



Settlement
Council
of Australia

Submission: Migration, Pathway to Nation Building Inquiry

Settlement Council of Australia

February 2023

The Settlement Council of Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate, the Ngunnawal people. We also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the various lands on which migrants and refugees settle across Australia, and on which our sector operates.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to our lands and waters.

About the Settlement Council of Australia

The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) is the peak body representing the vast majority of settlement agencies across Australia providing direct services and support to people of migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Our members include organisations large and small, who are committed to the successful settlement of migrants and refugees across the country. Their services range from greeting new arrivals at the airport, through to assisting them to secure housing, learn English, make social connections, access services and find their first job. Australia's settlement services are recognised as being among the best in the world.

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Introduction

The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) is grateful for the opportunity to make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration's inquiry *'Migration, Pathway to Nation Building.'*

Our submission is based on previous consultations conducted over the past 24 months, in which the issues related to the inquiry were raised across the SCOA network. In addition, SCOA hosted a Network Meeting dedicated to our submission for the Inquiry with over 55 attendees from across over 45 member organisations. This submission follows the Committee's Terms of Reference.

SCOA endorses and supports the principles outlined by the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) as underpinning our future migration system, namely that the system should be: Fair and affordable; Timely; Transparent and accountable; Simple; Informed; and Safe and supportive.¹

1. The role of permanent migration in nation building, cultural diversity, and social cohesion

Australia is a migrant nation, but Australia's success hinges on how well we support successive waves of migrants and refugees to belong, thrive and lead fulfilling lives. With almost one third of people resident in Australia born overseas, it is more important than ever to make newcomers feel welcome, help them thrive and build rewarding lives in the place they have chosen to make home. There is a need to recognise diversity is "not detrimental to, but part of, processes of social inclusion."² Public support for migration is very important for social cohesion and campaigns can be beneficial to boost public confidence in Australia's migration program.

"As immigration increases again during a time of economic uncertainty, there is a need to maintain a focus on fostering social inclusion, trust, and the cohesiveness of Australian society."³
Scanlon Foundation Research Institute

The importance of assistance for newcomers

Australia's permanent migration program consists of the Skill and Family stream. In addition to the permanent migration program the Humanitarian Program involves individuals and families fleeing persecution to permanently settle in Australia. All migrants go through a process of settlement, but currently only a very small subset are eligible for any kind of support to navigate the settlement journey. Despite coming through the skilled program, some may come across circumstances that mean they require more support. Others may not need much support, but would still benefit from being able to ask someone for advice on things as simple as how the health system works, how to choose a school for their children, or other matters. The lack of support for skilled migrants and their families also has gendered impacts, as women are often

¹ FECCA. (2022). *Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia Submission: A Migration System for Australia's Future*. Available online at: <https://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/FECCA-Submission-A-Migration-System-for-Australias-Future.pdf>

² OECD. (2003). *Social Integration of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities: Policies to combat discrimination*. Available online at: <https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/15516956.pdf>

³ Scanlon Foundation Research Institute. (2022). *Social Cohesion Insights 05: Support for immigration*. Available online at: <https://scanloninstitute.org.au/news/social-cohesion-insights-05-support-immigration>

very isolated while not always having the same qualifications and social capital as the primary applicant.

Currently the majority of migrants to Australia arrive with little orientation and the expectation they will work it out on their own. Skilled migrants bring economic benefits, but we also have social obligations towards them. This social support further enhances their economic contributions (increasing the tax base through increased income, etc). It also prevents entrenched social inequities from forming in the long term. SCOA therefore believes the link between migration, nation building, cultural diversity and social cohesion is good settlement.

To this end, much of this submission (and section 6 in particular) discusses how Australia's existing settlement infrastructure can be better leveraged to support Australia's migration system to achieve its national building ambitions.

2. Immigration as a strategic enabler of vibrant economies and socially sustainable communities in our cities and regional hubs

Immigration can be extremely beneficial to communities and economies, especially to regional areas. Regional migration addresses population decline and labour shortages in these regions.

The importance of sustainable regional settlement

Regional settlement can be mutually beneficial to both the communities (in need of workers) and newcomers (looking for opportunities and support). However, preparing and setting up these communities for the arrival of migrants and refugees is essential. The following are key for successful settlement of migrants and refugees:

- Properly funded settlement support, in conjunction with all levels of government
- Capacity building of regional communities, and a welcoming community
- Proper infrastructure, housing, transport and healthcare
- Experienced employment providers.

“For such settlement to work, a welcoming community and community preparedness and planning is essential.”⁴

The Labor Party went to the 2022 Federal election supporting “the settlement of suitable humanitarian entrants in regional locations with the support of State, Territory and local governments and local communities.”⁵ They argued that, “Refugee settlement can have a particularly positive effect in rural locations and these people play an important role revitalising rural and regional communities.”⁶ SCOA agrees that suitable migrants and refugees, with the support of government, settlement services, and the community, can thrive and meaningfully contribute to these communities. However, for a more viable and sustainable regional settlement

⁴ Refugee Council of Australia [RCOA]. (2022). *Submission to the 'Migration System for Australia's Future Discussion Paper*. Available online at: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-A-Migration-System-for-Australias-Future.pdf>

⁵ ALP. (2021). *ALP National Platform*. Available online at: <https://alp.org.au/media/2594/2021-alp-national-platform-final-endorsed-platform.pdf>

⁶ Ibid

program, SCOA recommends increased funding for the necessary infrastructure and services, including settlement services in regional areas.

Adequately resourced settlement services will set the necessary baseline for successful settlement of newcomers, and capacity building of community members as well. Resourcing and equipping settlement services in regional areas to build the capacity of local communities and services to be more welcoming and culturally responsive is essential to creating a sense of welcome and retaining migrant populations in regional areas. In addition, regional areas need to be set up with functional housing, health care, infrastructure, transport, and internet to ensure maximum opportunity for success and independence of those settling there. Having access to appropriate health care including bulk billing doctors, translators and mental health/trauma support are vital for humanitarian entrants who may be dealing with intense trauma.⁷

Employment is a key sign of successful settlement. Workforce Australia providers in regional areas need to have the knowledge, experience and cultural sensitivity to assist newcomers with the right information and supports. If specialist 'CALD' or 'Refugee' licensed Workforce Australia providers are not available in a regional area, there needs to be capacity building measures in place for the 'Generalist' Workforce Australia providers to understand the barriers faced by humanitarian entrants.

“Investing in refugee specialists is imperative to ensuring the employment challenges and barriers faced by refugee and humanitarian entrants are addressed in ways that draw on expertise and connections that refugee employment specialists have developed over many years.”⁸

We know that regional areas are eager and ready to welcome migrants and refugees to their communities, and CALD communities benefit from having a close-knit community and slower pace.⁹ However, recent research from Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council, a SCOA member, has highlighted that despite Ballarat being a highly successful regional settlement location, there are areas for improvement to make sure migrants and refugees are best set up to succeed such as infrastructure improvements, and increasing employment opportunities and cultural competency.

Recommendation 1

Ensure regional settlement is accompanied by the necessary investment in infrastructure and services, including adequately resourced settlement services.

3. Attraction and retention strategies for working migrants to Australia

⁷ Piper, Margaret. (2017). *Refugee Settlement in Regional Areas: Evidence based good practice*. Available online at: <https://www.apf.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=6e5de221-0006-44a9-bdeb-284998219f63&subId=669302>

⁸ RCOA (2022). *Submission: Employment White Paper*. Available online at: https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022_11_Employment-White-Paper.pdf

⁹ Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council. (2022). *Destination Ballarat Report: Readiness for Regional Settlement*. Available online at: <https://www.brmc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Destination-Ballarat-Report.pdf>

The importance of support for newcomers

In order to better attract and retain migrants to Australia, Australia has to be seen as a destination where new arrivals will be supported when they first arrive – but also if they come across hard times, know they and their families will be supported by the Australian government. Currently, most migrants who arrive as permanent residents have to wait up to 4 years before accessing government payments due to the newly arrived resident's waiting period (NARWP). However, many migrants initially arrive on temporary visas before transitioning to permanent residency meaning they may be waiting many years longer before being able to access support.¹⁰ Circumstances can change quickly, as the COVID-19 pandemic showed, leaving people, often without family support, asked to fend for themselves. The post-COVID-19 consequences of this have been seen in comparatively higher rates of skilled migrants choosing destinations such as Canada, UK and Germany instead of Australia.

The concept that permanent residents are to be taxed the same rate as citizens whilst receiving no social support from the government taxing them breaches the notions of fairness Australia is built on, with substantial impacts on Australia's social cohesion as a result. Providing income support to migrants as they begin their life in Australia is essential to their economic participation and supporting this economic growth. By providing migrants with support, we are providing them with an opportunity to effectively settle in Australia, including finding appropriate skilled employment. Expanding settlement service support to all who arrive in Australia is mutually beneficial – the newcomers feel welcomed and supported, and Australia is seen as an appealing place to migrate to.

Recommendation 2

Remove the newly arrived residents waiting period and provide social support to migrants regardless of visa status to remain an attractive destination for migrants.

4. Policy settings to strengthen skilled migrant pathways to permanent residency

The importance of permanency for social cohesion

Having a sense of permanency as early as possible is important for social cohesion and belonging. Additionally, having clear and transparent pathways to permanency will make Australia an attractive destination for migrants. Temporary migration, without the option or pathway for permanency, has well-defined negative impacts. Granting of permanent visas will incentivise more migrants and refugees to move to 'put down roots' in regional areas, rather than just meet visa requirements to work/study in a regional area. SCOA therefore advocates for reducing the over-reliance on temporary migration, ensuring those intending to settle permanently in Australia are provided with permanent residency as soon as possible, simplifying the citizenship processes and make it more equitable to access.

¹⁰ SCOA. (2021). *Submission: Inquiry into the Consistent Waiting Periods for New Migrants Bill 2021*. Available online at: <https://scoa.org.au/wpcontent/uploads/2021/07/SCoA-Submission-Newly-Arrived-Residents-Waiting-Period.pdf> .

The way the NARWP is applied is significantly complex and this in and of itself creates an access issue as even if exceptions are created they are difficult to take advantage of.

There has been a significant shift in Australia in the expansion of temporary migration. As the Refugee Council of Australia has noted, this shift undermines the social inclusion of migrants by restricting their access to permanent residency.¹¹ This is especially the case for those on TPV/ SHEV or bridging visas who are often unable to access education and social supports.¹² This can set people back and hinder their settlement and integration in Australia. This inquiry should consider the negative effects of the growth of temporary migration in Australia and focus on improving pathways to permanency for migrants and refugees who make enormous contributions to Australia.

Recommendation 3

Ensure those intending to settle permanently in Australia are provided with permanent residency as soon as possible.

5. Strengthening labour market participation and the economic and social contribution of migrants, including family and humanitarian migrants and the partners of working migrants

Australia has relied on migration for population growth and labour productivity for decades. We know Australia will continue to do so as the country is facing widespread skill shortages, with unemployment at 3.5% in December 2022 and job vacancies exceeding the pool of available workers.¹³ SCOA has published extensively on the topic of labour market participation of migrants and refugees.¹⁴ We advocate for a person centred approach, where people who arrive in Australia are helped on a journey to gain employment in the area they are qualified for or want to become qualified to work in. Skills and qualifications recognition is a key part in this, as is fairness in assessing English language proficiency requirements. However, there also needs to be more encouragement for employers to understand the benefits of hiring someone from a refugee or a migrant background.

The importance of individualised employment support for newcomers

Everyone who arrives to Australia has different skillsets, challenges and dreams. SCOA has always advocated for a more client-centred-approach to employment support and settlement more broadly. We believe if newcomers are able to get individualised and tailored employment support, this has the potential to fast-track their occupational journey and maximise earning potential, thereby optimising the social and economic benefits for Australia as a whole. This is beneficial to both the newcomer and Australia. However, realising this potential would require a

¹¹ RCOA. (2022). *Submission to the 'Migration System for Australia's Future Discussion Paper*. Available online at: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-A-Migration-System-for-Australias-Future.pdf>

¹² Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) and the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) are temporary visas available to asylum seekers who arrived in Australia without a valid visa. A SHEV visa holder must intend to work or study in a regional area.

¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS]. (2023). *Labour Force, Australia*. Available online at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release>

¹⁴ SCOA. (2022). *Submission: Employment White Paper*. Available online at: <https://scoa.org.au/submission-employment-white-paper-14>; SCOA. (2022). *Next steps to improve Australia's settlement and integration of refugees*. Available online at: <https://scoa.org.au/wpcontent/uploads/2022/06/SCOASU1.pdf> 15; SCOA. (2019). *Recognising Overseas Skills and Qualifications*. Available online at: http://scoa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/RecognisingOverseas-Skills-and-Qualifications_Maximising-Human-Capital-in-Newly-Arrived-Australians-1.pdf

significant shift in how most employment services currently operate. It would mean working not only with people who are unemployed, but also those employed in low skilled jobs who want to advance their careers. Services would need to be available to people who are not eligible for welfare payments, such as skilled migrants struggling to navigate Australia’s job market. Importantly, services should neither focus on getting migrants into ‘any job’ nor support a long period of unemployment waiting for a job aligned with their profession. Rather, good supports would map the complex pathway of getting back into ones chosen profession, and work alongside them as they navigate that pathway.

“Ensure funded services are incentivised to help people not just into any job, but into employment that more closely aligns with their skills, qualifications, experience and aspirations.”¹⁵

Providing appropriate training and support is key to assisting migrants and refugees on their employment pathway. Many of SCOA’s members provide training such as driving lessons, assistance in getting a driver’s license, English language support, assistance with finding local job experience – all to assist migrants and refugees in getting ready for careers and then connecting them to relevant jobs. Training is key to make sure people are both prepared for a certain job, but also in a job they want and enjoy doing. This requires staff at both settlement organisations, but also employment providers to provide culturally responsive training, advice and job support. Localised settlement services have a footprint of offices, people are familiar with their organisations, there is better access to interpreters, and they have local level labour market knowledge. Employment is a core part of settlement, and settlement services do most of the work of supporting people into finding employment but without the infrastructure that would be available to them if they were delivering employment services. Settlement and employment are inseparable. SCOA wants more settlement services grounded in local communities to be granted Workforce Australia contracts as they are best placed to deliver specialist employment support to CALD and refugee jobseekers.

Recommendation 4

Grant Workforce Australia contracts to settlement service providers grounded in local communities as they are best placed to deliver specialist employment support to CALD and refugee jobseekers.

The importance of skills and qualifications recognition

The issue of skills and qualifications recognition is widely reported on and established. However, it repeatedly comes up in consultations with SCOA members as a major issue for those arriving to Australia with overseas qualifications and/or skills as it hinders many migrants and refugees from gaining meaningful employment with career progression, severely impacting Australia’s future prosperity. If Australia relaxed its strict licensing/qualification guidelines, CEDA argues Australia could gain up to \$5 billion each year from reform to occupational licensing.¹⁶

¹⁵ RCOA. (2022). *Submission: Employment White Paper*. Available online at: https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022_11_Employment-White-Paper.pdf

¹⁶ CEDA. (2022). *Employment White Paper Submission*. Available online at: <https://www.ceda.com.au/ResearchAndPolicies/Research/WorkforceSkills/Employment-white-paper-submission>

Qualifications recognition and licensing continues to be one of the biggest barriers to migrant and refugee participation in the labour market due to challenges relating to coordination and oversight, fairness of processes, system navigation, English language requirements, and costs. We therefore recommend 1) putting in place national legislation on recognition to allow for coordination, regular monitoring of implementation, improved fairness, transparency, consistency and accountability in the recognition process, 2) funding of programs that provide individualised support to migrants and refugees in navigating the skills recognition process such as the Refugee Career Pathways Pilot (CPP), 3) continuing the [Skills Assessment Pilots](#). Please see SCOA's recent submission for *A migration system for Australia's future* for further detail on our recommendations on this issue.¹⁷

Recommendation 5

Review and implement legislative and policy changes to qualification and skills recognition processes.

The importance of engaging with employers to meet their needs

Many industries are eager to hire refugees as they contribute to diverse and inclusive workplaces and have many areas of expertise, bilingual skills and are extremely motivated.¹⁸ There is a need to engage employers and businesses across Australia as to how to be informed and supported in employing refugees as they face distinctive challenges. There needs to be more advocacy around the benefits of hiring someone from a migrant or refugee background, as research shows refugees have more loyalty towards employers, with a lower turnover rate, and they open new ethnically diverse customer markets.

“Many employers see refugees as resourceful, determined and highly motivated.”

Department of Home Affairs, Shergold Report

Specialist employment providers could guide businesses by screening and recruiting refugee cohorts to businesses keen to hire refugees. Employers would need to remain flexible in their hiring processes due to a lack of local work experience, qualifications gained overseas, and English language limitations. Through collaboration, employers and migrant and refugee services can support many more migrants and refugees into meaningful work.

Incentivising employers to hire migrants and refugees can also be mutually beneficial. Programs such as the Jobs Victoria Fund could be expanded to help eligible employers apply for subsidies to meet the costs of taking on new, eligible employees for much needed labour workforce. Employers eligible for Level 1 subsidies in the Jobs Victoria Fund can access up to \$20,000 for

¹⁷ SCOA. (2022). *Submission: A migration system for Australia's future*. Available online at: https://scoa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/SCOA_Migration-Program-Review-Paper.pdf

¹⁸ Shergold, P., Benson, K., & Piper, M. (2019). *Investing in Refugees, Investing in Australia: the findings of a Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia*. Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Available online at: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-andpubs/files/review-integration-employment-settlement-outcomes-refugees-humanitarian-entrants.pdf>

employing those who face significant barriers to employment such as newly arrived migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds and people seeking asylum and refugees.¹⁹

Recommendation 6

Specialist employment providers (e.g., those with 'Refugee' or 'CALD' Workforce Australia licenses) should act as a link to assist business to employ refugees and support more flexibility in hiring processes.

6. The role of settlement services and vocational training in utilising migrant experiences, knowledge, and opportunities

It is now more important than ever to connect newcomers to the services available to them in Australia. Most settlement services in Australia are only available for refugees and humanitarian entrants, however settlement is a process that all people who migrate to Australia go through. SCOA therefore has three main recommendations for maximising the potential of settlement services:

- 1) Settlement services should be expanded to ensure all migrants who come to Australia are eligible for at least a basic level of support.**
- 2) If settlement services are expanded to include all migrants, they should be funded and resourced appropriately, and service delivery should not happen at the expense of very disadvantaged cohorts.**
- 3) Limitations should be removed to accessing the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program in based on length of stay in Australia and visa category.**

SCOA has heard from our members that they are supporting a number of people who fall outside the remit of settlement support services and their needs are often acute. Other countries, such as Canada, fund 'newcomer services' available to refugees, permanent residents, and temporary residents.²⁰ The services are highly used by skilled migrants (outside of humanitarian entrants). In 2018-19, 55% of Economic Class (skilled migrants) to Canada accessed employment-related services, 38% accessed language training and 42% accessed information/orientation services.²¹ By supporting all migrants who arrive in Australia to navigate their new lives, Australia will remain a competitive destination for global talent.

If settlement services are opened up to a larger cohort (i.e., skilled migrants, temporary migrants, international students etc.) then there needs to be commensurate increased resourcing to the

¹⁹ Jobs Victoria. (2021). *Jobs Victoria Fund Guidelines*. Available online at:

https://jobs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/604787/Jobs-Victoria-Fund-Guidelines-updated-10am-16-November-2021.pdf

²⁰ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC]. (2022). Newcomer services. Available online at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigrationrefugees-citizenship/campaigns/newcomers.html> ; Welcome BC. (2022). Settlement Services. Available online at: <https://www.welcomebc.ca/StartYour-Life-in-B-C/Settlement-Services>; Government of Canada.

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/transition-binders/minister-2019/settlement.html>

²¹ Ibid.

sector to be able to meet the level of need. The question of sustainable resources cannot be ignored. In addition, with increased flexibility on eligibility, service delivery should not happen at the cost of very disadvantage migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants. Recognising that not all people will need settlement support services to the same degree or intensity, there should be flexibility embedded to allow a range of assistance from intensive individual case management, to allowing people to walk into a service and ask where they can enrol their children in school.

The Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program is an existing suitable avenue for delivering this expanded support. SETS provides support to humanitarian entrants and other eligible migrants for up to 5 years after arrival. SETS client services helps in accessing English language skills, education, employment, and domestic and family violence support among other supports. We have advocated for limitations to accessing SETS based on length of stay in Australia and visa category to be removed due to the varying settlement journey of migrants and refugees. Many migrants and refugees fall through the cracks, and will continue to do so, by not being eligible for SETS. One such cohort is women who tend to be predominantly carers in the family for the first few years of settlement. When they go to enter the labour market, or learn English, they are often locked out of employment or language services. Some migrants who come on skilled visas, who for some reason lose their job, are often in need of support. They may be very capable to navigate many aspects of society but might require some limited settlement support. One successful program, run by some of SCOA's member organisations, is the [Diverse Queensland Workforce program](#). The program assists migrants, refugees and international students into employment independently of the time they have been in Australia. We hear from our Queensland members delivering the program that it has been highly successful in supporting people who would probably be falling through the cracks due to being disqualified from other settlement support due to length of time in Australia or visa category.

In terms of vocational training, there needs to better connection between programs and training and newcomers. Australia can have the best vocational training programs in the world, but unless people know about them, they are futile. Being eligible for services is one thing, but knowing about them is entirely different. There is always going to be a need to connect migrants to the appropriate programs available to them. One of the key challenges at the moment is that when non-humanitarian migrants first arrive in Australia they are not being connected to applicable services as a matter of course.

Recommendation 7

Settlement services should be expanded to ensure all migrants who come to Australia are eligible for at least a basic level of support.

Recommendation 8

Expanded settlement services should be funded and resourced appropriately, and service delivery should not happen at the expense of very disadvantaged cohorts.

Recommendation 9

Limitations should be removed to accessing the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program based on length of stay in Australia and visa category.

Recommendation 10

If settlement services' eligibility is expanded, non-humanitarian migrants will be better connected to applicable vocational services and programs.

Conclusion

Throughout this submission we have highlighted the importance of universal settlement services in ensuring successful and smooth integration into a new country. Providing these services to all migrants, regardless of their visa status or length of stay, is essential in promoting equality and fostering a sense of belonging in the community. Adequate funding and resources should be allocated to these services to ensure their effectiveness and inclusiveness. Access to education, employment support, language training, and cultural orientation can significantly impact the well-being and integration of migrants and refugees into their new communities. By providing these essential services, countries can enhance their reputation as a welcoming destination for migrants and create a more diverse and inclusive society. In order to enhance the settlement process for migrants in Australia, it is essential to invest in infrastructure and services, provide social support without any waiting period, grant permanent residency as soon as possible, involve local communities in service delivery, review qualification and skills recognition processes, facilitate linkages between employers and refugees, expand settlement services and provide adequate funding. Implementing these recommendations will result in a more attractive destination for migrants, a smoother settlement process, and a stronger, more inclusive society.

List of recommendations

Recommendation 1: Ensure regional settlement is accompanied by the necessary investment in infrastructure and services, including adequately resourced settlement services.

Recommendation 2: Remove the newly arrived residents waiting period and provide social support to migrants regardless of visa status to remain an attractive destination for migrants.

Recommendation 3: Ensure those intending to settle permanently in Australia are provided with permanent residency as soon as possible.

Recommendation 4: Grant Workforce Australia contracts to settlement service providers grounded in local communities as they are best placed to deliver specialist employment support to CALD and refugee jobseekers.

Recommendation 5: Review and implement legislative and policy changes to qualification and skills recognition processes.

Recommendation 6: Specialist employment providers (e.g., those with 'Refugee' or 'CALD' Workforce Australia licenses) should act as a link to assist business to employ refugees and support more flexibility in hiring processes.

Recommendation 7: Settlement services should be expanded to ensure all migrants who come to Australia are eligible for at least a basic level of support.

Recommendation 8: Expanded settlement services should be funded and resourced appropriately, and service delivery should not happen at the expense of very disadvantaged cohorts.

Recommendation 9: Limitations should be removed to accessing the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program based on length of stay in Australia and visa category.

Recommendation 10: If settlement services' eligibility is expanded, non-humanitarian migrants will be better connected to applicable vocational services and programs.

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