



Settlement  
Council  
of Australia

## AT A GLANCE



### Target Participants

People from migrant and refugee backgrounds



### Aim

To support newly arrived migrants and refugees to get Australian work experience to support employment outcomes



### Organisations Involved

Multicultural Australia and local businesses



### Location

Greater Brisbane, Toowoomba, Rockhampton



### Funding

Staff payroll contributions or direct employer contributions

## CASE STUDY

# Work and Welcome *Multicultural Australia*

The Work & Welcome program partners with local businesses to provide participants with a 12-week paid work placement that enables them to gain local work experience, build confidence and create connections in the community.

## About the program

Many newly arrived migrants and refugees arrive in Australia with valuable qualifications, skills, and experience, but may struggle to find suitable employment in their first few years. In particular, a lack of Australian work experience, and English language ability are often noted as a key barrier.

Multicultural Australia's Work & Welcome Program aims to support migrants and refugees to gain meaningful employment. The program has many benefits, including supporting migrants and refugees to develop the experience, confidence, and skills to find ongoing employment, addressing skills shortages in Queensland, and supporting local businesses. This is particularly important in light of research that highlights that diverse workplaces and communities are key drivers of

Queensland's economic growth, with Deloitte Access Economics estimating that the Queensland economy could be \$250 million larger in 10 years if the skills of migrants were fully utilised.

Further, more than 6,000 new Australians in Queensland have under-utilised skills that align with current shortages.

Multicultural Australia identifies program participants and matches them to placements based on their career aspirations and the capacity of host workplaces. Some examples of previous placements include administrative and IT support work, libraries, school canteens, assisting with in-class learning support, maintenance, groundskeeping and repair work, and customer service.

Host workplaces range from private sector schools, small NGO's and local businesses through to large corporations and state authorities such as QLD Rail and the State Library.



The Work & Welcome program has significant benefits for the host business. New Australians are highly motivated and bring a wide range of skills and experience, including resilience, problem solving and an ability to work productively with different cultures. Two-way learning is also encouraged and supported by host organisations. For example, participants are invited to prepare a presentation for their workplace about themselves, their background and their experience of settling in Australia.

Host employers also report significant growth in their social capital – the connections and values shared by an organisation’s workforce. Team members who have worked alongside Work & Welcome placements tell of rich and rewarding experiences, and HR departments report healthier, happier and more productive workplace cultures.

Work & Welcome is funded almost entirely through private voluntary donations made by staff at the participating workplace. Program contributions are deducted from the regular wages of staff and are donated to Multicultural Australia. Multicultural Australia is the formal employer of program participants, meaning they pay participants wages and oncosts. The cost of contributing to Work & Welcome placements is 100% tax deductible through Multicultural Australia.

Multicultural Australia provides ongoing support to participants and host organisations while they are on their placement, as well as support to participants after they have finished their placements to transition into ongoing work.

## Challenges

One of the challenges has been managing host employer’s expectations against the realities of clients in early stages of settlement. For example, roles may require a drivers licence however we know that takes time for our clients to achieve. This has required ongoing support and communication between workplaces, participants and the support agency to ensure a positive experience for all.

## Outcomes

- More than 80% of host employers say Work & Welcome enabled them to access new customers, think and engage differently, and innovate new services and products.
- Over 70% of Work & Welcome placements have found ongoing work with their host employer or another organisation. Many other participants are on track to completing further training or study.
- Host employers report significant growth in their social capital – the connections and values shared by an organisation’s workforce. Team members who have worked alongside Work & Welcome placements tell of rich and rewarding experiences, and HR departments report healthier, happier and more productive workplace cultures.



## Feedback from participating businesses

*“We are busy building a culture that values diverse and future-focused thinking, inclusivity, asking for help and a willingness to ‘go the extra mile’. Work & Welcome plays a really valuable role here, bringing in fresh thinking and expanding the range of experience and knowledge in our organisation.” – Queensland Urban Utilities*

## Key Learnings

**This experience has generated 4 key learnings for Multicultural Australia**

1. New Australians are highly motivated and bring a range of skills and experience, including resilience, problem solving and an ability to work with different cultures.
2. Australian work experience is important build skills and confidence to enter the workforce.
3. Many businesses have goodwill and want to employ migrants and refugees.
4. Having a channel to match new arrivals with the desire to work, with businesses seeking to fulfil their corporate social responsibilities is essential. z

### More information

For more information, visit [https://www.multiculturalaustralia.org.au/work\\_and\\_welcome](https://www.multiculturalaustralia.org.au/work_and_welcome).

