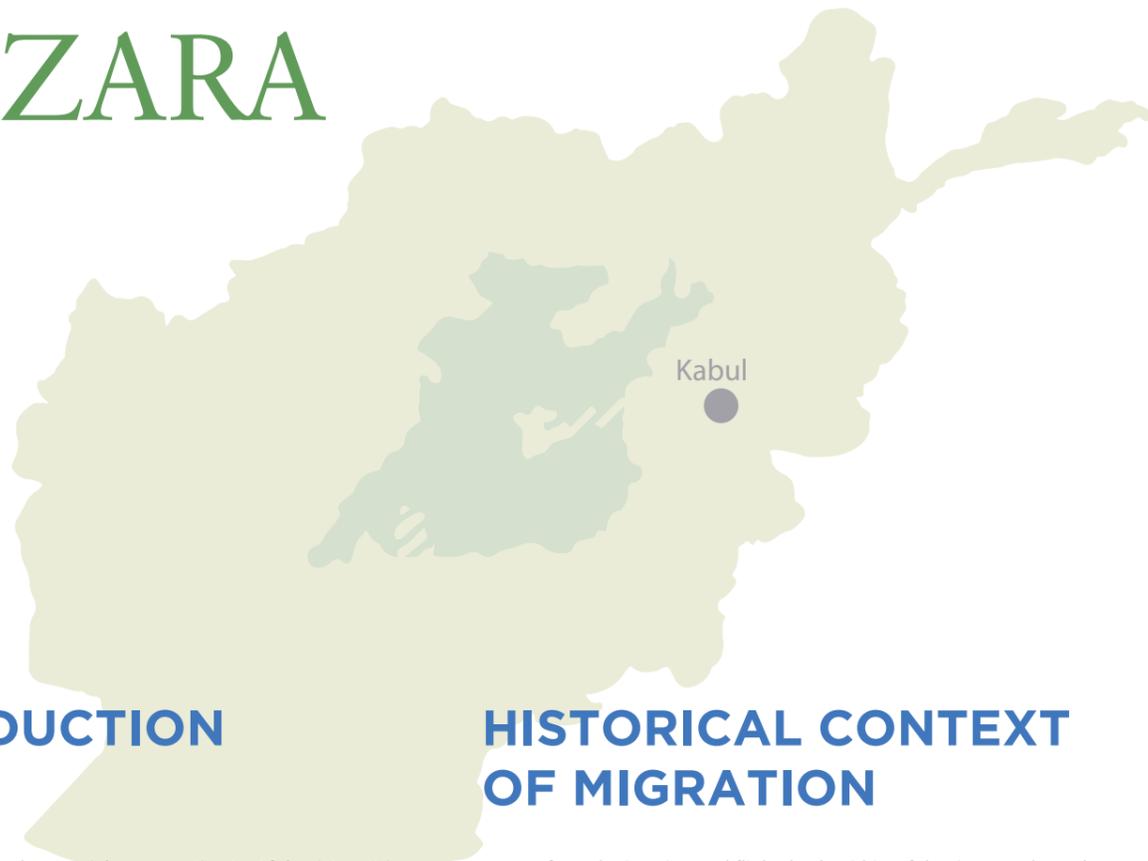


HAZARA



INTRODUCTION

Hazara people are an ethno-social group native to Afghanistan. It is believed that most Hazara lineage can be traced to Turkic-Mongolian tribes of Central Asia including Genghis Khan, albeit there are Hazaras scholars who trace it back to the Indo-European Kushans or Tokharians who built the Buddhas of Bamiyan in central Afghanistan in the third or fourth century (MacKenzie & Guntari 2015). The vast majority of Hazara follow Shi'a Islam, contrary to other Afghan ethnic groups who are Sunni Muslim. In 2004, Afghanistan constitutions recognised 14 ethnic groups: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Baloch, Turkmen, Nuristani, Pamiri, Arab, Gujjar, Brahui, Qizilbash, Aimaq, and Pashai.

Hazara people homeland is Hazarajat (*land of the Hazara*), a geographically isolated central region of Afghanistan, consisting of the provinces of Bamiyan and Daykundi and parts of other provinces including Ghazni, Ghor, Uruzgan and Wardak. Hazarajat is a mountain region highly vulnerable to droughts and floods (DFAT 2019). The region is dependent on agriculture for economic opportunities; however, its infrastructure is under developed restricting the movement of people and goods. Albeit Hazara people constitute more than 70 per cent of Hazarajat population, country-wide they are considered a minority (DFAT 2019), representing an estimated 10% of the total population¹ which itself has been an issue of major contention i.e. a US Embassy report in June 2020 prompted reactions by the Hazara people including the Afghan Vice President².

Hazara are hardworking, hospitable, and resilient people, famous for their music and poetry, orally transmitted through generations. Hazaras place great value on educational achievement for their children, including girls. DFAT country information report highlights how Hazara girls living in Hazarajat are more likely to participate in sport, community life and the workforce, compared to girls and women from other ethnic groups living in different regions (DFAT 2019). Having said that, the report also indicates that, despite the significant improvement of women rights across the country since the end of the Taliban regime, women's place in society remains controversial and Hazara women, particularly outside of Hazarajat, face gender-based and societal discrimination (DFAT 2019). In the 1880s, Hazara's social structure comprised landed nobility, peasants and artisans. However, persecution and violence, as well as the systematic social, economic, and political discrimination against Hazara, caused by their different religious belief, distinctive ethnic origins, as well as the separate economic and political roots, resulted in a progressive loss of their social standing in modern Afghanistan (Ref World 2020). Albeit, Hazara's situation has improved since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the resurgence of religious-motivated internal conflicts against Shi'a Muslim threaten Hazara people's safety and security, often forcing them to flee the country.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MIGRATION

Hazara forced migration and flight, both within Afghanistan and to other countries, is tied to the long-lasting discrimination and persecution that has endangered Hazaras' safety and security while, at the same time, restricting economic opportunities. In 2019-2020, the Hazara community in Afghanistan was persistently attacked by ISIS and Taliban, including a brutal attack of a maternity ward in May 2020 killing health staff, pregnant mothers and babies (Maley 2020).

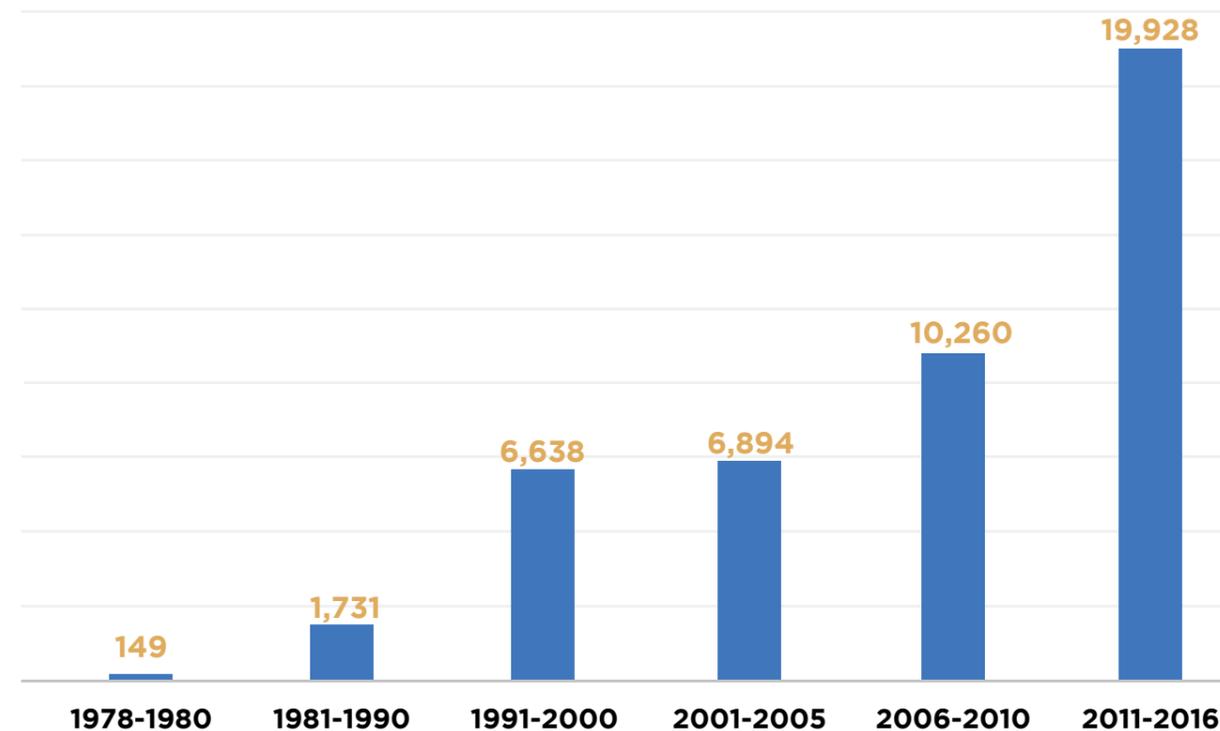
According to UNHCR, Afghan people are the third largest refugee group in the world, after Syrian and Venezuelan, with 2.7M people seeking international protection worldwide (UNHCR 2020). The countries that host the largest number of Afghan refugees are Iran and Pakistan where, Hazara refugees still face persecution by Sunni extremists because of their religious beliefs. Hazara's are Shi'a Muslim, while Pakistan is predominantly Sunni Muslim country.

Whilst due to lack of reliable sources and data it is difficult to draw a clear picture of Hazara people migration to Australia, it is possible to get a sense of their history through the Afghan-born people in Australia. Migration from Afghanistan to Australia started in the 19th century with the cameleers. Between 1901 and 1970, the White Australia migration policy prevented any further migration. In the late 70s, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, forced migration started to grow as a consequence of the continuous state of conflict and unrest in Afghanistan. Whilst census and migration data refer to Afghan people, a large percentage of Afghan refugees are Hazara people (Monsutti 2004). According to the Cultural Atlas (Evason 2016), Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in Australia, commonly are:

- Ethnic Hazara fleeing persecution in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries of refuge such as Pakistan,
- Intellectuals, journalists or activists,
- Individuals who assisted the Australian mission in Afghanistan and were at risk of harm (e.g. interpreters),
- Women and children who arrived under the Program 'Women at Risk' humanitarian visa.

Demographic data pertaining individual ethnic groups is minimal, difficult to obtain and not always reliable.

Migration to Australia



1978-1980

Other countries of asylum/migration
Iran, Pakistan

1978 - Saur (April) Communist Revolution, led by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan who took power initiating a series of radical modernization and land reforms throughout the country.

1979 - Soviet Union (URSS) occupation.

1979-1989 Soviet - Afghan war. About 2.6M people crossed the border to Iran during the war (IOM 2014), overwhelmingly Hazara people. The majority of those migrating to Pakistan were Pashtun people, however a large number of Hazaras sought refuge in Quetta Pakistan where the Hazara population is estimated 500,000 to 600,000 people.

1988 - Establishment of the Hizb-e Wahdat, Hazara main political party.

1991-2000

Other countries of asylum/migration
Iran, Pakistan

1992 - Mujahidin took power. Fighting broke out between Mujahidin supporters, various parties and Hizb-e Wahdat. The conflict escalated and at a later time Amnesty International reported the killing of many unarmed civilians and the rape of many Hazara women.

1993 - Hundreds of Hazara residents in the Afshar district of West Kabul were massacred by government forces. Large areas of Kabul, particularly those inhabited by Hazaras were devastated.

1996 - The newly established Taliban regime declared *Jihad* on the Shi'a Hazaras.

1998 - The killing spree starting on 8th August 1998 in Mazar-e-Sharif in Balkh province which resulted in the deaths of 8,000-10,000 Hazara people is recognised as one of the worse attacks against the Hazaras (HRW 1998) also causing the largest wave of Hazara refugees.

2001-2005

Other countries of asylum/migration
Iran, Pakistan

2001 - War and associated bombing campaigns between the Taliban and United States-led coalition forces.

2001 - Destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban. Hazara people have their own myths and folklore associated to the statues, unrelated to Buddhism.

2005 - Religious minorities are been target by extremist groups (ISIS after 2014)

2006-2010

Other countries of asylum/migration
Iran, Pakistan

2009 - The Shi'a Personal Status Law was passed, stripping Shi'a women, many of whom are Hazara, of some of their basic rights enshrined in the Constitution, rendering them more vulnerable.

2009 onwards - Resurgence of Taliban posing a direct threat to the Hazara people.

2011-2016

Other countries of asylum/migration
Iran, Pakistan

Massacres and suicide bombings targeting Hazara people. Bomb blasts, killings and target attacks intensified in Quetta Pakistan. A lot of Hazaras left Pakistan during these years.

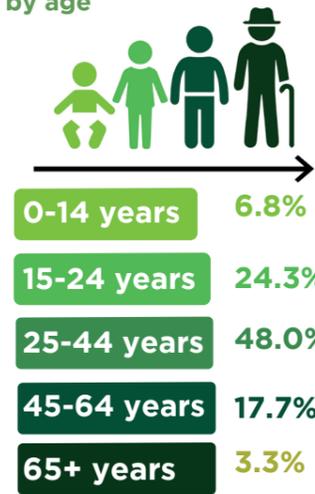
¹ DFAT - Accurate statistical data of ethnicity in Afghanistan are not available due to the sensitivity of the subject.
² Twitter, <https://bit.ly/3iqTL5l>

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

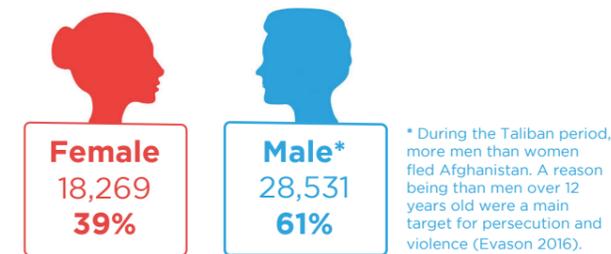
According to the 2016 Census, there is a total of **46,799** Afghan-born people in Australia, **21.9%** of whom are of Hazara ancestry. However, this data may be incomplete because the same Census data also indicates that **33.9%** of the Afghan-born people speak Hazaragi, which is only spoken by the Hazara people. Hazara in Australia are likely to identify their language as either Dari (with Hazaragi as dialect of Dari) or Hazaragi. However, Hazaragi is only recognised in Australia as independent language. In Afghanistan the language of Hazara people is considered a dialect of Dari (or Persian).

The fact that there were **33.9%** Hazaragi speakers in Australia indicates that the actual percentage of Hazara among the Afghan-born population in Australia is much higher than the **21.9%** with Hazara ancestry reported in the 2016 Census. On the other hand, while Iran never granted citizenship to Afghan refugees (including Hazara), those that fled to Pakistan were granted Pakistani citizenship. Of the 61,913 Pakistan-born people living in Australia, **4.1%** are of Afghan ancestry and **4.6%** speak Hazaragi.

Structure by age



Gender structure



Language

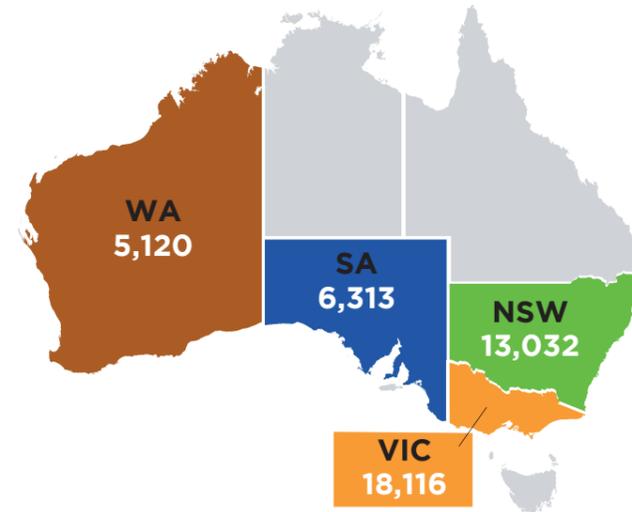
Hazara people speak Dari and Hazaragi, historically both considered dialects of Persian. However, Dari has been the official language of Afghanistan in the past few decades, while Hazaragi is still considered a dialect of Dari. Australia is the only country that has recognised Hazaragi as a language, mainly as a result of community advocacy and the recognition of Hazara people's human rights, experience of persecution because of their identity, language and ethnicity⁴.

Data Source: ABS (2016 Census) https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/7201_036

⁴ National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), 2005
⁵ Australian Migration Statistics (Department of Home Affairs) — released November 2019.

Geographical Distribution

Number of Afghan-born people in Australia as 2016 Census showed:



Legal Status



50.2% of Afghan-born are Australian citizens
7,939 Afghan people were granted Offshore Humanitarian visas in the period from 2014-2019⁵

Education Level



21.6% of the Afghan-born population over the age of 15, completed Year 12
8.2% completed a Certificate III or IV
5.6% had completed an Advanced Diploma or Diploma

DFAT sources reported that a considerably higher percentage of Hazara children receive formal education relative to the children of other Afghan ethnicities. Hazara children are generally encouraged to consider further education options where family circumstances allow (DFAT 2019).

Professional Activities



33.3% Technicians and Trades Workers
16.7% Labourers
10.8% Machinery Operators and Drivers

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES

IN AUSTRALIA

VISA AND SAFETY CONCERNS

The ongoing political and civil unrest in Afghanistan as well as the ongoing discrimination and persecution of Hazara people in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, causes the community in Australia ongoing anxiety and a fear of the future. Additionally, humanitarian protection and family reunion visa processes are long and difficult. People that arrive by boat are kept in detention for a prolonged period of time in environments that are detrimental to people mental health.

The uncertainty around the safety and security of family members overseas, the prolonged and strenuous visas process which prevents them to fully resettle fully or sponsor their families from overseas, despite being recognised as refugees, causes:

Less (or long delayed) chances to fully establish in Australia, for instance, buying a property, investing in long term ventures. Employers may be hesitant in employing them because of their visa types and the uncertainty of how long the person may be around etc.

Damages to physical and mental health. Those who have had personal experiences of violence and now live in Australia do not necessarily seek emotional/mental health help for fear of criticism by their families/community, taboo and lack of culturally appropriate mental health services.

Those who have arrived via boat and are applying for Australian citizenship are waiting two to three years to hear a response from the department on their citizenship applications. The system is punishing them for coming to Australia via boat.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

Community sources reported that the gaps in younger Hazaras educations creates a situation where the students almost always play 'catch-ups' on their literacy and language skills. Schools are not always prepared, particularly state schools possibly because of funding and financial resources, to effectively fill those gaps in the students' education gaps. The gap is carried through the schooling career until universities or colleges, for those who reach it.

The recognition of work rights is an issue for many Hazara people. A lot of skilled Hazara tradesman and labourers come to Australia from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran and because of lack of language proficiency end up working for people for cash, or at much lower rates than the legal rates, exposing themselves to a range of issues, such as:

- no insurance and protection in cases of injury at work
- inability to claim underpaid rates and more.

IN AFGHANISTAN

CHALLENGES

- Safety and security in Afghanistan and other refugee host countries such as Iran and Pakistan. Resurgence of conflict and attacks targeting Hazara people.
- Humanitarian aid provided by NGOs and other agencies does not reach remote areas and/or may not reach the most vulnerable populations.
- Flow of money and remittance

PARTICIPATION IN CIVIL SOCIETY

There is a general distrust of authorities, particularly towards those in political power given previous experiences with authorities in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"Personally for me if there were any attempts made by DFAT to politically show concern over the ongoing attacks on Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan, this would have a great impact on the psychology of the Hazaras who feel so abandoned by their own and the world leaders" (Hazara community member).

Having said that, the Hazara community in Australia is increasingly participating in social economic and political process, however there are various challenges that serves as barriers such as lower community education capacity issues.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Hazara are community oriented and resilient people. The more established community members are providing support to newly arrived people either on individual level or through community organisations. If adequately supported, they can be a great resource and asset to migration agencies.
- Hazara people are genuinely interested in working toward improving the lives of those around them in partnership with local, state, and federal government bodies. The opportunity to engage with the community in a meaningful manner is always there.
- Hazara refugees have resulted mostly successfully and have experienced incredible social mobility in a short period of time (e.g. less than two decades). Hazara dominantly work in construction and trades as reported by the last Census and they have benefited from the construction boom. As an increasing number of Hazara refugee arrivals from 2010s are becoming Australian Citizens and voters in Australia.

PRIORITIES

- One of the most urgent issues facing Hazara men who are out of detention and have a bridging visa or a Safe Haven visa, to be able to go through the visa process quickly so they can begin to resettle and reunite with their families.
- Early culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions to assist these students to catch up and stay connected to their education reduce dropout rates.
- Build on the trust and support that the Hazara people have towards Australia. The Hazara community has actively taken part in the Bushfire Appeal providing cash donations and by volunteering (SSI 2020).

OPPORTUNITIES

- Hazara people can support diplomats to liaise with the community overseas. The Hazaras in Afghanistan have been leading in education, gender equality and democratic freedom aligning with Australia's mission.
- Australia's aid and foreign missions have an opportunity by working with the Hazara diaspora in Australia to target issues that are considered asylum seeker push factors such as the human security issues and the lack of economic opportunities in central Hazarajat provinces.
- It is believed that the Hazara community remittance to the poverty-stricken central provinces of Afghanistan, and to the refugee communities of Pakistan and Iran, is a significant amount.

PRIORITIES

- The Government can invest and facilitate the flow of remittances.