

# Foreword

Since the Second World War, the New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS) and the Ministry of Health, working collaboratively, have accomplished much in refugee resettlement. Currently, New Zealand is one of only nine countries worldwide offering a regular quota of places for refugees identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In 1959 New Zealand became the first country in the world to accept 'handicapped' refugees. Our success in resettling disabled refugees received international acclaim and led other countries to follow suit. Today refugees with disabilities and medical conditions continue to be a significant part of our annual refugee quota.

At Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, several agencies work together to provide a comprehensive orientation programme for all refugees arriving under the quota system. Mangere's 'on arrival' health screening is unique.

Health and Immigration collaborate in other areas such as border control where NZIS's Refugee Status Branch actively promotes the free health screening for 'asylum seekers' offered by public health services in the main centres.

However, despite our progress in refugee resettlement, there is room for improvement. Many refugees arriving on our shores are debilitated by trauma, loss and unresolved grief. Their successful resettlement depends on how we, as a country, respond to their needs. Good access to health care, immigration services, interpreters, education, social welfare, housing and employment is crucial. Often however, these services do not adequately meet their needs. Our goal is to establish an integrated approach to refugee resettlement.

*Refugee Health Care: a handbook for health professionals* is a significant step by the Ministry of Health towards this goal. The handbook aims to encourage health services to become more accessible and responsive to the needs of refugee consumers, and to link in, where appropriate, with other provider agencies.

Written in consultation with health workers, provider organisations and people from refugee backgrounds, the handbook is designed to support health workers, particularly general practitioners, in the delivery of safe, effective and culturally appropriate care to refugee clients.

We are confident it will be a valuable resource.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annette King".

Minister of Health



A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to the Minister of Immigration.

Minister of  
Immigration