



**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY  
INTO MIGRANT SETTLEMENT  
OUTCOMES**

**THE COMMITTEE SECRETARY,  
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION**



# PURPOSE

To provide a written submission from Access Group International Limited (Access) regarding the parliamentary inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes.

## BACKGROUND

Helping individuals, families and communities to effectively settle and engage in their new environments by providing quality, innovative and responsive service offerings when it's needed the most is just the beginning of how Access works with its clients. Access, one of Queensland's leading not-for-profit organisations, is nationally recognised for its delivery of service solutions that focus on promoting community development initiatives to improve the economic and social well-being of people across Queensland and Australia.

The extensive scope and reach of Access's service delivery portfolio consists of individual and group case management, capacity building, community development, family support services and programs, youth initiatives, health and life skills programs and services including counselling. Employment, training, literacy, language and numeracy skills programs are delivered to some of the most complex needs clients who are not only struggling with acculturation and settlement issues but face severe trauma and mental health issues, lack interpersonal and cross cultural skills and face significant language and cultural barriers.

Our experience in delivering on contracted work is underpinned by our robust Quality Assurance framework, which ensures that the work we provide is of the highest standard and not only meets, but exceeds the expectations of our clients. Access is supported by a diverse workforce consisting of more than 345 staff from over 49 different nationalities speaking over 71 different languages and dialects, representing a wide range of industries from social work to health sciences and education to aged-care.

We specialise in using a collective impact approach in working collaboratively with government and private sector organisations to develop strategies to deliver significant and lasting social and economic change. This specialised strategic approach has helped to grow Access into a strong, award winning organisation whose brand is associated with quality and customised service responses, a leader in social enterprise and innovation and an industry leader in productive diversity, social research and development and community service development.



# CONTEXT

Access understands that the Committee shall give particular consideration to social engagement of youth migrants, including involvement of youth migrants in anti-social behavior such as gang activity, and the adequacy of the Migration Act 1958 character test provisions as a means to address issues arising from this behavior. As such, Access is providing two written submissions - one from Access Group International Limited, and another through Multicultural Youth Queensland (MYQ) with a focus on specific youth issues.



# DISCUSSION

**THE MIX, COORDINATION AND EXTENT OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE SERVICES IN PROMOTING BETTER SETTLEMENT OUTCOMES FOR MIGRANTS.**

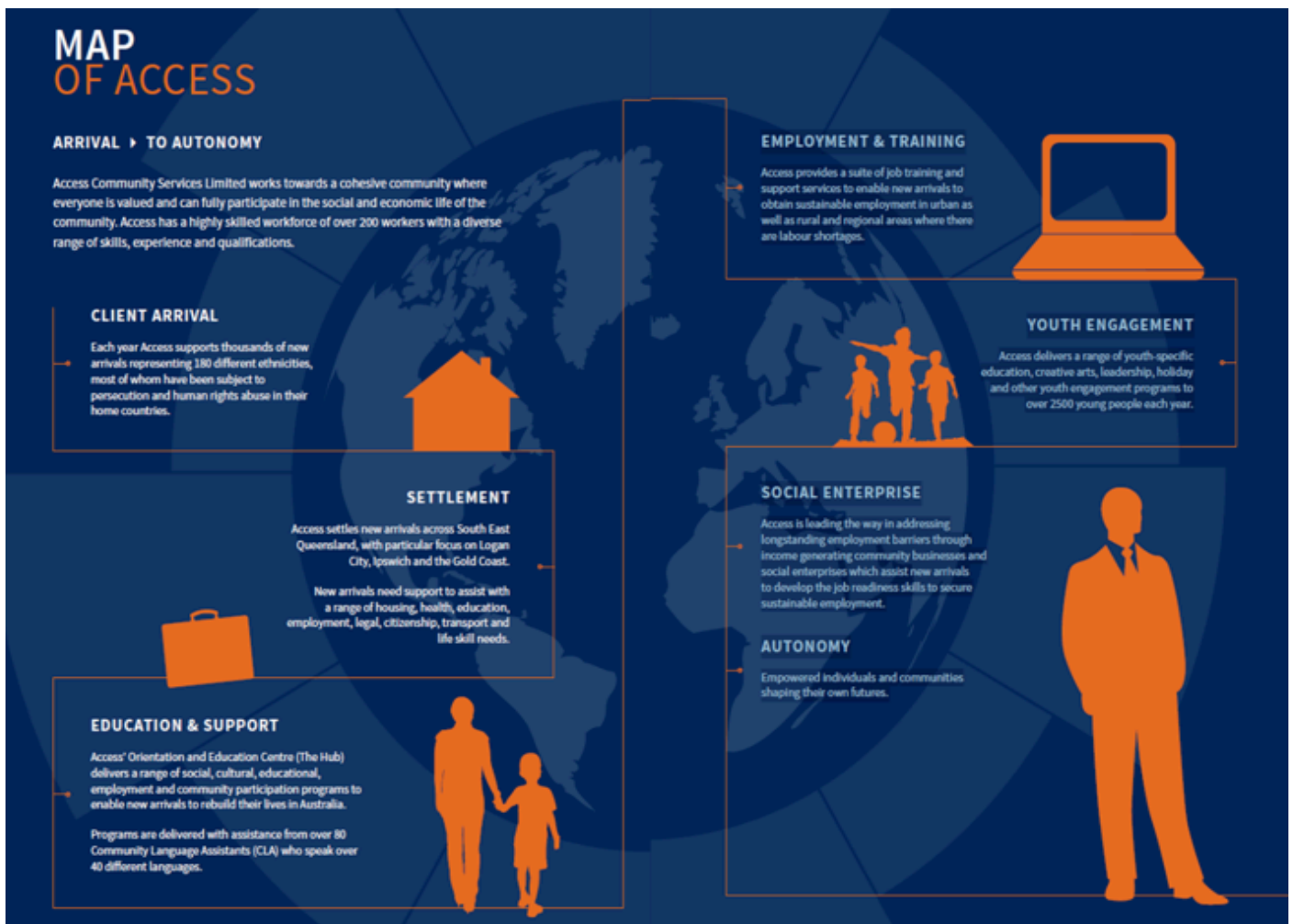
Access believes that one of Australia's greatest assets is our diverse and inherently rich cultural background; a background that economically, politically and socially, not only contributes to the nation we are today, but as importantly - to the one we will become tomorrow. Access has thrived on a positive approach and as a settlement leader, we focus on the overall adjustment experience, skills development and a strengths-based approach.

Working with our local communities to stimulate community engagement and building bridges between the diverse cultural and ethnic groups of our region is important to the social cohesion agenda, that Access plays a lead in. Access witnessed that the refugee crisis emanating out of Syria inspired a strong bi-partisan response from all levels of government and generated goodwill from within a community that is truly one of inclusiveness, compassion and generosity. The landscape is not all negative around settlement in Australia - as the media can often lead us to believe.

Access continues to address growing needs within the community, while continuing to work towards the six major strategic goals of our Corporate Plan - Employment and Economic Development; Safety Health and Wellbeing; Sustainable Development and Growth; Developing and Supporting Communities; Strategic Information and Advice and; Good Governance - as we assist our clients from 'arrival to autonomy'.









# 1. EXPERTISE IN SETTLEMENT

Through years of working in the Settlement space, Access has identified that settlement expertise is crucial to being able to achieve successful settlement outcomes for individuals and communities. With an understanding of people's stories and personal experiences, we have been able to influence how mainstream services interact and consult with clients, at the same time increasing good practice capabilities. Partners with whom we work with have been able to develop appropriate responses to working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) individuals and also seek further cultural advice from Access. Our experiences as a Settlement provider have demonstrated the need for expertise in working with CALD communities and individuals. If the Settlement space was to be led by mainstream services, the expertise would be lost and the response would more homogenous.

Settlement Services aim to assist eligible clients to become self-reliant and participate equitably in Australian society, while maximising the productivity of our diversity and the economic and social well-being of clients. These services also assist to minimise longer-term reliance on social services. Casework services involve the provision of settlement related information, advice, advocacy or referral services to individuals or families either on request or as assessed/required due to issues arising from the client's settlement experience. This includes needs assessment, the development of individual case plans and support for clients referred from Humanitarian Settlement Services. This service type may also include programs that assist clients to become 'job ready', by building skills and capabilities in employment and education.

Settlement services are delivered successfully to recent arrivals from all cultural backgrounds without discrimination based on race, religion or nationality. The sector's dedicated workforce possesses a vital understanding of the needs of different cultures,

providing culturally aware services that are sensitive, relevant and appropriate. Under the leadership of Gail Ker, CEO of Access, we have seen significant growth in all aspects of the organisation, but especially in personnel, with our overall headcount increasing from 98 employees in 2008 to 347 in 2016. One key point of difference within Access is staff diversity, and Gail Ker was recognised for this in 2015 by being awarded the CEO Diversity Champion by Australian Human Resources Institute. These values are embedded within our team and is demonstrated through a diverse workforce.

Access currently has 246 employees, 82 Community Language Assistants (CLAs) and 19 Business Trainees, totalling 347 staff. Our staff come from 49 different countries and speak 71 different language groups and dialects and many are members and leaders in their local community.

Volunteers are also a very important part of our organisation and work alongside staff to provide quality services to clients and community groups through a range of life skill programs and community engagement activities.





## 2. EARLY INTERVENTION AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Access conducts a range of early intervention strategies and protective measures throughout the settlement experience including conducting community education sessions that are adaptable to clients' trending issues and needs and assist in preventative and education measures around

settlement. They includes basic life skills around health, mental health, housing, accessing services, etc; but can also include capacity building for communities, storm season awareness, employability skills, domestic violence prevention and more.

## 3. STRATEGIC APPROACH

Access strives to identify and drive strategic opportunities, enhance service delivery and build evidence-based research and practice. In doing so, we aim to competitively position the organisation across multiple sectors that support CALD communities. Strategic development and growth of the organisation is achieved through organisational funding, social policy, research, evaluation and project development. Access has also established key partnerships that enable us to deliver services that are recognised as best practice.

### LOCAL AREA COORDINATION (LAC)

Access facilitates a Local Area Coordination (LAC) meeting quarterly to improve service coordination and enhance collaboration between key stakeholders who service newly arrived refugee clients. The LAC encompasses government and community organisations across South East Queensland (Logan, Ipswich and the Gold Coast) and focuses on identifying key issues and solutions. From the LAC network, several working groups have been established to address gaps in service delivery. Positive outcomes particularly within the delivery of health services and coordination of employment services for refugees in this region, have resulted from the LAC. The LAC also provides an opportunity for Access to highlight key trends in arrivals.

### SETTLEMENT SUCCESS RESEARCH (TRIPLE P)

Access has completed a pilot study with the University of Queensland (UQ) titled Parenting After Migration: Exploring the Acceptability of a Parenting Intervention Aimed at Improving Family Adjustment During Resettlement in Australia.

This project explores family adjustment post-settlement while also providing an initial indication of psychological wellbeing, family functioning and socio-economic participation. Key findings to date indicate that refugee and CALD migrant families are highly receptive to parenting support; practitioner experience, flexibility, and rapport with parents is key to successful program delivery; and participating families derived very positive benefits from program participation. These findings provide validation of the worthwhile nature of the body of research as a whole and the need for parenting support early in the settlement period. The next step for this research is a randomised control trial (RCT) of Triple P for migrant and former-refugee parents.

Settlement Services directly assist recent arrivals to start new lives in Australia and enhances their potential to make social, civic, political and economic contributions to this country.

*“Rather than becoming a part of our community, we want our clients to add to our community. To impart upon us their customs and the unique and amazing aspects of their cultures. This allow us to learn and grow into a better community, because of them.”*

HSS Team Leader





## 4. INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT - CASE MANAGEMENT

Access has several settlement programs that assist newly arrived refugees to settle in Australia. One such program is Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS). The HSS program at Access endeavors to guide clients through their settlement journey, with the ultimate goal being autonomy. HSS clients are well supported by a team of case-workers, housing workers and HUB teachers. Each family or client case, have a specific allocated worker from each division who provide personalized and client-centered care. The individualized case management approach remains for approximately 6 to 12 months, which allows sufficient time for most clients to develop a basic level of autonomy and independence.

The HSS program focuses upon a strengths-based tailored approach whereby staff utilise the clients' resilience and prior experiences, to provide a foundation for their new settlement journey. Clients are actively engaged through HSS support, guiding the case management approach. Clients develop new skills & are linked to support services (case management), learn Australian real estate & rental market (housing), and develop greater understandings of Australian law, culture and services (HUB). Moreover, with the new venture, the Access Gateway, client services are further tailored by internal & external services collaborating in a joint space, to allow for greater flexibility and streamlining of services.

Clients who have greater needs, are also referred to the Complex Case Support (CSS) service at Access for more specialized and intensive care. CCS workers and HSS workers collaborate on such cases, with the key being ensuring that clients are linked to appropriate services, improvements in client progress are demonstrated and that clients are closer to becoming less dependent on their support workers.

Once clients have exited the HSS program at Access, they are generally referred to the Settlement Services (SS) program who provide continued support for up to 5 years. This support is less intensive and is on a needs basis, therefore again individualised by client needs. Should clients continue to or develop the need for CCS support during this period, this can be implemented to ensure that clients are receiving the best possible support that they require.



## 5. CASE STUDY: HUMANITARIAN ENTRANT FULFILS DREAM OF EMPLOYMENT AND HOME OWNERSHIP

Arriving in Australia in 2007, Access was there to meet Cin and his family at the Brisbane International Airport ten years ago. His settlement journey as a newly arrived Humanitarian Entrant has since led him to permanent employment through Access' Social Enterprise AES Building and Maintenance Solutions. He also purchased his own house in 2014.

### MEET CIN

Cin is a 40-year-old male from Burma who arrived in Australia in 2007 after 10 years in a Malaysian Refugee Camp with his family. He had little knowledge of Australian culture and limited ability to speak English.

"I don't know how to pay bills, rent the house, we don't know how to read, how to write. That's how Access helped us. They helped all the family, and we meet new people."

There were adjustments to make and challenges to overcome in the early years of settlement, including health concerns. Times were not always easy, but Cin had this motto - "It will be better tomorrow."

"Even back then, though, I thought about my own home in the future, even in the first 12 months. I will own my own home. That is my dream."

As Cin's English improved, and his family settled into life in Australia, Access began focusing on employment support. He started work experience at the Access carpark as a parking attendant, and after that, part-time work in housing maintenance.

Then came the news that he had really been hoping for – he was employed by AES, where he received training, equipment and professional support, including the attainment of a Queensland White Card for working in the construction industry. When he progressed from part-time casual to part-time permanent in 2014, he was able to buy a home.

*"My family was so happy. I start my job with AES then after one year I went to the bank to buy a home - my dream."*

Cin recalls, and is grateful for, being picked up from the Brisbane International Airport in 2007 by Sophal, a caseworker at Access. He adds, "If people are coming and don't know anything, sometimes they are not helped and they start feeling alone. That's why people need help."

"I was picked up from the airport and they (Access) were very helpful from the beginning and that was really important. It is also really important to have a job in the long term, giving me experience and confidence. Everything at Access has been good. People are honest and I keep a job that is helping other people."

## MEET SOPHAL

Sophal is a caseworker at Access and is a former refugee himself from Cambodia, who arrived in Australia in 1982 with his wife and four small children. He started working at Access in 1987 and has over 29 years' experience in settling thousands of humanitarian entrant families. Every one of those families has a unique story and has a special place in Sophal's heart.

Sophal describes the airport pick up process: "When you first see these families they are nervous, excited, and most likely exhausted. They can be on a plane for days — it is a very long process — and then through departures and other paperwork. They often have had no sleep, but we always welcome them, make them feel comfortable, and tell them that they are safe. We take them, we show them, and we just ask them how they feel - 'Are you alright? Did you sleep well on the plane?' We just keep talking to them and help them feel more relaxed. We are there for them."

Sophal worked with Cin and his family in the first eight months of settlement, helping them adjust to life in Australia, helping them learn immediate new skills about life in Australia. He also started to help set longer term goals focused around schooling, family adjustment, employment and housing.

He feels that it is important to acknowledge that culturally, people often arrive with a very strong work ethic and owning your own home is part of family pride.

*"People do not come to Australia just to exist, they come for a better life for their families and to work hard."*

"I use my own example and I understand about their culture, about their feelings, about their cooking, about everything. We come here for our children and it's a part of me too and it is very powerful. That's why I can be the first person at Access who can lead them on the way to their goals."

Sophal has kept in touch with Cin and his family throughout the last ten years, saying a cheery hello whenever he saw him. "I have always said hello to Cin and asked about his family. He told me that his wife could drive now and I said 'Oh congratulations'. It's a part of me to stay connected."

When he was given a more comprehensive update on Cin and his settlement journey he pauses to reflect: "I am so proud to know this. It is part of my own achievements to see our people (Access clients) progress in their lives. Especially that they are happy as citizens in Australia."

In 2016, Cin and Sophal met up again to celebrate Cin's amazing settlement achievements, a combined result of his personal drive and the settlement support of Access.







## 6. SPECIALISED PROGRAM SUPPORT: WOMEN

The Women at Risk Program is vitally important as single women and their children are particularly vulnerable, experience greater inequity in accessing assistance and protection and are at greater risk of discrimination and gender-based violence. The Women at Risk Program guarantees safety and protection for a small portion of these vulnerable women, who are unlikely to be prioritised through SHP or other Australian visa subclass streams.

Access has dedicated female case-workers who specialise in the provision of case management and the facilitation of community development initiatives for women at risk. The case-workers provide intensive case management support for single women and their children to address complexities

intersecting between gender, religion and pre / post migration experiences. The aim of this intensive support is to ensure women are socially connected within the community and have the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships, build confidence, feel safe and engage in learning new skills to promote independence.

Our Community Engagement and development approach focuses on prevention goals (i.e. preventing vulnerability by empowering, connecting, supporting and engaging community groups and their leaders to develop resilience and self-reliance skills. It also recognises and builds on existing resilience and protective factors).



## 7. TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Through training and employment people find identity, self-confidence and a sense of purpose in the wider community. These aspects of working life are important for personal wellbeing, growth and quality of life are highlighted through our training and employment programs. Access has a strong focus on pre-employment training and skills development including:

### SKILLING QUEENSLANDERS FOR WORK (SQW)

Access delivers programs under the Queensland Governments' SQW initiative which aim to deliver quality programs to support employment and training for disadvantaged individuals throughout Queensland. It focuses on developing an individual's skills, supporting them to begin a learning pathway to a Certificate III qualification, and providing direct assistance to those Queenslanders who need extra support to enter and stay in the workforce. Tailored, local, community-based support is offered to young people, mature-age job seekers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability and people from CALD backgrounds.

There are six programs that make up the SQW initiative:

- Community Work Skills
- Ready for Work
- Get Set for Work
- Youth Skills
- Work Start Incentives
- First Start

*"The services that Access are delivering to participants are over and above what is funded and expected through the SQW program and they are clearly contributing to better outcomes for the participants. On behalf of Mercy Community Services, I want to extend my thanks for the services that are being delivered and offer our support to increase participant numbers in the program."*

- General Manager - Strategic Service Development, Mercy Community Services.

*"We have recently participated in the pilot program by providing industry work experience for 13 candidates completing their Certificate II in Hospitality. From this program, we successfully provided employment opportunities for eight candidates."*

- Ikea, Logan

*"I want to expand my career and get a new job. The door is getting opened!"*

- Ramadan, Participant

*"Thanks to Access and government to help us to take course at Tafe."*

- Ghasem, Participant





## STRIVE INTERNATIONAL

Strive International is a commercial Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that has been a part of Access since late 2015. Strive's goal is to develop employability skills and raise the confidence and self-esteem for individuals to pursue a career in the industry they aspire to or move into further education, training and employment. Strive International aims to provide clients with the opportunity to gain relevant skills and knowledge through a mix of effective, relevant training and vocational placement to enhance employment outcomes.

Strive International strives to assist those most disadvantaged to reach their potential through employment and training. We work with clients who may be long term unemployed, parents returning to work, income recipients needing to meet job search obligations, migrants, school leavers and mainstream clients, to provide opportunities to gain

work experience and qualifications that will enable them to gain sustainable employment. We also work with clients who are already in the workforce who may be new to the job and require mentoring, support and training, or have been working for quite some time but are lacking formal qualifications that will enable them to progress in their occupation or be considered for promotion.

Through our links and relationships, we have established networks and partnerships in the workforce that we continue to canvas and grow to develop relevant employment avenues and training pathways for participants through the provision of work training and opportunities for industry-based work experience. Strive includes Certificate 3 Guarantee, High Level Skills (Certificate IV and above) and User Choice (traineeship) funded training places (in partnership with the SQW program).



## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING MIGRANT SETTLEMENT OUTCOMES AND PROSPECTS.

# 8. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE – LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the greatest challenges society faces today is protecting the vast number of displaced people around the world. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there were 65.3 million people who have been forced to leave their homes due to armed conflict and human rights violations at the end of 2015 – an increase of 4.8 million people from the year prior<sup>1</sup>. With one of the world's largest resettlement programs, Australia shares the responsibility of protecting refugees and contributing to international best practices in settlement services. This review of selected literature (below) investigates the resettlement processes, best practices and challenges faced by the top four countries that resettle refugees with UNHCR: United States, Canada, Australia and Norway.

A number of trends in best practices are identified through the examination of government factsheets, agency resources and journal articles from these countries. Literature from United States, Canada, Australia and Norway demonstrate that there must be a strong focus on integration support services,

education opportunities, career pathways, health and wellbeing and civic participation.

Australia contributes a great variety of literature and resources to the global settlement sector and draws on prominent peak bodies to guide its practices. Access constantly reviews national and international best practices to establish a global footprint and provide world-class client-directed services.

Access is committed to applying key national settlement standards and frameworks to all its practices and enterprises. We endeavour to embody the priority areas identified by national and international peak bodies by adopting a human rights lens and integrated, client-centred approaches at both the systematic and practice levels. Although health and wellbeing are at the forefront of our initiatives, we recognise that education, employment, language support, transport, civic participation, family support and justice are interconnected and must act in cohesion.

<sup>1</sup>“UNHCR Global Trends 2015 – How Australia compares with the world,” *Refugee Council of Australia*, <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getfacts/statistics/unchr2015/> (June 20, 2016).



## 9. RESETTLEMENT IN UNITED STATES – 52,583 REFUGEES ASSISTED BY UNHCR IN 2015<sup>2</sup>

In the U.S., refugee resettlement is facilitated through the Refugee Admissions Program, which is jointly administered by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration in the Department of State, the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services and offices within the Department of Homeland Security. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services conducts refugee interviews and determines individual eligibility for refugee status in the United States. In order to qualify for refugee status, individuals generally must not already have migrated and settled in another country.

Refugees are classified into three main channels in the Refugee Admissions Program:

- **Priority One** - Individuals at risk of persecution, or for whom no other feasible solution exists. These refugees are referred to the U.S. by UNHCR, or identified by a U.S. embassy or a non-governmental organisation (NGO).
- **Priority Two** - Groups of “special concern” to the U.S., which are selected by the Department of State with input from Immigration, UNHCR, and designated NGOs. Currently, the groups include certain persons from the former Soviet Union, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Iran, Burma, and Bhutan.
- **Priority Three** - Relatives of refugees who are resettled in the U.S. may be admitted as refugees<sup>3</sup>.

Once a refugee has been provisionally accepted to the U.S. (this acceptance is pending medical and security clearance), the Refugee Processing Centre works with private voluntary agencies to determine where the refugee will be relocated. Refugees who

resettle in the U.S. are not required to have a sponsor, however, if a refugee approved for admission does have a relative living in the U.S., the Refugee Processing Centre will endeavour to place them near their family. After assurance, placement and medical/security clearance is completed, arrangements are made for travel to the U.S.

Previously, this entire process took 18-24 months, and refugees would be left in dangerous locations for long periods of time. These issues have improved since 2014 due to inter-agency coordination and processing procedures<sup>4</sup>.

### U.S. BEST PRACTICES IN RESETTLEMENT

Much of U.S. literature on refugee resettlement contents that based on the vast number of refugees they accept, they do achieve positive outcomes in a number of areas:

- Employment - From 2009 - 2011, refugee men ages 16 years and older were more likely to work than their U.S. born counterparts. Refugee women were just as likely to work as U.S. born women, at 54%. Refugee women from four of the ten most common ethnic groups exceeded U.S. born women (Vietnamese, Liberians, Ukrainians and Russians), while the other six groups fell behind U.S. born women (Cubans, Iranians, Burmese, Somalis, Bhutanese and Iraqis). The lower employment rates of women from some refugee groups often translates into fewer workers per household, thus lower household incomes. However, overall, U.S. settlement services claim that they successfully promote refugee self-sufficiency.

<sup>2</sup> Karlsen, Elibritt., “Refugee resettlement to Australia: what are the facts?” *Law and Bills Digest Section*, [http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/RefugeeResettlement](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/RefugeeResettlement) (September 7, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> “An Overview of U.S. Refugee Law and Policy,” *American Migration Council*, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/overview-us-refugee-law-and-policy> (November 18, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> “An Overview of U.S. Refugee Law and Policy,” *American Migration Council*, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/overview-us-refugee-law-and-policy> (November 18, 2015).

- Spoken Language Proficiency – The U.S. refugee program recognises that English language proficiency is vital to independence and integration. Like other immigrants, refugees tend to gain English skills over time – however, from 2009-2011 58% of refugees, with over 20 years of U.S. residency, had limited English proficiency. Children reported higher proficiency than adults. In order to tackle limited English proficiency, U.S. settlement services emphasise the importance of education.
- Education Attainment – The level of education among refugees generally correlates with household income and other indicators of social welfare based on skills recognition. The overall educational attainment of refugees falls between the attainment levels of other immigrants and the U.S. born. From 2009-2011, refugee adults were less likely than the U.S. born to have completed secondary school, but the two groups were equally likely to have a bachelor's degree. U.S. settlement services highlight that opportunities and support for credential transfer would lead to higher employment rates among refugees.
- Median Household Income – Although refugees have relatively high education attainment and employment rates, they have lower incomes than other immigrants. The refugee median household income from 2009-2011 was \$42,000, which is roughly \$3,000 less than other immigrants, and \$8,000 less than the median for U.S. born households. It should be noted that refugee incomes rise substantially according to their length of stay – however – refugees are still more likely to live below the poverty line and require welfare benefits. Unlike other immigrants, refugees qualify immediately upon arrival for cash welfare benefits, food assistance and public health insurance to mitigate these hardships

The U.S. government has achieved some positive outcomes for refugees in the above identified domains of resettlement, but does recognise that there is room for improvement. Based on the fact that the nation admits the highest number of refugees, progress is urgent.

In response to the concern that refugees have faced high levels of impact violence and trauma, U.S. refugee agencies place social work and counselling practices as high priority in their services. Social work case management of refugees has evolved and progressed in the last few decades, with an emphasis on applying specialised adaptations and applications of mainstream services, and adopting a “pan-cultural perspective” (focuses on common experiences and practice approaches for working with all immigrants and refugees). Social workers separate the stages of refugee resettlement into three categories with corresponding treatment: Pre-flight, flight and resettlement stress:

- Pre-flight experience – is associated with severe mental health issues and can be linked to torture and trauma which requires PTSD support.
- Flight experience - although this stage may be radically different for individuals and ethnic groups, depending on the duration and conditions of their journey to safety, this stage of the refugee journey can compound the symptoms of trauma.
- Resettlement - At this stage, social workers provide a practical target for preventive interventions. In the years following permanent resettlement in a third country, the experience of past trauma is only one of many issues facing refugees; trauma is not necessarily a phenomenon of the past, but is ongoing, especially when family and friends are left behind in refugee camps or combat zones<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Auclair et al. *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees: Successes and Challenges* (Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2015) 16-23.

<sup>6</sup> Capps, Randy & Fix, Michael., *10 Facts about U.S. Refugee Resettlement* (Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Potocky-Tripodi, Miriam., *Best Practices for Social Work with Refugees and Immigrants* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Davidson et al., “Review of Refugee Mental Health Interventions Following Resettlement: Best Practices and Recommendations.” *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 80.4 (2010): 576–585.



## CHALLENGES FACED IN RESETTLEMENT

A number of challenges have been identified in refugee resettlement in the U.S. with regards to protection and migration:

- Post 9/11 Anti-Refugee Sentiment - As most are well aware, the U.S. faces challenging anti-refugee sentiments today which is linked to heightened security concerns post-9/11. There is pressure on the Refugee Admissions Program to screen and scrutinise, especially those who are outside the U.S., because they are the easiest to delay. Contributing to the sentiment that resettled refugees should be closely examined for links to security threats is the fact that they are classified as 'invited'; border protection officers do not want to risk being responsible for granting entrance to an individual who may turn out to be a security threat, so the best method is to reject<sup>9</sup>.
- The Asylum Filing Deadline - In 1996, Congress passed a provision barring an individual from asylum if he or she did not apply for protection within a year of arriving in the U.S. This "filing deadline" has not only impacted refugees who face religious, political, and other forms of persecution from obtaining asylum in the U.S., but it also delays the resolution of refugee and asylum cases. This has led to thousands of cases that could have been resolved at the asylum office level to be shifted to the increasingly backlogged immigration court system.
- Expedited Removal - Immigration officers have the authority to order the immediate, expedited deportation of people who arrive in the U.S. without legal travel documents. While measures were put in place to protect asylum seekers with credible fears of persecution from this deportation, a study by the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom found serious flaws in the implementation of these measures and yet there are still used.

- Maritime Interdiction - The U.S. has a long history of interdicting Cuban, Haitian, Chinese, and other asylum seekers and migrants at sea, which has triggered international criticism. These practices have also set a poor international example. The U.S. does not have effective, fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory standards to govern its prohibiting actions and to ensure compliance with its commitments under the Refugee Protocol and other human rights conventions.
- Sexual and Gender-based Persecution Claims - Although the U.S. has played a leading role in advancing protection for victims of sexual and gender-based persecution, significant gaps continue to undermine the ability of refugees who face these harms to access and receive U.S. asylum or resettlement. There is no assessment to determine whether a petitioner qualifies as a refugee, and more notably, there is no distinction between male and female applicants.

As a result of the twelve-year delay in resolving these issues, refugee and asylum applicants have been denied protection and entrance into the U.S. They have been returned to persecutors or live in legal limbo, postponing their ability to reunite with their children and bring them out of harm's way<sup>10</sup>.



<sup>9</sup> Noll, Gregor & Van Selm, Joanne., "Rediscovering Resettlement." Insight 3 – Migration Policy Institute (2003): 3.

<sup>10</sup> How to Repair the U.S. Asylum and Refugee Resettlement Systems (New York: Human Rights First, 2012), 5-6.

## 10. RESETTLEMENT IN CANADA – 10,236 REFUGEES ASSISTED BY UNHCR IN 2015<sup>11</sup>

The Canadian government claims that compassion and fairness are a source of pride for many of its citizens. Refugees selected to resettle in Canada have often fled their homes because of inconceivable hardships and have often lived in refugee camps for years – for some, their entire lives. As a member of the UNHCR community, Canada endeavours to find long-term solutions to prolonged and emerging refugee situations and assists developing democracies to challenge the environments that create refugee populations<sup>12</sup>.

The Canadian refugee system has two main entrance channels:

- Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program – The UNHCR, along with private sponsors, identifies refugees to enter Canada. Once a refugee candidate has been selected, the case must be screened to ensure that there are no issues relating to security, criminality or health. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada works with security partners, such as the Canada Border Services Agency, to facilitate this process. Private sponsors, who may be individuals or communities, also apply to resettle refugees. Some private sponsors do so on an ongoing basis and have signed sponsorship agreements with the Government of Canada to support refugees from abroad. Other sponsors, known as Groups of Five and Community Sponsors, are persons/groups in the community who are not involved on an ongoing basis but have come together to sponsor refugees. In 2013, Canada launched the Blended Visa Office-Referred Program to match refugees identified for resettlement by the UNHCR with private sponsors in Canada.

- In-Canada Asylum Program - This program is for people making refugee protection claims from within Canada. Refugees and asylum seekers may enter Canada before making their claim, and the number of people arriving varies each year. In 2014, over 13,500 people made an asylum claim from within Canada. This program works to protect refugees in Canada who have a legitimate fear of persecution, or who are at risk of torture or cruel or unusual punishment, in their home countries. Not everyone is eligible for asylum – for instance, people convicted of serious criminal offences and people who have had previous refugee claims rejected by Canada are not eligible to make a claim<sup>13</sup>.

### **CANADIAN BEST PRACTICES IN RESETTLEMENT**

Whether refugees have resettled from overseas or have been granted protection from within Canada, they often do not have the resources to establish themselves. The Canadian government collaborates extensively with partners and stakeholders to deliver a broad range of settlement services to support successful integration. Refugees are granted initial provincial or federal funding, or monies from private sponsors. Individuals and families settled within the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) program are provided with immediate and essential services as well as income support under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) to support their initial settlement. Income support is generally provided for you to one year, or until the client becomes self-sufficient. Canada provides income support to eligible clients who cannot pay for their own basic needs. Monthly income support levels for accommodation, food and incidentals are guided by the prevailing provincial or territorial basic social assistance rates in the client's area of residence.

<sup>11</sup>Karlsen, Elibritt., "Refugee resettlement to Australia: what are the facts?" Law and Bills Digest Section, [http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/RefugeeResettlement](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/RefugeeResettlement) (September 7, 2016).

<sup>12</sup>"The Refugee System in Canada," Government of Canada, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/canada.asp>, (June 16, 2016).

<sup>13</sup>ibid





The RAP also provides immediate and essential services, generally delivered during the first four to six weeks following a client's arrival in Canada, including:

- Port of entry and reception services;
  - Temporary accommodation;
  - Help to find permanent accommodation;
  - Needs assessments;
  - Information and orientation; and
  - Links to other federal and provincial programs, as well as to other settlement services.
- Needs assessment and referral services to increase refugee awareness of their settlement requirements and link them to government and community settlement services;
  - Information and orientation services to better understand life in Canada and make informed decisions about the settlement experience;
  - Language training in English and French to foster skills to function in Canada;
  - Employment services that help newcomers search for, gain and retain employment in regulated and non-regulated professions;
  - Community connection services that enable refugees to receive assistance in public institutions, build networks with long-time Canadians and established immigrants with opportunities to fully participate in Canada society; and
  - Support services such as child care, transportation assistance, translation and interpretation services, provisions for persons with a disability, as well as short-term/crisis counselling to deal with settlement issues<sup>15</sup>.

Private sponsors must provide financial and emotional support to the refugees they sponsor for the duration of the sponsorship period, or until the refugee becomes financially independent. This includes accommodation, clothing and food assistance. Most sponsorships last for one year, but some refugees may be eligible for assistance from their sponsors for up to three years<sup>14</sup>.

The Canadian government funds a settlement program that assists refugee to adapt to life in Canada. These services include the following:

<sup>14</sup>ibid

<sup>15</sup>"Positive Spaces Initiative," Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, <http://www.positivespaces.ca/news/psi-one-cics-best-practices-settlement-services>, (December 20, 2016).

## Challenges Faced in Resettlement

Canada has settled more than 30,000 Syrian refugees since November 2015, but resettlement efforts cannot yet be considered a complete success. The Senate Committee on Human Rights issued a report on the federal government's refugee resettlement program, identifying a number of challenges encountered in the RAP.

- Delays, Bureaucracy, and Unequal Treatment – From January-February 2016, at the height of the Syrian refugee cohort, the Canadian government processed applications for resettlement on an expedited basis. By March, immigration officials announced that the expedited process for Syrian refugees was intended to be temporary, thus additional resources were withdrawn once the targets were on track to be met. When the additional allocated resources were pulled, refugee families were dismayed and taken aback by the long delays in finalising their applications. The lack of transparency in regards to these changes caused panic among refugees. Furthermore, when timelines are long or unclear, difficulties arise for community groups and individuals to make the financial, social and logistical commitment expected of sponsors. Another issue in relation to processing delays is the unequal treatment of refugees from different countries. The Canadian government accelerated the processing of applications for private sponsorships of Syrian refugees, but did not do so for refugees from other countries<sup>16</sup>.
- Inadequate Information Sharing, Coordination and Funding - The most well-known and accessible refugee resettlement organisations provide the public with information about the system, sponsorship opportunities and other ways to get involved. When the government does not communicate effectively, settlement agencies encounter difficulties managing the volume of inquiries, especially during the Syrian resettlement initiative. A lack of formal coordinating systems for case management and service delivery was also identified as a key gap.

- Starting out Behind - The resources available to the two main streams of Syrian refugees (private sponsored refugees (PSRs) and GARs) are significantly different and the implications have an impact on their ability to integrate. Many PSRs arrive equipped to tackle life in Canada and are supported by strong networks who are willing to help. On the other hand, private sponsorships do occasionally breakdown. When this happens, there is a risk that PSRs will be left entirely without support. GARs are specifically selected because they are the most vulnerable, yet they generally receive less support than PSRs.
- High Costs and Low Incomes – An issue repeatedly raised in Canadian parliament is how federal income is inadequate for GARs. It has generally been agreed that the level of financial support, which is tied to provincial social assistance rates, is inadequate to meet refugees' essential needs, such as food and shelter.

Despite the above challenges identified, the Canadian RAP has identified the below key areas to strive towards that lead to successful integration:

- Language training for adults and women must not be left behind;
- Employment for adults;
- Recognition of foreign education and work experience;
- Focus on experiences of children and youth;
- Mental health and the need for an appropriate response to refugee trauma;
- The need for a specialised response to violence against women; and
- Family reunification is essential for full integration<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Atallahjan, Salma & Munson Jim., *Finding Refuge in Canada: A Syrian Resettlement Story* (Ottawa: Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2016), [http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/committee/421/RIDR/Reports/RIDR\\_RPT\\_SyrianResettlement\\_FINAL\\_E.pdf](http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/committee/421/RIDR/Reports/RIDR_RPT_SyrianResettlement_FINAL_E.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Atallahjan, Salma & Munson Jim., *Finding Refuge in Canada: A Syrian Resettlement Story* (Ottawa: Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2016). [http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/committee/421/RIDR/Reports/RIDR\\_RPT\\_SyrianResettlement\\_FINAL\\_E.pdf](http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/committee/421/RIDR/Reports/RIDR_RPT_SyrianResettlement_FINAL_E.pdf)



## 11. RESETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA – 5,211 REFUGEES ASSISTED BY UNHCR IN 2015<sup>18</sup>

Through its refugee resettlement programs, the Australian government works to improve the lifetime wellbeing of migrants and refugees who are settled by responding to their specific needs and encouraging independence and participation in the Australian community. Australia and its population supports a productive, harmonious and diverse society for all Australians<sup>19</sup>.

Australia has two main channels of refugee programs:

**1) Humanitarian Programme for Refugees and Others in Refugee-Like Situations** – This program has two functions:

**a)** The onshore protection/asylum function fulfils Australia's international obligations by offering protection to people already in Australia who are found to be refugees according to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. It provides options for people who wish to apply for protection (or asylum) after arrival in Australia.

**b)** The offshore resettlement function demonstrates Australia's commitment to refugee protection by going beyond these commitments and offering resettlement to people overseas for whom it is the safest option. The offshore resettlement component includes two permanent visas:

**Refugee** - individuals who are at risk of persecution in their home country, who are typically outside their home country, and require relocation; and

**Special Humanitarian Programme** - individuals outside their home country who are subject to substantial discrimination which may lead to intense violation of human rights in their home country, and immediate family of persons who have been granted protection in Australia<sup>20</sup>

**2) Migration Programme for skilled and family migrants** – this program considers Australia's economic and social needs. There will be up to 190,000 permanent migration places available in 2015-2016 and at least 3,485 child places outside the managed Migration Programme. Child visas will no longer be included under this managed Migration Programme. Additional Child visa places will be available over the next four years as it transitions to a fully demand-driven programme by 2019-2020. Removing Child visas from the managed Migration Programme will ensure planning levels do not act as a barrier or delay to inter-country adoption or uniting other children with their Australian families<sup>21</sup>.

### **Australian Best Practices in Resettlement**

Australia has a number of peak national bodies to guide best practices in refugee settlement, such as the Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA), National Settlement Framework (through Department of Social Services) and the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN). These peak bodies investigate which services refugees need to integrate, and determine key indicators to measure successful settlement outcomes.



<sup>18</sup> Karlsen, Elibritt, "Refugee resettlement to Australia: what are the facts?" Law and Bills Digest Section, [http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/RefugeeResettlement](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/RefugeeResettlement) (September 7, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> "Settlement and Multicultural Affairs," Department of Social Services, <https://www.dss.gov.au/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs>, (June 28, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> "Fact sheet – Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian programme," Department of Immigration and Border Protection, <http://www.border.gov.au/about/corporate/information/fact-sheets/60refugee>, (23 December, 2016).

<sup>21</sup> "Fact sheet – Migration Programme Planning Levels," Department of Immigration and Border Protection, <http://www.border.gov.au/about/corporate/information/fact-sheets/20planning>, (23 December, 2016).

SCOA examines the question, “what do migration programs in Australia aim to do?” – It functions as a network of settlement providers that are committed to meeting international human rights obligations, as well as addressing economic and social needs within the country to foster growth and multiculturalism. SCOA has identified the following priorities for refugee resettlement:

- Human rights – “Australia has obligations under International Human Rights Law to protect and respect the rights of individuals seeking asylum. The humanitarian stream is intended to meet these obligations.”
- Family reunification – “Family visas are intended to facilitate reunification of family members that may have been separated as a result of fleeing conflict and to bring together migrant families.”
- Multiculturalism – “Australia’s non-discriminatory migration program and multiculturalism policy have been complementary since the 1970s, and have enabled diverse cultures to flourish.”
- Economic Growth – “Migration contributes to the overall GDP of Australia and is forecast as an essential component of Australia’s long-term economic growth.”
- Labour Market – “Skilled migration visas target specific skill shortages and aim to increase labour market participation and skill level of the labour force<sup>22</sup>.”

The National Settlement Framework (NSF) is a structural blueprint for the three tiers of government - Federal, State and Territory and Local Government - to collaborate effectively and deliver services that support refugee resettlement in Australia. According to the NSF, social service providers deliver an extensive range of services that benefit many Australians, such as welfare and support for vulnerable people in the community, including refugees and migrants. Social services, from both the government and non-government sectors, provide refugees with support, knowledge and skills that enable them to start a new life in Australia. In

particular, government-funded services focus on English language support, active participation in the workforce, and access to education. The NSF contents that these aspects are critical to successful settlement as they assist refugees to engage economically, socially and culturally in Australian society. Settlement is non-linear and migrants do not necessarily progress through services sequentially. The NSF has identified the following framework priority areas for refugee settlement:

- Education and Training
- Employment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Housing
- Language Services
- Transport
- Civic Participation
- Family and Social Support
- Justice<sup>23</sup>

Australia places a great deal of emphasis on the settlement and integration of young migrants, as one in four Australian young people are from a refugee or migrant background. MYAN, an advocacy non-profit body that provides advice to government, capacity building to those who work with young people, and supports the development of young people’s leadership, recognises that young people have great potential to be active participants and leaders in Australia. Engaging young people as active citizens has positive long term benefits, which is why MYAN has developed the National Youth Settlement Framework (NYSF) to support a targeted and consistent approach to addressing the needs of young people in the settlement context. MYAN ascertains that active citizenship is comprised of four key domains - social participation, economic participation, civic participation, personal well-being. Access has participated in workshops to ensure youth programs follow the MYAN framework and to identify indicators of these domains to attain successful outcomes<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> “Factsheet: Australia’s Humanitarian and Migration Program,” Settlement Council of Australia, file:///C:/Users/Chantal/Downloads/Australia+Immigration+Programs+Fact+Sheet\_final.pdf, (December 23, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> The National Settlement Framework,” Department of Social Services, [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/11\\_2016/the\\_national\\_settlement\\_framework.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/11_2016/the_national_settlement_framework.pdf), (November 2016).

<sup>24</sup> deAnstiss, Helena & Liddy, Nadine., *National Youth Settlement Framework* (Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network, 2016).





## CHALLENGES FACED IN RESETTLEMENT

Despite Australia's great efforts, refugees still face significant challenges in resettlement. As refugees begin a new life in a society completely foreign to them – different laws, education and health systems, languages and cultural expectations – gaps in services still exist. For individuals seeking asylum and refuge during this process, the challenges are compounded. Some of the challenges identified for refugees in Australia are the following:

- Sourcing affordable housing;
- Finding employment;
- Language and communication barriers;
- Racism and discrimination;
- Community attitudes;
- Impact of disrupted schooling;
- Separation from families, particularly if some family members remain in the conflict zone;
- Mental health issues linked to trauma, including survivor's guilt;
- Economic challenges; and
- Changes in familial roles and status of family roles.

Although research has demonstrated that refugee children are very resilient, young people face additional challenges due to their age and experience, such as:

- Physical and psychological trauma effects;

- Some children are forced to flee the country alone as minors;
- Language and literacy difficulties due to disrupted schooling;
- Lack of sense of identity and belonging; and
- Forced to take on leadership family roles<sup>25</sup>.

In light of these challenges, the Australian government, in collaboration with settlement services, carries out the following grassroots actions in their research, projects and service delivery to improve their practices and the experiences of refugees:

- Seek grassroots feedback from refugee communities;
- Consult refugee communities and Community Leaders about their needs and priorities;
- Collaborate with Community Leaders to encourage active members to attend consultations;
- Engage interpreters and bi-cultural workers when consulting with refugee communities orally;
- Provide translations when communicating through writing; and
- Consider child care and transport when consulting with refugees<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>25</sup>"Settlement Challenges," Roads to Refuge, <http://www.roads-to-refuge.com.au/settlement/settlement-challenges.html>, (2015)

<sup>26</sup>"Empowering Refugees: A Good Practice Guide to Humanitarian Settlement," Department of Social Services, <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/publications/empowering-refugees-a-good-practice-guide-to-humanitarian-settlement>, (March 2014)

## 12. RESETTLEMENT IN NORWAY – 2,220 REFUGEES ASSISTED BY UNHCR IN 2015<sup>27</sup>

Norway also works with UNHCR to provide solutions to the global refugee crisis by implementing critical and often life-saving intervention for refugees with compelling vulnerabilities and urgent protection needs. The UNHCR website states that “Norway has shown great commitment to international solidarity and burden sharing in response to UNHCR’s appeal for resettlement of Syrian refugees in urgent need of protection, by doubling its annual resettlement quota in 2015.” Norway pledged to increase its resettlement quota to 2,220 placements – 1,500 of which were allocated to Syrians .

There are no specific legal criteria for refugee resettlement in Norway. The Norway Immigration Act 2008 provides general standards for the recognition of refugees, and effectively serves as the legal basis for resettlement. The main Norwegian network that facilitates refugee resettlement are the Ministry of Justice and Emergency Planning, Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Directorate of Integration and Diversity, Municipalities, Norwegian People’s Aid, Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers, Norwegian PEN. The Norwegian government considers refugees in the following categories:

- Legal and physical protection needs;
- Survivors of violence and torture;
- Medical needs;
- Women and girls at risk (WAR);
- Family reunification;
- Children and adolescents at risk;
- Lack of foreseeable alternative solutions; and
- Other: 80 places per year are allocated for ‘alternative use’ - under which Norway provides costs for resettlement places in countries outside of Europe, such as Argentina.

Refugees who require settlement assistance are offered housing in a municipality. Municipalities who apply for refugee intake must have the capacity to offer appropriate facilities and services .

Norway allocates 60% of its resettlement numbers to women and girls, with Women at Risk (WAR) cases a priority. During the refugee selection process, officials must also consider the capacity of the municipality to facilitate appropriate services to clients. E.g. The capacity of municipalities to settle refugees with mobile disabilities (elderly and those who are wheelchair bound) is limited. If a refugee has experienced trauma or torture, the availability of specialised medical services is taken into consideration. Municipalities must settle refugees within six months of their acceptance into the quota, and they are to be accompanied to private, pre-arranged housing in host communities.

Refugee intake is voluntary for municipalities. The Norwegian government requests that each municipality receives a certain number of refugees each year and authorities receive a government subsidy to meet the cost of refugees’ introduction benefits for a five-year period, amounting to €77,405 per adult and €74,895 per child received. Municipalities also receive integration grants of varying amounts to cover additional expenses incurred in settling and integrating refugees for four years after arrival .

Karlsen, Elibritt., “Refugee resettlement to Australia: what are the facts?” Law and Bills Digest Section, [http://www.apf.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/RefugeeResettlement](http://www.apf.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/RefugeeResettlement) (September 7, 2016).

Steingrimsdóttir, Katrín. & van Hogerlinden, Lisa., “Norway Doubles its Resettlement Quota for Refugees in Urgent Need of Protection,” The UN Refugee Agency of Northern Europe, [http://www.unhcr-northern-europe.org/news-detail/?tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Bnews%5D=279&tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&cHash=da1cd53fa842cfb373967a1b6e5bda3b](http://www.unhcr-northern-europe.org/news-detail/?tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=279&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&cHash=da1cd53fa842cfb373967a1b6e5bda3b), (2015)

“Settlement of Refugees,” Government.no, <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/immigration/integrering/busetting-av-flyktningar/id2343754/>, (December 16, 2014).

“European Resettlement Network – Norway,” <http://www.resettlement.eu/country/norway#norways-resettlement-programme>, (June 2013).



Municipalities that receive refugees must provide integration and support services for their intake. Integration services include healthcare, children's education, affordable housing, vocational training and employment support. The federal government has developed quality standards that integration services must meet – these standards include:

- Norwegian language training;
- Labour skills to lead to employment;
- Career guidance and pathway;
- Education opportunities; and
- Social studies in the immigrant's native language (where feasible)

The usual duration period for funded integration programs is two years, but this timeframe can be extended to three years if it will be beneficial for a client. In order to obtain permanent residency in Norway, integration programs must be completed within three years and the individual must have practiced 550 hours of language training and 50 hours of social and cultural studies. Refugees are eligible to apply for citizenship after living in Norway for seven years legally. Refugees may apply for immediate family members to join them and if refugees apply for family reunification within one year of arriving into Norway, then the general requirement to demonstrate sufficient income to meet the needs of family members is not applied.

## **NORWEGIAN BEST PRACTICES IN RESETTLEMENT**

Norway hosts one of the largest resettlement programs in Europe and has filled its quota every year. This quota targets a variety of refugees, including medical and emergency cases and high numbers of WAR visas, and boasts its short decision-making and processing times. Norway is the only country in Europe that encourages NGOs to advise the government on its refugee directives in the quota and selection process, through various consultations.

Since 2003, the Norwegian government delivered a Norwegian Cultural Orientation program, which provides a four-day session for adults (16 years and older) and a two-day session for children (8-15 years old). These training sessions are client-centred and encourage the participation of refugees in activities including role playing, case studies, problem-solving, games and debates. Video clips and presentations are used to elaborate specific cultural topics, and participants are each provided with reference handbooks. This program is delivered by a bi-cultural trainer, from the same or similar background of the refugee group, who speaks the language of the cultural orientation participants and who has lived in Norway for some time. This eliminates the use of an interpreter, and the communication is more direct.

Refugees are placed in municipalities characterised by strong cooperation between central and local governmental authorities. The placement system is particularly effective in terms of ensuring appropriate services for refugees with specific medical needs, and in enabling the development of local expertise in working with particularly vulnerable groups. Refugees from similar ethnic or minority groups are placed in the same or neighbouring municipality to promote the development of community engagement and to reduce isolation<sup>31</sup>.



31 "European Resettlement Network – Norway," <http://www.resettlement.eu/country/norway#norways-resettlement-programme>, (June 2013).



## CHALLENGES FACED IN RESETTLEMENT

As with the other leading resettlement countries, Norway faces challenges in its refugee resettlement efforts. The following challenges have been identified:

- Municipalities encounter increasing challenges in finding affordable housing for single persons;
- Norwegian municipalities receive many refugees with serious medical and social needs. Receiving refugees with these medical profiles pressures local specialist services and has in some cases impacted negatively on the capacity of local services; and
- In addition to the above point, refugees who have experienced torture and trauma face higher rates of unemployment, low levels of community engagement and weak social integration skills. When appropriate specialist services are not available in this field, negative mental health symptoms may increase<sup>32</sup>.

Despite these challenges, Norway is becoming increasingly strategic in its refugee practices. It responds and adjusts to the current global refugee crisis and increases its quota as necessary. For example, in 2013, Norway re-engaged in the resettlement of Congolese refugees, conducting a selection mission to Nakivale Refugee Camp in Uganda, including interviewing on site and committed to receiving 75 Colombian refugees from Ecuador. In response to the UNHCR's 2011 Global Resettlement Solidarity Initiative for North Africa, Norway created 250 places in addition to the annual quota and made 60 places available from within the regular quota. Norway also expedited the resettlement of 45 UAMs from Shousha. Norway also recognises that family relations still play a central role in immigrants' and refugees' establishment of a new life, even though its welfare society takes on many of the social and economic functions of the family. Norway strives to be flexible in its delivery of services to clients based on their culture<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>32</sup>Hauf et al., "Mental health problems and post-migration stress among multi-traumatized refugees attending outpatient clinics upon resettlement to Norway," *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 53, no. 4 (May 2012): 316-332.

<sup>33</sup>"European Resettlement Network – Norway," <http://www.resettlement.eu/country/norway#norways-resettlement-programme>, (June 2013).





## 13. RESEARCH

Access is strongly committed to ensuring that all of its activities - including policy development and service provision - are informed by the best available evidence. Access believes that participating and contributing to evidence-based research is one of the most effective ways to inform discussions, shape future social policy and improve service delivery and service outcomes. Daily contact with migrants and refugees and other marginalised groups provides us with the unique opportunity to engage in up to date research, and thus provides continual feedback and results based work.

Access is involved in a number of research collaborations, which provide an evidence base to inform service planning and delivery and systemic advocacy efforts. The research and evaluation projects we pursue provide migrant and refugee data and evidence that is used to mobilise resources, to address identified client needs and improve service delivery. Our research projects range from qualitative insights to major longitudinal studies and national investigations including:

### **WOMEN AT RISK (WAR)**

Access is a partner organisation on an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and the University of Northern New South Wales (UNSW) investigating the settlement experiences of refugee women who have recently arrived in Australia under the Women-at-Risk visa category. The project will be completed mid-2017 and the results will be used to inform the design and delivery of settlement services for WAR. Preliminary findings based on data collected from 108 females have uncovered the types of difficulties experienced post-migration, social satisfaction and psychological functioning.

### **CULTURAL AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE YOUNG PEOPLE**

In 2016 Access became a partner investigator for Defining the Status of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Young People which is a national ARC Linkage Project aiming to: define this data gap; provide new social, economic and cultural indicators; provide the first national/state reporting framework for this cohort; and build a national knowledge hub.

### **EMPOWERING CALD WOMEN RESEARCH PROJECT**

The DSS has commissioned the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) to conduct an Empowering CALD Women Research Project. In June 2016, Access joined the National Expert Reference Group that was established in consultation with the DSS to broadly inform the proposed research framework and conduct of the project. The Reference Group comprises a range of key stakeholders in the fields of family services, settlement services, and women and broader social policy services and programs.

This research will identify strategies the government should consider to empower CALD women that advance their safety, economic and social participation, leadership opportunities, and supports them to advance community cohesion.

## 14. THE ACCESS GATEWAY

Ushering in an exciting new era for Access, the Access Gateway was launched in October 2016. Access collaborates with other organisations, interested parties, government departments and community groups to deliver seamless service continuity and support for members of the community. The Access Gateway operates as a collaborative service hub. Operation relies on the internal and external linkages to programs, organisational relationships and community. It also seeks to provide a welcoming and safe place for community members to connect with each other, the broader community and services.

A client-centred approach enables the lived experiences of refugees and migrants to shape the vision and direction of The Access Gateway. With this approach, The Access Gateway empowers refugees and migrants to shape their settlement journey.

The primary function of The Access Gateway is as a central information, support and referral service for migrants and existing Access clients, experiencing significant levels of disadvantage, with a focus on those who have limited or no access to government support services (e.g. Pacific Islanders) and refugee clients who have been exited from federally funded settlement services experiencing significant levels of disadvantage. However, The Access Gateway philosophy centres around a 'no wrong door' policy, where all community members are welcome.

Whether a community member has a query about how to fill out a form, where to get legal advice or where to find family support, they can go to the one place - The Access Gateway - for support. Here they can access internet, printing facilities and referrals to relevant services. This level of service prevents individuals 'falling through the cracks' and aims to provide individualised support and early intervention.

The advantages of a centralised community hub are many and includes the provision of a space where complimentary services can partner to achieve outcomes for clients which is a perfect example of cross cultural cooperation, understanding, and social cohesion. It enhances opportunities to

identify service gaps, and provides a place to work on innovative solutions to address these thereby providing a more centralised, seamless journey for clients. The Access Gateway requires partnerships with local organisations and service providers to provide the most comprehensive support and to get the best possible outcomes for clients.

There are a number of programs and services being run out of The Access Gateway to support our diverse clientele and there are plans for many more. Through the operation of The Access Gateway, various gaps and duplication which exist in programs and services have been identified and rectified, thereby increasing efficiency in service delivery.

In a similar fashion, The Access Gateway operation reveals needs and issues for individuals and communities in a somewhat organic way. The Access Gateway is revolutionising the way Access collects evidence and data to assist in continuous improvement of services and to inform practice, advocacy and government. Settlement in Australia relies on the assistance of mainstream services. It is crucial that the delivery of mainstream services to migrants and refugees is undertaken by providers that are culturally competent and are able to meet the needs of clients in a responsive and efficient manner. Where those services are delivered by agencies outside of the settlement sector, it is also vital that they understand the settlement sector and are able to work collaboratively with it to ensure best possible outcomes for clients. The Gateway Model is a strong example of how this can be achieved.

Settlement service providers are largely funded at the Federal level only to assist people from refugee backgrounds. Settlement service providers already provide services (often unrecognised and unfunded) to other groups of recent arrivals however there is scope to do more. With appropriate funding the sector is well-placed to increase the provision of services to other groups of migrants to ensure successful settlement outcomes can be enjoyed more broadly.



## 15. INTEGRATION AND COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Through The Access Gateway, we are focused on integration and coordination with the aim to be connectors to community and services for both clients and Access programs and staff. Thus, we are creating a one-stop shop for settlement and community where a story can be shared once, but services come together in a coordinated way to respond to client needs. The partners that have been invited into the Gateway model, have been identified through client needs as a stepping stone to a collaborative environment, which is more flexible to client and community need. We believe this will lead to more collaborative and innovative responses to client needs through the Gateway model, furthermore creating more effective use of resources.

For example, Refugee and Immigrant Legal Services (RAILS) have come to The Access Gateway as partners in providing legal advice to our clients at a more local level, given that their main service is in West End. The space allows for clients who normally would not be able to access their service, to get support for not only family reunification but other needs they may identify through these connections.

Other partners and Access have benefited from working together and sharing our unique expertise in providing support to our clients. With more currently partners in negotiation, since the launch in October 2016 the following partners have come on board:

- Child Health
- Long Hospital (midwifery program)
- Logan Together
- Volunteering Qld
- Justice of the Peace
- Tax Help
- St Vincent de Paul
- Yourtown
- Benevolent Society

Some of the work with our partners and community at The Access Gateway has led us to better identify gaps in service delivery - and created an actual space - to further discuss innovative ways to address these gaps. For example, Midwife Services within the Logan hospitals identified that CALD women expecting, were not accessing the support available. The offer of space at The Access Gateway gave them the opportunity to create a gentle introduction into their services.

The Access Gateway and its 11 programs being delivered, have highlighted the strengths of individuals and community and the great outcomes that can be achieved through working together across differences. The diversity of not only staff, but community and partners, has enriched the dialogue to create innovative solutions to some of the issues surrounding social cohesion. Communities have been keen to both, lead innovative projects which promote social cohesion through community events and participate in projects that promote diversity like the kite flying project run at Walk Together Logan.

Another example is the Access Men's Shed, which has been able to create a safe space for CALD men to learn about services that they normally would not want to access or learn about in a more masculine setting. Through various Men's Shed activities, they are able to discuss and ask questions that they normally would not in a formal setting.



## 16. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ETHNIC LEADERS

In Australia, the importance of engaging with ethnic leaders and ethnic community organizations should be paramount. It is Access' experience that refugees arriving Queensland have banded together for social and economic reasons, mutual support and the vital culturally-appropriate sustenance necessary to recreate life outside their country of origin and to support them complete their settlement journeys in Australia.

Access recognises that community sector solutions must come from within the communities themselves. Logan is one of the most multicultural diverse regions in Australia and solutions for one community are not suitable for every community and this is further complicated by the differences within various cultural groups. Therefore, our community engagement team work hard to engage the different cultural communities and endeavour to reach even the most specific sectors of those communities. Like others who came before them, refugees have created their own patterns of community-based organisations (CBOs).

Resettled in Australia, the CBOs appear to take many forms, each with its own interest and function. In general, CBOs have been making important contributions to the life of those ethnic communities of which they are a part. Functions have ranged from

the alleviation of loneliness among isolated refugees, solving specific problems (such as those of family violence), meeting needs (like native-language tutoring for children) and cultural preservation, to welcoming and helping new refugees find jobs, housing, etc., and providing a broad range of social and resettlement services to sponsored humanitarian entrants. In the end, it is self-evident that an exiled people is best guided and assisted by others of similar experience and background who have already been through the process of adjustment and integration.

Since 1998 to date, Access have recognised, supported, facilitated and employed the strength and potential of ethnic/refugee leaders and CBOs as valuable resources in the resettlement of their own people. We have persistently advocated for a legitimate role of these associations in refugee resettlement policy and programs. We have continued making every effort to engage with refugee community groups in the provision of services to refugees and as advisers on program planning, implementation and evaluation and policy matters. An approach that recognises community members as agents of their journey rather than mere recipients leads to better outcomes, where individuals feel empowered and listened to. Ultimately this works towards combatting alienation and marginalisation and building a cohesive society.





## 17. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Building on new opportunities while listening and responding to the needs of our clients is a key focus at Access. We continue to explore new ways to service our communities within the resources available to us. Social Enterprise continues to be a pivotal part in addressing challenges and we continue to see growth in our suite of social enterprise businesses.

The term social enterprise has varied definitions and meanings and is sometimes taken out of context depending on your point of reference. What is certain that at the core of social enterprise, is the commitment to social development. Access has taken what we see as the 'best bits' to become the leading settlement agency to use social enterprise to drive social change. Our model is shaped by a fundamental value of employment-led social cohesion.

Our journey of social enterprise began because of necessity. We needed to find solutions to our own challenges for our clients and our organisation. It was our determination to find the answers that drove our investment in a new social business approach back nearly a decade. This approach has been developed over time, and now embeds the following key principles that provides a strong framework for our organisational decision-making when embarking on new social enterprises. The 'Access method' goes one step further than any other in our industry to not only have a social impact but define it for our clients and communities. To us, social enterprise is about:

**a. Responding to service gaps.** Settling communities requires us to contract in a range of services from housing to health. Finding suitable suppliers was not always easy. We faced challenges with discrimination, exclusion, and services that were not culturally appropriate. We also found ourselves

spending lots of money on substandard services as it was the best we could bring in. So we thought – we could do a better job by offering better quality and cost competitive products and services. And now we do!

**b. Creating employment opportunities.** We believe the best way to help people is to help them help themselves. Our method builds confidence, on the job training opportunities, orientation to Australian workplaces and employee rights, Workplace Health and Safety and importantly, supports the development of English language skills. Our general target is that we apply a 75:25 percent ratio. This means 75% of employees in the social enterprise are ongoing staff whilst 25% are transitional employees. This facilitates our objective of helping as many jobseekers with employment opportunities where they can acquire valuable skills and training, build their self-esteem, get local references and get the right support and motivation to finding a job.

**c. Investing in our ideas.** As a highly dynamic company we pride ourselves on knowing each and every one of our clients. This also means we identify problems and develop solutions much quicker than many others in our field. Being reliant on funding cycles or scrapping around for sponsorship was resulting in problems worsening as we could not apply the remedies as soon as we saw it. This led to a decision that we needed to generate our own income streams to ensure timely responses to local problems.

Access has multiple social enterprises including:

- Harmony on Carmody Café
- The Spice Exchange
- Access Driver Training
- AES Building and Maintenance Solutions, and more.

## THE SPICE EXCHANGE

The Spice Exchange engages women from diverse cultural backgrounds to create spice blends and condiments reflective of the regions from where they come. The program helps culturally diverse women by building social connections, developing confidence and providing opportunities for women to overcome barriers to employment. The Spice Exchange is both a social enterprise and an employment and training pathway program that provides practical skills and workplace experience.

During the program, the ladies will share stories, culture and traditions and each week the ladies create, explore, and share their knowledge and experiment with cuisine and spice. While the ladies get to create, explore and share their culinary experiences, they also acquire soft entry training skills in professional development and gain practical hands on experience in a standard Australian workplace environment. It also assists women to gain work experience in a culturally responsive workplace environment where they can learn employability skills and develop an understanding of Australian business practices.

### Meet Mabil

Mabil, a 28-year-old mother from Southern Sudan arrived in 2006 and is now an Australian citizen. She has completed a variety of courses such as Child Care and Aged Care but continued to face many difficulties in securing work. She also experienced discrimination from an employer early on when she first arrived; 'You see, I have three qualifications, but I don't get a job, it's hard...when we have qualifications but do not get job, people ask us to go to factory, to use your hand...so what can we do?'

She started volunteering with The Spice Exchange and after some time she began working there. Of her experience with The Spice Exchange, Mabil says, 'they helped me a lot because I get paid now. I work for one day but that one day helps me a lot to buy something... I learn a lot of things, and I learn lot of experiences, can share my ideas...we have own spices in our countries and we can give ideas to use them. It has used my skills, and helped me a lot, and I learned to do it quickly over time. When I started it took me long time to do the work, but now it is easy to do.'

A number of women express appreciation for being a part of The Spice Exchange as it has enabled them, as migrant women, to interact with other women and work outside of the house. The Spice Exchange social enterprise has increased business savvy and small business aspirations among culturally diverse women, as well as confidence of the participants, who recognise the value of food as a vehicle to promote and celebrate their culture and story.

## HARMONY ON CARMODY CAFÉ

Harmony on Carmody Café is Logan's Multicultural Café, which opened in 2008 to serve as a venue that brings members of the community together to dine and share in the benefits of multiculturalism.

The café is designed to promote harmony and an appreciation of the rich and diverse culture of Logan City. The cafe's purpose, as a social business for Access, is to provide opportunities for refugees, migrants and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers to gain hands-on training and work experience in the hospitality industry. This experience is to equip participants with practical skills that will assist in securing sustainable long-term employment into the future. In 2015-16, Harmony on Carmody Café had eight placements through Access employment and training programs, including Work for the Dole, which has led to paid employment opportunities.

### Meet Epa

Epa is a Congolese male, 23yo and a 2016 recruit. To address his employment needs, Youth Transitions staff worked with Epa on developing a resume and set him up with work experience at Harmony on Carmody Café. Two weeks after his work experience Epa was offered a 2 days a week employment at Harmony on Carmody Café. His dream is to be a Youth Worker and his current job at Harmony on Carmody helps him support himself and engage with other people.





## 18. ARTS-LED PRACTICE

Access, through the Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre (BEMAC), is working to transform arts led practice in Queensland by creating opportunities to positively contribute to the settlement journey of refugees and migrants through using the Arts:

1. To tell their stories in a safe meaningful way
2. Share these stories with the wider community
3. Raise awareness of the experiences and challenges that refugees and migrants face settling in Australia
4. Explore possible community solutions to emerging needs
5. Create pathways to develop a sense of belonging and self-worth

The Arts can build social capital by strengthening friendships, helping communities to understand and provide a safe way to discuss and problem-solve difficult social issues. The arts, including music, dance, theatre, visual arts and writing, are increasingly recognised as having the potential to support health and wellbeing.

*“Not only did the smile not leave my face, but the smiles never left our clients’ faces either. Each and every one of us came back singing, laughing and talking about how great Culture Train was. The music and personalities took us on a journey through time and place.”*





## 19. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The impact of pre-migration and post-migration stressors on the psychological wellbeing of refugees is well established. Research indicates that post-migration experiences of resettled refugees influences broader settlement outcomes, adaptation, and overall quality of life. These outcomes are particularly pertinent given that quality of life is considered a primary determinant of an individual's health and is thus increasingly being used as a predictor of future health outcomes.

Of paramount importance, is finding ways to facilitate positive adaptation and thereby enhancing overall quality of life for migrants and refugees post-settlement. Engaging mental health professionals early in the settlement period is one such mechanism through which positive adjustment may be facilitated in refugee and migrant populations.

However, a range of barriers exist in relation to refugees and migrants accessing mental health services. These include but are not limited to: language and cultural factors, lack of knowledge regarding available services, stigma, limited scope of specialist and mainstream services, and limited application of evidence-based culturally specific treatment approaches and limited access to interpreting services.

### **HARMONY PLACE**

In 2016 Access, in line with other management and strategic acquisitions, formed a successful merger with Harmony Place, enabling better mental health outcomes for our clients in a culturally aware and supportive community setting.

Harmony Place is a non-government community-based organisation providing mental health and wellbeing services specifically for people and communities from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. We offer a range of early intervention programs and specialist mental health programs that promote emotional and social wellbeing and reduce the risk of mental illness. Harmony Place staff are committed professionals with qualifications in Social Work, Psychology and Counselling. Many came to Australia as refugees and migrants or are the children of migrants and refugees.

Harmony Place supports: The Partners in Recovery Program; CALD mental health awareness sessions; The Harmony United Program (wellbeing through sport); Mental Health First Aid Courses; and, Social Inclusion Groups including conversational English classes, Art classes, Spanish Women's Group, CALD Women's Group and CALD Men's Group.





## THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY ON A MIGRANT'S, OR PROSPECTIVE MIGRANT'S, SETTLEMENT OUTCOME.

# 20. RESEARCH FINDINGS: 'REFUGEE SETTLERS IN SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND: EMPLOYMENT, ASPIRATIONS AND INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION ABOUT FUTURE OCCUPATIONAL PATHWAYS'.

Access was a partner organisation on this Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project with The University of Queensland (UQ), Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), to investigate: a) the employment experiences of refugees, b) their employment aspirations and c) refugee parents' intergenerational communication about education and employment with their children. This study specifically focused on the experiences of refugees from Burma, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia, which are among the top ten source countries for offshore humanitarian entrants.

Over two years, 269 refugee parents were surveyed from the Burmese (Chin, Karen Karenni), Ethiopian (Amhara, Tigrians and Oromo) and Congolese communities living in South-East Queensland.

Key findings included:

- Level of education, length of stay and English language proficiency were predictors of employment.
- Underutilisation of skills and underemployment were major issues.
- English language proficiency not only affected employment, but also aspirations and levels of life satisfaction.
- Acculturation enhanced positive intergenerational communication; those who were more acculturated had more positive communication with their children.
- How much contact parents had with schools was directly related to their aspirations for their children's future and in some cases, their English language proficiency. Increased involvement by parents in their children's lives and school system resulted in greater awareness about their children's education and employment aspirations.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Hebbani, A. et al (2016). Refugee Settlers in South-east Queensland: Employment, Aspirations and Intergenerational Communication about Future Pathways: Final report



## 21. ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

It is well recognised in refugee settlement literature that attaining English proficiency is a critical step on the pathway to successful settlement. Data from 'Building a New Life in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants' (BNLA) supports this sentiment. BNLA is an Australian Government study of humanitarian migrants which recruited a cohort of 2,399 recently arrived refugees and asylum seekers in 2013. Participants were interviewed annually for the first five years of their settlement journey. Findings highlight a range of social and economic outcomes with which English language proficiency has a clear relationship.

Whilst it is widely believed that English language skills play a critical role in successful settlement, it is not practical nor feasible to make English language competency a condition of entry to Australia for all migrants and refugees.

Instead, the Government must maintain its commitment to delivering practical and useful English language training for all recent arrivals who require it, ensuring they are empowered to interact with government, contribute to their community and obtain meaningful employment.

**English- TAFE and Browns Professional College**  
As English is a key indicator of settlement success

for newly arrived migrants, Access has strong partnerships with English education programs. Since clients are newly arrived to Australia, HSS at Access refers all suitable clients to the AMEP program at TAFE. This program provides foundational English for newly arrived refugees. Through the strong collaborative relationship that Access and TAFE have, client progress is monitored and any issues (i.e. attendance) are shared amongst both services, with better coordination of support and ultimately improvements in clients' levels of English.

The four main TAFE campus' that clients of Access attend are Loganlea, Bundamba, South Bank and Southport.

Furthermore, Access has developed a strong working relationship with Browns Professional College who have generously donated scholarships to some Access clients. Clients who are needing more specialised English support (i.e. wishing to complete the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam) and/or those who have more advanced English skills, have been referred to Browns Professional College programs for more targeted English support and outcomes. It is hoped that this relationship will continue to strengthen as more clients engage in this opportunity.



## 22. COMMUNITY LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS PROGRAM

Access has a team of 82 casual Community Language Assistants (CLAs) who support our programs by assisting with the language and cultural needs of our clients. CLAs are employed on a casual basis and support our staff and external agencies as required. CLAs are an integral part of culturally appropriate and responsive service provision.



## 23. VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play a key role in working alongside Access staff members in delivering successful settlement outcomes for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) individuals and their families. Access has relied on the commitment and enthusiasm of volunteers since its establishment over 30 years ago. In the last financial year, volunteers contributed over 14,350 hours to support clients with navigating transport, community events, English tutoring, child minding, homework, and other activities delivered by Access.



## 24. COMMUNITY HUBS

Community Hubs are an initiative of Community Hubs Australia, funded and supported by the Scanlon Foundation, Australian Government Department of Social Services and Department of Education. Access is the coordination and support agency for the Queensland Community Hubs Program. Community Hubs support parents and children to develop school readiness skills, navigate the education system and to build parents' capacity to support their children's learning. Community Hubs bring local information and services around education, health, community and settlement into a familiar and friendly place. Often, this is a primary school or other community space that is already part of everyday life for families and their children. For mothers, fathers and carers, accessing services, assistance and training is easier when delivered in settings that they are already familiar with. Our Hubs are located in six schools within the Logan Local Government Area: St Francis Catholic College, Woodridge North State Primary School, St Pauls Catholic Primary School, Mabel Park Primary School, Woodridge State Primary School and Regents Park State School.

Community Hubs offer migrants, refugees and general community members with practical assistance to establish links to wider community services and support in a safe and familiar environment, so they can build better lives and move towards full participation in Australian society. The target group for Community Hubs is young families with children 0 - 5 years, but inclusive of all families. The primary focus is on CALD families and families from low socioeconomic backgrounds, however, all families are welcome. Community Hubs are place-based initiatives, and programs are developed to meet the needs of the families who attend. No two Community Hubs are the same as programs/activities are directed by families' needs. With the recent announcement by the Federal Government for expanding the Hubs across Australia, it is expected that five more Hubs will be funded across Queensland.

### ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The Community Hubs have activities for parents and children. Mothers who have very young children who are not yet school age and not attending a pre-school program can attend with their children. Programs for mothers reduce isolation and increase participation by creating welcoming spaces where they can participate and interact with other mothers and teachers, guidance officers, and principals from the school community. Activities include: English conversation classes, Women of Worth – craft classes, financial literacy, playgroups, cooking classes, circus classes (physical education classes for young children), to name a few. Allied health professionals (e.g. occupational therapists, speech therapists, nutritionists) are engaged on an 'as needs' basis for the children and families.

### HEALTH IMPACT PROJECT

The Access Health Impact project, funded by Queensland Health, provides an innovative, place-based approach in supporting parents and children who access the Logan Community Hubs to achieve optimum health outcomes. The project recognises the importance of prevention and early intervention in achieving positive health outcomes comes from place-based service delivery, collaboration and evidence based practice. Our approach ensures holistic and planned interventions, with effective coordination of resources and complementary services that are non-intrusive, practical and client-directed. As at December 2016:

### ASSESSMENTS

Number of intake assessments	165
Number of speech assessments	93
Number of occupational therapy assessments	39
Total number of assessments	297
Total number of referrals	592



## WHETHER CURRENT MIGRATION PROCESSES ADEQUATELY ASSESS A PROSPECTIVE MIGRANT'S SETTLEMENT PROSPECTS.

## 25. MIGRATION PROCESS

Access believes that the current migration system is sufficient and working well. Existing migration processes include a robust array of checks and balances designed to ensure that newly arrived migrants and refugees meet public interest criteria. It is not practical to test a person's likelihood of successfully integrating before their arrival, nor to attempt to extend that test to future generations of a migrant's or refugee's family. To attempt to do so could amount to racial profiling and is contrary to Australia's non-discriminatory migration policies.

Through our work with refugee and migrants, Access is finding that family reunification and social connectedness is a key component in an individual's successful settlement journey, however this is not helped by the obstacles in the way that prevent an easy reunification. Although there are pathways through different visas to reunify, the process can be long and sometimes result in rejection without

grounds. This can then directly impact on the client's settlement journey and circumstances, if the individual is now facing a future on their own in Australia.

Many of Access' clients flee for asylum, and in the process, can sometimes lose family connection, if they are then not given an opportunity to re-unify their intention to settle in Australia may change. This has even lead to some clients trying to seek an alternative country to migrate that have more opportunities for their families to migrate.

Access would support new visas being introduced like the Temporary Parent Visa that would provide more opportunities to have parents visit for a longer period of time. It is hoped that this type of visa would also be accessible and affordable for the families who have come to Australia as refugees.

## 26. LINKS

The Humanitarian Settlement Services program has experienced a greater number of refugees arriving with "links" in the community. 50% of referrals allocated to South-East Queensland during the current financial year have "links", which are generally defined as being friends or relatives. There is an expectation by the federal government that links assist with the settlement process which places importance on offshore link assessments to ensure

that the link has the capacity and interest to assist with settlement. Access has experienced numerous cases however, where links are not very familiar with clients and do not have the capacity to support their settlement. Access is also concerned that linked clients are being allocated visas in lieu of the most vulnerable or at risk refugees.

## 27. PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION (HEALTH MANIFESTS)

Previously, there were some issues with the expediency of health manifest reports that outline clients' physical and mental health prior to their arrival in Australia. At times, Access was not informed of the true nature of the clients' condition (i.e. no mention of wheelchair requirements) or health manifest reports were arriving post client arrival, which made it difficult to support clients adequately.

However, this has improved in recent times with health manifests arriving well before client arrivals and with more detailed health descriptions being provided. Effective communication has seen a vast improvement in more effective client support.

## 28. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROVISIONS IN VISAS

Australian refugee resettlement policy leads international migration practice through its family violence provisions in visas. The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) has developed these provisions to allow certain people applying for permanent residency in Australia to continue their application after the breakdown of their married or de facto relationship, if they or a member of their family has experienced domestic and family violence (DFV). These provisions are a direct response to Australia's nationally recognised DFV concerns.

Research has demonstrated that some migrant partners may stay in abusive relationships due to the belief that they will be deported if they end the relationship. If an applicant's relationship breaks down after they have applied for permanent residency, he or she can still be considered if they provide evidence that they, or a member of their family, has been a victim of DFV committed by their Australian partner. This evidence may be judicial or non-judicial. DIBP engages interpreters to assist with such visa enquiries and translates their written materials into a number of languages.

The challenge DIBP faces is that women from non-English speaking backgrounds may not have access

to this information and thus are not aware of visa provisions in place to protect victims of DFV. In an endeavour to address this issue, the DIBP has developed a "family safety pack" with information on Australia's laws regarding DFV, sexual assault and forced marriage. The family safety pack also includes important information about essential services and emergency contacts in Australia.

DFV provisions on visas are part of Australia's overall commitment to respond to and intervene in cases of DFV in CALD communities. In Queensland, state government has invited Access, based on their expertise in settlement, to participate in co-design workshops to develop a standardised assessment tool to identify DFV in CALD communities. This tool will be released in 2017 in collaboration with Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS).





## 29. MAPPING SETTLEMENT OUTCOMES: CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2016

The views, experiences and aspirations of our clients, their families and communities are important to Access. This information helps inform our priorities and our investment in planning to meet the needs of the people we continue to support. It also provides an opportunity to recognise the work we do well, and the areas we can improve in. In 2016, Access conducted *Mapping Settlement Outcomes: Client Satisfaction Survey* as part of this continuous improvement process.

The survey data capture was reflective of the *National Settlement Service Standards* (Settlement Council of Australia, 2015):

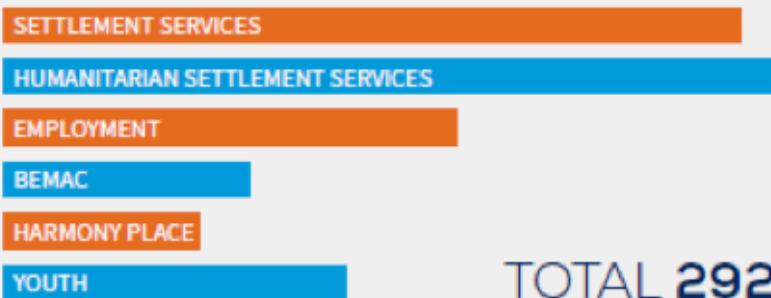
- Background
- Education
- Housing
- Employment
- Transport and Social Infrastructure
- Social Participation and Citizenship

In line with the requirements of using culturally appropriate methodology, Community Language Assistants (CLAs) were engaged to assist clients in the completion of the survey. In total over 110 hours of CLA services were provided over the survey collection period across multiple language groups.

## ANNUAL CLIENT SURVEY 2016

# CLIENT SNAPSHOT

### RESPONDENT PROGRAMS



### FAMILIES

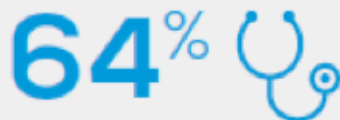
85% OF CLIENTS LIVED WITH THEIR FAMILIES, WITH THE REMAINING LIVING WITH PARTNERS, FRIENDS, OR FLATMATES.



**95%**

OF RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN.

### HEALTH



HAD APPOINTMENTS WITH DOCTORS DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS.



**82%**

REPORTED THAT THEY DID NOT DRINK ALCOHOL, AND FOR THOSE THAT DID, IT WAS EITHER MONTHLY OR RARELY.



**93%**

BELIEVED THAT EATING HABITS WERE VERY IMPORTANT OR IMPORTANT TO THE WAY WE FEEL ABOUT OUR HEALTH.



STATED THAT THEY DID NOT SMOKE.

### ASPIRATIONS



OF CLIENTS BELIEVED IT WAS VERY LIKELY OR SOMEWHAT LIKELY THAT THEY'D BUY A HOUSE.

### SOCIAL INCLUSION



**98%**

FELT WELCOME AND SAFE IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

DD

"I FEEL AUSTRALIA IS FRIENDLY AND EASY-GOING."

"I CAN FEEL A SENSE OF WELCOME, AND THAT SYMBOLISES TO ME THAT I'M IMPORTANT AS A PERSON AND IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I BELONG"

"I AM ABLE TO GO TO THE LIBRARY AND DO THINGS BY MYSELF, ABLE TO GO TO THE SHOPPING CENTRE AND USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT."

"I AM ABLE TO DO THINGS WITHOUT PEOPLE INTERFERING."



## SKILLS

CLIENTS CAME FROM A VARIETY OF EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS INCLUDING **ENGINEERING, TEACHING, IT, MEDICAL AND FASHION DESIGN.**

SOME HAD THEIR EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS RECOGNISED IN AUSTRALIA.

## EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS



1. LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY
2. LACK OF LOCAL EXPERIENCE
3. NON-RECOGNITION OF FORMER QUALIFICATIONS

## THE INTERNET

**39%**

OF CLIENTS REPORTED THAT THEY WERE CONFIDENT IN USING COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET.

DD

"MORE COMMUNICATION IS HELPFUL FOR WHOLE FAMILY AND GIVES ME MORE INDEPENDENCE. I WANT TO IMPROVE."

**80%**

OF CLIENTS WERE **KEEN TO RECEIVE TRAINING** IN USING COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET.

## ACCESS AND ITS SERVICES

"ACCESS HAS BEEN GOOD TO HELP MY FAMILY TO SETTLE DOWN IN THE COMMUNITY."

DD

**90%**

REPORTED THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED A **VERY GOOD/GOOD SERVICE** FROM ACCESS.

**88%**

OF CLIENTS WERE **HAPPY WITH THE STAFF** AS THEY WERE FRIENDLY AND ENCOURAGING.

DD

"THEY HELP ME LIKE A FAMILY AND THE ACCESS STAFF HAVE BEEN VERY HELPFUL. I AM THANKFUL."

**87%**

WOULD **RECOMMEND OTHERS TO RECEIVE HELP FROM ACCESS SERVICES.**

DD

"ACCESS IS THE MOST **IMPORTANT SERVICE IN LOGAN** AND OFFERS A RANGE OF SERVICES TO PEOPLE WHO ARE IN NEED OF HELP IN ANY WAY."

"ACCESS IS A PLACE WHERE WE MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES GET INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION INTO THE AUSTRALIAN STANDARD OF LIVING. **ACCESS ASSIST US TO GET WORK SOMEWHERE AND LIVE BETTER LIVES.**"

"ACCESS IS ALWAYS **STANDING UP TO HELP NEW MIGRANTS** AND OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE LOOKING TO FIND TRAINING IN ORDER TO GET A JOB " **"ACCESS HAS VERY GOOD SERVICES THAT HELP THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS.** I AM HAPPY FOR THEM AND WISH THEM TO CONTINUE THIS GREAT ESTABLISHMENT."





## OTHER RELATED MATTERS

The youth work of Access is guided by the National Youth Settlement Framework: A national framework for supporting the settlement of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia, produced by Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (Australia) (MYAN). It provides extensive supporting documents including:

- National and state snapshots
- Facilitating indicators through good practice capabilities
- Applying good practice capabilities
- Assessment guides for indicators in practice
- Useful resources for supporting good practice

## 30. YOUNG MIGRANTS

In Australia, one in four young people are from a refugee or migrant background and this group of young people is diverse, as are their needs. As such, services that respond effectively to the specific needs of young people from a refugee or migrant background are essential.

Achieving good settlement outcomes for young people requires support for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in the domains of economic, social, and civic participation and personal wellbeing.

English language acquisition is crucial to a young person's successful settlement journey. Youth specific English language classes are an important

factor in facilitating learning outcomes for young people, as well as providing opportunities for young people to socialise on a peer level and build social networks.

Specialised settlement support for young people is also a significant factor in achieving good settlement outcomes. Extending the provision of settlement services to migrant and refugee young people currently ineligible for support due to their visa status or method of arrival would increase their participation and engagement.



## 31. MULTICULTURAL YOUTH QUEENSLAND (MYQ)

Multicultural Youth Queensland (MyQ) is a youth-led, innovative not-for-profit organisation that provides targeted services, programs and projects to improve life outcomes for young people aged between 12 and 30 years. MyQ responds to youth needs through policy and advocacy work, sector capacity building, youth capacity building and direct service delivery.

### CULTURAL CONSULTANTS PILOT PROJECT

Funded by the Attorney General's Department-Living Safe Together, the Cultural Consultants program aimed at assisting young people from the ages of 15-24 years to build the capacity of other young CALD people to actively participate in Australian society. This was achieved through developing early intervention strategies to promote employment opportunities, provide a strong support network and by bridging cultural, gender and intergenerational gaps that can exist within CALD communities. The purpose of the program was to deter young people in the community from engaging in anti-social behaviour and this is accomplished through training the Cultural Consultants focusing on the three core outcomes of Education, Empowerment and Employability.

The training package consisted of the following modules:

1. Communication
2. Strength & Capability Development
3. Core Skill Development
4. Teamwork
5. Cultural Competence
6. Peer Support
7. Social Skills
8. Life Skills
9. Social Media Awareness
10. Job Readiness

20 young people were trained as Cultural Consultants and now have practical knowledge and core skills that will assist them to become more confident in working with young people in their community. The Cultural Consultants have learnt skills in engagement and gained friendships and networks with other people from various cultures. They now have the skills required to advocate for change within the local community and provide a voice for young people in their own community.

It is hoped that the Cultural Consultants will now be provided with ongoing employment opportunities with MyQ to attend events, run programs and/or events and engage with stakeholders on a meaningful level.

“One of the major successes of this project has been the strong relationships that have been forged through the training sessions. The Cultural Consultants have connected with each other through the mutual goal of wanting to provide their communities with further opportunities for growth. The Cultural Consultants acknowledge that working together and providing a supportive and safe environment fosters change and inclusion”.

- Ongoing Settlement Services Manager - June 2016



## YOUTH TRANSITIONS PROJECT

The Youth Transitions (YT) project provides early intervention assistance to address the barriers that prevent young people from participating as active citizens in the local community. The project works in collaboration with a range of stakeholders and partnering organisations to deliver targeted services in specific areas. The project targets refugees and other vulnerable migrants eligible for Settlement Grants, who are under the age of 25 and living in the Logan area. Exceptions can be made if there are complex needs present.

The Youth Transitions project already had 228 clients as at June 2016. These include the Multicultural Sports Club Male Soccer Team and Multicultural Sports Club Female Volleyball Team. Both of these teams train on a weekly basis, providing social inclusion and participation beyond the client's own community and culture.

### **Girls Volley Ball: It's not all about the volleyball (from Volley Ball Case Study, November 2016)**

Girls volley ball was initiated early in the roll out of the YT Pilot. After identifying an interest, YT partnered with Multicultural Youth Queensland's Multicultural Sports Club (MSC) to run girls volleyball training every Thursday. Each week they meet to learn volleyball skills, to interact and to enjoy time with other young girls. The initial aim of the program was to give young CALD women an opportunity to engage in a social team activity that would connect them with other young women and provide a platform for physical activity.

In particular, the coach focuses on engagement and encouraging team-building and self-capacity. For her, the sessions aren't really about volleyball rather they are more about using "volleyball as a vehicle" for enhancing life skills.

Partnering with MSC and the selection of the coach were pivotal strategic choices in making the volleyball program successful. The coach's particular style and focus has created a safe space for the girls to meet one another every week. With this engagement style and within this safe space, the girls have formed 'lifelong friendships' and improved in confidence and in language and problem solving skills.

After a need was identified and YT and MSC discussed options, a coach was employed to design and run a volleyball program. There were a series of 'taster' sessions to ascertain interest and group numbers, then weekly sessions were held.

"I make friends from other cultures and backgrounds here. We are a family. It is better than school because in my school they are all modern Australian people, like Aussie. When I am there they look at me and say like I am Muslim. I know they are just kids I know. Here I meet girls like me with different cultures, background and countries."

- Fatemeh (participant)

"Volleyball is good for all girls. If we don't go, we just go to school then go home and study. Can come to volleyball and feels different. When I stay home I feel boring. Volleyball makes me feel better. I love sports. Especially volleyball."

- Nigar (participant)



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## (IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER)

**Recommendation One:** To continue to work with local communities to stimulate community engagement and the building of bridges between the diverse cultural and ethnic groups of our regions and contributing to the social cohesion agenda overall.

**Recommendation Two:** To support professional development for the continuous improvement of expertise in the settlement sector.

**Recommendation Three:** To work with settlement agencies, research institutes and industry to design needs assessment and data collection tools.

**Recommendation Four:** To continue to support and fund research into complex settlement issues and the settlement model.

**Recommendation Five:** To continue to support innovative service delivery models and practice.

**Recommendation Six:** To work with industry and accreditation bodies to expand prior recognition pathways and new ways to recognise the skills that refugees arrive with.

**Recommendation Seven:** To recognise the importance of English and the different styles of learning required for children compared to adults and to continue to invest in English language courses and training across the life span.

**Recommendation Eight:** Maintaining and promoting social cohesion as a crucial component in supporting resettlement (and therefore any policies that enables the isolation or discrimination of individuals or groups based on their ethnicity or race is recommended against).

**Recommendation Nine:** To continue to support pathways that enable community-based organisations to be self-sufficient, integrate successfully into their respective regions and participate in the democratic process overall.

**Recommendation Ten:** Australia's settlement services sector is effective and efficient and provides responsive and flexible services to new arrivals to assist them to reach their full potential in Australia.

## CONCLUSION

Migrants and refugees need support as they complete their settlement journeys in Australia. It is acknowledged that the settlement process is complex and takes time.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to settlement and indeed many migrants will share different opinions of what, to them, constitutes "good settlement" and when that is understood to have been achieved.

Access welcomes this inquiry and is committed to playing a key role in these discussions moving forward. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion.

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