to the ever increasing number of immigrants. Ranging from cultural difference to policy barriers, many immigrants find it hard to access basic services like food, medication and financial support. There is every need for the government to formulate and implement policies to deal with regulation of entry of people and have programs aimed at sustaining existing immigrants. Involvement of other non-governmental organizations and the UN is also important in assuming a collective responsibility to serving Australian immigrants

Legislation and policies of the Australian government and its systems, together with all sector organizations and local government should ensure that refugees and immigrants, like all Australians, are not discriminated on any basis when accessing services and in particular in such important services as housing services. People working in such important services in an extremely diverse area as Auburn, should undertake cultural awareness and cultural competency training that would help them provide a better and more efficient and fair service where not only are residents provided the support to find appropriate housing, but also support to equip residents with information about their rights and responsibilities as tenants.

### **6. Organizations' Reflections on Services in Auburn**

There are many different services in the Auburn area that are provided by different organizations. These services include social events, day care, mother's groups, childcare services, youth programs and activities, recreational activities and parks, libraries, sporting activities, festivals, and many others. Despite the number and various types of services available in the Auburn LGA, there is a question of whether or not these services are sufficient in number, type and delivery of service, considering the diversity and the growth in the population. This section addresses some of these

questions by presenting reflections on the aims, quality and challenges of services and for service providers. This data was collected from the two local organizations AYC and Turkish Welfare Association, and from ACC.

In-depth interviews were conducted with two senior representatives from two separate community-based not-for-profit organizations located in Auburn and providing services for residents in the Auburn LGA as well as surrounding areas free of charge. Though similar in size, they have different target communities as well as different levels of funding and have formed different stakeholder partnerships. One more interview was conducted with a staff member of the Community Development Team at the ACC. These interviews provided a different perspective to the nature, scope, adequacy and effectiveness of services in the Auburn LGA as well as helping to identify any gaps in service provision.

## **6.1 Organisation Interviews**

### **6.1.1 Auburn Youth Centre**

The Auburn Youth Centre focuses on services for those between 12 to 24 years of age, and provides services to both males and females. The centre is located in the heart of Auburn, close to transport, the local shopping centre and other key services. Some of the services and activities provided by the Centre among others are sporting events, youth activities; help with homework and other school related matters. At a time in which some organizations such as AYC are generous and have substantial funds provided by the government, the Council of Auburn complains that it has been inadequately supported by some of these organizations.

### **6.1.2 Turkish Welfare Association**

The other organization which contributed to the study was Turkish Welfare Association (TWA). One volunteer from the administrative office was interviewed. It was found that TWA provides many services to support people in their ethnic community. One thing that was seen as important was providing access to a Turkish television channel in order to keep connected to their culture. However, they have made efforts to collaborate with other organizations in the region and try to engage with more than just the Turkish community. Specifically, it was pointed out that ACC had refused to participate in three projects and had rejected proposals submitted by TWA that had supported generously other centres. Grants were lost and they had to seek other sources of finance such as hiring out their hall. This is possibly due to the competitiveness between ACC and other organizations as ACC have much to benefit by being seen in the public eye as taking on many

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projects. As with other interviewees, the TWA volunteer agreed that there is a lack of housing services for the elderly. Another problem that was addressed was that elderly migrants needed assistance with basic use of English for filling out forms or reading medical reports. The volunteer said that the facilities in Auburn were good but inadequate, especially for children such as the one at Railway Park which has seen a significant increase in number of children and families spending time there.

#### **6.1.3 Council Interview**

The Director of the Development and Cultural Diversity Department of Auburn Council was interviewed and this provided an overview of the Council's role in supporting the interests of the community. These services were accessed by many residents in Auburn LGA either directly or through some community organizations. They represent the interests of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) residents of the Auburn LGA and include;

- identifying and prioritizing community needs and facilitating the development of projects, partnerships, and strategies to address those needs
- working in partnership with community groups, local service providers, and government departments to facilitate, promote, and support CALD community initiatives.

The interviewee projected accusations that residents were creating barriers to development and attributed this to include lack of awareness of using services, a lack of trust in government organizations, and a lack of effective communication between the migrants residents and ACC. It was claimed that the Community Development section aims to improve the social well-being of residents and to build stronger and sustainable communities. By developing stronger links and connections between communities and by assisting members of communities in participating in community life and activities, the council encourages people to work together to improve the quality of their lives and the communities in which they live similarly after the views of the residents.

ACC has a portfolio that demonstrates engagement with the community and a commitment to improving services. They claim that these examples are indicative of their care for the residents of the area. However, during the interview, it was revealed that some of the associations and

organizations in the area do not receive enough support, while others have received generous amounts from the council. The explanation given was that this was due to the diverse aims and objectives of these organizations. According to ACC, whether an applicant is successful for a grant depends on the quality of its proposal; meeting the eligibility criteria; and meeting an identified need in the community; and demonstrated outcomes to the specific and broader community. It was suggested, this naturally increases the competition between the organizations in trying to obtain the grants services from the council. For instance, multicultural organizations such as the AYC; an organization which fulfill the criteria of the council's funding policy. However, organizations like TWA and Bahnin are not as well funded and are not convinced it is due to not fulfilling such criteria.

Some organizations are more established and have more resources, skills, and expertise in preparing and submitting a proposal than other organizations. Although the council encourages representatives from all organizations to utilize the support of the Community Development team and the Community Project Officer, those established organizations often get priority treatment, are invited to attend the various functions of the council and partake in community events in order to be eligible for a grants. Nevertheless, the range of organizations that ACC consults and supports has increased over the last few years.

A number of funding grants are available for community groups and organizations. The council offers assistance to all groups in identifying funding and providing training, planning, advice, and guidance for preparing funding submissions. The council also administers grants programs, including Council Community Grants, the Auburn CDSE Scheme, and Community Builders.

#### **6.1.4 Discussion**

Lack of financial support and grants, language barriers, and unemployment for both adults and young people were major issues and concerns raised by the non-profit organizations. The majority of workers in these organizations were volunteers, while some of them were part-time workers. Also, in the view of the organizations, the available services were provided to individuals of a certain culture or ethnicity, noting however that the government often does not make a distinction between the organizations and gives encouraging a sense of cohesion whom it sees fit. The reason for this may be due the government teamwork between the different cultures and not to work alone hence the representative logo of Auburn found on signs "one community many cultures". Auburn Council, which covers the

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area of multicultural support organizations as a priority over other organizations, can be seen through the multicultural-based AYC.

Some of these agencies try to overcome the difficulties by finding funding sources indirectly through voluntary contributions or leasing of halls, if possible, for marriages, parties, and festivals of their own. However, some individuals see a conflict between the users of these services and the centre's constituency. These conflicts are not due to cultural or ethnic differences, but because of religion and sometimes because of internal or external politics. For example, conflict that may arise between the Sudanese where there is a division in their country of origin with the creation of the State of New South Sudan which many Australian Sudanese identify with and belong to which creates intra-community conflict. Ethnic specific services sometimes help exacerbate differences further, which may also lead to further segregation and isolation among different members of that particular community.

In general, almost interview participants expressed full confidence in the services they were providing to the residents of Auburn. At the same time, they were still able to identify shortcomings in some of the services provided, such as health care. Also, lack of available, adequate and free facilities and resources was also noted as being important with a call for greater access to free hall hire, advertisement distribution and promotion of their activities in an appropriate environment from time to time.

### **7. General Discussion and Conclusions**

Australia has one the highest immigrant population with Sydney as the prime destination for the newly arriving people in Australia (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010). The newly arrived migrants and people with refugee backgrounds can be Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (MYAN, 2011). Multicultural people can demonstrate resilience and resourcefulness (Francis & Cornfoot, 2007) but they are still disadvantaged in many ways and often lack access to the services and opportunities they need in order to succeed in life as they face challenges with language, culture, social systems and processes, racism and discrimination. As such, many are at risk of social isolation and disengagement from education (MYAN Australia, 2010).

In the 2006 census, 23.76% of Australians in NSW said they were born overseas and 40% of the national population said at least one of their parents was born overseas. That is almost half the population with access to

cultural capital that is not limited to the local Australian context. Also, many of those have specific needs due to socio-economic, linguistic or psychologically-related disadvantages. For example, some of the students from these families may have hybrid identities and almost 16% of all Australians speaks a language other than English at home (AHRC, 2008). Some research suggests this can impact on their use and development of English in school; in some cases negative and in others positive. Between 2005-2010, 30 % (7,310) of all Humanitarian arrivals including refugees to Australia were young people aged 12-24 (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, January 2011). These youth are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to adapting to the Australian classroom as not only do they not share the cultural capital of most young Australians, but they may have symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress disorder that can hinder their ability to focus on or enjoy learning. Another example is that 1514 young people accessed the AYC drop in service alone in 2011 (AYC Annual Report 2010/2011) who may have faced different problems in their daily lives. The majority were from Sudanese background with large numbers of youth from Afghanistan and Sierra Leone as well as Australian youth of unspecified background. Turkish, Lebanese, Iraqi, Ethiopian and Pakistani youth did access the service but disproportionately low in comparison to demographic stats in the area.

The newly immigrants face a number of challenges in satisfying their daily needs which include housing, employment, health and education. They also feel a range of mental and emotional challenges including feeling of insecurity and social isolation. Communication barriers and cultural shock are also important issues. Murray and Skull (2005) explained that health services pose a major challenge to immigrants because of countless existing barriers. According to them language barrier is a major challenge that faces immigrants making it impossible for them to communicate with the indigenous. Others include unemployment, financial hardships and legal barriers among others. They further noted that government migration and settlement policy has helped immigrants to access health services (Murray & Skull, 2005, p. 25.) Addressing these issues by providing adequate and competent services remain critical matter for the newly immigrants and refugees (Kelaher and Manderson, 2000).

According to Kelaher and Manderson (2000), immigrants in Australia receive a wide range of services from the government and other organizations. Its success is highly attributed to the implementation of policies for the purpose of promoting multiculturalism (Kelaher&Manderson, 2000, p. 2). Waxman documented some of the



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services provided to immigrants in Australia especially when they are still unfamiliar with the environment. During these early stages, immigrants are guided by service providers (Waxman, 1998, p. 762). Khoo(1994) covered a wide range of factors and their impacts on the lives of immigrants in Auburn area in Sydney and other parts of the country. Factors discussed include gender, education, age and birthplace among others. These categories define the magnitude of immigrants' dependence on the government and other organizations (Khoo, 1994, p. 68).According to Booth & Smith (2001), most immigrants lacked enough food and health care due to the increasing number of immigrants. The government and other service providers found it strenuous to meet the needs of majority of these people leading to food insecurity alarms. The article further covered strategies which needed to be adopted to save immigrants from food insecurity together with common challenges witnessed by service providers.

Lack of financial support, inadequate language classes, and poor job opportunities are some important problems that create barriers in the process of settlements of the new migrants and refugees. Due to high concentration of immigrants in Sydney, the cost of living has doubled leading considerably high inflation. Both immigrants and service providers are faced with challenges regarding distribution of services which are inadequate (Ley & Murphy, 2001, p. 120).

This study focused on the quality of services aiming for improvement of lifestyle of the newly migrants in the Auburn LGA of the Sydney city which has a diverse range of population of many ethno-cultural backgrounds from around the world making it a very multicultural society. Immigrants from a range of backgrounds while may bring some social, political and economic benefits to the newly adopted communities there are also challenging issues and concerns particularly in the settlement matters of the newly migrants and refugees. The study focuses on factors which influence the awareness of new immigrants of existing services and some of the issues affecting service providers in the Auburn LGA. Direction and support are therefore considered by Waxman as key services in ensuring that immigrants go through the process of transition with a lot of ease(Waxman, 1998, p. 762).

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in collecting data and make the study findings reliable and credible. In-depth interview and survey were conducted to generate data for this research. A high number of newly arrived migrants and refugees were found

living in poor socio-economic conditions, with low level of education and significant unemployment issues.

However, many of the disadvantaged residents were being benefited from the community services offered by the government agencies and by various community groups, mostly run by volunteers. Despite such wide range of efforts it is demonstrated in this research that there are still significant shortfalls with identified gaps in service provisions. It is emphasized that these shortfalls have to be addressed in order to meet the future needs and demands of the increasing population in the Auburn LGA.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated some important findings in relation to the nature and effectiveness of services available to refugees and immigrants from the perspective of the users of the services. The outcomes of the study explored how these services were offered to the target residents and helped to better understand the gaps in the services. Some important challenges that the newly immigrants and the refugees face have been identified. Some of these challenges have got positive and negative aspects. For example cultural diversity of the area has been identified as a major problem for both the immigrants and the service providers in establishing effective communication in receiving and providing services. Whereas it also recognized that because of cultural diversity, adopted multicultural policies have played a key role in promoting cultural pluralism.

It was evident that immigration services in local and national Australia face challenges due to continuous increase in the number of immigrants. This poses challenges that range from cultural difference to policy barriers, difficulties in accessing basic services like food, education, housing, medication and transport. There is every need for the government and the non-government welfare organizations alike to formulate and implement legislations and policies to deal with the regulation of entry of people in the country and the local government areas and have programs aimed at sustaining existing immigrants. This will help all Australians without any decimation adopt and maintain a socio-economically acceptable standard of life.

#### **Study limitations:**

There have been some challenges and limitations of this study. The main challenge was to find a source of credible data. This has been a challenge for quite sometime due to the fact that there has not been good record keeping of migration data which could be used for analysis. Source of reliable data eventually determines the reliability of the outcomes of the

research being carried out. Interview and survey have been conducted in overcoming this problem.

Another limitation was to obtain cooperation of those who were interviewed and whether they provided accurate data for use in this research. Some interviewees may not be able to provide accurate data / information or they are not cooperative enough to depend on the data they provide. However, the researcher was careful about this and believed that the researcher had been able to extract credible through in-depth interview and conducting successful survey.

Another major limitation was the skills and knowhow of the researcher on how to analyse the data obtained to have well analysed information which would be used to determine effectiveness of the immigrant services in Sydney. To overcome these limitation appropriate tools were used in analysing the data. Time factor in relation to the duration of the study and the time when the subjects were willing to spend i was also a limitation. By being time conscious and effective this limitation was overcome. Finally the other limitation was the size of the sample. Although the number of samples was limited, the sample size was considered sufficient to reach to creditable conclusions for this research.

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