Submission: Civics education, engagement, and participation in Australia

Settlement Council of Australia

June 2024

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 Australia's migrant and refugee services and allied organisations. We provide leadership to the settlement sector and broader society to enable people of migrant and refugee backgrounds to experience positive settlement outcomes. We represent over 130 member organisations nationally, all working towards a shared vision for an Australia where all people of migrant and refugee backgrounds belong, thrive and experience fulfilling lives.

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Introduction

The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters on civics education, engagement, and participation in Australia.

SCOA is the peak body representing Australia's migrant and refugee services and allied organisations. SCOA provides leadership to the settlement sector and broader society to enable people of migrant and refugee backgrounds to experience positive settlement outcomes. SCOA represents over 130 member organisations nationally, all working towards a shared vision for an Australia where all people of migrant and refugee backgrounds belong, thrive and experience fulfilling lives. This submission highlights the experiences of culturally diverse communities, focusing on newly arrived refugees and migrants, as well as new Australian citizens.

Our submission reflects a combination of evidence and grassroots insights from across our network. To inform this submission, we organised a meeting with our network members in May 2024, which was attended by over 20 representatives from the settlement sector and culturally diverse organisations.

Civic engagement contributions of migrants and refugees

The 2021 census revealed a new demographic reality in Australia, which shows that 50.8 per cent of Australians are either born overseas or have at least one migrant parent. This makes us "the first English-speaking nation to have a migrant majority."[1] A healthy level of civic engagement necessitates the active civic engagement of migrants and refugees – without this, not just the migrant and refugee population, but Australia's population overall would be considered disengaged.

Culturally diverse migrant and refugee communities significantly contribute to Australia's civic life through various forms of engagement and support. Their engagement often begins within their own communities, not due to segregation, but because these are the spaces where social gaps are most apparent and where they are well placed to make valuable and practical contributions. However, these contributions are frequently unseen, overlooked, and underappreciated because they occur within diaspora and faith communities.

Migrants and refugees often volunteer, helping others in their community through organised groups or informal networks. This spirit of mateship fosters community cohesion and resilience. Many culturally diverse communities take active roles in keeping their neighbourhoods safe, clean and welcoming. This includes participating in neighbourhood watch programs, organising community clean-ups, and advocating for local safety measures. By organising and participating in cultural events, migrants and refugees contribute to the vibrancy of Australian society. These events promote mutual understanding and respect, fostering a more inclusive community. For example, many mosques, temples and churches run by migrant communities offer free or subsidised food. Individuals often participate in such activities as a moral responsibility and do not seek other rewards or recognition.[2] Therefore, such activities are often

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[1] George Megalogenis (2 July 2022), "Root-and-branch renewal as Australia makes migrant-majority history", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, https://www.smh.com.au/national/root-and-branch-renewal-as-australia-makes-migrant-majority-history-20220629-p5axo0.html

[2] Grant Wyeth (7 June 2021), "What We Can Learn From Australia's Sikh Community", *The Diplomat*, https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/what-we-can-learn-from-australias-sikh-community/ ; Afnan Malik (5 April 2023),

informal and not expressly articulated as 'volunteering,' and subsequently not sufficiently recognised.[3]

Migrants and refugees play a vital role in Australia's overseas humanitarian contributions, demonstrating a strong commitment to supporting not only their communities in Australia but also their countries of origin and other regions in need. Their contributions can be broadly categorised into sending donations, remittances, and volunteering. Many migrants and refugees regularly send donations to various humanitarian causes overseas. For example, during natural disasters or crises in their home countries, diaspora communities frequently mobilise to raise funds and collect essential items to send back home. Remittances form a significant part of the financial contributions made by migrants and refugees to their home countries. These remittances are often used by recipients to cover basic needs such as food, education, healthcare, and housing, thereby improving the quality of life and economic stability of families and communities abroad. This steady financial support can also contribute to broader economic development in the recipient countries. Lastly, volunteering is another crucial way migrants and refugees contribute to overseas humanitarian efforts. Many individuals volunteer their time and skills to support international aid organisations, either from within Australia or by travelling to affected areas. This can include participating in fundraising events, organising community drives, and even offering professional expertise in fields such as healthcare, education, and engineering. Moreover, some migrants and refugees return to their home countries temporarily to assist in rebuilding efforts, leveraging their skills and knowledge gained in Australia to make a tangible difference.[4]

These overseas humanitarian contributions highlight the strong transnational connections that migrants and refugees maintain and their unwavering commitment to supporting global humanitarian efforts. Their actions not only provide critical aid to those in need but also strengthen the bonds between Australia and the international community, fostering goodwill and cooperation.

Advocacy and practical support around race and cultural inclusivity is another critical area where migrants and refugees contribute substantially. SCOA witnesses this on a daily basis within our own settlement sector. Our settlement workforce profile survey, which was recently completed by SCOA, reveals that three out of four workers used a language other than English for work and at home and were born overseas.[5] This is a testament to the civic engagement of culturally diverse communities. Our workforce engages in civic participation on a day-to-day basis, advocating for the needs of culturally diverse communities and working towards a more inclusive society.

Civics education of culturally diverse Australians

Culturally diverse Australians, especially those from migrant and refugee backgrounds, acquire knowledge about their civic rights and obligations through a combination of formal and informal mechanisms. Among the formal mechanisms, schools play a crucial role in providing structured education on Australian history, government, and the electoral system. School textbooks serve

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"Breaking fasts and building community: Free iftar dinners served at local mosques", *SBS*, https://www.sbs.com.au/language/urdu/en/article/breaking-fasts-and-building-community-free-iftar-dinners-served-at-local-mosques/f6iwvedle
[3] Yiran Li, Yixuan Huang, Ilan Katz and Bingqin Li (2022) *Sustaining Old Age Volunteerism among CALD Population — the CASS Community Volunteer Model*, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney, https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/sprc/our-projects/sustaining-old-age-volunteerism-among-CALD-population
[4] Louise Olliff, *Helping Familiar Strangers Refugee Diaspora Organizations and Humanitarianism* (Indiana University Press, 2022), https://iupress.org/9780253063564/helping-familiar-strangers/
[5] SCOA (2024), *National Settlement Workforce Profile 2023*, https://scoa.org.au/national-settlement-workforce-profile-2023/

as the initial exposure to Australian civics for many newly arrived migrants and refugees with school-aged children. However, the depth and quality of civics education can vary significantly between schools and states.[6]

The *Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond* booklet is another key resource for migrants preparing for the citizenship test. It covers Australian values, history, and the responsibilities of citizenship, serving as an essential tool for new citizens. SCOA's member organisations are also actively engaged in helping migrants and refugees prepare for the citizenship test, and this is an important aspect of civic education.

However, both the workbook and citizenship education are limited as they are primarily geared towards the citizenship test, which is not an appropriate mechanism for comprehensively teaching about civics education and equipping future citizens to actively take up their civic rights.

In our consultation with our member organisations, there was strong view that civic participation – which is one of the 10 National Settlement Outcomes Standards – reaches far beyond the acquisition of citizenship.[7] However, because of the difficulties in obtaining citizenship (as will be discussed further below), member organisations spend a disproportionate amount of time focused on supporting clients to apply for citizenship and pass the test. This has the effect of reducing the amount of time and resources that can be spent on supporting communities in actively *exercising* their citizenship and proactive civic engagement.

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) also provides educational materials and outreach programs to inform the public about the electoral process. Despite these efforts, language barriers and limited accessibility can hinder the effectiveness of these resources for non-English speakers, especially for smaller and emerging CALD communities that struggle to find translated materials in their language. Further, the distribution of these materials could benefit from more actively leveraging informal networks of ethnic and faith-based groups.

On the informal side, peer groups, social media, and community gatherings play vital roles in disseminating information about civic duties. Newly arrived individuals often rely on their immediate social circles to navigate the complexities of their new environment. Social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and WeChat are widely used among migrant communities to share information, stay connected, and facilitate grassroots levels of political participation and civic engagement.[8] Community-based and ethnic organisations host information sessions and workshops on civic participation, offering opportunities for face-to-face learning and discussion, which can be more effective than written materials for some individuals.[9]

To enhance the quality of information and civic engagement among culturally diverse Australians, governments and communities can leverage these existing mechanisms and introduce new initiatives. Schools should receive additional resources to deliver comprehensive civics education, including tailored programs for students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. This could involve collaboration with community organisations to provide culturally relevant content.

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[6] Peterson, A. and Bentley, A. (2017), "A case for cautious optimism? Active citizenship and the Australian civics and citizenship curriculum", *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 37 (1), 42-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2016.1142424

[7] SCOA (2020), *National Settlement Outcomes Standards*, https://scoa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NSOS-2020.pdf

[8] Xueyin Zha (10 August 2022), *WeChat's role in Australian democracy: A grassroots view*, Lowy Institute, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/wechat-s-role-australian-democracy-grassroots-view; Sun, W., & Yu, H. (2020). "WeChatting the Australian Election: Mandarin-Speaking Migrants and the Teaching of New Citizenship Practices", *Social Media + Society*, *6*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120903441

[9] Annika Burgess (2 Sep 2023), "'Powerful' grassroots efforts could be the decider for multicultural Australians' Voice to Parliament referendum vote", *ABC News*, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-09-02/indigenous-voice-to-parliament-multicultural-vote-referendum/102758130

The AEC and other relevant bodies should expand the availability of multilingual educational materials and further leverage grassroots community networks. Most translated resources have been created primarily for larger, more established CALD groups rather than for new and emerging communities. The government can also partner with local community organisations to co-create and disseminate civics education materials, ensuring that the information is culturally appropriate and effectively reaches the target audience.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, information and awareness campaigns led by the federal government, as well as various state governments and community organisations, might offer further insights into what works and what does not. One significant improvement in the government's communication strategy has been the increased availability of COVID-related materials in various formats, including text, images, and videos. For instance, videos originally in English featuring elderly Victorians discussing vaccines have been subtitled in key community languages, and multilingual radio advertisements have been produced. These translated materials now better accommodate different media consumption preferences, using a mix of online text, hyperlinked PDFs, and Word documents for instructions; JPEG files and posters for visual aids; downloadable audio files that are more conversational; and video files with dubbed audio in languages other than English and English subtitles (or vice-versa) for practical demonstrations, such as how to wear a face mask.[10]

> ### *Recommendation 1: Culturally appropriate civics education*
>
> - *Partner with local community organisations to co-create and disseminate civics education materials, ensuring that the information is culturally appropriate and effectively reaches the target audience.*
> - *Use lessons learnt from COVID-19 information campaigns regarding the use of text, image, audio and video materials in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.*

Challenges and variations in civic engagement and participation

Civic engagement among culturally diverse Australians can vary significantly based on several factors. Younger migrants, particularly those who arrive as children or adolescents, tend to integrate more quickly and exhibit higher levels of civic engagement. Older migrants, especially those with limited English proficiency, may face greater challenges in engaging with the electoral system. Migrants in urban areas generally have better access to information and civic resources compared to those in regional or remote areas. Employment can also influence civic engagement, with employed individuals having more opportunities to interact with a broader segment of society. Conversely, unemployed migrants may experience social isolation, which can hinder their access to civic information and opportunities for participation.

Civic engagement and participation **vary at different stages of migration**. Recently arrived migrants and refugees are often preoccupied with immediate settlement needs, such as housing and employment, which can delay their engagement with civic matters. Economic

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[10] Leah Gerber et al., (31 May 2021), "Developing multilingual communication strategies for CALD communities during the COVID-19 vaccination rollout", *Lens*, Monash University, https://lens.monash.edu/@politics-society/2021/05/31/1383335/developing-multilingual-communication-strategies-for-cald-communities-during-the-covid-19-vaccination-rollout

instability, lack of time due to multiple jobs or family responsibilities, and limited access to transportation can all hinder participation in civic matters. Over time, as they stabilise their lives, their civic engagement tends to increase, and can increase even further with second generation migrants.

However, settlement services are primarily funded to work with individuals in the early stages of their settlement. For example, the humanitarian settlement program works with humanitarian entrants for up to 2 years, the Adult Migrant English program focuses on those still learning English, and the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program has a focus on the first five years of their arrival. Previously, the SETS program had a 5-year eligibility limitation, however this was removed recently in a welcome recognition of the non-linear nature of settlement. Nonetheless, this increased flexibility was not met with additional resources and relies instead on providers triaging the needs of clients. In practice, this means providers have limited capacity to support the civic engagement needs of community members who are relatively well-established in other areas of their settlement.

Various other barriers can prevent culturally diverse communities from fully participating in the electoral process. Limited English proficiency remains a significant obstacle. Although translation services are available, they are not always sufficient to ensure a comprehensive understanding of electoral materials and processes. **Migrants may come from countries with different political systems** and may not be familiar with the concept of compulsory voting or the specifics of Australian electoral procedures. However, research shows that migrants from less democratic countries will likely be more loyal citizens. Analysing data from the 2010 to 2019 Australian Election Study surveys, alongside Freedom House regime classifications of migrants' countries of origin, a study explored migrant attitudes towards Australian democracy. The results indicate that migrants from other democratic countries share similar attitudes with native-born Australians. Conversely, those from less democratic countries demonstrate higher levels of political trust and satisfaction with democracy. This suggests that, despite facing political exclusion, migrants from less democratic countries tend to be more loyal citizens than those born in Australia or other democratic nations.[11]

Australians of culturally diverse origin are well-integrated into many sectors but remain **under-represented in legislative institutions**. Despite being eligible for political office through citizenship, few have succeeded in recent federal, state, and local elections. As Australia experiences growing ethnic diversity, the 2022 federal election saw a record number of ethnic minority candidates elected. However, the proportion of candidates and elected Members of Parliament from ethnic minority backgrounds remains significantly lower than their share of the overall population. In 2021, more than 28 per cent of the Australian population reported having non-Australian-and-European (hereafter non-European) ancestries (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022), yet only 9 per cent of the House of Representatives members have non-European backgrounds.[12]

This "representation gap" arises from both individual/community and systemic factors. On an individual level, candidates often lack deep political networks and resources to effectively campaign. Systemically, the complex preselection process within parties and factional competitions pose significant barriers. Additionally, there is a perception that political parties only engage with culturally marginalised communities superficially during election times.[13] To address this, political parties should actively promote ethnic diversity, offer cultural competency

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[11] Cameron, S. and Pietsch, J. (2021) "Migrant Attitudes Towards Democracy in Australia: Excluded or Allegiant Citizens?", *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 67 (2): 260-275. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajph.12727

[12] Guan, Q., and Pietsch, J. (2023), "Representing diversity in a liberal democracy: a case study of Australia" *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 50(12), 3069–3090 https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2290446

[13] Surjeet Dogra Dhanji (2020). "Australians of Indian Origin in Politics: Interrogating the 'Representation Gap' in Australia." Asia Institute, University of Melbourne, https://melbourneasiareview.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Australians-of-Indian-Origin-in-Politics-Interrogating-the-Representation-Gap.pdf

training, and create pathways to support future minority candidates, aiming to enrich political representation and align with broader societal inclusion.

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Recommendation 2: Address poor representation in legislative and leadership positions

To address the poor representation of culturally diverse Australians in legislative and political leadership positions, all political parties should actively promote ethnic diversity, offer cultural competency training, and create pathways to support future candidates from culturally marginalised backgrounds. This would enrich political representation and align with broader societal inclusion.

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Digital barriers and misinformation

Addressing the digital divide is essential for leveraging social media and online resources for civics education. Providing digital literacy training to migrants and refugees can empower them to access reliable information and participate in online civic discussions.

Digital barriers are a critical factor that further complicates the civic engagement of migrants and refugees. Many newly arrived migrants and refugees may not have consistent access to digital devices or reliable internet connections. This digital divide can prevent them from accessing online resources that provide essential information about voting and civic responsibilities. Furthermore, low digital literacy levels can hinder their ability to navigate online platforms effectively. For instance, filling out online voter registration forms or accessing electronic voting information can be challenging for individuals unfamiliar with digital technologies. To overcome these barriers, it is imperative to provide digital literacy training tailored to the needs of migrants and refugees. This training should cover basic skills such as using the internet, recognising reliable information sources, and understanding how to use government websites.

Digital literacy and English proficiency are linked, but distinct. Some barriers to engaging digitally relate to English language 'firewalls' - most translated materials in Australia are embedded within English-language websites, necessitating English literacy skills to access them. Even where a website is able to be navigated in-language, a lack of digital literacy may preclude engagement despite best efforts to cater to language barriers.

Another pressing issue is the widespread dissemination of misinformation through digital channels. Social media platforms, while useful for information sharing, are also rife with false or misleading content that can distort perceptions of the electoral process. Migrants and refugees, who may already be navigating a new and complex information environment, are particularly vulnerable to such misinformation. Misinformation can spread quickly within tightly-knit communities on platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and WeChat, leading to confusion and potentially deterring individuals from participating in civic matters. We observed the spread and harms of misinformation campaigns during the COVID-19 vaccine rollout[14] and the Voice referendum.[15]

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[14] Bang Xiao et al. (4 March 2021), "Misinformation about COVID vaccines is putting Australia's diverse communities at risk", *ABC News*, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-04/covid-19-vaccine-misinformation-cald-communities/13186936
[15] RMIT ABC Fact Check (29 Sep 2023), "Secret agendas, context-free claims and mistaken identities: these are the key themes in Voice to Parliament misinformation", *ABC News*, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-09-29/fact-check-voice-to-parliament-

With the advent of powerful Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, people from all social and educational backgrounds could be vulnerable to the spread of misinformation. AI can help spread misinformation by creating and disseminating false or misleading content at an unprecedented scale and speed. Advanced AI models, such as deepfakes and natural language processing algorithms, can generate highly convincing fake images, videos, and texts that are difficult to distinguish from authentic content. These AI-generated materials can be strategically deployed on social media platforms, websites, and forums to manipulate public opinion, influence political events, and cause social unrest. Additionally, AI-powered bots can amplify misinformation by rapidly sharing and promoting deceptive content across networks, creating echo chambers that reinforce false beliefs among targeted audiences. This capability of AI to produce and propagate misinformation poses significant challenges to identifying and mitigating the spread of false information in the digital age.

Critically, this is not only a risk within migrant and refugee communities. This is a risk at a population-wide level, and migrants and refugees can become targets of disinformation and misinformation, as socially marginalised groups are a common target. In looking at civic participation we must not only look to whether or how migrant and refugee communities engage, but also how other actors threaten their engagement. An increasingly polarised political climate combined with the multiplier effects of technology and AI is a risk that cannot be ignored.

Governments and community organisations should collaborate to identify and counteract misinformation. Creating centralised, easily accessible sources of verified information can help counteract false narratives. Public awareness campaigns are also crucial to educate voters on how to recognise and report false information. These efforts should include community leaders who can help disseminate accurate information and build trust within their communities.

Recommendation 3: Combating misinformation

Create easily accessible sources of verified information to counteract false narratives. Additionally, public awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate voters on recognising and reporting false information. These efforts must include community leaders to help disseminate accurate information and build trust within their communities.

Barriers to citizenship

Many of our member organisations are actively engaged in helping clients prepare for the citizenship test. While the test is a crucial step to becoming an Australian citizen, it also acts as a barrier for those who migrate to Australia as adults with very limited English. Many humanitarian migrants with limited proficiency in English struggle to pass the test despite living, working, and establishing family and community connections in Australia. Of the 2,068 humanitarian entrants who took the test between July and September 2009, only 1,016 (49.1%) passed on their first attempt. This pass rate was significantly lower than the average of 76.5% for all migration streams, and 85.6% when excluding humanitarian entrants. On average, humanitarian entrants took the citizenship test 1.7 times, compared to 1.2 times for all other

migration streams.[16] The overall pass rate for citizenship test has declined sharply in recent years after the September 2020 introduction of Australian values questions. Answering these questions requires a higher level of English proficiency, and in order to pass, a person must answer all five Australian values questions correctly and get an overall mark of at least 75 per cent. One incorrect answer to the Australian values questions means failing the whole test. The citizenship test pass rates plunged 65 per cent between June 2022 and August 2023, with over 100,000 individuals failing the test during this period. This marks a drop from the 80 per cent pass rate seen from 2017 to 2021.[17]

While humanitarian migrants perform the social functions of citizenship and have no other loyalty except to Australia, the citizenship test hinders them from becoming fully Australians and exercising the full breadth of their civic rights. People aged 60 years or older are exempt from taking the test. However, if exempt earlier, younger migrants could fulfil most of their duties and entitlements, such as joining Australian defence forces, public service, or applying for an Australian passport. We urge the committee to take their unique situation into consideration and consider the ways in which the test can *inhibit* rather than foster civic participation for humanitarian migrants.

In our recent consultation, our member organisations also reported challenges accessing test centres in certain regional and remote locations. As many migrants move to regional areas, which boosts the local economy and addresses population declines, it is necessary to increase the number of test centres in such locations.

> ### *Recommendation 4: Citizenship test*
>
> - *Reform the citizenship test to take into consideration the unique situation of migrants who arrive in Australia without formal skills and English requirements, such as humanitarian migrants and sponsored family members.*
> - *Establish more citizenship test centres in regional areas and increase outreach for citizenship testing.*

Conclusion and recommendations

Certain groups of migrants and ethnic minorities in Australia, especially those from non-British and non-European backgrounds, encounter numerous social and institutional barriers that hinder their full integration into the country's multicultural community. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census reveals that migrants from British and European backgrounds achieve different socioeconomic outcomes compared to those from Asian backgrounds, despite having similar educational qualifications and durations of residence in Australia. Consequently, achieving social membership and inclusion remains a challenge for specific migrant groups. To address this significant social issue, Australia needs a deeper commitment to the core principles of citizenship that goes beyond merely formal equality.[18]

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[16] Refugee Council of Australia (2019), *Settling in Australia: The challenges*, https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/settlement-challenges/10/

[17] Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District Inc. (19 January 2024) "Citizenship test pass rates plummet" https://ethniccouncilshepparton.com.au/?p=11947

[18] Juliet, P. (2017) "Diverse outcomes: Social citizenship and the inclusion of skilled migrants in Australia." *Social Inclusion* 5 (1): 32-44. https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/55322#

As Australia becomes "the first English-speaking nation to have a migrant majority",[19] it is strongly speculated that migrants will shape the future of Australian politics.[20] It is imperative that political parties, AEC, and other stakeholders consider this new demographic reality and take proactive measures to engage new Australians in civic engagement.

SCOA provides the below recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for meaningful civic education, engagement and participation of new and emerging Australians.

The Settlement Council of Australia urges the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to consider the unique challenges and contributions of culturally diverse communities, particularly newly arrived refugees and migrants. By enhancing civics education through formal and informal mechanisms, addressing barriers to participation, and leveraging the strengths of these communities, Australia can ensure a more inclusive and engaged citizenry.

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[19] George Megalogenis (2 July, 2022), "Root-and-branch renewal as Australia makes migrant-majority history", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, https://www.smh.com.au/national/root-and-branch-renewal-as-australia-makes-migrant-majority-history-20220629-p5axo0.html
[20] John Black (28 March 2024), "How migrants are changing the face of Australian politics", *Financial Review*, https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/how-migrants-are-changing-the-face-of-australian-politics-20240325-p5ff4e

List of recommendations

Recommendation 1: Culturally appropriate civics education

- *Partner with local community organisations to co-create and disseminate civics education materials, ensuring that the information is culturally appropriate and effectively reaches the target audience.*
- *Use lessons learnt from COVID-19 information campaigns regarding the use of text, image, audio and video materials in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.*

Recommendation 2: Address poor representation in legislative and leadership positions

- *To address the poor representation of culturally diverse Australians in legislative and political leadership positions, all political parties should actively promote ethnic diversity, offer cultural competency training, and create pathways to support future candidates from culturally marginalised backgrounds. This would enrich political representation and align with broader societal inclusion.*

Recommendation 3: Combating misinformation

- *Create easily accessible sources of verified information to counteract false narratives. Additionally, public awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate voters on recognising and reporting false information. These efforts must include community leaders to help disseminate accurate information and build trust within their communities.*

Recommendation 4: Citizenship test

- *Reform the citizenship test to take into consideration the unique situation of migrants who arrive in Australia without formal skills and English requirements, such as humanitarian migrants and sponsored family members.*
- *Establish more citizenship test centres in regional areas and increase outreach for citizenship testing.*

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