



The high rate of refugee and migrant settlement in Blacktown has seen it develop an inclusive multicultural atmosphere. Pictured are Susan Diiku and Lillian Amuron.

Picture: Isabella Lettini-PP169479

Refugees settle well, in spite of rental shortage

CHRISTINE O'MALEY

IT is hard enough finding an affordable home in the current market squeeze, so imagine the difficulty getting a roof over your head as a newly arrived migrant from a war-torn nation.

This is the challenge for those involved with the federally funded Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy, whose job is to help humanitarian entrants settle and build new lives in Australia.

Blacktown is among Sydney's top five suburbs for refugee settlement, with 173 families settled in the city over the past three years as part of the Immigration Department strategy.

Facilities management

specialists Resolve FM revealed that, since 2005, of the thousands of refugees who settled in Sydney, a third settled in two suburbs: Fairfield and Auburn.

The rest mainly settled in Liverpool, Blacktown and Lidcombe-Berala.

ACL manager, Michael Cox, said its work was invaluable in the current rental squeeze.

"This situation makes life hard for the average renter, and it would be even more difficult for newly arrived refugees without assistance," Mr Cox said. "For most refugees finding a place to live, along with learning English and finding employment, are major challenges. The IHSS increases tremendously their ability to integrate, participate and contribute to the community."