

2023 National Settlement Conference

BUILDING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

NOVEMBER 2023

Conference Report



Settlement
Council
of Australia

"...settlement services are like the architects of a thriving community.

They lay the groundwork for a harmonious and interconnected society where diversity is not just tolerated but celebrated.

It's like they're crafting a symphony, ensuring that every instrument plays its part to create a beautiful, harmonious melody of unity.

The impact of settlement services extends far beyond the initial stages of arrival. It's a long-term investment in the future of our nation."

Senator Fatima Payman
Senator for Western Australia

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 is the peak body representing the vast majority of settlement agencies across Australia providing direct services and support to people 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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Executive Summary

Our 2023 National Settlement Conference (NSC23) was held from 23 – 24 November 2023. SCOA's regular conference is the premier event for the settlement sector attracting stakeholders across government, settlement providers, community organisations, and academia. Our conference theme of *'Building the Future Together'*, was brought to life over the two-day event. New sector connections were forged - and existing ones reunited – to ignite robust and relevant discussions.

The NSC23 attracted over 400 delegates from diverse sectors and backgrounds. The delegates included SCOA members and non-members alike. This diversity in experiences, professions, and expertise was reflected in our Conference Program. Day 1 of the conference commenced with an address by The Hon. Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs and was followed by over 35 exceptional speakers and panellists across plenary and breakout sessions.

We aimed to highlight the many ways in which our sector intersects with arts and culture as the conference sessions were interspersed with performances from culturally and linguistically diverse talent. At our Welcome Reception we were honoured to witness the emotive performances of spoken word poets – Manal Younus and Zaynab Farah. On Day 2, the conference was opened with a live immersive storytelling of Bukjeh.

NSC23 coincided with SCOA's 25th Anniversary and was a brilliant way to celebrate all those that have walked alongside us in this journey. While our Gala Dinner provided us the opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the last 25 years, the second day of the conference was dedicated to looking forward to the next 25 years with our Road to Belonging Strategy taking centre stage. Six sessions throughout the day were dedicated to unpacking the progress of our Working Groups and capturing broader sector input into the final Road to Belonging Strategy.

Overall, the NSC23 was a resounding success and made possible with the support of our sponsors, member organisations, speakers, performers, and attendees.

The conference left us reminded of the important work our sector is delivering every day, and the powerful outcomes we can achieve when we come together.





Chair Foreword

Opening the Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA)'s 2023 National Settlement Conference in Melbourne this past November was a profound honour. This event provided an exceptional platform to connect with esteemed leaders from across Australia's settlement sector, fostering discussions and collaborations centred around the theme of 'Building the Future Together'.

The conference days were filled with meaningful engagement covering a wide variety of topics including access to support services, trauma informed care, education, employment, and learning about what makes us all Australian. Work on these issues is a core part of SCOA's advocacy and the work of our member organisations.

By opening these discussions with a broader audience, we can all work together to facilitate the transition for migrants and refugees in Australia, thereby making their journey more manageable and empowering.

A highlight was a performance by Bukjeh, led by the phenomenal artist Aseel Tayah, providing impactful and raw storytelling on leaving home as a refugee. I also reflect on Senator Fatima Payman's speech on her family's experiences as refugees in this country, and how settlement services were significant to her family's safety, wellbeing and belonging. A true testament of the immense possibilities when opportunities are given to everyone equally.

The Gala Dinner marked a significant milestone as we celebrated SCOA's 25th anniversary, surrounded by both longstanding and new members. Against the backdrop of the tunes of our band performance, Zouruna, we reflected on all that SCOA and our members, have achieved in the last 25 years and looked toward our next 25 years of achievements together.

We recognise that none of these accomplishments would have been possible without the unwavering dedication and commitment of our partners and sponsors, whose support has been integral to our success. We extend our deepest gratitude to them, as well as to the delegates and speakers for their invaluable contributions throughout the conference. I also want to extend special appreciation to all the SCOA staff members, board members, and advocates for their tireless efforts in advancing our mission within the settlement sector.

Lastly, I extend my gratitude to The Hon Andrew Giles, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, and Multicultural Affairs, for championing both our endeavours and the broader efforts of the settlement sector. Thank you to the Department of Health and Aged Care and Department of Home Affairs for their financial support and collaboration with SCOA's activities over the past years. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the government to achieve our shared ambition of providing a settlement experience that ensures all individuals coming to Australia can belong, thrive, and lead fulfilling lives.

Melissa Monteiro

Chairperson, Settlement Council of Australia





CEO Foreword

The purpose of a conference is to – quite literally – host a space where people can confer. It brought such joy that at every moment, and everywhere I turned during the conference, I could see people conferring rigorously. If there were any bored or lethargic participants, I did not see them. I overheard many an interesting debate, saw lots of faces deep in reflection, and could feel the warmth of supportive colleagues. The passion and sincerity of the participants was palpable. As the young people would say these days, ‘it was a vibe.’

Every person in every room over the course of the event brought an energy that took the conference content off the pages of the program and brought it to life. The conference program was filled to the brim with topics covering contemporary issues in migration and settlement. With over 70 speakers and 28 sessions covering everything from housing, the role of lived experience in our work, complementary pathways, regional models for settlement, and everything in between – we left no stone unturned.

Importantly, the conference was not just an opportunity to discuss these topics, it was also a forum for planning how to move forward on tackling some of the most pressing issues facing migrant and refugee settlement in Australia. The second day of the conference was focused on practical workshops to push forward our Road to Belonging Strategy – a collective five-year strategy for improving Australia’s settlement system.

There are six working groups under the Road to Belonging Strategy, each led by experts in the field, which worked hard over 2023 to make progress against the first tranche of actions in the strategy. Each of the working groups hosted a workshop presenting their progress and draft products for input from a broader cross-section of stakeholders. These sessions informed how the working groups should move forward on their respective pieces of work.

We were, in the spirit of the conference theme, building the future together.

In the months since the conference, the SCOA team has been busy continuing to construct and scaffold the future we ideated together during the conference. We have taken the feedback in the workshops, finalised the products which were presented in draft form, and developed workplans for the next phase of implementing the Road to Belonging Strategy – ensuring our conference is much more than talk.

The conference was a momentary home for the sector’s ideas, energy, and expertise – and it is our role as a peak body to keep the momentum going afterwards. In the months since the conference, we have already made progress on many of the issues canvassed, with much more planned across 2024 and 2025.

I look forward to sharing with you our progress at our next National Settlement Conference, and conferring once again on how we can pool our resources to ensure Australia provides our newest arrivals with the fulfilling futures they deserve.

Sandra Elhelw

CEO, Settlement Council of Australia

Our Sponsors

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to our generous National Settlement Conference of Australia 2023 Sponsors. Without whom, our event would not have been the huge success that it was.

The 2023 National Settlement Conference received funding from the Australian Government

Premium Partner



Welcome Reception Partners

Conference Dinner Partner



Community and Sector Supporters



Lanyard Partner

Health Promotion Partner

Note Pad & Pen Partner

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Founding & Early Members



Conference Supporter

Scholarship Contributors



Member Sponsors



National Settlement Conference Achievements



448
delegates
attended the
conference over
two days



Over
6000
views

of the National
Settlement Conference
2023 website

78
panellists, speakers,
facilitators,
and performers

across
28 sessions

*Including distinguished figures
such as Hon. Andrew Giles
MP, Cassandra Fernando MP,
and Senator Fatima Payman*

31
member
organisations
contributed to our
**Poster
Presentations**

'Best Poster'
awarded to
South East Community Links
on
*Connecting Communities:
Public Transport Pilot*

'People's Choice'
awarded to
Whittlesea Community
Connections
on
*Bi-Cultural Health
Navigator Project*

A total of
28
sponsors
of the
conference



Delegate Reactions



Thank you for the humanity that was shown at this conference. Congratulations for such success and impact. SCOA national conference raised the benchmark.



We were delighted to be given the chance to be involved in the SCOA Strategic Planning Working Groups and look forward to seeing the next iteration of this excellent work.



The insights gained during this conference were nothing short of enlightening, reaffirming our commitment to building a more inclusive and compassionate tomorrow.



The event offered two days of enriching experiences, featuring inspiring presentations, thought-provoking workshops, and valuable connections with settlement service providers and organisations dedicated to the crucial work in this sector.



Thank you Settlement Council of Australia and the many outstanding speakers for an outstanding conference and highlighting the complexities and intersectionality of settlement and how we can work together to build the future.



Feeling invigorated at #2023nationalsettlementconference this week. Huge thanks to Settlement Council of Australia for hosting and enabling us to further enhance our industry knowledge, build new partnerships and to reignite some old ones.



Poster Presentations

Over 30 of our member organisations from across Australia contributed to our poster presentations centring around NSC23's theme of 'Building the Future Together'. The posters highlighted successful, innovative, and collaborative projects and research studies promoting best practice settlement service delivery for migrant and refugee communities.

54 Reasons: *'It Takes a Village' to make child rights real for newly arrived children and families*

This presentation showcases 54 Reasons' Child Rights Practice and Outcomes Framework.

Australian Red Cross: *Australian Red Cross's Migration Support Programs*

These programs provide integrated and multi-initiative approaches to supporting new arrivals to secure and sustain employment matched to their career experience and goals.

Bendigo Community Health Services: *Refugee Emergency Preparedness Program*

This program was co-designed with Country Fire Authority and the State Emergency Service key city emergency staff, and members from the Karen Dari and Dinka speaking former refugee communities to build their capacity to better prepare and manage emergencies.

CMRC: *Cultural Humility – an intentional response to mental distress in young people from refugee backgrounds. Critical reflections on thinking, behaviour and actions*

This project worked with young refugee people across Western Sydney on the topic of mental health.

Community Northern Beaches: *My Settlement Journey*

A collection of twelve stories, written by volunteers and told by migrants and refugees. This was in collaboration between Community Northern Beaches, Spill the Beans writing group and TAFE Northern Beaches.

Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia: *Unlocking the Power of Local Communities: A Transformative Journey through the CRISP Program*

This presentation highlighted the CRISP Program's profound impact on refugees.

Cultura: *Respectful Relationships and the Australian Law*

A video messaging program co-designed and produced with young people from a refugee background living in Geelong about sensitive topics in language for newly arrived young people.

Edmund Rice Centre: *ERCWA Subsidised Driving Program for Humanitarian and Family Stream Visa Holders*

Edmund Rice Centre WA have developed and facilitated a comprehensive, affordable program that has operated successfully since 2009 and has supported more than 1000 to obtain a WA Driving Licence.

Gymea Community Aid and Information Service: *Driver Licensing Access Program*

This program supports vulnerable refugee and migrant communities in Greater Sydney including Newcastle, Wollongong, and Northern Beaches to achieve their NSW license.

LEAD Professional Development Association & Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency: *Pillars of Resilience*

This is a year-long educational program aimed at fostering connections between community leaders, religious leaders, and community members in the Blacktown LGA.

LEAD Professional Development Association: *The Linker Network: A Collaborative Practice Model for Client-Centred, Coordinated Service Delivery*

A program that provided more positive, consistent, streamlined service and system experience for children, families, young people, and communities throughout Western Sydney Nepean Blue Mountains.

Melbourne Polytechnic: *More than words; Language, Learning and Connection in the Melbourne AMEP*

A video project that captures the experiences and positive impact of the Adult Migrant English Program on 6 newly arrived migrants and refugees.

Metro Assist: *Building Together, Thriving Forever, Building the capacity of the Ukrainian Community*

A program that supported migrant and refugee leaders, communities, and small ethnic organisations, including the Ukrainian community, to foster their socio-economic participation.

Metro Assist: *SkillMe-Optimising Impact Through Cross-Sector Collaboration*

This program has successfully helped support migrants and refugees with overseas skills and qualifications in finding meaningful employment.

Multicultural Australia: Ezidi Men's Group,
Toowoomba

This program is an innovative approach to addressing a range of settlement and family relationship issues encountered by the Ezidi community in Toowoomba.

Multicultural Australia: SETS Women's Group:
Toowoomba

Toowoomba SETS program partnered with local start-up company, Mosaic Hues, to deliver a weekly English class to refugee women in Toowoomba.

Multicultural Australia: Work & Welcome Program

This program offers a unique opportunity to connect jobseekers from refugee and migrant backgrounds with employers across Queensland.

Multilink Community Services Inc.:
Pacific Engagement Visa initiative

This initiative provided MultiLink an opportunity to leverage their SETS model and practice towards a new settlement cohort, the Pacific Island communities.

Nambour community Centre (Linda Dennis):
Domestic and Family Violence Campaigns targeted at women from multicultural backgrounds

A project co-designed with migrants to focus on women from multicultural backgrounds who may be experiencing domestic violence.

Navitas Skilled Futures: Digital Skills for Women:
an AMEP module in collaboration with Settlement Services International

A free course that empowers newly arrived women with digital skills to enable greater confidence, independence, and connections.

Navitas Skilled Futures: Living with Aussie Wildlife -
A collaborative multimedia project for migrants and refugees in partnership with SBS Learn English and WIRES

This educational multimedia project helped migrants learn about Australian wildlife while improving their English language skills.

Refugee Service, Legal Aid NSW: "The Ribbon"
A refugee tale of hope, adversity and the law – a book for children

A children's book about a refugee child and their family coming to Australia which contains information about free legal help that the Refugee Service of Legal Aid NSW.

Settlement Council of Australia:

Bringing Theory into Practice: Supporting the Settlement Workforce in Implementing the National Settlement Outcomes Standards (NSOS) and Settlement Sector Quality Framework (SSQF)

An overview of the impact of the SSQF and NSOS training on the settlement workforce.

Settlement Services International:

Billion Dollar Benefit Advocacy Campaign

This is a cross-sector advocacy campaign that breaks down barriers so that skilled refugees and migrants can work in their fields of expertise

Settlement Services International: Sharing Innovation Across Service Delivery Partners

The NSW Settlement Partnership Consortium has been providing innovative settlement service delivery through the allocation of projects, testing innovations, bi-annual workshop, and the sharing examples of innovative settlement practice.

Settlement Services International: The Road to Independence

A program that provided CALD women with access to driver literacy, driving lessons and a license.

South East Community Links: Connecting Communities: Public Transport Pilot

This pilot program aimed to address the barriers CALD communities experience in accessing modes of public transport.

Spectrum: Parenting in a New Culture

This program provides culturally responsive parenting education and support to parents/carers from CALD backgrounds.

Spectrum: Shared Prosperity – Economic Inclusion for Sustainable Livelihoods for Migrant and Refugee Communities in Australia

This study focused on migrant and refugee communities in Hume Victoria and the numerous employment barriers they face and key interventions to foster economic inclusion.

Westjustice - Western Community Legal Centre:
Don't Settle for Less, The Settlement Justice Partnership and Fairer Outcomes for Refugees in Melbourne's West

An initiative which placed community lawyers in settlement support agencies in Melbourne's West where they helped clients and settlement workers in a known and trusted environment.

Whittlesea Community Connections (Hiyah Rahman): Bi-Cultural Health Navigator Project

This program trained people with refugee and migrant backgrounds interested in working in the health sector to understand better and navigate Australia's health system.

DAY ONE: Celebrating achievements

Day one of our conference centred around listening and learning from diverse leading experts in the not-for-profit, government and private sectors, from across Australia. We heard how they draw on their personal and professional journey, as well as lived experience in empowering and delivering settlement support for migrant and refugee communities. Their insights shed light on the challenges faced by communities and the innovative solutions developed within the sector. This collective sharing of knowledge served to strengthen the collaborative efforts aimed at fostering inclusive and supportive communities.

The conference opened with a Welcome to Country performed by the Bunurong tribe.

We also heard from the Hon. Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs who discussed the importance of the settlement sector being connected and working to focus on the positive resettlement journeys of community.

A productive day of 16 interactive and engaging sessions was held on topics including, lived experience, supporting new arrivals with disability, solutions to the housing crisis, emerging research in settlement and supporting communities to be their own advocates.

SUMMARY OF DAY ONE SESSIONS:

Addressing inequity within multicultural affairs and settlement:

This session delved into the need to address systemic inequities within the multicultural affairs and settlement sector. Participants emphasised the importance of diversity and intersectionality in decision-making processes and advocated for client-led, strength-based approaches to settlement. The workshop underscored the necessity of cultural competency and inclusivity in all aspects of settlement design and delivery, with a call for greater diversity in funding allocation.

Panellists:

- Dr Nora Amath, Islamic Women's Association of Australia
- Renee Dixson, Forcibly Displaced People's Network
- John Kamara, 2023 Tasmanian Australian of the Year
- Facilitator: Erfan Daliri, Kind Enterprises

Bridging the gap between academia and practice

Exploring the fusion of academia and practice, panellists discussed barriers to grassroots research engagement, practitioner collaboration with academics, and researcher engagement with communities. Audience engagement further enriched the dialogue, addressing topics such as understanding multilingual audiences and integrating research elements. The session concluded with reflections on key outcomes and recommendations for bridging academia and practice.

Panellists:

- Dr Louise Olliff, Refugee Council of Australia
- Sarah Yassien, SBS
- Facilitator: Michael Zgryza, MultiLink Community Services Inc



Brokering housing solutions

This session emphasised the critical importance of housing as a fundamental human right for newly arrived migrants and refugees. The multifaceted nature of the housing issue, compounded by systemic challenges, was underscored, illustrating the difficulties faced by individuals lacking a rental history, English language skills, and networks. However, the workshop also showcased various innovative initiatives undertaken by settlement services and diaspora communities to address housing challenges, such as forming relationships with real estate agents, providing training to the housing sector, and leveraging community networks for support.

Panellists:

- Kate Colvin, Homelessness Australia
- Sonia Di Mezza, Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services
- Cath Scarth, AMES Australia
- Facilitator: Mirsia Bunjaku, Australian Migrant Resource Centre

Collaborating for more impactful influence

During this session participants delved into insights on driving systemic change to better serve communities. Led by Neil Pharaoh and Rory Parker from Tanck, seasoned experts with over 20 years of combined experience, the session explored strategies to influence government and key actors effectively. Attendees had the opportunity to learn from Neil and Rory's expertise in government engagement and impactful advocacy campaigns. The session provided valuable insights into driving meaningful social change through collaborative efforts.

Panellists:

- Neil Pharaoh, Tanck
- Rory Parker, Tanck
- Facilitator: Melissa Monteiro, SCOA Chair

Frameworks for the settlement sector. Current state and future directions

This panel discussed the Australian Government's recent framework, *Refugee and Humanitarian Entrant Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework*. This framework aims to guide government in delivering settlement outcomes. Panellists reflected on the importance of having a framework that emphasise measuring outcomes to ensure we are accountable to communities, taxpayers, and funders..

Panellists:

- Julie Robert, Settlement Council of Australia
- Grace Keppel Benson, American University
- Andrew Kiley, Department of Home Affairs
- Facilitator: Rose Dash, Multicultural Australia





From lived experience to professional insight panel

The speakers, all working in the settlement sector as well as having lived experience, discussed the important role of migrants and refugees in delivering and leading settlement services. We heard how settlement workers with lived experience provide refugees a unique connection and strength in their settlement journey.

Panellists:

- Samira Husic, MercyCare
- Farzana, Community Migrant Resource Centre
- Joseph Youhana, HOST International
- John Buraho, CORE Community Services
- Facilitator: Jasmina Bajraktarevic-Hayward, Chair of Settlement Advisory Council

Future directions in complementary pathways for refugee settlement

The session delved into alternative pathways for refugee settlement, sparking insightful discussions. Panellists explored global contexts, advancements in community sponsorship, skilled migration pathways, and developments in education pathways. Participants actively participated in a structured Q&A, fostering reflections on pivotal outcomes and recommendations for future collaborative efforts in refugee settlement.

Panellists:

- Lisa Button, Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia
- Sarya Alsayed, Talent Beyond Boundaries
- Emily Chipman, UNHCR
- Dr Sally Baker, Australian National University
- Facilitator: Paul Power, Refugee Council of Australia

Improving health policy and practice for migrants and refugees

All speakers emphasised the importance of having migrant and refugee voices in health policy and decision making. The reflections shared included how COVID-19 accelerated connections with CALD communities, settlement providers and government to ensure information and messaging reaches all communities equitably. It was also noted that the voices of people with lived experiences of health issues are still not being heard by those designing health services.

Panellists:

- Carita Davis, Department of Health, and Aged Care
- Sheetal Challam, Cancer Institute NSW
- Dr Olayide Ogunsiji, Western Sydney University
- Facilitator: Kwame Selormey, Melaleuca Australia

Our role in supporting women experiencing violence

Delving into the imperative of supporting women facing violence, the session showcased diverse perspectives from an expert panel. Conversations revolved around the vital roles of settlement services, innovative community strategies, and recent research insights. The discussion spanned whole-of-family approaches and strategies for mainstream service messaging, culminating in actionable recommendations to combat violence against women.

Panellists:

- Maha Abdo OAM, Muslim Women Australia
- Prof. Jo Spangaro, University of Wollongong
- Constance Jones, African Women's Federation of South Australia
- Facilitator: Maria Dimopoulos AM, Myriad Kofkin Global

Regional models for delivering settlement services

In this session, the focus was on the significance of regional settlement in shaping local communities and economies. The workshop highlighted the need to dispel misconceptions about regional areas and emphasized the importance of economic, cultural, and social factors in ensuring successful settlement outcomes. Participants discussed the importance of an inter-agency approach and highlighted successful initiatives, such as youth campaigns and employment programs, aimed at fostering regional settlement and community integration.

Panellists:

- Andrea Obeyesekere, Centacare FNQ
- Dr Charishma Ratnam, Deakin University
- Sharon Daishe, Mosaic Multicultural Connections
- Facilitator: Ann Foley, Multicultural Community Services of Central Australia

Supporting communities to be their own advocates

This session provided valuable insights into effective advocacy practices, overcoming challenges, and optimising system structures. Panellists examined the vital role of settlement services and delved into the complexities of community leadership and legitimacy. Audience engagement further enriched the discourse, prompting reflections on actionable strategies to empower communities in their advocacy pursuits.

Panellists:

- Farhad Arian, CORE Community Services
- Sam Matti, Australian Assyrian Chaldean Syriac Advocacy Network
- Rana Ebrahimi, Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network
- Facilitator: Shabnam Safa, National Refugee-led Advisory and Advocacy Group

Supporting new arrivals with disabilities

This session provided a unique perspective from migrant and refugee advocates with lived experiences of a disability, to discuss the challenges faced by new arrivals with disabilities. This includes stigma, shame, lack of access to interpreters, and difficulties navigating support services including the NDIS. Solutions include the necessity of the disability sector to provide culturally responsive care and having culturally diverse workers in the healthcare system.

Panellists:

- Dr Dinesh Palipana OAM, Doctor, National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- Nyrob Majak, Advocate
- Cathy Preston-Thomas, NSW Refugee Health Service
- Facilitator: Pino Migliorino AM, Cultural Perspectives

What was key to your successful settlement?

An empowering session with former refugees sharing their journey in settling in Australia. Panellists emphasised how important it is for settlement workers to promote a strengths-based mindset when working with refugees, and how community engagement and mentoring was fundamental to their wellbeing, belonging and success.

Panellists:

- Akec Makur Chuot, Hawthorn Football Club
- Om Dhungel, Author
- Hedayat Osyan, CommUnity Construction
- Facilitator: Mandi Wicks, SBS



DAY TWO:

Moving forward together

Day two began with a powerful performance by Bukjeh, a refugee storyteller troupe of diverse refugee artists tell their own stories through the music, dance, and theatre. Bukjeh translates to 'a small pack of belongings carried by travellers' and their performance reminded us of the universality of the refugee experience.

This performance was followed by a poignant address from Senator Fatima Payman who emphasised the enduring impact of settlement services and their role in shaping the future of Australia:

“Settlement services are like the interior decorators of life transitions, turning a house into a warm, welcoming haven. The micro-level impact of settlement services is profound.”

Her words helped set the tone for day two's focus on SCOA's Road to Belonging Strategy, a long-term vision which outlines the gold standard for settlement in Australia and articulates a roadmap for the Australian settlement sector to bolster the country's capacity for a more seamless, equitable, and prosperous system for migrants and the Australian population.

We turned our minds to problem solving, increasing economic participation, and our Road to Belonging strategy on Day Two. With conversations exploring creative ideas for new initiatives proposed across 15 interactive and diverse sessions, working groups, and consultations.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM DAY TWO SESSIONS:

Moving beyond entry level: career progression for migrants and refugees workshop

This workshop explored avenues for career progression for migrants and refugees beyond entry-level positions. Participants discussed systemic barriers to career advancement, such as qualifications recognition and workplace bias, and shared insights on engaging employers and advocating for workforce diversity. The session underscored the importance of identifying transferrable skills and pathways for career development, highlighting the benefits of diversifying the workforce and celebrating successes along the way.

Panellists:

- Chantal Mousad, CareerSeekers
- Robyn Matthews, Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services
- Betina Szkudlarek, University of Technology Sydney
- Facilitator: Violet Roumeliotis AM, SSI

Supporting newly arrived refugees to get their first job

Discussions around strategies for supporting newly arrived refugees in securing their first job. Participants highlighted the challenges faced by migrants and refugees, including language barriers, lack of OH&S knowledge, and workplace culture misunderstandings. The panel and subsequent discussions emphasised the importance of pre-employment support, training, and cross-sector collaboration in facilitating successful entry into the workforce.

Panellists:

- Mirsia Bunjaku, Australian Migrant Resource Centre
- Cindy Carpenter, Bread & Butter Project
- Carmen Garcia, Community Corporate
- Facilitator: Violet Roumeliotis AM, SSI





Road to Belonging

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

In 2022, SCOA led a co-design process with over 40 stakeholders to develop a shared ambition and roadmap for the settlement sector.

From its inception, it has been important to us to include a diverse range of perspectives as the settlement sector cannot achieve good settlement outcomes alone. Day 2 of our NSC23 was dedicated to presenting the latest work on each of the six Working Groups and seeking attendee input on what the next year of work should look like. Each of the six sessions were led by their respective Working Group Chairs.

The feedback captured in each of the Working Group sessions has been detailed in following sections of this report. Since the conference, the Chairs, Deputy Chairs and SCOA Secretariat have led their working groups in synthesising the feedback received, finalising outputs in line with conference feedback, and developing work plans for the next tranche of implementation (2024-2026).

WORKING GROUP ONE: Empowered settlement journeys

What we presented

We highlighted the activities and outputs of the Working Group in the last year and presented a draft set of recommendations for future settlement programs – in particular on-arrival settlement programs – seeking participant input.

What we heard

We undertook a group activity to develop a wordcloud which reflected the groups collective vision in response to 'In the context of the work we do for clients in the settlement sector, what does "empowerment" mean to you?'. The wordcloud highlighted the following top 5 responses –

1. Freedom
2. Turning vulnerability into strength
3. Independence
4. Choice
5. Informed choices

The second group activity focused on a risk-benefit review of the proposed Recommendations Mapping Document. Overall, we received support for the proposed recommendations which will inform and support the drafting of the final report.

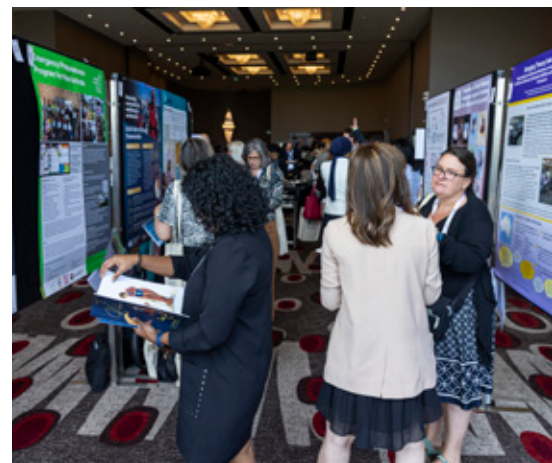
WORKING GROUP TWO: Partnering with local migrant and refugee communities

What we presented

We presented the draft community engagement framework developed by the Working Group 2 over the past year and a half. This community engagement framework provides an approach that is bespoke to the settlement sector and tailored to the context within which we work.

What we heard

The main focus of the session was to determine how the community engagement framework would be operationalised. We heard case study examples of best practice community engagement, identified tools required for implementation, and accountability measures across the five community engagement methods of our framework.



WORKING GROUP THREE:

Connecting with other sectors and broader Australian society

What we presented

Delegates were presented with the outcomes of the Working Group's desktop research, case studies report, and primary research into cross-sector collaboration opportunities. We presented a number of initiatives for delegates to consider, prioritise, comment on, and add to.

What we heard

Delegates voted on the seven initiatives presented to identify a priority initiative. Two key initiatives arose as clear top priorities for the group:

1. Recognise corporates that run successful migrant recruitment programs
2. Establish a new "corporate" sector lead role support corporates and NFPs to work with each other.

These initiatives were added to with a number of suggestions from attendees which included, but are not limited to, potential accreditation process for culturally safe workplaces and advocacy for workers/study rights across all visa types.

WORKING GROUP FOUR:

Supporting workforce and organisational capacity

What we presented

The workshop shared the National Settlement Workforce Profile 2023 preliminary report which highlighted the data and insights captured in the National Settlement Sector Workforce Profile Organisation and Workforce Surveys. The session also sought input on a National Settlement Qualification Strategy (NSQF), including what a more comprehensive training program for the sector could look like, what key units are required, and how training could be implemented.

What we heard

There was unanimous support with the purpose statement for the National Settlement Qualification Strategy (NSQS) with 100% of attendees voting in favour of the purpose statement. Further, 77% of attendees supported that meeting the requirements of the Qualifications Strategy not be an entry requirement, but an agreement with the employer should be in place to obtain those skills within a certain amount of time. Delegates were then asked to design the settlement specific training package competencies & core units. The outcome of which was identification of required skillsets at several career levels – volunteer, entry, intermediate, advanced – generalist, and advanced – specialist. These were further separated as to general, settlement specific, co-existing needs, and case management specific competencies.



WORKING GROUP FIVE: Building monitoring, evaluation, and data capability

What we presented

We presented the efforts made over the past year to enhance and standardise data collection practices across the sector. Central to this presentation was the drafted Theory of Change (ToC) created to meet the sector's specific needs. The session focused on the development process of the ToC and soliciting feedback on prioritising outcomes outlined within it.

What we heard

During the session, we received positive general feedback on the ToC. Specifically, when discussing priority outcomes, five had been previously identified by the Working Group (WG) members.

However, through consultation during the session, an additional outcome was identified as a priority. This collaborative and inclusive approach to refining and finalising the ToC ensured the incorporation of collective insights and priorities from all stakeholders involved.

WORKING GROUP SIX: Driving research and systems change

What we presented

Session delegates were presented with the 'Return on Investment' study for settlement sector and regional model of settlement service delivery. Delegates were then tasked with facilitating a small group discussion with their table to provide responses to 4 questions on the implementation of the 'Return on Investment' study.

What we heard

Overwhelmingly the delegates supported the Return-on-Investment study and found it to be a beneficial exercise in legitimising the monetary, and non-monetary, impacts of settlement.

Delegates were asked to specify their potential contributions and the extent to which they could commit their resources, such as financial support, data collection, linking with clients or communities, providing advice, or participating in the study. Responses varied across participants, with many expressing willingness to contribute data collection efforts, facilitate links to clients or communities, and offer valuable advice based on their expertise. Some organisations also indicated potential financial support for the study, emphasising the importance of independent research and the need for a combined effort within the sector. Additionally, there were suggestions for conceptual support, consultation, and even offering digital feedback mechanisms. Overall, the responses demonstrated a diverse range of contributions that could enrich the fuller study once the scoping study is completed.



Conference Highlights



25th Anniversary Gala Dinner







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