

# Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement: A Case Study of the Limestone Coast

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The Australian Population and Migration Research Centre,  
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The Tatiara District Council

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Cover photo: Burmese children participating in the Mt Gambier Christmas Parade  
Sourced from the MRCSA photo archives.

## Executive Summary

The aim of this project, funded by the Local Government Association of SA, was to achieve a better understanding of the role local government can play in the successful settlement of new migrants in rural and regional South Australia. Of particular interest to this study were the settlement experiences of immigrants in non-metropolitan areas; which are likely to be different to those of migrants settling in large urban environments. The study concentrates on four non-metropolitan Local Government Areas in the Limestone Coast region of South Australia: Mt Gambier, Grant, Naracoorte-Lucindale and Tatiara. The report provides some background to the role immigration can play in non-metropolitan regions and examines some of the direct and indirect outcomes for local communities and for migrants themselves.

In non-metropolitan areas population growth has been traditionally exacerbated by the outmigration of youth to urban areas for education and employment opportunities. Immigration, an often neglected element of counter-urbanisation, can have a significant role in addressing and arresting issues relating to labour shortages and de-population in non-metropolitan areas. The Limestone Coast provided valuable insights into both planned and unplanned settlement patterns of new migrants.

This report examines migrant settlement using several key themes: community services and supports; family, friends and social networks; employment and industry; settlement intentions, and future mobility patterns. Results show that the Limestone Coast region is a prime example of how state and federal resources, combined with local community groups and supportive local councils can create positive experiences in times of rapid population change. While there are many examples of how different businesses and industries, community groups, schools and churches or individuals have worked to create a positive experience for new migrants in the region it is perhaps the ability of these organisations to work together through the Local Area Committees (LACs) that has proven to be an effective tool in coordinating support and identifying the gaps in service for new migrants. Local Government and the Migrant Resource Centre SA have been two of the driving forces behind this effort in the Limestone Coast. In particular, the role of Local Government in creating an atmosphere of welcome and acceptance for new migrants across this region is of critical importance to achieving positive community outcomes for both new migrants and the wider community.

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# 1. Introduction and Background

The aim of this project is to achieve a better understanding of the role local government can play in the successful settlement of new migrants in rural and regional South Australia. Of particular interest to this study are the settlement experiences of immigrants in non-metropolitan areas; which are likely to be different to those of migrants settling in large urban environments. The study concentrates on four non-metropolitan Local Government Areas in the Limestone Coast region of South Australia: Mt Gambier, Grant, Naracoorte-Lucindale and Tatiara. The report provides some background to the role immigration can play in non-metropolitan regions, assesses the role of immigration programs and examines some of the direct and indirect outcomes for local communities and for migrants themselves.

## Background

The role of international migration is increasingly significant in many OECD countries, including Australia. However, research and policy has largely focused on the concentration of immigrants in cities (Brenton-Short *et al.* 2005); understandably so with the provision of highly skilled workers in high level jobs fundamental to the functioning of large cities, and the need for low-wage and low- status service workers in '3D' (difficult, dangerous and demeaning) jobs in urban locations (Friedmann 1986; Sassen 2001). More recently, there is growing evidence of increasing flows of immigrants to rural and regional areas in countries such as the Canada (Bollman *et al.* 2007), the United States (Johnson 2006; Painter & Sanderson 2011) and Europe (Kasimis 2005; Papadopoulos 2005; TUC 2004). Nonetheless, the role of international migration in non- metropolitan areas has received scant attention from researchers and policy makers considering the demographic, economic and social challenges facing OECD nations.

Few countries have been more influenced by international migration in the contemporary era than Australia. In 2011, 27 per cent of Australia's population were born overseas, a further 20 per cent were second generation immigrants and at any one time there were more than a million foreign persons temporarily in the country. In the last decade, most immigrants have continued to settle in the largest cities; however, there has been an increasing number settling outside of the large 'gateway' capital cities. The numbers of overseas-born persons living outside the capitals in Australia increased from 771,574 in 2001 to 1,001,645 in 2011 – an increase of 29.8 per cent (ABS 2012).

There appears to be a strong trend toward some decentralisation of immigrant settlement in high income destination countries such as the United States (Hirschman and Massey 2008; Massey and Capoferro 2008), Europe (Jentsch 2007), United Kingdom (Green *et al.* 2012), Spain (Olivia 2010), Greece (Kisimas 2008), Canada (Carter *et al.* 2008) and New Zealand (Spoonley and Bedford 2008). A distinctive part of this trend within Australian settlement patterns has been explicit policy intervention to facilitate immigrant settlement outside of major cities.

In non-metropolitan areas population growth has been traditionally exacerbated by the outmigration of youth to urban areas for education and employment opportunities. Hence, immigration, an often neglected element of counter-urbanisation (Champion 1989) can have a significant role in addressing and arresting issues relating to labour shortages, de-population and ageing in non-metropolitan areas. Further, despite their smaller numbers, the impacts of immigrants moving to non-metropolitan areas are amplified due to the smaller local population numbers; particularly in the working age population, usually most affected by net migration losses.

In Australia, the historical background of immigrant settlement in rural and regional areas highlights the 'pioneering spirit' of immigrant settlers from England and the Scotland and is evident in many of the place names. During the post-war periods further immigrant settlement from countries such as Greece, Italy and Germany occurred (Collins 2007) and strong ethnic communities characterised rural landscapes (Jordan *et al.* 2011). The mid-1990s saw the Australian government attempting to shape where immigrants settle on a large scale. Selective migration programs and initiatives were introduced with the aims of achieving a more even population distribution and to arrest regional and rural decline characterised by labour shortages, depopulation and ageing (Collins 2007; Griffiths *et al.* 2010; Hugo 2008).

State Specific and Regional Migration (SSRM) initiatives, introduced in 1996/1997 altered the landscape of Australian immigration policy (Hugo 2008) with regional migration schemes (e.g., SIR, SDAS and RSMS)<sup>1</sup> requiring skilled migrants with temporary visas to live in a regional area for two years and work full-time for 12 months before gaining Permanent Residency (PR). Other schemes include the 457 temporary skilled worker scheme and the Working Holiday Maker visa. Alongside these schemes the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIPB) developed a new approach to identify and establish new regional locations for humanitarian settlement.

The impact of such schemes to regional and rural Australia have overall been positive (Hugo 2008a; 2008b) and is a measure of policy facilitating the settlement of immigrants to regional and areas that may have significant labour shortages. However, there is also emerging evidence of new immigrants (i.e. refugee-humanitarian settlers) independently gravitating towards non- metropolitan areas outside of Federal immigration programs; indicative of how policy at the Federal level can have indirect impact and unintended outcomes at the local level. The Limestone Coast region of South Australia has clear population shifts that are the result of both planned settlement schemes and indirect or unplanned settlement of new migrants. It is these trends in both planned and unplanned population change attributed to new migrants that is the focus of this report.

## Outline of the report

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This report begins with an introduction and brief background of the literature. Chapter 2 discusses the background to the study, past and present international migration trends in regional Australia and outlines the aims, objectives and the methodology of the study.

Chapter 3 discusses in some detail the policies that underpin international migration to regional Australia. This includes a brief discussion on policies in the post-war period as well as current skilled migration and refugee-humanitarian settlement policies. Chapter 4 presents an overview of the Limestone Coast where Australian census data is analysed to provide an insight into the influence of international migration in the population composition in this area.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 focus on the findings of this study. Chapter 5 explores different aspects of regional communities and the integration and settlement of migrants; including the role of family and friendship networks in settlement and integration; perceptions of community attitudes towards new migrants, and the role of key stakeholders in supporting integration. Chapter 6 investigates employment and its role in influencing the mobility of migrants in regional areas. This chapter also explores the type of work migrants are involved across each study area in the Limestone Coast; the role of social networks in seeking employment, and barriers to employment and employment and integration. Chapter 7 is mainly concerned with understanding the mobility patterns of migrants across the study areas. The drivers influencing their movement into each study area are explored and mobility patterns prior to in-migrating into respective towns are investigated. This is expanded to include future settlement intentions and onward migration drivers and patterns.

Chapter 8 discusses the implications of the findings within the context of the role of international migration in non-metropolitan Australia. It also provides recommendations for local government and local communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Skilled Independent Regional visa (SIR);  
Skilled Designated Area Sponsored visa (SDAS);  
Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS).

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## 2. Overview of the Study

The selective migration programs and initiatives described in Chapter 1 have been introduced in Australia with the aim of achieving a more even population distribution and to arrest regional and rural decline characterised by labour shortages, de-population and ageing. However, as a result there are emerging trends, patterns and issues related to the settlement of new migrants (particularly among migrants with humanitarian backgrounds) in rural and regional areas that are not well understood. For example, it has been noted by local, State and Federal stakeholders that the Limestone Coast has seen a marked increase in unplanned, 'organic settlement' in some towns. In other words, the secondary migration of international migrants (primarily refugee-humanitarian entrants) independently gravitating toward particular regional areas, that is occurring outside the framework of federal immigration and settlement policy. It is important that all levels of government understand how, where and why these settlement patterns are developing and what this means for rural and regional communities, their residents, their economy and their local communities.

This research was conducted in the Limestone Coast region of South Australia and includes the following LGAs: Naracoorte-Lucindale; Tatiara; Grant and Mount Gambier. The study, funded by the Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA) through its Local Government Research and Development Scheme, was carried out in partnership with the District Councils of Grant, Mt Gambier, Naracoorte-Lucindale and Tatiara and the Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia (MRC SA). The study took place from January to July 2014 and included in-depth interviews with 40 community stakeholders; including officials from various state government departments; local council employees; employers, and service providers in housing, employment and education and migrant specific services. In addition, a further 51 interviews were conducted with skilled and refugee-humanitarian migrants living in the region.

The project aimed to provide an increased understanding of the impact new migrants have on local communities, their reasons for settling in these areas and the role of the Local Government and community groups in their successful settlement and integration. Findings from this research will strengthen the ability of these LGAs to develop programs and provide services to meet the needs of recently arrived migrants to the area and support successful integration with the overall population living in the area. Although findings from the research will apply most directly to LGAs in the Limestone Coast region many of the research findings will be applicable more broadly. Effective programs and services provided to newly arrived migrants cannot be developed, and successes measured, until newly arrived migrant populations, and their place within the broader community, are better understood.



## Aim and Objectives

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The aim of this study is to achieve a better understanding of the role of local government in the successful settlement of new migrants in rural and regional South Australia in order to facilitate the adjustment of the migrants and maximise their contribution to regional social and economic development.

The key research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What local community factors enable settlement of new arrivals?
2. What is the role of local government in enabling migrant settlement in rural and regional areas?
3. What social, economic and demographic impacts (both tangible and perceived) do migrants have on local communities? What role do they play in sustaining/revitalising regional/rural communities?
4. Why do some migrants choose rural locations over urban locations for settlement; are rural locations better for integration and assimilation than urban locations?
5. What forms of mobility can be seen in these rural regions among new migrants (i.e. temporary, permanent and/or circular migration). What are the impacts of these types of settlement on both the migrants and local communities?

## Research Methodology

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It must be noted that even though this study only commenced in early 2014, it had undergone a significant period of development since 2012. The researcher team attended several Local Area Co-ordination (LAC) meetings to develop relationships with key stakeholders and community leaders in each study area and followed local press and council news across the district during this developmental stage. The Migrant Resource Centre South Australia (MRCSA) established and convenes these LAC Meetings with participants including various state government departments; local council officials; employers and service providers in housing, employment, education and migrant specific services as well as key community leaders. Utilising a mixed-methods approach, this study included the following stages:

### Stage 1

A detailed analysis of census data related to population change and mobility in non-metropolitan South Australia over the 2001, 2006 and 2011 period at a number of regional scales; focusing on newly arrived migrants and associated local demographic change.

### Stage 2

An exploration of the international literature, policy development and local government programs related to settlement of recent international migrants in regional and rural areas.

### Stage 3

In-depth interviews with migrants living and working in the Limestone Coast, their employers, other key community stakeholders and Local Government representatives.

Secondary data sources primarily involved a detailed analysis of intercensal data from the 2001, 2006 and 2011 Australian Census of Population and Housing. The analysis focused on population change in each of the study's LGAs; as well as the role of international migration in contributing to this change. The census data is extremely useful as it is possible to identify the change and characteristics of the Australian-born and overseas-born populations. However, there are two clear caveats associated with using the census data. Firstly, it does not indicate the motivations and intentions of migrant populations moving in and out of an area; and secondly, there are questions about the accuracy of census data in capturing migrant populations, as this group is most likely to experience difficulty in completing census forms and are also likely to be highly mobile between census periods. Although the recent introduction of the Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset (ABS 2014) significantly improves the national data available on migrants, the high levels of mobility of recent migrants, along with the discrepancies between official data sets (i.e. ABS Census data and DIPB Settlement Database) continues to be a challenge and contributes to the lack of clarity on new migrant settlement geography.

Primary data collection for this study involved in-depth interviews with migrants and stakeholders conducted across all the study areas. A total of 51 semi-structured interviews with skilled and refugee-humanitarian migrants were conducted in Naracoorte-Lucindale, Bordertown and Mount Gambier/Grant<sup>2</sup> (i.e. approximately 20 semi-structured interviews in each study area). Another 40 in- depth interviews were also held with stakeholders, including officials from various state government departments; local council officials; employers and service providers in housing, employment, education and migrant specific services.

The stakeholder interviews were designed to capture the following information:

- Background information about the organization the participant is representing and their role at the organization.
- Experiences with new migrants at the organization and (if relevant) the role the organization plays in enabling migrant settlement.
- Perceptions on migrants in the local community; what impact they have on the area and any challenges to their social inclusion.
- Stakeholder interviews with employers of migrants also collected detailed information about the process involved in hiring migrant workers and their experiences with migrant workers.

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the geographical proximity of Mount Gambier and Grant LGAs, they will be combined and considered as one study area for the purposes of this report.

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The migrant interviews were designed to capture the following information:

- Background information about the individual (individual and family details, language ability, education and skills etc.).
- The individual's migration history, both before arriving in Australia and internal mobility within Australia; where they have lived and the factors driving movement to different locations (e.g. employment, social networks).
- The individual's interactions in the community where they currently live; what type of people they are in contact with, what community groups and events they are aware of or participate in, housing, use of services and experiences with employment in the local community.
- Intentions for future mobility.

The duration of these qualitative semi-structured stakeholder interviews typically lasted for about 60 minutes and each interview was recorded as it allowed the interviewer to avoid note-taking and fully engage with the participant throughout the interview. This approach pertained to most stakeholders and skilled migrants, with only a small number who declined having the interview recorded.

However, for refugee-humanitarian entrants, issues linked to recording interviews was carefully deliberated as previous research has highlighted the association placed by refugees between tape recordings and 'official interrogations' (Omidian 2004). This was potentially a hindrance when it comes to getting refugee-humanitarian migrants to be forthcoming with their answers and could likely result in refusals to participate. It was decided that for refugee-humanitarian migrants, tape recordings would be substituted with note taking. Further, field researchers were thoroughly briefed on adhering strictly to the interview questions and to avoid any line of questioning with regards their asylum seeking and refugee experiences prior to resettlement in Australia. Although there were a small number of questions asking participants about where they used to live and work, these questions were asked in a factual manner to reduce the potential or the need for them to provide answers that may be traumatic or distressing. In accordance to ethical responsibilities, participants are not identified in this report in order to protect their privacy and confidentiality.





Afghan women and guests at the Eid celebrations at the Naracoorte Caves  
Sourced from the MRCSA photo archives.



Women shopping in the newly established supermarket in Naracoorte.  
Sourced from the MRCSA photo archives.

### 3. Policies underpinning international migration to regional areas

The settlement of migrants, including refugees, in non-metropolitan Australia has a long history. In the immediate post-war years, Australia admitted Displaced Persons (DPs) from Eastern Europe (Kunz 1988; Price 1990) on the proviso that they worked in a prescribed location for their first two years in Australia. These locations were often non-metropolitan regions such as the Snowy Mountains Scheme in Victoria and New South Wales and other rural communities with labour shortages (Hugo 1999; Kunz 1988). Although significant numbers of migrants remained in these non-metropolitan locations after two years, many did gravitate towards the major cities. Similarly in the 1970s and 1980s, the influx of Vietnamese refugees into Australia were partly directed towards regional locations such as Whyalla in South Australia (Viviani *et al.* 1993), and over time, this population group also migrated to major metropolitan centres (Burnley 1989).

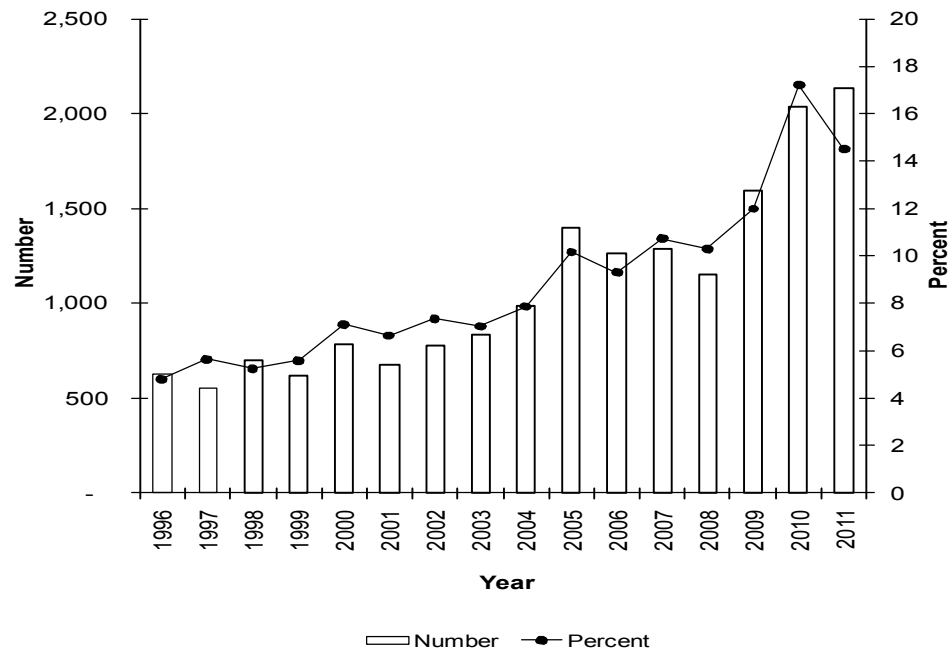
There are some parallels with the distribution of refugee-humanitarian migrants today. While newly arrived migrants tend to settle in metropolitan cities close to existing family ties and other supports, federal government policy has in recent times focused on directing newly arrived refugee-humanitarian migrants to regional areas (Sypek *et al.* 2008). In 2003, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's (DIPB, previously DIAC) 'Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants' recommended that more refugees be settled in non-metropolitan areas. A new approach for identifying and establishing regional locations for humanitarian settlement was devised and introduced in 2005 (DIAC 2009). This approach focused on so-called 'unlinked migrants' or refugee-humanitarian settlers who did not have established family linkages upon arrival in Australia. A number of criteria were established to identify particular regional areas which would be selected for directed settlement of humanitarian immigrants including: a population of more than 20,000; existing migrant communities; evidence of community acceptance of new immigrants; an accessible location, and the availability of appropriate employment opportunities and service infrastructure.

This program has had a significant impact of the distribution of refugee-humanitarian migrants in non-metropolitan locations across Australia. As Figure 1 illustrates, the proportion of these settlers initially moving to communities outside the capitals has quadrupled to one in five in the last decade.

International migration has also clearly had a role in boosting the non-metropolitan workforce through skilled migrants and is, in part, attributable to the federal government's State Specific and Regional Migration Schemes (SSRM). Massey and Parr (2012) have demonstrated that the migrant population in regional Australia, compared with the Australia-born population, had significantly higher levels of education, especially among the most recent arrivals. Moreover, they show that while in the past overseas-born groups have experienced relative socio-economic disadvantage compared with the whole of Australia, the gap has closed as a result of the SSRM schemes. This suggests that by 'channelling' new skilled settlers into regional areas they will contribute significantly to the human and economic capital of rural and regional Australia.



Figure 1: Australia: Settlement of Refugee-Humanitarian Settlers Outside Capital Cities, 1996-2011



Source: DIAC, unpublished data

The success of regional migration schemes and the associated economic benefits to regional communities are very dependent on their ability to retain migrants. However, the mobility patterns of new migrants, particularly refugee-humanitarian settlers, are complex. As mentioned, settlement programs in the 1970s and 1980s with the Vietnamese refugees had limited success as many re-located to larger cities such as Sydney and Melbourne over time. Such mobility patterns were also found among refugees in Canada (Simich *et al.* 2002), the UK (Pearson 2007) and other parts of Europe (Damm & Roshlom 2005a; 2005b). However, there is emerging evidence of informal secondary relocation occurring in some regional centres in Australia. McDonald *et al.* (2008) and Boese (2013) found small but significant re-settlement of refugee-humanitarian migrants who, on their own accord, relocated from Melbourne to regional parts of Victoria such as Latrobe, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Colac and Castlemaine; motivated by employment opportunities, the availability of affordable housing, and the existence of established social networks.

These emerging patterns of mobility and settlement are also noted for skilled migrants in regional areas. Reports from DIPB (DIMIA 2005a; 2005b; DIAC 2007) have found that only a minority of skilled migrants in regional areas (less than 10% of SDAS, RSMS and SIR visa holders) intend to move away from their current location. Conversely, higher proportions of surveyed migrants (32% of RSMS migrants in designated areas; 24% of SDAS migrants) indicated a preference to live elsewhere (DIMIA 2005a; 2005b). Another study found a significant 20 percent of regional skilled migrants in the Riverina, New South Wales had plans to leave within a year (DIAC 2007). The effects of these secondary migrations on rural and regional Australia are mixed; non-metropolitan regions may struggle in retaining skilled migrants, but also, they could also benefit from other migrants voluntarily relocating from other parts of Australia.

Research on the secondary migration of immigrants in Australia remains limited; a startling gap considering the increasing participation of immigrants filling labour shortages in some regional and rural areas. This study of the Limestone Coast region in South Australia suggests that researchers and policy makers should focus more on understanding the secondary migration of immigrants and its implications for regional and rural Australia.

## 4. The Limestone Coast

The Limestone Coast region is situated in the South East of South Australia. Some of the key industries in this region include agriculture, forestry, wine, fishing/aquaculture and horticulture (RDA Limestone Coast 2013). This region comprises seven LGAs: Grant, Kingston, Mount Gambier, Naracoorte- Lucindale, Robe, Tatiara and Wattle Range. The region has a population of 63,077 people (ABS 2011) with a significant proportion (40.7%) living in Rural City of Mount Gambier, the largest regional settlement in South Australia. The population of the Limestone Coast is predominantly comprised of Australian-born (86.7%); with an established history of post-war settlement. In recent times it has experienced a new wave of migration, including both skilled and humanitarian migrants. The Limestone Coast case study is focused on the Grant, Naracoorte- Lucindale, Tatiara and Mount Gambier LGAs (see Figure 2).

Figure 2  
Map of the Limestone Coast Study Area

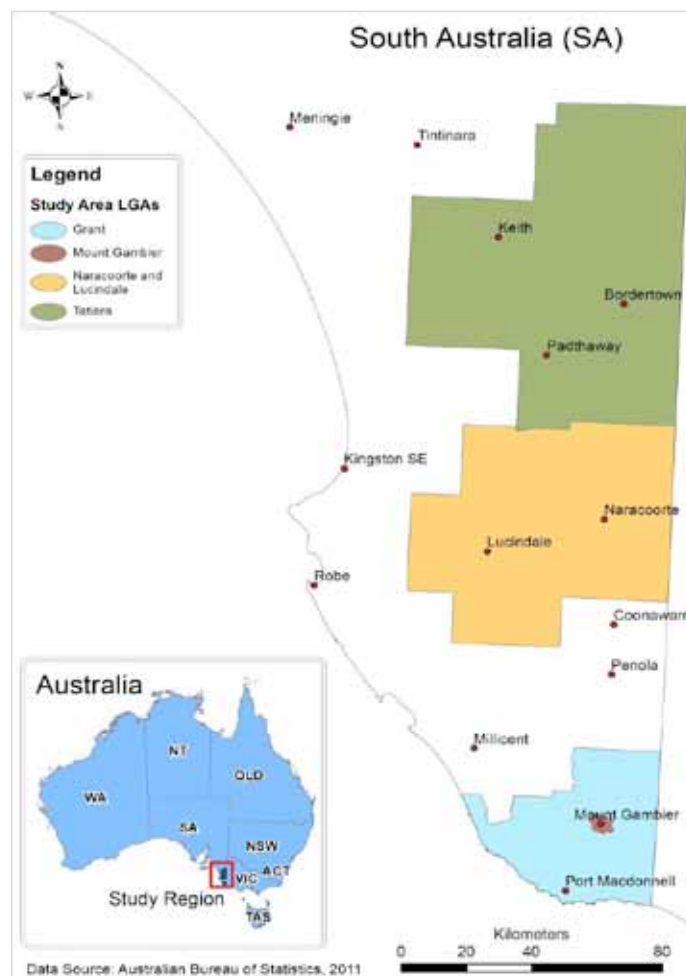




Table 1: Total Population 2001-2011, LGAs in Limestone Coast Case Study

	2001	2006	2011	Change	
				2001-2006	2006-2011
Grant	6,938	7,057	7,599	119	542
Mount Gambier	23,116	23,796	24,871	680	1,075
Naracoorte-Lucindale	7,923	7,867	7,982	-56	115
Tatiara	6,796	6,761	6,484	-35	-277
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,773</b>	<b>45,481</b>	<b>46,936</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>1,455</b>

Source: ABS Census Data 2001, 2006 and 2011

Mount Gambier and Grant LGAs are planned direct refugee-humanitarian settlement locations, while Naracoorte-Lucindale and Tatiara LGAs are not. These four LGAs were selected in part, to compare and contrast patterns and processes of immigration in larger regional centres such as Mt Gambier with those of nearby smaller settlements. The selection of these four LGAs was based on community consultation and stakeholder information through the Migrant Resource Centre of SA and LAC meetings in the Limestone Coast in 2012 to 2013.

Overall, as Table 1 shows, two of the selected LGAs, Mt Gambier and Grant, had relatively significant population gains in the 2001-2006 and 2006-2011 intercensal periods; with the latter period particularly significant. The Naracoorte-Lucindale LGA experienced a loss of 56 people in the 2001-2006 but saw a gain of 115 people in 2006-2011. Conversely, Tatiara had population losses in both intercensal periods, particularly in 2006-2011 which saw a decrease of 277 people. It must be noted that while these numbers might be small in comparison

to metropolitan areas, their social, economic and demographic impact as earlier mentioned is amplified in relation to the size of their respective communities.

Immigrants have played an increasing role in these areas in the last decade. As seen in Table 2 from 2001-2011 the number and proportion of overseas-born increased in all LGAs apart from Grant. This increase was particularly significant in the Naracoorte-Lucindale and Tatiara LGAs when placed in context of the respective changes in their total populations as shown in Table 1 above. In the 2006-2011 period, the gain of 115 people in Naracoorte and Lucindale was attributed to 292 immigrants. This means that the arrival of new overseas-born migrants in fact 'offset' a population loss through the outmigration of its resident population. For the Tatiara LGA, while the gain of 241 immigrants was insufficient in offsetting the overall loss of its resident population; nonetheless the gain in new migrant population has mitigated an otherwise significant population loss.

Table 2: Proportion of Overseas Born 2001-2011 and Net International Migration, selected LGAs in Limestone Coast

	Overseas born			Australian born			% Overseas Born			Net International Migration	
	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011	2001-2006	2006-2011
Grant	507	537	551	6,156	6,213	6,802	7.6	8.0	7.5	30	14
Mount Gambier	2,249	2,299	2,601	19,573	20,253	21,370	10.3	10.2	10.9	50	302
N'coorte & L'dale	614	614	906	7,039	6,907	6,727	8.0	8.2	11.9	0	292
Tatiara	382	468	709	6,100	5,977	5,581	5.9	7.3	11.3	86	241

Source: ABS Census Data 2001, 2006 and 2011



Mt Gambier school children at Karenni community celebration.  
Sourced from the MRCSA photo archives.



Youth leaders at a community forum with Mt Gambier MRC Manager  
sourced from MRCSA photo archives

Table 3: Top 10 Birthplace countries and Languages Spoken at Home of Overseas Born, selected LGAs in Limestone Coast

Top 10 Birthplace Countries of Overseas Born Population				Top 10 Languages Spoken at Home of Overseas Born Population			
2006		2011		2006		2011	
England	1148	England	1137	English	2786	English	2884
New Zealand	477	New Zealand	532	Italian	226	Italian	195
Netherlands	285	Netherlands	279	German	84	*Karen	154
Italy	268	Italy	240	Dutch	75	German	96
Scotland	226	Philippines	226	Mandarin	67	Mandarin	93
Germany	220	Scotland	214	Afrikaans	53	Filipino	90
South Africa	126	Germany	214	Greek	52	Dutch	85
Philippines	90	*Afghanistan	138	Polish	48	*Dari	84
Poland	65	*Burma	130	Croatian	32	*Tagalog	83
Greece	65	*India	129	Filipino	27	*Swahili	62

Source: ABS Census Data 2006 and 2011

\* denotes new entry in the top 10 list in 2011.

Examining the changes in the birthplace countries of the overseas born population in these LGAs and the language spoken gives a further insight into the composition of these recent migrants. As Table 3 shows, there was a shift in the composition of birthplace countries for the selected LGAs in 2006 to 2011. While New Zealand and traditional post-war birthplace European countries such as England, Scotland and Italy continued to have a strong presence in 2011, the emergence of the Philippines, Afghanistan, Burma and India in the top ten birthplace countries in the study area is clearly a reflection of Australia's skilled migration and humanitarian program.

Similarly, comparing the top 10 languages spoken at home in the 2006 and 2011 census for the overseas born population further highlights the evolving diversity of immigrants in this region. For example, in 2011 Karen displaced German as the third most spoken language at home for the overseas born population while Dari and Swahili also emerged in the top ten.

Despite this evidence of new population trends from the 2006 to 2011 Australian Census period it must be acknowledged that, in fact, this may be a poor representation of the actual change in population numbers that is occurring in these, and other, non-metropolitan locations. Anecdotal evidence from stakeholders across this region, including local employers and the Migrant Resource Centres, suggests that the numbers of new immigrants across these regions are much higher. With no available data set which tracks the mobility patterns of new immigrants the census does provide some insight into the changing multicultural landscape of rural and regional Australia. However, it does not fully present a picture of contemporary immigration as it fails to capture the secondary migration (and additional onward migration) patterns of these migrants between census periods.

This evidence of secondary movement alongside strong anecdotal evidence from community consultations with stakeholders in the Limestone Coast region underlines the lack of understanding of contemporary population dynamics and underscores the need to further explore the mobility of immigrants and its implications in rural and regional Australia.



## 5. Community

### Introduction

*'Oh I am sure they will [settle and have a long term impact on the local community], but it depends a lot on how they respond to being here and how we respond to them. It's a two way thing; it's not just about how well they integrate. It really is dependent on the wider community.'*

(Stakeholder)

As traditionally a mainly Anglo-Saxon region, the arrival of migrants from multicultural backgrounds to the Limestone Coast over the past decade has represented a significant change. This is not the first wave of migrant settlement with European migrants coming to the area in the post-WWII period. Many long-term residents and stakeholders recalled this time as a period of community adjustment to people of different backgrounds, using it as a point of reference to current community changes.

*'Culturally Naracoorte has always been a relatively wealthy farming grazier area and predominately white, English speaking, so...for Naracoorte to have a new group of refugees that was going to be a big challenge for them. Culture shock. Back when I went to school it was Greeks and Italians. They're not seen as culturally different now but back then it was hugely culturally different to us.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

The current wave of migration in Australia does differ from previous migration patterns in many ways. Contemporary migrants are diverse in their reasons for moving to the region – including humanitarian migrants settled in Mount Gambier as families through planned settlement programs; independent skilled migrants from a variety of backgrounds who are sponsored to live and work in the region, and humanitarian migrants who come on their own following work or other family members already settled here. This wave of new migrants are also very diverse in their cultural and birth place backgrounds with humanitarian migrants including people of Congolese and Burmese backgrounds in Mount Gambier, people of Afghan background in Naracoorte and people of Afghan, Sri Lankan and African backgrounds in Bordertown; and skilled migrants from a wide variety of backgrounds, including less developed countries such as the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam but also people from developed countries such as South Africa, the UK, Argentina and the Netherlands. This latter group tend to be more scattered throughout the region compared to humanitarian migrants and have been present in the areas in small numbers for a longer period of time.

While levels of mobility and population change represent significant changes for the migrants themselves, local communities are going through a process of adjustment coming to terms with their changing populations. Overall the response to these changes appeared positive but not without challenges:

*'And you know it's been a big learning curve... you know, Bordertown has gone from being this very regional town with all Australians and had to become very multicultural very quickly. And probably...there are still some towns people that are not going to be happy but at the end of the day, well it is what it is.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

There was also the recognition that migrants play an important role in sustaining and improving regional areas in terms of population, industry and diversity:

*'[Migrants] have a necessary role in where Australia sits currently economically and there is lots of change so unless we diversify, the towns won't survive. I think the diversification of the community is essential in social change.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

This chapter of the report will present insights from stakeholder on their perceptions of how new migrants are settling and integrating in the local communities of the Limestone Coast and what role they have in the longer term. Response from migrants interviewed for this study will also be included to describe their perspectives on how well they feel they are settling in to these communities.

## Learning about living in the region

In order to understand the expectations and settlement experiences of migrants once they arrive in the area it is important to consider their reasons for moving to the region in the first place. Work opportunities and planned resettlement through humanitarian schemes are key drivers of movement in this region (this is covered in depth in the Mobility Chapter of this report, see Chapter 7). Additionally many migrants decide to come to the region to follow family members or friends who live in the region. But what knowledge do migrants who move to towns in the Limestone Coast have about living there before arriving? How well equipped and prepared are they to facilitate their successful settlement in the area?

Most of the migrants interviewed in this study knew little about the area before moving there, in fact 88 percent (n=45) said they knew very little or nothing. For those who knew something about the area before moving most had received their information from 'friends and family who live there'; but this varied to some degree when looking across different migrant groups. Half of all skilled migrants who knew something about the area found their information through independent Internet searches while only one humanitarian migrant had used this resource. This difference between humanitarian and skilled migrants is mainly attributable to the fewer resources and choices available to humanitarian migrants. Further, even humanitarian migrant participants directed by UNCHR and DIPB under the regional humanitarian settlement program reported receiving minimal orientation information prior to arrival, as most of their knowledge about their future locations were nominated as 'very basic' or 'none at all'. Some humanitarian migrant participants indicated that the information provided before arrival was non-specific with regards to Mount Gambier; instead, they were provided general information about Australia as a whole or given travel brochures about Mount Gambier to read.

With so many migrants knowing very little about the area before moving there, the provision of region specific settlement information and support upon arrival is critical. Stakeholders were asked in their interviews how they thought new migrants learnt about the everyday practices of living in the communities of the Limestone Coast. The most common resources nominated were the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC), the local council and word of mouth from local community members and other migrants.

For humanitarian migrants who arrive through planned settlement programs the process is more straightforward. The MRC, responsible for delivering the Commonwealth Government's HSS in the Limestone Coast region provides on-arrival case management services that include reception, case management, accommodation and orientation. The HSS is very structured with the onshore orientation program for humanitarian entrants and to a large extent the program is personalised and 'hands on'. As one DSS official states:

*"Orientation starts from Day One; first thing they get orientated about is their house. Someone who has been living in a refugee camp in Northwest Thailand for 15 years going to a three bedroom house in downtown Mt Gambier and trying to explain to them what a fuse box is at the side of the house and what a wheelie bin is and the fact that you put that out on a Wednesday night and someone is going to take it away...all that kind of stuff and what the electrical equipment is for... and how you use it. So right from the word go, orientation is happening, it's not all 'chalk and talk', a lot of it is experiential. If you want to show someone how to use a bus, you don't sit them in front of a whiteboard; you actually walk with them to a deli, buy a multi-trip ticket, put them on a bus and put it in."*

However for migrants who come to the region independently the process of learning about living in the area, accessing services and community information is more ad hoc and depends a lot on individual migrant circumstances. For example, new migrants with children are exposed to opportunities to some information about settling in the community through schools, similarly they would learn basic community information if they take part in English language courses at TAFE, or through information provided by an employer, or by making contact with the MRC office in their town. Even real estate agents described being able to offer some assistance to new migrants about local services and community practices. Relaying information to new migrants about settlement relies on collaboration between a number of service providers and local community members in these towns:

*'There are definitely orientation services available through service providers. But there are a lot of 'parents' to these people. The whole town raises them. ...school's one [source of information for new arrivals], church is the other. Church is a huge source of support to them and sometimes that's where they feel their safest. So services are there, for some more structured than other.'*

(Government Stakeholder)

*'I think that they are largely picking up a lot of that information from the migrant resource centre, I think they play a key role in that. We put as much information out as we can through our [council] newsletters, but that often doesn't get to the people who are renting. But also they get information from friends and their own networks, we see people bring newcomers down to the library and show them where the free internet is and things like that. So I think the word of mouth amongst their own community is quite good.'*

(LGA Stakeholder)

Getting information from established migrants seems to be perceived as a key resource for information by community members:

*'There's nobody. I don't think there's a need for it. They are very self-sufficient, through their own networks they learn.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

*'Just through conversations....I think that is how a lot of it happens.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

## The role of family and friendship networks in settlement and integration

Those migrants who move to the region as a family group present a different situation in terms of settlement to those who move to the region on their own. Comments from stakeholder interviews in this study suggested that integration in the wider community was much easier for those who migrate as families compared to those who come on their own. Families, particularly with school aged children who were seen as creating wider local networks or points of contact and having more opportunities for interaction in the broader community:

*'You get the families in there and its more likely roots are going to be put down. Kids are in school, they are encased in the community, there's a social network...'*

(Government Stakeholder, Adelaide)

*'It is easier to join community stuff when you have a family...'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

*'They get so much servicing from the schools. The families that have kids...you go to the school and you drop your kids off and then suddenly you are involved in the community. This is a hypothetical but...you might be a newly arrived parent and you drop the kids at school and you might have a question. Suddenly you have 20 other mothers there who can help you with the answer rather than having to go back to your case worker to help you. That is what we want. We don't want the new arrival to be solely dependent on their service provider, that's the worst thing that could happen to them. We want them to be independent and to have their other networks.'*

(Government Stakeholder, Adelaide)

The vast majority of migrant interview participants in this study were married (n=44 or 86%) and most (n=42 or 82%) had at least one child with an average of two to three children. Almost all participants (n=38 or 92%) who had children had at least one dependent child aged under 18, highlighting that new migrants generally represent young working age people with young families. However, critically for some of these migrants, their immediate family members have not yet been able to join them in Australia. Although 86 percent of all interview participants were married, only 55 percent said they had close relatives living with them in their current town. This was most prevalent among humanitarian migrants who have moved to Australia on their own in order to escape persecution, leaving family members in the home country or a transit country until they can secure safe sponsorship to Australia for them. Just 45 percent of all humanitarian migrants nominated having close relatives living with them (n=18) compared to 91 percent (n=10) of all skilled migrants interviewed.

There was also variation by location in the extent that new migrants had family members living with them in the same town (reflecting the focus on planned settlement of families in this location). Some 88 percent (n=14) of all migrants interviewed in Mount Gambier were living with close family members, compared to 53 percent (n=10) of migrants interviewed in Naracoorte and just 25 percent (n=4) of those interviewed in Bordertown. Those separated from family members expressed living with ongoing stress and worry about the safety of their family members and the ongoing uncertainty, in part due to changing Australian immigration rules, of when they will be reunited with their family members. There were a number of 'single' men in Bordertown and Naracoorte who displayed some degree of depression and expressed frustration at the impasse in bringing their families over. They indicated that while they are mostly very content in their respective locations and would like to remain living in these communities, they felt that they were unable to put down roots and make long-term plans without their families (see Chapter 7).



Findings from this study suggest that, in general, those migrants who are on their own (usually men) were most likely drawn to the area by work opportunities and were most willing to pursue better work elsewhere if the opportunity arises. They had much less incentive to settle, integrate and remain in the local area (outside of employment):

*'To find a point of connectedness, as a single person, working, I think it is far more difficult than if you had a family...you do see them walking around the street quite a lot because they've got nothing else to do.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

*'It's the women who want to settle, who understand that their children need stability. If the government would only understand that if they unite families then families make a stronger base for settlement and integration.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Lone migrants with family living elsewhere were perceived as more likely to send money home to family members and least likely to be investing their money earned back into the local community to the same extent that migrants living with families locally may do. From the perspective of one stakeholder there was no economic value to the broader community from lone migrants in the town:

*'None.....all money gets sent away. The town is poorer in lots of ways; if they are settled here and all had families it would be different...it is a male generated town now. I think if it were a more diverse group of people it would be a lot better... more kids...these guys come in, take the money and go.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

On the other hand, new migrants living in the region as families were seen to not only be more likely to settle on a long term basis but also to contribute more economically to the local community:

*'They receive from Centrelink, yes they do... but not all, some have jobs already...but they, especially the humanitarian migrants...they inject it into the local community buying cars, houses, private schooling.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

However there are still positive flow-on economic contributions to the local community from single migrants, such as use of local services, private housing rental, and their role in helping to sustain local industry by way of employment, as discussed in Chapter 6 of this report.

## Family and friendship networks driving migration

As mentioned previously, family and friendship networks are often drivers of both settlement and mobility. Just over half (n=28) of all migrants interviewed had family or friends already living in the town before moving there; this includes 62 percent (n=24) of all humanitarian migrants and a third of all skilled migrants. For the most part the people they knew in the town prior to moving there were friends but in some cases (n=5) participants had moved to the area to join a spouse already living there. In addition to local contacts the majority of migrants interviewed for this study (61%) had relatives living elsewhere in Australia. This was even more prevalent among skilled migrant interviewees; with most having close relatives living elsewhere in Australia.

Most of the migrants interviewed in this study (73% or n=37) nominated friends they already knew before moving there who were living in the same town. This was particularly apparent with the humanitarian migrants where 75 percent nominated existing friends living with them in the same town a reflection of the fact that many humanitarian migrants moved to the region following employment opportunities recommended by their friendship networks (see Chapter 6 of this report). In addition to local networks of friends over 70 percent of all migrants interviewed had friends living elsewhere in Australia. Understanding where close family members and friends are living relative to the location of the migrant is important because social networks are often a key driver of migration. This can work in either direction; with close friends and/or family members moving to the Limestone Coast area to join their family member/friend currently living there or new migrants leaving the region to join their family member or friend in another location.

## Perceptions of community attitudes towards new migrants

Most of the migrants interviewed for this study (87% of humanitarian migrants and 73% of skilled migrants) felt people in the local community have been friendly towards them. Only one migrant interviewed stated that he felt that the local community was unfriendly and the remainder were unsure or had mixed experiences. A small number of migrants interviewed described isolated incidents where members of the local community had been unfriendly towards them; however these participants still felt that overall they felt well received by the local community<sup>3</sup>.

Stakeholders perceived some negative attitudes within the wider community towards new migrants but there don't appear to be substantial issues (violence, threats or vilification) with migrants generally being accepted:

*'I think the 'fitting in' thing is something that is getting better; I think the tolerance level [from the wider community] is improving...I think that the racial discrimination – because that's where it starts, that is the severe end of it – I think that goes through a series of steps; through to tolerance and then acceptance and then the final step is integration. And think I can see that there has been a bit of a move along that continuum in that people are not so polarised or divided now. They can see that all these people are here now and settling in and working hard and integrating into the community.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

*'I think it's actually been ok...I think that's also because they keep pretty much to themselves. I've never heard, in the general community, anyone making comments about the migrants.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'Although they are generally accepted I hear murmurings...they're taking our houses, they're taking our jobs...so I think that's basically people who are misinformed. "They're getting more money" that's the other thing I hear....a little bit I hear from the migrants themselves I hear that's they've been made to feel not welcome in the community as well.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Both the migrants themselves and some stakeholders who were interviewed said that for new migrants, particularly those from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds, this sense of acceptance did not go beyond basic pleasantries to true integration.

*'Country people tend to be pretty welcoming generally...but I do think it is hard for people who come from different backgrounds, particularly if there are language barriers, to break into the community...while someone from the local community might be walking past and say hello, getting beyond that and doing something proactive takes time.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'The structural stuff is all there [but]...I honestly think there is very little interaction [between migrants and the mainstream community]...but I suppose that is something that is just going to have to evolve isn't it...'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'If it wasn't for the Skilled Migrant Friendship Group I don't think I would have many contacts here...because the Australians, in my opinion, are very good at making you welcome and are interested in knowing where you come from and so on but it is the next level [of friendship]... that is not there.'*

(Stakeholder/ Skilled Migrant, Mount Gambier)

Finding a point of shared experience or common understanding is key to building any new relationships and is particularly important in facilitating integration; however this process was acknowledged by many stakeholders as taking time, with finding that point of connection or understanding often difficult with migrants from very different cultural backgrounds. For example one stakeholder describes misunderstandings that arose when Afghan migrants were opening jars and containers to inspect them before purchase in the supermarket, a practice that is commonplace in their market-based shopping culture but looked on poorly here:

*'There are issues there that are not necessarily wrong culturally, for their cultures, but for Australia and the eyes of the law...it is very complicated.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that while every effort was made to ensure that interviewees were encouraged to be frank and honest in their interviews and were made to feel comfortable sharing their personal information with the research team (including the use of interpreters) this was a 'one off' interview and it was acknowledged that a certain level of formality was likely to be kept while more personal sentiments and stories may have been revealed over time.

Another example of cultural misunderstanding that occurred in the Limestone Coast region during this study was the apprehension of four men found to have been hunting local native wildlife. While to most local community members it is obvious that Australian wildlife is protected hunting animals for food was considered a normal activity for the new migrants. Despite some negative press at the time of the apprehension the magistrate expressed confidence the offence arose from a cultural misunderstanding and that the group would not reoffend. One stakeholder working in migrant settlement explained that this would now be incorporated into orientation information. Other cultural practices, such as arranged marriages for young women, are not well understood in the Australian community and this becomes even more complicated for young migrants simultaneously living the cultural traditions of their parents and integrating into the Australian mainstream:

*'They are in that cultural divide where they are growing up here and learning about what young women do in Australia as opposed to what they are not allowed to do in their background... We've seen the girls really wanting to go to Uni. And that is our heartbreak, seeing how they all get married off. There is still some of the arranged marriage in the culture.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Many stakeholders interviewed noted differences in how well different groups of migrants integrate. For example Filipino migrants have been very well accepted, especially in Bordertown because they took it upon themselves to create and become involved in community activities, and many of these activities, such as sport and church were understood by the local community:

*'Filipino families...because the parents were educated and they are Catholic, they have a link straight away to the community...whereas it is pretty tricky for Muslims.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

*'The Filipino community there, they were very happy with what we did and they were... 'OK, we live in this town and we'll make it happen', so they started their own choir and their own soccer club and all those things. So in Bordertown I think they have been a very good addition to the community. They are really community minded.'*

(Regional Stakeholder)

*'The Filipinos, everybody loves, they all go to the Catholic Church, they all get together...there's also women. Working for the Catholic Church has played a big role in the Filipino community being more integrated –everyone loves them because they are there, they are very community minded. They have a point, a focal point...These guys [Afghanis] they just wander the streets. They just work and wander the streets.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

It was acknowledged that integration is a two-way process that involves both new migrants and the local community if it is to be successful:

*'It's [reaching] that nice balance. Please keep your traditions but let the children assimilate and assimilate yourselves and get to know some people. Because that works in a two-way process, I think if people see people assimilating there will be more acceptance.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

*'We can learn so much from them [migrants]. It makes you reflect on your own practices a bit.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

Stakeholders also stressed the importance of opportunities to interact with migrants and get to understand each other as imperative to facilitating integration:

*'It's important to put a face to things, it's not until people have met one another and have a relationship with them that they realise they are just the same as everybody else...That's where schools are good. Kids get to know kids in their class and they might end up getting invited to the birthday party or kids are playing football with them so they go home and talk to their parents about this and [interactions with migrants] just sort of filter in.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

Community events such as Harmony Day celebrations provide a good forum for bridging cultural understandings. Stakeholders remark that these events have become very popular and successful in the past couple of years:

*'I think people [in the local community] are curious. Curiosity has grown over time as there are more migrants in town. There is now great interest in things like Harmony Day...I think the community really embraces them.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'I was really pleased to see so many locals coming along [to Harmony day celebrations]...that was really pleasing to see...it only takes one convert at the end of the day – once someone employs [a migrant] or becomes friends and talks to someone else word gets around.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

In addition, a 'Thank you' function was organised by the Afghan community (and other smaller ethnic communities) in Naracoorte in August 2013 for the local community. This was reportedly well received and well attended by the local residents. Albeit this function was largely assisted and driven by the MRC, it not only highlights the importance of a two way process whereby the new arrivals are seen to actively participate in integrating themselves into the community, but also, organisations such as the MRC or local councils have a role in encouraging and fostering this process.

### The role of key stakeholders in supporting integration

There are many organisations that have a specific role to play in supporting integration of new migrants. The important role of schools in integration has already been mentioned. The Migrant Resource Centre clearly has a very explicit role related to supporting the successful settlement and integration of new migrants. As mentioned above, the MRC offer orientation programs for new migrant arrivals but also work closely with other providers to respond to the needs of the migrant community in the region as they arise. For example the MRC provides space for volunteers to run Australian Citizenship classes, they support information sessions around health and domestic violence, provide space for social and craft groups to meet and have opened an office in Bordertown in response to the large influx of migrants who have moved there for work recently. They also drive the Local Area Committee meetings, enabling all community stakeholders with an interest or role in migrant settlement to come together.

Supportive local councils were also viewed as being key to successful migrant integration across the region:

*'It makes a difference when you have the council visibly behind supportive migrant programs [e.g. Harmony Day activities, Refugee Week]. You've got to use local government to push settlement – and support it.'*

(Government Stakeholder, Adelaide)

*'I think the council has a key role in integration... and you can see this in some of the activities we have been doing; such as the film night we had in the town hall [where a film on coming to Australia by boat was shown and several migrants spontaneously got up and shared their own journeys – one of which was later a front page story for the local newspaper]; also for Harmony Day we brought a group together and established a Harmony Day event in the town square that brought in lots of people – we probably had about 300 people come on the night and there was Afghan and Thai and Australian food and then all the school kids had a celebration during the day; and now we have a bit bigger budget set aside for next year and we will create a bigger event then... so interest is growing. So that is probably our major event but hopefully we can pick up a couple of other things along the way and support the MRC with their activities when we can.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

The Local Council in conjunction with the local media was also noted as an important forum for dispelling myths about migrants in the community and presenting the facts:

*'We are there to provide the facts as we know them ...through the local paper or at events... and we do that when there are rumours that start circulating...you know things like that the Federal government is going to start flooding us with three or four or five hundred refugees and lob them in our town, things like that come up from time to time and we will publically debunk it because obviously we are talking to the Department of Immigration about things like that. So we have a role to play there and make sure the community is getting the correct information.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Table 4: Migrant interviewee response: Contact with groups in the community\* by migrant type

	Humanitarian		Skilled		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Other migrants from same birthplace	38	95.0	8	72.7	46	90.2
Local Australians	25	62.5	10	90.9	35	68.6
Other migrants	18	45.0	7	63.6	25	49.0
Total	40	100.0	11	100.0	51	100.0

\*n/% who nominated at least weekly contact with group

Source: Enabling rural migrant settlement survey, 2014

Almost all migrants interviewed (86%) felt there were local community events they could participate in the local Christmas pageant, Australia Day celebrations, Harmony Day, sporting activities). However, quite importantly, a smaller overall proportion felt the local community supports their cultural practices (67%). Some of the reasons given for their perception were: 'locals don't understand our cultural practices' and 'availability of specialised food (e.g. halal food) in local stores'. Some 58 percent (n=11) of migrants interviewed in Naracoorte said 'no' or they are 'not sure' whether their cultural practices are supported compared to 29 percent (n=3) of migrants interviewed in Bordertown and 12 percent (n=2) of migrants interviewed in Mount Gambier. The majority of migrants interviewed in Naracoorte were migrants from Afghanistan and publicity around the war, fears of terrorism and misunderstandings of the Muslim religion and dress code within the local community may play a significant role in this.

*'I see the major stumbling block for migrants in this town is fear, fear from community members. And I know from talking with friends or people around town they say 'oh, you're up at that school with all the migrants', so there is a fear factor I think and lack of understanding possibly with our Middle Eastern migrants.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

*'[People from] Christian backgrounds find settlement easier... to blend in. It can be difficult to communicate with someone from Afghanistan wearing a burqa for instance because you can't see whether they are smiling or frowning and that makes it hard to interact.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

## Community Networks

It is clear that for a great proportion of the migrants interviewed for this study the majority of interactions and friendships were within their own birthplace groups; particularly for humanitarian migrants. Table 4 shows that almost all humanitarian migrants interviewed (95%) had at least weekly contact with others from their same birthplace compared to just 63 percent who had the same level of contact with local Australians. This is compared with 73 percent of skilled migrants who had at least weekly contact with others from their own birthplace and 91 percent who had the same level of contact with local Australians.

A large proportion of both humanitarian and skilled migrants interviewed had regular contact with other migrants in the local community, reflecting the diverse and multicultural nature of the region and the workplaces where many of the migrants interviewed were employed. The poor English skills of humanitarian migrants relative to skilled migrants in this study were identified as making it difficult to interact in any depth with people outside of their own birthplace or language group and may help to explain the less frequent interactions with local Australians for this group. In addition to a common language, the sense of familiarity of experiences, food and customs shared with others from the same birthplace makes socialising more regularly within this group a natural choice. In discussions with stakeholders this tendency for migrants to interact mainly within their own group came up repeatedly as a barrier to integration:

*'I think that is one of the big problems with the migrant settlement program, settling such a large group of people from the same background in the same area, they all stick together and speak in their own language. So they never extend their English skills.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'I think the migrants have found their own way within their own cultural groups but perhaps not made links to the wider community.'*

(Stakeholder, Mt Gambier)

The workplace is an important opportunity for and place of interaction across different community groups because people from different backgrounds have to interact with each other. The role of employment in developing language skills, enabling integration, and fostering social and support networks outside of birthplace groups should not be under-estimated.

Table 5 shows humanitarian migrants have a higher tendency to have larger friendship groups with others from the same birthplace group (n=29 or 73%) than with local Australians (n=10 or 25%). In contrast, the friendship groups of skilled migrants are distributed more evenly

across other migrants from the same birthplace groups and local Australians. Only a small number of both skilled and humanitarian migrants said they had friendships with several 'other migrants' outside of their birthplace group.

Supporting the theory that integration and developing local friendships takes time, Table 6 shows that the number of friendships, across all community group types, is greater among migrants who have been living in the area more than one year compared to those who have been living there for a shorter period of time. The increase in the proportion of migrants who have several or many friendships with local Australians is the most significant, with just one migrant who had been living in the area less than a year stating they have several/many friendships with local Australians compared to 15 migrants (44%) who had been living in the area for more than one year.

Table 5: Migrant Interviewees: Friendships with groups in the community\*

	Humanitarian		Skilled		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Other migrants from same birthplace	29	72.5	6	54.5	35	68.6
Local Australians	10	25.0	6	54.5	16	31.4
Other migrants	7	17.5	3	27.3	10	19.6
Total	40	100	11	100.0	51	100.0

\*n/% who nominated they have several/many friends with group

Source: Enabling rural migrant settlement survey, 2014

Table 6: Migrant Interviewee Response:  
Friendships and contact with groups in the community by length of residence in current town

	Up to 1 year		More than 1 year	
	n	%	n	%
Several/many friends by community group				
Others from same birthplace	11	64.7	24	70.6
Local Australians	1	5.9	15	44.1
Other migrants	3	17.6	7	20.6
At least weekly contact with others by community group				
Others from same birthplace	15	88.2	30	88.2
Local Australians	10	58.8	24	70.6
Other migrants	9	52.9	16	47.1
Total n	17	100.0	34	100.0

Source: Enabling rural migrant settlement survey, 2014



## Participation in community groups and volunteering

A total of 63 percent of all migrants interviewed said they participated in local community groups, including 91 percent (n=10) of all skilled migrants and 55 percent (n=22) of all humanitarian migrants. This varied substantially by location with 100 percent of migrants in Mount Gambier stating that they participate in community groups compared to 44 percent (n=7) of migrants in Bordertown and 47 percent (n=9) of migrants in Naracoorte. This may reflect the more diverse range of organisations and social opportunities available in the larger regional centre of Mount Gambier, but may also reflect the fact that more migrants interviewed in Mount Gambier were settled as families rather than single migrants. As previously discussed, many of the lone migrants who are living in Bordertown and Naracoorte are there primarily for work and may not be interested in participating in community groups and/or have fewer opportunities to engage with other networks.

### Box 1: Migrant interviewee response: What community groups do you participate in?

- MRC women's group
- Birthplace specific community groups: Afghan, Filipino, Karen
- Church groups, including many culturally specific church groups such as the Catholic church, African church group and Karen church services
- Sports events (mainly soccer)
- Skilled migrant friendship group
- School groups and activities
- Rotary club

A range of community groups were represented among those who did participate, interestingly with most related to their position as a migrant. Box 1 shows a list of the community groups nominated. Church was the most commonly listed type of community activity, with some migrants attending mainstream local church services but many attend culturally specific church groups and services.

Along with participation in community groups and activities, volunteering can be a very useful pathway to acceptance in the local community. There is some evidence that humanitarian migrants are keen to participate in volunteering activities which provides them a sense of value as they contribute to society (AMES 2014)<sup>4</sup>. Volunteering not only assists new migrants in getting involved and engaged with their communities, but also, it helps them build skills to facilitate positive settlement outcomes. As stated by one stakeholder in Naracoorte:

*'Some migrants want to know how to fit in better and I they tell them the only way in a country area is to serve in the community. So go and join the CFS, the footy club, Rotary etc. Sport is very important here too.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Nearly half of all migrants interviewed said they volunteered in the local community, including 64 percent of skilled migrants and 45 percent of humanitarian migrants. Again there was a much higher rate of participation in volunteering for migrants living in Mount Gambier, and in most cases volunteer work was also related to their position as a migrant. For example, 56 percent of all migrants who volunteered either provided assistance in translation, helped new migrant arrivals in settlement through the MRC and/or helped to organise social events for other migrants. However a few migrants did volunteer through more 'mainstream' organisations including Red Cross, Rotary, CFS, or in schools. This response shows the important role migrants themselves play in enabling successful settlement of other new migrants to these locations. One stakeholder notes how it has become easier in recent years to settle new migrants when they arrive because the community, for example Naracoorte, has built on itself, establishing strong social networks with more migrants available to help:

*'That's why it is so important, the continuity of the settlement programs...to allow [migrant] communities to support themselves.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Volunteering was also noted as an important pathway to paid work for some, as discussed in the employment chapter of this report (see Chapter 6).

<sup>4</sup> <http://amesnews.com.au/latest-articles/rising-numbers-asylum-seekers-volunteering-community/>

## The role of local services in enabling migrant settlement

In order to successfully integrate and settle, the basic needs of new migrants must be met including their ability to communicate and interact within the local community, to find adequate housing and work, and ensure basic needs such as health and education are met. This section of the report considers whether available local services adequately meet the needs of new migrants and what some of the barriers were to accessing services.

English language came up repeatedly as the single biggest perceived barrier migrants face when it comes to integration:

*'It's language. Language is absolutely the single biggest barrier.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'I think people tend to see them generally, from my conversations, as hard-working, polite....they're appreciative and generally nice people that just find it hard to communicate sometimes.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

It is therefore important that services and resources are available locally to help migrants to improve their English language skills. The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is there to provide new migrants, especially humanitarian entrants, with functional English to assist their settlement and aims to provide English language learning to all new migrants, including those new arrivals who may never get employment e.g. women or older migrants; it was noted by MRC SA that this program was never intended to be an adjunct to employment nor does it have the resources to do so. While most humanitarian migrants are entitled to 510 hours of English language support through the AMEP, it has been noted by both migrants and stakeholders interviewed in this study that the success of this program varies. One major problem observed by MRC SA stakeholders is that people do not always complete their allocation of hours because they are sent out to work and have no way of returning to English classes if seasonal work finishes. Therefore improved and more integrated communication systems need to be established between HSS, other settlement agencies, AMEP and JSAs with opportunities to incorporate English language classes into work life and perhaps pathways of work specific English Language learning made available to people who have completed the initial hours of English language provision available through AMEP.

Additionally, the use of interpreters is cost prohibitive for some organisations, so there is a reliance on other migrants to provide this support; however it was noted that there can be issues with this:

*'Phone interpreters are about \$30 for a quarter of an hour. It is hugely expensive. We do get some financial assistance with that but not a lot for accessing that sort of thing. It's easy enough to translate a short note [with help of a student support officer from the same background] but then we've got confidentiality issues, [as] she's in the Chinese community...it's a bit close.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Although some 40 percent of all migrants interviewed as a part of this study did use interpreters at times (see Table 7), these were usually informal interpreters such as family members or friends. Several stakeholders explained the role children were playing as family and community interpreters as they became more proficient in English through their schooling.

Migrant interviewees used a range of services regularly, as shown in Table 7. Overall health services were most commonly used 'at least sometimes'. Health services are applicable to all types of migrants and are often a requirement for employment, which helps to explain the high rate of access to these services by the migrants interviewed in this study. Although it didn't come up in migrant interviews, some stakeholders mentioned a huge and emerging demand for health services among humanitarian migrants, particularly around mental health:

*'We're seeing a lot of depression and anxiety because of this [changing migration policies]...a lot have gastro-intestinal problems because of stress and trauma and all of that, and a lot of them have allergy problems from the pesticides. We're just starting to come into the mental health issues because they trust us now and they know us.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Table 7: Migrant interviewee response: Services used 'sometimes/often'

	Humanitarian migrants % (n=40)	Skilled migrants % (n=11)	Total % (n=51)
Council	47.5	54.5	49.0
Centrelink	57.5	27.3	51.0
Employment services	42.5	27.3	39.2
Schools	47.5	63.6	51.0
Health services	95.0	100.0	96.1
Interpreting services	50.0	9.1	41.2
Police	45.0	63.6	49.0
Migrant Resource Centre	67.5	18.2	56.9

Source: Enabling rural migrant settlement survey, 2014

Use of services other than health; such as schools, employment services and Centrelink services varied relevant to individual migrant circumstances. There are some clear differences across humanitarian and skilled migrants use of services shown in Table 7. Humanitarian migrants interviewed were much more likely to use Centrelink, employment services, the MRC and interpreting services compared to skilled migrant interviewees. This reflects the fact that humanitarian migrants are entitled to certain services, such as Centrelink payments and generally have poorer English skills compared to skilled migrants. Most skilled migrants are employed and therefore would not require employment services, and although the MRC offices are available to all migrants, most programs are more relevant to humanitarian migrants. One MRC stakeholder explained why some migrants may use their services more than others:

*'Every nationality, and the reason why they came, really I think directs whether they access a service like ours, because of the choice. For example the Filipinos are not accessing the service really... They've made that choice to leave [the Philippines] for financial reasons so they are quite happy whereas some of the Afghani men...there is a lot going on to worry about, they are stressed about family, sending every bit of money home...and they have had to leave their home under great duress and some of them have taken great risks to come out...some of them have come out through detention centres...no one size seems to fit all. I'm finding that the journey determines whether they will access the service or not.'*

(Regional Stakeholder)

One barrier to service access mentioned by a stakeholder was transportation for those who don't drive since there is very little public transport available in the region:

*'Access to services is a big barrier, especially at this end of town, there is nothing. There are no shops, and the mums don't drive so to get to places they are walking long distances. All the services and facilities in this town are centrally located and there is no way to get there if they don't drive other than to walk.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Overall most migrants interviewed (84%) say the services available locally met their needs. The lack of locally available culturally appropriate or desirable food (e.g. halal food or African products) was the most commonly acknowledged downfall of living in a rural location. A few migrant participants mentioned insufficient specialist health services, the lack of conversation English courses, and the distance and lack of transport options to the city. One stakeholder talked about migrant-led business initiatives in Naracoorte and the role these played in the settlement process:

*'So as businesses such as the Asian supermarket and the Afghan supermarket become established they will become part of the Naracoorte established scene... and if we get the new housing development finalised that will provide the town with more housing options and in particular more affordable housing, and there is already work here and so it is that combination of things.... the town has to satisfy all those needs for new migrants, including their needs from a cultural perspective, including food, including work. And maybe one day we will have a mosque here, wouldn't that be great!'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

## Housing

One key service for new migrants is appropriate housing. The majority (94%) of migrants interviewed in this study live in rented accommodation, while six percent own their accommodation, with the remaining four migrants buying or building their own home at the time of interviewing. Nearly two-thirds of participants lived in a separate house and about a quarter in units or flats.

A range of strategies were used by new migrants to find a place to live and to reduce rental costs (see Table 8). Personal networks with other migrants were as equally important as Real Estate Agents in finding somewhere to live. A third of migrants used the services of Real Estate Agents to find a home, and another third found their accommodation through family and friends. The MRC was also considered important in this regard, especially in Mount Gambier. Compared to skilled migrants, humanitarian migrants were more likely to find accommodation through MRC or Anglicare (who provide accommodation servicing under the HSS program). Only one in ten interviewed respondents found a place to live through other service providers and/or Internet searches.

Migrants outside of the planned HSS program tend to initially stay with friends and relatives for a period of time when they first arrived in the area and then move on after they found their own accommodation. This emphasises the importance of migrant networks in smoothing newer migrants' adjustment to the new environment. More humanitarian migrants reported difficulty finding accommodation compared to their skilled counterparts, in part as the latter generally had no language barriers when dealing with landlords and Real Estate Agents, were employed, and in some cases were provided with housing as part of their employment package.

Finding accommodation was more difficult in Naracoorte compared to Bordertown and Mount Gambier. In Mount Gambier, as a planned settlement region, the availability of adequate and appropriate housing for new migrants is a requirement. In Mount Gambier, the assistance provided by MRC or Anglicare services, affordability and a fairly adequate supply of housing appeared to ease the challenges of finding accommodation. On the other hand, interviews with key informants in Bordertown indicated that the rapid influx of a large number of migrants over a short period of time together with a limited supply of housing had been a challenge, and in fact most rental properties were now taken in the town:

*'Housing is difficult, because men are often staying in a house together, although most of the agents now find that the Afghan men are very tidy in the home, they take a lot of pride in their home and are usually pretty reliable as far as paying the rent, so they have a good reputation as tenants. But*

*some landlords are not keen on having them as tenants because they think there are too many of them for the size of the house, but some owners are very happy about having them.'*

(Regional Stakeholder)

*'Housing is a problem for everybody else because no one else can get a house because these guys have all got the houses. So there is that angst in the community, because no one can get a house.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

Migrants who moved with other family members appeared to face more difficulties in finding suitable accommodation compared to lone migrants. The average number of people living in a house was found to be four, with the majority (57%) live with three to five people, about 20 percent with one to two people, some 14 percent with more than six people. Only five migrants (10%) were living alone. Nearly half of all the migrants who live with another person were living with their partners and/or children, just over a quarter with friends and about 10 percent with other family members. Compared to humanitarian migrants, skilled migrants are more likely to live alone or with their partners and children. Some 48 percent (n=19) of humanitarian migrants were living with friends, many of whom they met during their journey to Australia or in detention centres; no skilled migrants interviewed in this study were living with friends.

While nearly a third of migrants interviewed found it difficult to find somewhere to live the majority of migrants were happy with the accommodation they currently lived in. Only eight of the 51 migrants interviewed reported that their current accommodation didn't meet their needs. However, the interviews indicated that migrants will move if their needs are unmet or if their needs have changed over time (for example being joined by family members or finding regular work). More than half (52%) of all migrants interviewed had moved house at least once since they moved to their current town of residence. Of these, nearly a quarter have moved once, about 13 percent twice, and another 13 percent had moved three times or more. Migrants discussed moving homes due to poor services and amenities such as absence of air conditioners or adequate heating, or the accommodation being too small for their needs etc.. However, the reasons driving movement were not always poor housing facilities but also included buying their own home, changing household demography, the need for living independently, and to live closer to work, children's schools and the town centre.

Table 8: Migrant interviewee response: Resources used to find a place to live by location

	Bordertown		Mount Gambier		Naracoorte		Total	
	n	% (n=16)	n	% (n=16)	n	% (n=19)	n	% (n=51)
Migrant Resource Centre	0	0.0	4	25.0	0	0.0	4	7.9
Family/friends	6	37.5	3	18.8	8	42.1	17	33.3
Real Estate agents	8	50.0	5	31.2	5	26.3	18	35.3
Service providers	0	0.0	2	12.5	1	5.3	3	5.9
Internet search	0	0.0	1	6.2	1	5.3	2	3.9

Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

On the other hand, 49 percent of migrants interviewed had been living in the same house since they moved to their current town of residence; but staying in one place doesn't necessarily mean migrants are living in the houses they desire. Lack of mobility might also be because of a shortage of houses in their area, a lack of affordable accommodation or limited English proficiency; as the following quotation taken from a middle aged Afghan migrant who lives in Bordertown, indicates:

*'...I like the town but my problem has been shortage of houses. It is not easy to find a place to live for people like me who don't know English. My poor English made it difficult for me to find a place. It takes long time. I have no education and often communicate with gestures. But so far I didn't change. I stayed in the same house. I have no other options.'*

### Enabling long term settlement in the area

In order for migrant settlement to be most successful for both the migrants themselves and the local communities ideally migrants should stay in the area for the long term. It has been noted throughout this chapter that the process of integration and settlement takes time and resources. One useful way to gauge migrant's attachment to the area is to consider where they think of as 'home'. An attempt was made to examine migrants' perception of 'home' in interviews for this study. Of the 51 migrant participants more than half (58%) considered Australia as their 'home' country; while nearly a quarter regard their country of birth as 'home'. Humanitarian migrants who fled conflict were among the largest group who regard Australia as 'home', as can be seen from the following quotes from humanitarian interviewees:

*'Australia is my home - I have no good memories of Afghanistan' 'There is nothing left in Afghanistan so I call Australia my home'*

This sentiment was also expressed by stateless persons (mainly Karen or Karenni from Burma) and those who spent most of their life in refugee camps. However it is also likely that, along with all migrants, they maintain transnational ties with their extended network of family and friends in their community of origin and have strong levels of engagement with migrant communities within Australia.

Notably, compared to humanitarian migrants, skilled migrants were more likely to consider their country of birth as home. Only two of the 11 skilled migrants interviewed for this project perceive Australia as their 'home' country. Some 14 percent considered both Australia and their country of origin as their 'home' as the following quotation taken from a Congolese immigrant who lives in Mount Gambier, illustrates:

*'...Both Australia and my country of birth feel like home...this is my home now but I still have so many family ties in Africa that I maintain so that feels like home too. I have a permanent residency here and I have a plan to apply for citizenship. I have so many friends whom I know from refugee camps here in Mount Gambier and elsewhere in Australia.'*

The perception of 'home' can be influenced by both a migrants' attachment to their community of origin and their level of integration in Australia. Some migrants for example were born and had grown up in neighbouring country refugee camps and are less likely to identify with their parents' home country as their own. For example, as one migrant interviewed for this study who was born in refugee camp on the Thai/Burma border, says:

*'...I grew up in a refugee camp, so Burma doesn't feel like home - Australia is like home but I find it hard to settle here and I can't comfortably call Australia home either.'*

Those who migrate to Australia as a minor are also likely to more readily regard their new country as 'home' as they may have few memories of their country of origin and may integrate more easily into Australian life through better exposure to language and customs through formal education.

Those migrants who consider Australia to be 'home' may be more open to putting down firm roots in their new communities. It is important that any challenges to long term settlement in the Limestone Coast area are understood and addressed in order to facilitate the long-term integration and successful settlement outcomes. One employer in the region describes how the momentum around integration builds over time:

*'Well...the first skilled migrants [working for us] who have been here for five years have just got their Australian citizenship; and three of our families have now bought their own home. There are children attending all the local schools, and the children are thriving in other things like sport.... two of the children are the regional champions in Karate and have been asked to represent South Australia. Our families are strong members of the Catholic Church and all the partners have gone out and got training and are now working. They have created a strong sense of community for themselves.'*

(Employer, Mt Gambier)

Settlement patterns and perceptions of settlement are often related to stable work opportunities or the location of social ties.

*'Those who don't have families with them tend to be the most mobile group.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'You're much more likely to get the skilled migrants to stay if you get the families entrenched [in the local community]. It is much harder to get singles to stay unless they meet someone and stay...they are more portable at the end of the day.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

However, making stronger connections in the local community may help inspire some migrants to stay on in the area longer term, as one stakeholder described:

*'The ones who stay are those who have made connections in the local community and they have friends and networks and also they have jobs outside of the meatworks.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

It was perceived by some stakeholders that having established, thriving migrant networks in their communities may also encourage other migrants to the region:

*'Because we've got such a large Afghani population, with people buying homes and children in schools and businesses growing, I think you'll find that our population will just keep building. It's just human nature to want to go where people understand you.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

## Conclusion

There are several clear messages about pathways to successful settlement and integration of new migrant in the Limestone Coast based on the findings from this study.

Although long-term settlement is considered an ideal, it is important to consider the benefits to regional communities from migrants with higher levels of mobility; even if they stay only briefly they contribute economically to the region through working in local industry, use of housing and other services and attracting other migrants to the region.

It is clear migrants who come to the region as families have an easier time in both accessing information and resources to expedite the settlement process when they first arrive, but are also more likely to set more extensive roots in the local community which assists in integration and long-term settlement. Although most of the humanitarian migrants who arrive in Mount Gambier's planned settlement programs come as families, the benefits of families for settlement and integration has implications for all migrants and remains a sound reason for the federal government to accelerate family reunification as much as possible for humanitarian migrants with family left behind.

It is apparent the process of integration for new migrants for some groups will take a substantial period of time and is a two-way process involving both the local community and new migrants coming to mutual understandings of one another. Due to language, communication and cultural barriers many new migrants initially engage mainly with other from the same birthplace group. In the short term this is seen to hinder integration in the wider community. Key stakeholders such as local councils, the Migrant Resource Centres, schools and other community groups in the region play a vital role in bridging this divide by dispelling any myths about new migrants to the general community and providing community based forums such as Harmony Day celebrations, citizenship ceremonies and inclusive public events for the local community and migrants to interact.





Work experience participants in Mt Gambier.  
Sourced from the MRCSA photo archives.



Karenni band performing at a community function in Mt Gambier.  
Sourced from the MRCSA photo archives.

## 6. Employment

### Introduction

One of the key factors driving both the movement and settlement of migrants is employment. This is true globally, for migrants of all different cultural backgrounds, and for both skilled and unskilled migrants. For the Limestone Coast region the 'push-pull' factors of employment attracting migrants in and out of the region are no different. In Tatiara and Naracoorte-Lucindale LGAs the presence of major industries such as meat processing, agriculture, horticulture and viticulture have been seen as a 'pull factor' for those seeking employment. Lower skilled employment in these industries are often characterised as DDD (dirty, demeaning and dangerous) occupations that struggle to attract participation from the Australian workforce and are perceived as employment opportunities for migrants.

*'There is no doubt there are certain jobs out there that no Australians want to do...especially in the agriculture and viticulture industries...whereas migrants, they are good at it, they are used to hard work.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'...There's not a lot of people who will do that kind of work because it's pretty cruddy work. You're out in the elements...[migrants] are out there doing the type of work Australians don't really want to do. They're prepared to do the work that a lot of other people won't do.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

The availability of migrant workers willing to do this type of work helps to sustain and grow local industry in the region. However it is not only unskilled or semi-skilled migrant workers that fill a void in the region; skilled migrants also fill explicit employment needs.

### Employment as a driver for movement

While the reasons for residential mobility are always multi-faceted, economic motivation appears to be a primary reason new migrants are coming to the Limestone Coast. Migrant interviewees in this study nominated 'job opportunities' as the single most important reason for moving to their current location, with 65 percent of all migrants interviewed stating this as a motivation for moving (see Chapter 7, Tables 15 and 18 for a discussion around other drivers of movement). However this varies substantially by location, as shown in Table 9. All interviewees in Bordertown and the majority in Naracoorte said job opportunities drove their movement to that location while only 25 percent of migrants interviewed in Mount Gambier nominated this as a reason; reflecting Mount Gambier's role as a planned settlement area.

### Type of employment

The different employment contexts in each of the three locations within the Limestone Coast study region to some extent underpins the employment experiences of migrants living in each of these areas. Table 10 shows the employment status of interviewees by location. All migrants interviewed in Bordertown were employed, which reflects their movement to the area for job opportunities. While just

58 percent of migrants interviewed in Naracoorte were employed reflecting the number of interviewees who were spouses and adult children of the working migrant; only one interviewee in this area was looking for work. Most interviewees in Mount Gambier were also currently employed in some capacity, although a larger number in this region were under-employed (only working on a part-time or casual basis), this group of interviewees were more likely to express wanting more work or work in another field of employment. These levels of unemployment and underemployment were considered by stakeholders in the Mt Gambier region to be indicative of the overall employment rates for the region and not specific to the migrant population.

Most of the migrants interviewed for this study were working in unskilled jobs. This held true across all three locations in the study region (Figure 3). Mount Gambier had the largest total number of interviewees working in skilled jobs, perhaps reflecting the more diverse employment opportunities in this larger regional centre.

Skilled migrants coming to Australia under the various skilled migration schemes including the State-Specific and Regional Migration Scheme (SSRM), Skilled Regional visas (489 or 887 visas), Skilled Regional Sponsored (475 visas) and temporary skilled work visa (457) are very diverse and include professions traditionally viewed as 'skilled' such as doctors and nurses, managers and professionals but also people with a unique and 'in-demand' skill. In the case of the Limestone Coast, skilled migrant workers include meat boners and agricultural workers who are sponsored by employers to fill a specific need. Some 60 percent of the skilled migrants interviewed for this study were employed in the meatworks or agriculture/viticulture industry, as described below.

Table 9: Migrant interviewee response: Moved to the area for 'job opportunities' by location

	Bordertown		Mount Gambier		Naracoorte		Total	
	n	% (n=16)	n	% (n=16)	n	% (n=19)	n	% (n=51)
Job opportunities	16	100.0	4	25.0	13	68.4	33	64.3

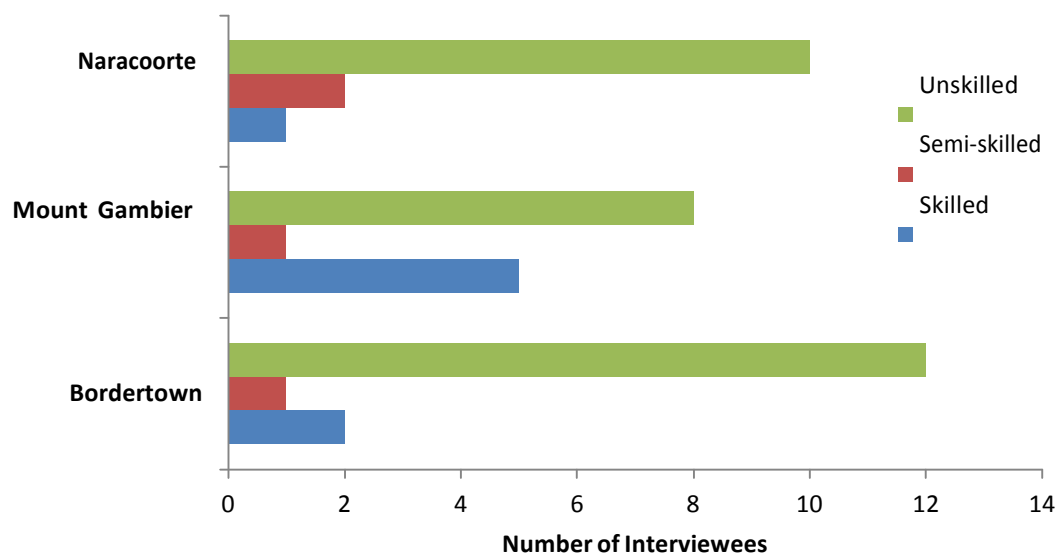
Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

Table 10: Migrant interviewee response: Employment status by location

	Bordertown		Mount Gambier		Naracoorte	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Full time	14	87.5	6	37.5	9	47.4
Part time	0	0.0	3	18.8	1	5.3
Casual	2	12.5	4	25.0	1	5.3
Total employed	16	100.0	13	81.3	11	57.9
Unemployed - looking for work	0	0.0	2	12.5	1	5.3
Not in labour force	0	0.0	1	6.3	7	36.8
Total not employed	0	0.0	3	19.0	8	42.1
Total interviewees	16	100.0	16	100.0	19	100.0

Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

Figure 3: Migrant interviewee response: Type of employment by location\*



\*Note this figure includes employed respondents only (n=36) Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014



Table 11: Migrant interviewee response: Industry of employment\*

	Total	% Employed (n=39)
Agriculture/Viticulture	9	23.1
Meatworks	21	53.8
Transport	1	2.6
Construction	1	2.6
Education	1	2.6
Cleaner	2	5.1
Childcare	1	2.6
IT	1	2.6
Aged Care	1	2.6
Administration	2	5.1
Caseworker/service provider	1	2.6
Journalist	1	2.6

\*Note includes only employed interviewees (n=39). Some interviewees nominated more than one industry of employment/work multiple jobs.

Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

Table 11 shows the industries of employment of all currently employed migrant interviewees. Over half of all interviewees who were employed were working in the meatworks industry, and nearly one-quarter were working in the agriculture/viticulture industries, reflecting key industries of employment in the Limestone coast region. This highlights the role of industries with high demands for unskilled labour as 'pull' factors for attracting migrants to rural and regional Australia. A similar pattern can be seen in other regions of Australia.

Almost all humanitarian migrants were employed in the meatworks or agricultural industries (83%) compared to 60 percent of skilled migrant workers. See Appendix 1 for a more detailed case study of the meatworks industry and the role of migrant workforce in this industry the Limestone Coast.

### Finding Employment

Informal social networks are a common means of finding work for most people and appear to be particularly important for new migrants. The role of social networks in helping migrants to find employment in the Limestone Coast region is seen in Table 12, showing 'friends/family' were the most commonly stated method of finding employment; with 55 percent of all employed humanitarian migrants and 20 percent of all employed skilled migrants finding work this way.

The means of finding work did vary somewhat by location and migrant. Highlighting the impact of chain migration 'friends or family' were most instrumental to finding work

for those living in Naracoorte (64%) and Bordertown (44%) compared to Mount Gambier where just 33 percent of employed interviewees nominated this. This emphasises the important role migrants themselves play in driving employment supply in the region, particularly in Tatiara and Naracoorte-Lucindale and thereby helping to sustain regional industries. As explained by one stakeholder, entrepreneurial refugee-humanitarian migrants with active social networks play a significant role in the influx of migrants in the study area:

*'In fact, I've had the story explained to me a couple of times, it all goes back to two Afghani men, I don't know, 6 or 7 years ago, started up some sub-contracting businesses and won a few contracts down in that region... And it sort of just grew and grew and grew.'*

(Government Stakeholder)

It is evident that availability of (mainly unskilled) work in various industries, combined with wide, strong social networks has contributed to the in-migration of large number of refugee-humanitarian migrants in the Limestone Coast. For example, one of the major employers in the study region who started operating in 2011 did not employ any migrant workers at that time; however, in late 2013 a supply of mainly Afghan refugee-humanitarian migrants (about 170) and skilled migrants recruited from the Philippines (about 30) to supplement the workforce allowed them to add a second shift at the plant and increase productivity. The HR manager interviewed at that company emphasised that both skilled and refugee-humanitarians were crucial for the

Table 12: How did you find your job?

	Total % (n=39 employed)
Friends/family	46.2
Internet	2.6
Recruiting agents	12.8
Applied for the job himself/herself	20.5
Word of mouth	5.1
Volunteer/work placement	10.3
Other	7.7

\*Note this figure includes employed respondents only (n=36). Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

company as well as for the town itself. Even by absorbing all the local recruitment options, there would still have been a labour shortage, limiting the implementation of the second shift. The role the migrants played in growth in this industry was noted by other community stakeholders as well:

*'Well our town would be in all sorts of strife if they weren't here. The local meatworks would be having major issues; they are now killing around 700 cattle a day, up from 450 because the export market has grown so much, and that means double shifts and they can only do that with a good supply of workers....'*

*'....and that business [the local meatworks] generates over 20 million dollars' worth of wages a year that comes back in to the town, and I would think that over 80% of the staff out there would be non-Australian born people.'*

*'Well the meatworks just wouldn't have a second shift if it wasn't for the migrants! I think [the owners] have put too much money into it to go back, they have spent over 9 million dollars to upgrade the plant and things....but I think it's good....I think the fact that more Filipino families are coming [30 skilled migrants and their families being sponsored by the meatworks] is really good, I think everyone is really looking forward to that.'*

This is a crucial element influencing the mobility of migrants in regional areas and as Jentsch et al. (2007:43) explains, employing migrant workers "can develop a dynamic of its own, as these workers use their own networks and often bring their friends and family members to join the same business". Although social networks were clearly the most common way migrants in this study found work, some 20 percent 'applied for the job themselves'. This was more common among skilled migrants, as their decision to migrate to rural and regional areas was often connected to their visa type

and/or employer sponsorship arrangements. Recruiting agents were used by 25 percent of all employed migrants in Bordertown compared to only one interviewee who used this method in Mount Gambier and no-one in Naracoorte. Several migrants talked about coming to the region first and then going directly to the plant or business based on word of mouth from a friend or relative.

Volunteer work also emerged as a growing avenue towards gaining employment for migrants. This was especially so for those living in Mount Gambier (33%). Several stakeholders and migrants highlighted the role of volunteering as a good pathway to employment in their interviews. Observations from this study were that most of the volunteer work new migrants undertook was directly related to their position in the community as a migrant and often involved those with good English skills volunteering as translators to assist in communication and settlement with other new migrants from the same background. Most migrants currently working at the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) for example started out volunteering for the organisation and eventually were offered a paid role. Additionally one Congolese migrant interviewed in this study found his employment as a Student Services Officer (SSO) at a local school through his work as a volunteer translator at the MRC and for the school. One of the teachers at the school knew of his good English skills and background in education so when a job came up at the school she encouraged him to apply and he got the job. Although he was formerly a secondary school teacher before coming to Australia and ideally would like to be teaching, he is happy that through this volunteering role he was able to get his 'foot in the door' working in the education sector. Another stakeholder from a private school explained that one of their SSOs had been employed after months of volunteering at the school; with her ability to act as a translator for migrant parents being seen as a considerable asset to the school.



## Barriers to Employment

Employment is considered vital to successful integration and settlement for new migrants; therefore it is important to explore any difficulties in finding not just any employment but suitable and/or desirable employment. Overall, a significant 70 percent of all migrants interviewed in this study said it was difficult to find employment. This varied by location with all employed migrants in Mount Gambier stating difficulty finding employment compared to 73 percent of those migrants living in Naracoorte and just under half of migrants (44%) in Bordertown.

### Lack of available work

One of the major perceived barriers to employment, especially in Mount Gambier, was the current lack of available work. As one stakeholder described, the employment situation in this area has changed since the planned settlement scheme began:

*'It is difficult to find employment at the moment. It was 3% unemployment when migrants first started moving to the area and now it is 7.5%. That is across the board [for migrants and the general community]. And that is an issue as a targeted settlement region because how viable is it to send people here if they're not going to be able to find employment. Because what are they going to do? They're going to have to move. It's up to the government and local government to make employment opportunities for the whole of the community.'*

(Regional Stakeholder)

One stakeholder pointed out that he felt things were worse in Mount Gambier than other towns in the region:

*'Mount Gambier is the epicentre for unemployment in the [Limestone Coast] region.'*

(Government Stakeholder, Mt Gambier)

Another stakeholder explained that she felt there were no unmet labour demands in the region:

*'I don't think there are unmet labour demands in the South East currently. I think that if there is work to be had, people are doing it.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

## Language and communication

Another substantial barrier that migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds face when trying to find work is English language proficiency; as highlighted in some stakeholder interviews:

*'The three 'E's, [are] the biggest barriers. The first E is English, then education and employment. You get the first one right, you get your English right, then your education and employment options are exponentially easier...If I could wave the magic wand and fix the one thing, it would be English. If I could bestow even IELTS level 4 English on everyone, I would do that as their settlement journey would be so much easier.'*

(Government stakeholder)

It was also noted that the language support humanitarian migrants are entitled to through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) – 510 hours of English classes – was often insufficient when it comes to being able to work:

*'The amount of English they need is quite substantial. And even if they do vocational training they still find themselves coming up against that brick wall with employers with not having enough English.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

While skilled migrants have to meet English language criteria in order to be granted an Australian visa, this requirement does not hold true for dependants of the primary migrant, and these dependants are not normally entitled to settlement supports such as English language classes. This is a barrier to successful settlement and integration for these families and it is often the case that partners of skilled migrants are themselves skilled and looking to be actively employed, but this may be hindered by English language ability and lack of support services.

For some stakeholders the issues were not just about speaking and understanding English per se that were problematic. Different cultural norms or understandings of what is expected in the Australian work-place when it comes to communication were seen as problems in both seeking and retaining employment. One stakeholder described how a group of migrants at a job interview alienated the employer by immediately asking how much the employer was will to pay as a form of bargaining rather than listening to what the employer had to say about the job specifications. Another stakeholder explained the common cultural practice among men from Afghanistan to leave work for months at a time without giving notice and the expectation that their job will be waiting upon return:

*'Cultural differences in terms of communication... not so much even the lack of English language but the lack of communication at work as a whole .....for example, they [Afghan men] never tell their employer....they'll finish their work shift on Friday and then fly out for a month or three months ... they don't let anyone know. Then they'll walk in to work Monday three months later and the employer says "what are you doing here?" and they say "I work here" and the employer says "no you don't, you left."'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

Another stakeholder, a HR manager of a major employer in the Limestone Coast region reflected a similar experience with Afghan workers leaving for holidays to visit their families in their home countries. They only inform the company after buying their tickets and booking their trip. Such trips could last for longer than their entitled annual leave of four weeks and some employees would leave after only working a few months at the company. This was despite the fact they were informed that they wouldn't be kept 'on the books' and weren't guaranteed a job upon their return. As a result, that particular company implemented a new policy which required every new employee to work for at least year before they can go on leave and return to their jobs after their holidays. Breaking down the communication barriers around expectations of both employees and employers could enable better employment outcomes and meet the needs of all parties. However, at the same time, the nature of much of the work in the region is casual and seasonal, particularly in the horticultural and viticulture industries; so there is potential to match some industry needs with employees who want seasonal work. As one regional stakeholder stated:

*'Seasonal work is a key part of that, and it is a key part of that lifestyle for some of those migrant communities anyway. Whereas we [local Australians] don't see seasonal work as a good thing, we see permanency as a good thing because our whole lives revolve around that; that's how we get a home loan and pay our bills... whereas they [migrants] are happy. They can go home for three months and that works for some of them.'*

## Transportation

Transportation to get to and from work can also be a problem, as new migrants often do not have a driver's licence or the ability to purchase a car, at least for a period of time. This often creates a reliance on others for transport to and from work. Additionally work is often located outside of the centre of town, especially in the agricultural and meatworks industries as a stakeholder describes:

*'Dairies are out of town, nurseries are out of town, vineyards are out of town...so they rely on being transported [by someone within their migrant group who can drive]...and if that one person who can drive is sick, they're out.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'Driving lessons are a big thing for the new migrants that come here....if they can't drive they can't get to a job. We have community volunteers that spend their time getting up the hours of driving lessons for new migrants.'*

(Stakeholder, Mt Gambier)

## Lack of suitable employment

Another problem raised in migrant interviews was under-employment or unsuitable employment; that is working in an area that does not meet their skills and qualifications. Just 28 percent of all employed migrants interviewed in this study said their current employment matched their skills and qualifications. A stakeholder makes this point:

*'You've got people with Masters Degrees collecting trolleys in the supermarket.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

While this can be extremely frustrating for the migrant worker it is also a loss for the general community with the potential of these migrant workers not being realised. This was clearly the case for two skilled migrants working in Mount Gambier, as described in Box 2.

## Box 2:

### The deskilling of skilled migrants

SM1, who practised as a vet back in Argentina, currently works as a Senior Stockman at a local piggery while his wife, a university trained laboratory technician in Argentina, has only been able to find casual employment as a cleaner at a local motel. She has applied for more relevant jobs in the viticulture industry in nearby Coonawarra but has lost out on more than one occasion to school leavers with no degree. She attributes this to both the lack of recognition of her skills here and her poor English levels. Both are currently undertaking further study at TAFE in laboratory technician skills and in the near future they hope move to Adelaide where there would be more opportunities for them to be employed in this field. While their main reason for moving from Mount Gambier is driven by employment opportunities, they also reflected that they wanted to be closer to their son who has taken up an apprenticeship in Adelaide. Further, they had a small network of Argentinian and Spanish speaking friends in Adelaide whom they could socialise with more often, and they acknowledged that when it came to recreational facilities/activities, Adelaide had more to offer compared to Mount Gambier.

For some employers the high skill levels of their skilled migrant workforce were seen as a great advantage for their business and they felt that there was no perceived mismatch in skills and employment opportunities. For example, a piggery owner near Mount Gambier explained that his skilled migrant workforce of ten (from the Philippines) all had university degrees in animal husbandry or veterinary science. While this might seem to the outsider as a high mismatch between skills and employment the employer felt that this not only provided a great benefit to him in being able to expand the genetics and breeding side of his business but also that it provided a group of skilled migrant workers better opportunities than they would have had in the own country:

*'Now this is quite a specialised farm...and we provide genetics to all the Australian pig industry and a lot of that success has to do with the staff that I am able to employ...and well for these people [the skilled migrant workers] to be given an opportunity of having permanent work, with a good income and everything else, well they are prepared to do anything. I mean, we have got the situation here where we have fully qualified veterinarians working as stockmen, and they are very happy.'*

Interviews with stakeholders brought to light observations of differences in expectations in terms of employment opportunities and recognition of skills and qualifications across different migrant backgrounds. Many stakeholders pointed out a particularly sharp contrast between the employment seeking approaches of the two major birthplace groups of humanitarian migrants in Mount Gambier, the Congolese and Karen:

*'I think they all want to find work and communities have very different approaches to obtaining that objective. The Congolese are very proactive and they're out there looking for jobs, looking for advice about how to get jobs, help with getting their resumes put together...the Karen community I think, struggles quite a bit more because they're not quite sure where to begin. They tend to be more passive and the work tends to come to them.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

Another interviewed stakeholder points out the frustration some Congolese migrants display when they cannot find work that matches their previous experience:

*'I know you were a sergeant in the army in the Congo, you were also a teacher...however your qualifications are not recognised here. And that's not just you...you'll have to start with a low level job'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

Despite this many migrants claimed they were happy to take whatever work they could find in the short-term and in the longer term hope to acquire the qualifications or certifications required to resume working in their chosen field or pursue better employment opportunities. Interestingly, while 28 percent of employed migrants interviewed in this study said their current work matched their skills/qualifications, 41 percent said they would like to continue working in the occupations in which they are currently employed in.

## Discrimination and exploitation

The issue of discrimination against hiring workers from a migrant background was not a common theme from either migrant or stakeholder interviewees. In fact it was more common to hear the opposite that some employers preferred to hire migrant workers rather than local workers because of their strong work ethic and their willingness to do work that 'Australians don't want to do':

*'Some employers find the migrant workers more reliable as workers in the agricultural type industries.'*

(Employer, Mount Gambier)

*'Migrant workers are very good. They are just committed to working. All they want to do is work...and they are very loyal.'*

(Employer, Mount Gambier)

It is common for humanitarian entrants to gravitate towards employment niches that are physically demanding, low skilled, labour intensive and unappealing to the general Australian workforce. However, one stakeholder cautions against a pattern of assuming migrant workers were only suitable for this type of employment:

*'I would like to see them aspire to jobs that are not just in agriculture. We need to make sure we don't pigeon-hole migrants into certain areas of work.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

Exploitation of workers is a concern with any vulnerable population, including new migrants. Although not discussed in any depth in interviews with either stakeholders or migrants the danger of over- reliance on migrants who volunteer, rather than being employed as a paid worker, did come up in a couple of stakeholder interviews. As previously discussed, volunteering and traineeships can be important pathways to employment but it is important these roles are not misused. Some stakeholders also expressed concern at the high level of turnover of migrant workers with some employers in the region.

There was only one mention by a migrant interviewee of any experience with exploitation in the workforce. This involved a small team of migrants who were offered a 'trial period' of work in the forestry industry in Western Victoria. In this instance he and the others in his team were underpaid for work they carried out, were not offered training or safety equipment and were not told when the 'trial period' would cease. When they challenged the pay and work conditions after a few weeks they were told they were not required any more.

## Employment and Integration

*'One of the biggest things in acceptance in the community is employment. Then they're seen as out there, not 'bludging' as some people say... and migrants want to be seen as contributing community members.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

As illustrated in the quote above, employment for new migrants is a win for both the migrants themselves, who are keen to find work, and for the community. Not only does having a job, generating income and creating a routine and 'normal' life help migrants themselves to settle in their new environment but this also allows them to integrate with the wider community and allows for a point of identification with others as a fellow working member of the community. One of the major barriers to integration previously identified in this report is the fact that migrants often socialise and interact within their own birthplace groups which limits their engagement with other community members; as stated by one stakeholder:

*'There is a fine balance between encouraging them to care and look out for each other but that then could be keeping them a bit separate from the wider community too.'*

(Regional Stakeholder)

Workplaces are an ideal setting for daily interaction across and between different groups of people. Migrant interviewees in this study were asked how often they interacted with others from different birthplace groups. Table 13 shows responses from employed migrant interviewees across skilled and humanitarian migrant groups. All said they interacted regularly with local Australians at work and 85 percent interacted regularly with other migrants.

Table 13: Interviewee Response: Interactions with Others at Work\*

	Skilled migrants		Humanitarian migrants		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Others from same birthplace group	6	60.0	25	86.2	31	79.5
Local Australians	10	100.0	29	100.0	39	100.0
Other migrants	8	80.0	25	86.2	33	84.6

\*Note this figure includes employed respondents only (n=36) and indicates those who have at least weekly interactions with others at work.

Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

In addition to interaction across different groups, employment also provides an opportunity to improve English skills and build on formalised English language programs as mentioned by one stakeholder:

*'We've questioned the success of AMEP – they do their hours and come out of it not being able to speak English...I think working together on that [including both AMEP and employment] is better because if you're in the workplace you're learning English.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

Workplaces also offer occasional social opportunities for employees to interact outside their own birthplace groups. For example the research team were able to observe a 'family day' BBQ put on by one workplace for all its employees and supported by the Migrant Resource Centre. In order to involve the newer migrant workforce and initiate interaction several informal 'come and try' Aussie sports activities were arranged including football, netball, volleyball and cricket. This enabled informal interaction with all community members and was referred to positively by several migrants later in their interviews. Other workplaces talked about using social events to encourage interaction including BBQs, staff basketball teams, fishing competitions and cricket matches. One employer described how a migrant employee's impending marriage enabled all staff to become involved and help her plan the wedding using their local knowledge.

While work provides positive outcomes for migrants it is important to also consider perceptions of employment opportunities from the perspective of the broader community. For example when unemployment rates rise in an area, as is the case currently in Mount Gambier, resentment towards new migrants as 'competition' for limited jobs may start to arise:

*'As unemployment in the area goes up you do get the subtle "they are taking our jobs" whereas 10 years ago it wouldn't have been an issue.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*"Coming here and taking all the Aussie jobs" That's a comment we hear quite a bit.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Interviewed stakeholders were asked their perceptions on migrants filling any unmet labour demands in the region. This was met with a mixed response, with some of the view that there were no unmet labour demands in the area:

*'There are no unmet labour demands...they say they have for the meatworks, but for me that is just importing cheap labour.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

*'They fill a need, they provide the work. They say Australians won't but I don't actually believe that... they [some employers] won't employ anyone with a disability or anyone who is older.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)

*'I don't know [if they fill a need] because prior to them [migrants] increasing in number in our community those jobs [in meatworks and vineyards] were filled at any rate. So whether they've increased their productivity to require those jobs, I don't know.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

While others point out that migrants are doing necessary work that others in the local community won't do:

*'There is national media misinformation which suggests migrants are taking away jobs...when in actual fact migrants are only taking jobs that Australians won't do.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'They [migrant workers] are very important to certain industries – meatworks and vineyards – but the transient nature makes it difficult to see any further development to the community...they need to stay longer.'*

(Stakeholder, Bordertown)



Stakeholders were asked to share their perceptions on any impact new migrants may have on the community in the long term and this generated a number of comments about the potential opportunities for migrants related to work. New businesses around food, including grocery stores and restaurants, were commonly discussed as opportunities. This appeared to match well with feelings expressed in migrant interviews that a lack of access to their cultural and origin country foods was a big disadvantage living in a rural region. There were some examples of migrants putting this idea into practice with an Afghan supermarket opening in Naracoorte in June 2014, an Asian food store in Mt Gambier run by a new migrant, and a group of Afghan women taking steps to start their own catering business following on from successes in selling their food at Harmony Day and local Wine Festival events.

Another key industry where opportunities for migrant workers were identified was in aged care. The experiences of one of the stakeholders interviewed for this project who employs migrants at a large aged care organisation in the region is detailed in an Aged Care Industry Case Study, see Appendix 2. Several examples of migrants starting labour contracting businesses for the viticulture and horticulture industries were also described by various stakeholders. Additionally, hospitality, health, and the hair and beauty industries (for example a supplier for cosmetics to suit African skin tones and African hair dressers) were also suggested as business opportunities for migrants in the region.

## Employment and future mobility

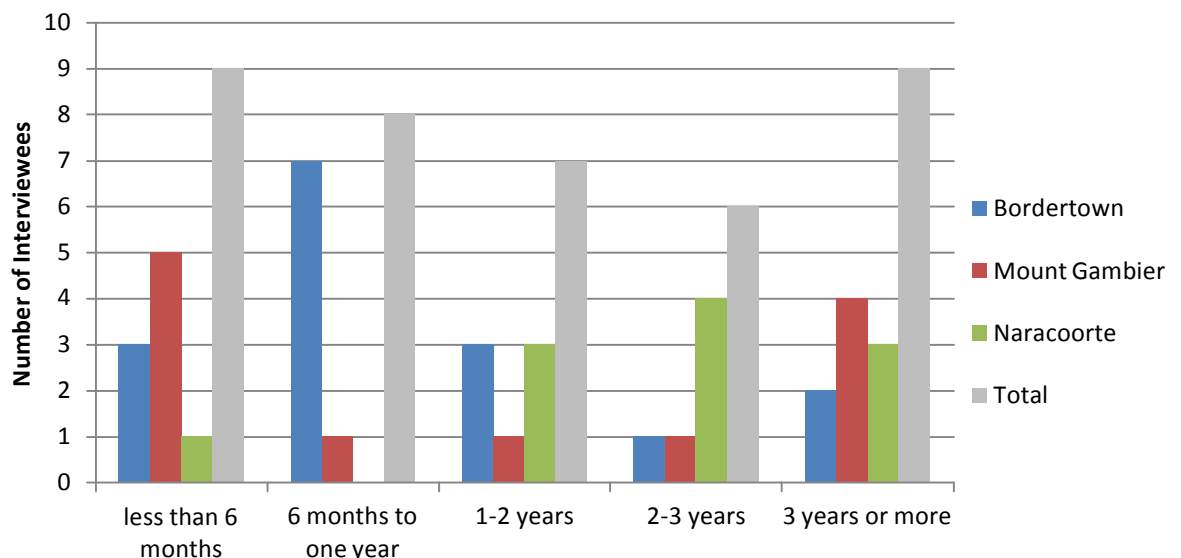
The ability of migrants to settle in the area relies heavily on long term employment. Figure 4 compares length of employment for employed interviewees across the three study regions. Most in Bordertown have been working with their employer for less than one year (reflecting the short overall timeframe interviewees in Bordertown have lived in the area - see Chapter 7 on mobility). Compared to the other locations migrants in Naracoorte have longer term relationships with their employer with all but one having worked for the same employer for at least one year.

The issue of high turnover of employees is a known problem, particularly at the meatworks industry. Stakeholders in this industry described recent steps that have been taken to address this issue:

*'[The meatworks] is working very hard to try and reduce that turn over...they have moved people from the [job placement agency] to become employees of the company...so it does ring true, what they are saying...and the workers themselves have said since then the pay has improved.'*

(Regional Stakeholder)

Figure 4: Length of Employment with Current Employer by Location\*



\*Note includes only employed interviewees (n=39) Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

Many of the migrants who were interviewed for this study (78%) said they would consider moving out of the area in the future. By far the main reason these migrants would consider moving from the region was if better employment opportunities came up elsewhere (60%). In fact only 23 percent of all employed migrant interviewees expected to be working in the same location in the future; demonstrating the transient nature of many of these migrant workers. This may be due to the lack of satisfaction with their current job role or reflect the insecure nature of their current job.

It is well established that true integration in the broader community takes a substantial period of time. Interviewed stakeholders were asked for their perceptions on why some migrants stay in the area and some move on to other places. The vast majority of responses were around work:

*'They are only going to stay if the circumstances are right. And that's usually around the work for them, at the end of the day.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

*'I think it is work that they need. That is the main thing they want, a way to be able to support themselves and live as they want to live without having to accept handouts and assistance.'*

(Employer, Mount Gambier)

*'I have heard it is definitely easier for them to find work in the cities. Finding work is a real issue... we've lost some people from this community for this reason.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Some stakeholders also mentioned difficulties in retaining skilled workers in the region, particularly if more than one skilled migrant in a family is seeking work:

*'When you start attracting fairly highly skilled migrants, there aren't a lot of work opportunities [locally] at that higher level... So once you've got a couple where one can't get work, the chances of them staying are minimal.'*

(Stakeholder, Mount Gambier)

## Conclusion

Findings from this study confirm the important role of work as both a driver of migration to the region but also in retaining migrants in the area longer term. Beyond influencing mobility, work is essential to successful settlement of new migrants in terms of integration in the broader community. It is a pathway through which migrants gain communication skills to them thrive in the Australian environment but importantly workplaces are also points of interaction with people from the local community, beyond their own birthplace groups, creating common ground which helps to start the long term process of integration.

There are clearly different contexts for employment across the Limestone Coast, with rising levels of unemployment in Mount Gambier meaning many people; including new migrants, have difficulty finding work. This is in contrast to new migrants in Bordertown and Naracoorte who on the whole moved to these locations because of a job opportunity or to follow a family member who moved there for employment. However, questions need to be asked about the permanency of those new migrants should their employment situation change. There were varying perceptions among stakeholders as to whether migrants are filling unmet labour demands in the Limestone Coast region or whether it is a case of 'importing cheap labour'.

It is important that the facts around employment opportunities and trends are accurately presented to the wider public or misinformation will perpetuate the negative stereotypes around 'migrants taking the jobs' and may mean migrant workers are at risk of being exploited. If migrant workers are meeting unmet labour demands and 'doing the work that locals don't want to do' they are filling a real need and helping to sustain key industries in the region and this also needs to be publically highlighted and celebrated as a success story for the region and for the migrants. The potential for migrants to fill roles in industries such as aged care and hospitality were also identified, as were business opportunities which would diversify the economy of the region. As one stakeholder suggested, access to a willing workforce may provide the edge that new or expanding industries need to create a stronger economy in the Limestone Coast region:

*"I think work will dictate what happens in attracting more or less migrants to the area. I think if we have some sort of expansion in the horticulture industry down here, which is quite likely to happen, it will attract more to the area. There are several things you need to expand industry and one the barriers to growing new industry is "who is going to do the work?" and if you can solve that problem with a migrant workforce..."*



Erika Vickery, Mayor, of Naracoorte, Lucindale Council at a Citizenship Ceremony with new citizens.  
Sourced from the MRCSA photo archives.



Young community volunteer.  
Sourced from the MRCSA photo archives.



## 7. Migration Patterns

As discussed in Chapter 3, regional migration schemes and the directed settlement of refugee- humanitarian migrants are some of the drivers that underpin the movement of international migrants to regional areas in Australia. The success of regional migration schemes and the associated economic benefits to regional communities are very dependent on their ability to retain migrants. However, the mobility patterns of new migrants, particularly refugee-humanitarian settlers are complex. Preliminary fieldwork conducted in September 2012 and late 2013 with community stakeholders in the Limestone Coast region revealed significant secondary mobility occurring in and out of the study area, particularly for migrants from refugee-humanitarian backgrounds. This chapter will explore the migration patterns of both skilled and refugee-humanitarian migrants in the study region, looking at the drivers of mobility and future settlement intentions. This will shed light on the implications of mobility for the Limestone Coast region.

It is important to keep in mind that the findings from the 'Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey' are not representative due to the small sample. Nonetheless, the results provide us with some indicators of migrant mobility in the study region. As shown in Figure 5 and Table 14, the length of time spent by respondents in each area bear some similarities and some differences. Figure 5, illustrates the length of time refugee-humanitarian participants had spent in each community.

The majority of participants were relatively new to the region, having spent less than two years in the area. Since 2007, Mount Gambier has been a direct settlement location for Burmese-Karen refugees and more recently for Congolese refugees, and appears to be a successful settlement story (Piper and Associates 2008). From this perspective, it is understandable that more participants with a longer period of residence are seen in Mount Gambier compared to Naracoorte and Bordertown.

Conversely, the increase of refugee-humanitarian migrants in Naracoorte and Bordertown has occurred outside the planned direct refugee-humanitarian settlement framework. Both these towns have experienced rapid levels of growth with predominantly Afghan refugee-humanitarian (but also African and Sri Lankan migrants in Bordertown) independently moving into these communities. As stated by an official from one Government department:

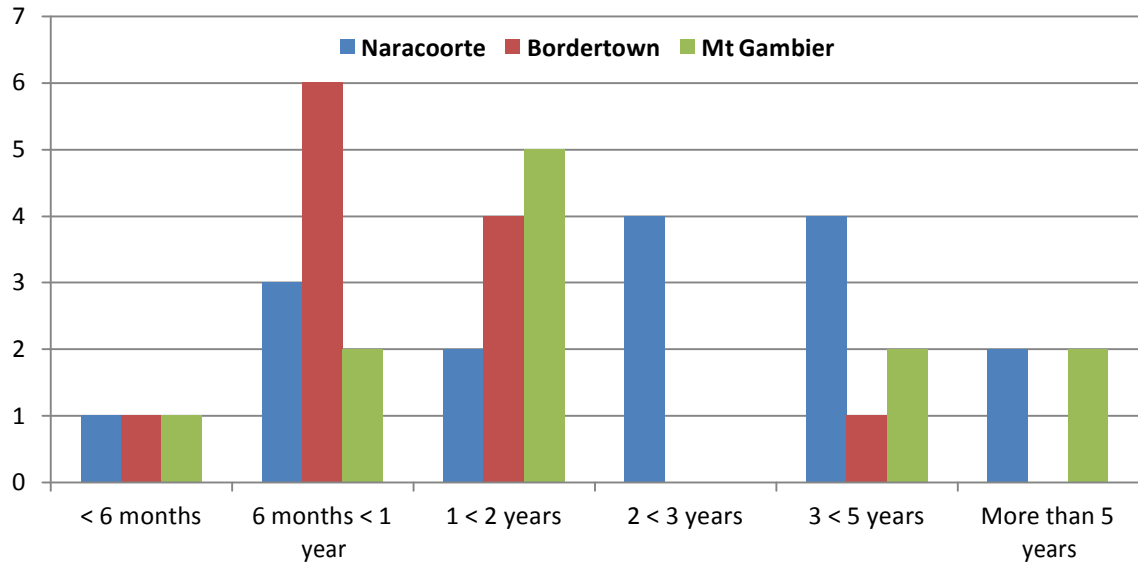
*"Mt Gambier has been a very planned and very controlled both from a HSS and SGP perspective and we have good networks in that area ... And about three years ago, there was an explosion of Afghanis [over 200 Afghans] who moved into Naracoorte, and about six months ago, a similar pattern started happening in Bordertown [about 150-170 Afghans]...completely unplanned. My understanding is that the majority of Afghan men now living in Naracoorte were originally settled in Adelaide or Melbourne. They moved to Naracoorte because of the real or perceived work opportunities there."*

(Government Stakeholder)

This unplanned arrival of refugee-humanitarian migrants to some regional areas has meant these smaller communities are experiencing some sense of 'structural lag' in terms of community understanding and provision of services to cope with this change. The movement of refugee- humanitarian migrants into Naracoorte was estimated to have begun around 2011, while Bordertown has experienced ebbs and flows of both skilled and unskilled migrants (associated with employment at the meatworks) and a recent increase in numbers in late 2013/early 2014. As one Bordertown stakeholder described:

*"Do you mean this time? Because you know this has happened a before! Maybe three or four years ago we had a massive influx of Filipinos, they were from Western Australia...and then eight or nine years ago we had the Chinese come, all on 457 visas. And I think initially that was mainly men and then their wives and families would come...and more recently some more Filipino families on 457s and a lot of Afghanis have come at the same time, and some Sudanese and other Africans [unskilled humanitarian and refugee migrants]. And now, since this first period we are getting a lot of Sri Lankans too."*

Figure 5: Length of time spent by refugee-humanitarian migrants in each study area



Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

Table 14: Length of time spent by skilled migrants in each study area

	Naracoorte	Bordertown	Mt Gambier
< 6 months	0	0	0
6 months < 1 year	0	1	0
1 < 2 years	0	0	1
2 < 3 years	1	0	0
3 < 5 years	2	1	0
More than 5 years	0	2	3
Total	3	4	4

Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

Extensive consultations with community stakeholders and information from the LAC meetings supported these estimated figures and the timing of the influx of refugee-humanitarian migrants (mainly of Afghan background) into Naracoorte and Bordertown. The striking difference with migration occurring in these two towns compared to Mt Gambier is the fact that these migrants are moving from elsewhere in Australia on their own accord, often coming into the area based on information about work through their networks.

In comparison, the skilled migrant participants (Table 14) in this study reflected comparatively longer periods of residence. There were eight skilled migrant participants who had lived in their respective towns for at least three years. While it must be remembered that this is a purposive sample of a small number of skilled migrants it does suggest that skilled migrants tend to live in these regional towns longer term and this may influence their settlement outcomes and future intentions.



Table 15: Reasons influencing the in-migration of migrants to each town

	Bordertown (n=16)		Mount Gambier (n= 16)		Naracoorte (n=19)		Total (n=51)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Job Opportunities	16	100	4	25.	13	68.4	33	64.7
Had a friend/family member	2	12.5	5	31.2	10	52.6	17	33.3
Word of mouth	1	6.2	4	25.0	5	26.3	10	19.6
Cost of living	2	12.5	2	12.5	0	0.0	4	7.8
Safe place to live	1	6.2	1	6.2	1	5.3	3	5.9
Many people from home country are here	3	18.8	3	18.8	8	42.1	14	27.5
Friendly people	0	0.0	1	6.2	1	5.3	2	3.9
Good place to raise a family	2	12.5	3	18.8	2	10.5	7	13.7
Visited before and wanted to return	0	0.0	2	12.5	0	0.0	2	3.9
To assist in my Australian PR outcome	1	6.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.0
Nice place to live in	0	0.0	1	6.2	2	10.5	3	5.9
Availability/ease of getting a visa	0	0.0	1	6.2	0	0.0	1	2.0
Healthy environment	0	0.0	1	6.2	0	0.0	1	2.0
Resettled by UNHCR/DIPB	0	0.0	6	37.5	0	0.0	6	11.8
Other	1	6.2	1	6.2	0	0.0	2	3.9

Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

The reasons for settlement in the Limestone Coast region vary between migrant type and location. However, there are some broad conclusions that can be made. As discussed in the previous Chapter, migration to the region primarily revolves around employment opportunities, as reflected in Table 15. Over 65 percent of participants indicated coming to the region for work, followed by one-third who were influenced by either moving with a family member (e.g. partner or parents) or joining a family member or friend already living in the region. Just over one-quarter of participants indicated that the presence of other (un-related) people from their home country already living in the community was a factor (27.5%) and just under one-fifth were influenced by word of mouth (19.6%). A smaller proportion also cited that they moved to the region as they felt that it was a good place to raise a family (13.7%); while a small number were directed by the DIPB as part of the planned direct settlement program.

Clearly, different drivers influence the mobility of refugee-humanitarian migrants and skilled migrants. While the reasons for their in-migration to these towns are multi-layered, economic motivation appears to be a primary reason, particularly for refugee-humanitarian study participants. For Naracoorte and Bordertown, the presence of major industries such as meat processing, agriculture, horticulture and viticulture can be seen as a 'pull factor' for those seeking employment, with the role of immigrants in these towns increasing. One of the major employers in the region who took over a business in 2011 did not employ any migrant workers at that time; however, in late 2013 a supply of mainly Afghan refugee-humanitarian migrants (about 170) and skilled migrants recruited from the Philippines (about 30) to supplement the workforce allowed them to add a second shift at the plant and increase productivity. This prompted a nine million dollar expansion to the plant, a considerable investment into both the business and the town.

In comparison, the movement of skilled migrants into these areas is partly about employment opportunities and partly influenced by federal and state migration schemes; through visas and employer sponsorship arrangements. The difference in the settlement experiences of refugee-humanitarian and skilled migrants is noted in several studies (Richardson et al. 2004a; Richardson et al. 2004b). An interview with a senior staff member from the Department of Manufacturing, Industry and Innovation (DMITRE) underlined that most skilled migration to rural and regions areas often occurred with a job already in place. Moreover, SSRM schemes require skilled migrants to reside in a regional area and/or tied to their regional employers for some time, with provision of a temporary visa of least two years before PR is granted. Hence, there is an expectation that they would be less mobile than refugee-humanitarian migrants. However, it must be noted that at the time of writing this report the Federal Government is looking to introduce legislation into Parliament that would see the creation of a new visa category for migrants with a refugee status. The proposed new visa, called a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV), would allow migrants to come to Australia for an initial period of five years and give them the opportunity to work, provided they go to a remote location or a rural location that needs labour. This raises a lot of questions for rural and regional Australia if it is introduced.

The role of family members or friends was also important in patterns of mobility and again, this was different for refugee-humanitarian migrants and skilled migrants. For the former, some had followed their partners while others knew of a friend/family member already living in the region. For Mount Gambier, the planned direct settlement of refugee-humanitarian migrants means that many are 'unlinked', with no existing ties with anyone in Australia when they arrive. However, over time other 'direct settlement migrants' do move due to social and family networks. For example, one female Burmese refugee interviewed had lived in Melbourne for over three years before deciding to move to Mt Gambier. The move was partly because of employment opportunities for her adult daughters but also due to the fact that they had a large network of extended family members (mainly nephews and nieces) already living in Mount Gambier.

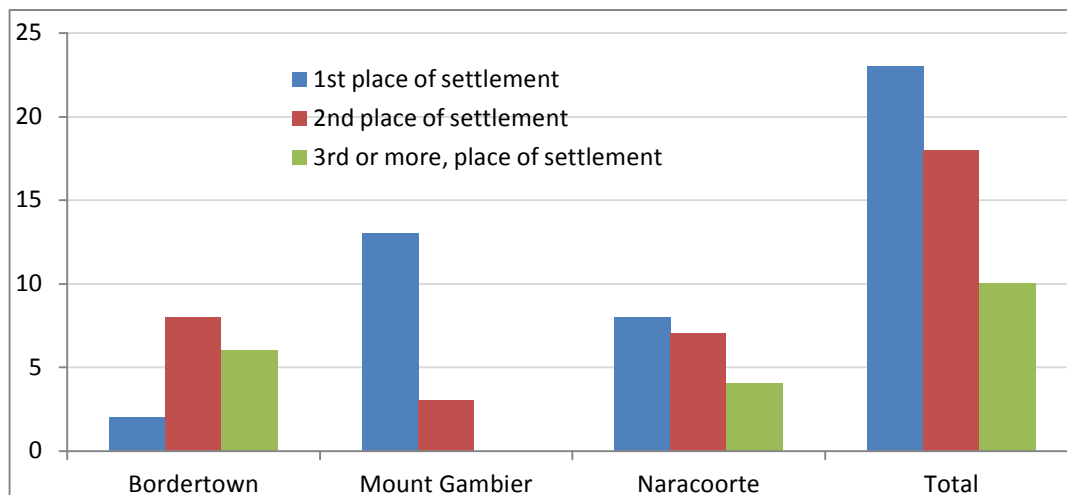
Social networks were also influential in mobility and settlement decisions in Naracoorte and Bordertown. Several stakeholders explained that the influx of refugee-humanitarian migrants to both Bordertown and Naracoorte was primarily based on social networks. Social networks are a crucial element influencing the mobility of migrants in regional areas and as Jentsch et al. (2007:43) explains, employing migrant workers 'can develop a dynamic of its own, as these workers use their own networks and often bring their friends and family members to join the same business'. This also overlaps with the 'word of mouth' factor as many interviewees reflected that information on employment prospects in both Naracoorte and Bordertown was obtained in this manner. In fact, at times, such information was offered by chance. For example, one Sri Lankan male who moved to Murray Bridge in SA in search of work found out about job opportunities in the Limestone Coast area via a random conversation with a shopper (another migrant) at a local Murray Bridge supermarket. Another Afghani migrant found out about Naracoorte even before coming to Australia:

*'A lot of the humanitarian migrants we see coming here have come here because they know people here or they have been told it's a good place to come. For example we know one guy, R\*\*, who came to Australia after seven attempts by boat to Australia. And when he got to Christmas Island he was told by one of his connections that 'you need to get to Naracoorte, that's a good spot to go'.'*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

The role of social networks in determining migration outcomes was less prevalent for skilled migrants; however there were some participants who cited having existing contacts living in this region. One German skilled migrant for example, knew of a friend living in Mount Gambier and had visited previously before moving himself and a Filipino skilled migrant living in Naracoorte mentioned how his brother and his family, along with other families from his hometown in the Philippines were migrating to Australia and relocating to Naracoorte in the very near future. An Argentinian migrant had moved to the region on the recommendation of an old school friend already living here. In addition, there was an appreciation by many of the migrants interviewed that they had considered it a positive factor that they were moving into communities that had a sizeable number of people from their home country.

Figure 6: Number of settlement locations in Australia



Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

As Figure 6 illustrates, for almost half of respondents the Limestone Coast town they were living in was the first location they had lived in since moving to Australia; with the largest proportion of these humanitarian migrants directly resettled by DIPB into Mount Gambier. For the remaining 55 percent the Limestone Coast was their second place of settlement; but a small proportion had moved several times before moving to the Limestone Coast.

Table 16 lists the various settlement locations of participants who had lived in more than one settlement location in Australia. Again, it must be noted that due to the small sample size, their migration patterns cannot be considered representative of a wider migrant population. Nevertheless, the table underscores the secondary migration patterns of participants having moved intrastate, interstate or both intra and interstate. However, for this small number of participants high levels of mobility between states and within South Australia itself was apparent. This was particularly the case for refugee-humanitarian migrants who moved quite extensively and at times quite circuitously.

As mentioned, employment is often the driving factor for movement along with social networks, but it must be noted that for many of these humanitarian-refugee migrants their lack of family in Australia also means they are less tied to one location, enabling heightened mobility.

As shown in Table 16, most skilled migrant participants who had relocated arrived from an interstate location. While this is not a representative sample, it demonstrates that they can be a mobile group and similarly their mobility is usually motivated by employment opportunities. Also of note, it was not uncommon for migrants to relocate from one regional location to another. Stakeholders from both the employment industry and the Migrant Resource Centre also commented on the high degree of mobility within the refugee-humanitarian population in the region; with many described as having lived in at least one other location before relocating to either Naracoorte-Lucindale or Tatiara LGAs. Duration of stays in different locations was often short and driven by seasonal work in the horticultural and viticultural industries; seldom are their movements associated with long term stable employment. Box 3 highlights one case study of a highly mobile migrant and the drivers of this mobility.

Table 16 Migration patterns of participants within Australia

Refugee-Humanitarian Settlement Locations	Urban-regional classification of previous location	Mobility type
Murray Bridge → Adelaide → Shepparton → Naracoorte	Regional	Intra and interstate
Adelaide → Rockhampton, QLD → Wagga Wagga, NSW → Naracoorte	Regional	Intra and interstate
Adelaide → Mildura, VIC → Bordertown	Regional	Intra and interstate
Sydney, NSW → Adelaide → Murray Bridge → Bordertown	Regional	Intra and interstate
Melbourne → Naracoorte → Bordertown	Regional	Intra and interstate
Adelaide → Bordertown → Melbourne → Bordertown	Urban	Intra and interstate
Tasmania → Adelaide → Naracoorte	Urban	Intra and interstate
Adelaide → Bordertown	Urban	Intrastate only
Adelaide → Naracoorte	Urban	Intrastate only
Adelaide → Mount Gambier	Urban	Intrastate only
Adelaide → Naracoorte → Bordertown	Regional	Intrastate only
Melbourne → Bordertown	Urban	Interstate only
South Brisbane, QLD → Naracoorte	Urban	Interstate only
Perth, WA → Naracoorte	Urban	Interstate only
Melbourne, VIC → Mount Gambier	Urban	Interstate only
Shepparton → Bordertown	Regional	Interstate only
Skilled Migrant Settlement Locations		
Brisbane, QLD → Naracoorte	Urban	Interstate only
Adelaide → Mount Gambier	Urban	Intrastate only
Adelaide → Sydney → Sth Africa → Adelaide → Mt Gambier	Urban	Intra and interstate
Ballarat, VIC → Bordertown	Regional	Interstate only
Albany, WA → Bordertown → Naracoorte	Regional	Intra and interstate
Albany, WA → Naracoorte → Bordertown	Regional	Intra and interstate

**Box 3:**  
**Multiple migrations within Australia.**

AF1, an Afghan refugee, was resettled by DIPB to Adelaide where he remained for three months before moving to Rockhampton in Queensland. This move came about through an Afghan friend who told him that there were job vacancies at the meat processing plant there. AF1 worked at this meat processing plant for seven months until work was no longer available; he then left Rockhampton to go to Wagga Wagga, NSW in search of employment. AF1 was unable to find employment in the short time that he was in Wagga Wagga. However, through another friend he heard about job opportunities at the meat processing plant in Naracoorte. AF1 subsequently migrated to Naracoorte and has been employed in this town for the last three years.

Table 17 Intention to move elsewhere in the future

Refugee-Humanitarian Migrants	Bordertown (n=12)		Mount Gambier (n=12)		Naracoorte (n=16)		Total (n=40)	
Yes	9	75.0%	3	25.0%	7	49.8%	19	47.5%
No	1	8.3%	6	50.0%	2	12.5%	9	22.5%
Not sure	2	16.7%	3	25.0%	6	49.8%	11	30.0%
Skilled Migrants	Bordertown (n=4)		Mount Gambier (n=4)		Naracoorte (n=3)		Total (n=11)	
Yes	3	75.0%	4	100.0%	1	33.3%	8	72.7%
No	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	9.1%
Not sure	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	66.7%	2	18.2%

Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

As described previously, international immigrants have been shown to have a role in offsetting depopulation in rural and regional Australia, following similar trends internationally. The scale of the recent organic movement of refugee-humanitarian migrants into regional towns, such as the Naracoorte-Lucindale and Tatiara LGAs, from other intra- and interstate locations is never the less an unexpected phenomenon. However, internal secondary migration, or 'chain' migration in Australia is not new with post-war migrants, particularly Greek and Italian migrants, occurring in non-metropolitan market gardening, orchard, vineyard and sugar cane regions (Price 1963; Hugo 1975). For example, it was found that secondary migration was the underlying process driving Greek settlements in the Riverland region in South Australia, with immigrants moving into the region, usually after having spent some initial time in metropolitan areas (Hugo & Menzies 1980:190-1). In fact, many stakeholder interviews across the Limestone Coast region made reference to the similarities of this current settlement to the post-war settlement of Greeks and Italians in the region.

One of the key features characterising the migration patterns of this recent wave of migrants is the speed and scale of their mobility. This has resulted in 'structural lag', whereby local government and service providers have been largely unprepared to cope with the number of new arrivals at times. While there is no reliable data on their numbers, the impacts are amplified as communities struggle to adapt to the rapid and fluctuating demographic changes both in terms of providing migrant-specific services within the health, education, housing and employment sectors but also socially in being able to provide informal community support.

Other international studies have similarly found significant secondary or chain migration patterns among immigrants (Hou 2005; Pyle 2007; Sanderson and Painter 2011). In the United States, Lowell, Massachusetts experienced a burgeoning migrant community of mainly Southeast Asian refugees who had moved from other parts of the United States, motivated by employment and relatively attractive wages, in the 1980s (Pyle 2007:19-37). This significantly contributed to Lowell's population growth as its Southeast Asian population increased from approximately 1,400 in 1983 to 25,000 by 1990, the speed and the scale of new arrivals inundating social service providers. Pyle (2007:30) argues

*"...the effect of national immigration policy, both in general and locally, is mediated by the secondary migration process. People are motivated to emerge from their home countries by a variety of factors – economic, political, and sociocultural – all of which involve institutional arrangements. Although they have been screened by the criteria of the national immigration policy of the host country, the immigrants still bring these diverse reasons with them. These factors will further influence their actions once in the country, including their patterns of internal migration."*



There is emerging evidence highlighting the mobility patterns of refugee-humanitarian migrants in Australia, an unexpected and indirect outcome of the humanitarian program. Boese (2013) found that employment, often in niche occupations such as meat processing (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006), was a key factor for many South Sudanese migrating from metropolitan to regional locations. This is similar to the findings of Sanderson and Painter (2011) in the United States who suggest that 'occupational channeling', where migrants are drawn to certain rural areas in the destination country because of existing skill sets and work experiences they bring with them, particularly related to food processing.

The success of regional migration schemes and the associated economic benefits to regional communities from secondary migration are very dependent not only on attracting migrants but also on the ability of regions to retain migrants. However, the mobility patterns of new migrants, particularly refugee-humanitarian settlers are complex. Table 17 shows future settlement and mobility intentions of study participants.

Again, while the data is not representative and the small sample size warrants caution, nonetheless, there are a few observations gleaned from Table 17. Firstly, it is quite evident that a significant proportion of participants intend to leave the Limestone Coast region. This appears to be higher for skilled than refugee-humanitarian migrants with only one skilled migrant intended to remain compared to nine refugee-humanitarian migrants. Of note is the number of participants who were unsure of their future movements: nearly one-third of refugee-humanitarian migrants (30%; n=11) and two skilled migrants (18.2%). When asked to elaborate, this group of participants mostly cited that they were happy to remain in their prospective towns but expressed an open attitude to future mobility dependent on opportunities either where they were living now or in other areas. For example, as highlighted in Box 4 skilled migrants did not discount the possibility of moving elsewhere even though they repeatedly stressed that they along with their families, were very happy in their current location.

#### Box 4:

#### Skilled migrant comments on intentions to remain

SM3 is a well-integrated Vietnamese skilled migrant living in Naracoorte with his wife and young child. He is employed full-time, recently bought a house and has an extensive social network comprising of both other migrants as well as local Australians. When asked if he would move out of Naracoorte, SM1 found it difficult to give a definitive answer as he felt that he would not know what would happen in the future. However, he emphasised that both himself and his family were very happy in Naracoorte and did not see themselves leaving any time soon.

SM2, a Filipino skilled migrant living in Naracoorte with his wife and children reflected a similar sentiment. He and his wife were both employed full-time, their children were attending school and at the time of interview, they were building a house in Naracoorte. He stressed that his family were very happy in Naracoorte and his brother and his family were soon to join him in Naracoorte. However, he refused to commit their future in Naracoorte as he acknowledged the possibility of that something could necessitate their out-migration in the future. While he could not identify any specific reason that may cause them to leave, both himself and his wife would like to move to Albany in WA at some stage, where they have an existing strong social network and had previously lived.

It must be noted that both SM2 and SM3 have both lived elsewhere in Australia before settling down in Naracoorte. The reasons for the previous migrations in Australia were driven by the search for employment. SM3 migrated from Vietnam to Brisbane where he lived and worked for several years before he applied for a job in Naracoorte. SM2 on the other hand had a more extensive migration history having lived and worked in Saudi Arabia and Taiwan, as well as Albany in WA and Bordertown in SA before settling in Naracoorte. These previous migration experiences need to be factored in when considering migrants' intentions to remain and settle in the area. Both SM2 and SM3 appear to be very settled and content in Naracoorte with no clear plans to leave in the near future; yet their refusal to commit to long term settlement is perhaps linked to their previous migration experiences and to some extent, a readiness to uproot should a need or opportunity arise. However, despite their ambivalent attitude to long term settlement, the interviews with both SM2 and SM3 suggest that their immediate future intentions are very much anchored in Naracoorte as evidenced by purchase of homes in the area.

Humanitarian entrants who were also unsure about long term settlement in the Limestone Coast region discussed similar feelings; however the reasons given for their uncertainty were more varied and mainly revolved around employment and family. There was a very strong sense that this group of humanitarian entrants were unsure of their stay in their respective towns as they were 'single' men hoping to bring their families to Australia via Family Reunion through the Humanitarian Program. Out of the 11 humanitarian entrants who were unsure of their future intentions to remain, four of them, two in Naracoorte and two in Bordertown reflected that they were happy in their respective locations, however, they found it difficult to give a definitive answer if they would remain as their families were still living back in their home countries or country of asylum.

There were two aspects to the absence of family members that influenced their intentions to remain in the Limestone Coast. Firstly, some participants indicated that if their wives and children did not like the area it might prompt a move to an urban location, despite a personal preference to settle in the region. Secondly, separation from family members appeared to strongly influence the uncertainty to remain and settle by other participants. Some of these interview participants displayed some degree of depression and were frustrated at the impasse in trying to bring their families to Australia. They indicated that while they are content in their respective locations and would like to remain, they were unable to put down roots and make long term plans without their families.

Other humanitarian entrant interviewees who were unsure of their future settlement plans reflected that employment or family reasons would influence their intentions to remain or move. These participants stated that they were very happy in their respective locations, but would move due to a lack of employment for themselves and/or their partner. One participant and her partner, who recently started a labour contracting business in the region, were happy to remain and saw ample opportunities for their business to grow; however they admitted that they would have to move elsewhere if those opportunities slowed down or ceased. Two participants cited that their future mobility hinged on other family members, with one citing her children's educational needs as the driver that might see them move; while another indicated that her parents were contemplating moving to Darwin and that she would follow them.

The influence of families on migrant settlement decisions was also reflected by some stakeholders:

*"Some of the men have told me that when they get their families here they would like to settle here. Others have said depending on the age of their children, they would settle in a city so their children can go to university. Others have said that they just want to get a better job and will seek that. But some of them are quite happy here and if their families like it here when they eventually come, they would probably stay."*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

*"It's the women who want to settle, who understand that their children need stability. If the government would only understand that if they unite families then families make a stronger base for settlement and integration."*

(Stakeholder, Naracoorte)

Participants who did provide definite intentions to migrate out of the region were asked to state their reasons. As Table 18 shows, a lack of employment opportunities or looking for better employment opportunities for themselves and/or their family members were strong drivers for leaving. This includes those currently not working and looking for employment of any kind and those seeking employment commensurate with their qualification and experiences; the latter in particular was expressed by skilled migrants interviewed. SM1 and his wife, as described in Box 1, Chapter 6, who have lived and worked in Mount Gambier for about five years, are examples of skilled migrants who have become 'deskilled'. This case study demonstrated that reasons driving the out-migration of people are multi-dimensional, but employment is clearly an underlying factor. This is further reinforced by analysing the other reasons given by participants. As listed in Table 18, participants clearly indicated that better employment opportunities would lead them away from the region; followed by better education/training opportunities for themselves and/or their family.

Table 18 Reasons\* influencing the out-migration of migrants who intend to leave

	Bordertown (n=12)		Mount Gambier (n=7)		Naracoorte (n=8)		Total (n=27)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Not what I expected	1	9.1	0	0.0	1	12.5	2	7.4
Facilities are not good	2	18.2	2	25.0	0	0.0	4	14.8
Lack of employment opportunities for myself/my family	10	90.9	7	87.5	5	62.5	22	81.5
Family/friends live in other areas	1	9.1	4	50.0	2	25.0	7	25.9
I don't like the area	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
My family is unhappy	0	0.0	1	12.5	1	12.5	2	7.4
Don't feel accepted by locals	1	9.1	1	12.5	1	12.5	3	11.1
Other	9	81.8	5	62.5	6	75.0	20	74.1
<b>Other reasons</b>	<b>Bordertown (n=10)</b>		<b>Mount Gambier (n=3)</b>		<b>Naracoorte (n=8)</b>		<b>Total (n=21)</b>	
Better employment opportunities for myself/my family	8	88.9	4	80.0	6	100.0	18	90.0
Better education/training opportunities for myself/my family	5	55.6	2	40.0	3	50.0	10	50.0
Better quality of life/recreational options	0	0.0	3	60.0	1	16.7	4	20.0
Want to be closer to capital city	1	11.1	0	0.0	1	16.7	2	10.0

\*Multiple Response Question

Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

It is encouraging to note that none of the respondents indicated a dislike for living in the area and only three participants felt that they were not accepted or were made to feel unwelcome by the local community. This suggests that it is not the Limestone Coast itself or the people that live there that drive onward mobility, but rather the lack of opportunities that rural and regional Australia affords them. Several stakeholders also reflected on the link between employment opportunities and the mobility of skilled migrants over time:

*'Once they are here, they are subject to the same forces that force people to move between regions anyway, you have job markets and size of population and links of those people to the population, family or ethnic groups...plus you also got the amount of services in an area, the presence of infrastructure and government services. That sort of support bundled together is very difficult to provide in locations with a smaller population.'*

(Government Stakeholder)

*'I worked out in the end what makes people stay... Usually they would sign on the dotted line for 2 years and once their 2 years were up they weren't attached to the employer anymore... By their very nature migrants are mobile and [when] they've just moved a country they're not worried about moving within the state or interstate'*

(Stakeholder, Mt Gambier)

*'I think some were so desperate to get out they would take anything, some saw it [moving to a regional or rural area] as a starting point and not necessarily a finishing point...so I kind of formed the opinion over time that if that is what we were going to be to most people that is what we should promote ourselves as – this is a good place to make a start, and it's a good place to tell other people to make a start, rather than trying to hold people here.'*

(Regional Government Stakeholder)

The decision to stay or move also revolves around family ties and their opportunities for work and education. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009; 2010) found that 'secondary applicants' or spouses of skilled migrants were more likely to face challenges in gaining employment or work commensurate with their qualifications and work experiences. As highlighted in a recent report on the challenges facing skilled migrant women in regional Australia (Webb et al. 2013:8)

*'...settlement is a complex and difficult process. A range of factors can facilitate settlement and thereby assist social inclusion, or can hinder settlement, leading to outcomes that may contribute to exclusion for these women and their families. The study found that migration should be considered as a family enterprise rather than an individual one, and it has identified a number of strategies and practices likely to enhance settlement and thus contribute to inclusion.'*

This was substantiated in this current study by government stakeholders such as the one quoted below, who reflected that relocation could be influenced by difficult settlement experiences of the spouse or family of the skilled migrant.

*'....some of them will stick it out, more resilient. I do have one example with a couple in a regional area where we nominated the guy and he was a teacher and he got a job and he was teaching in a regional area but his wife couldn't get employment. She was in a different field I think it was more generalist, office manager type field... So for that reason they kept wanting to move out...where she had more family support. They did stay for a while but they kept contacting us about moving out, moving interstate...they've left now... they did stay a while because of that [moral] commitment, and he got a job. But she just wasn't happy and didn't have employment.'*

(Regional Government Stakeholder)

It would appear that intentions to remain and settle in a rural community can also be broadly divided between the younger and older age groups. For example, results from interviews with older refugee- humanitarian participants as part of this study indicated a stronger intentions to remain and settle; whereas their younger counterparts (usually in their 20s) expressed a desire to live elsewhere – often in larger regional centres or metropolitan areas. Younger participants indicated that any future migration would be motivated by brighter employment prospects and lifestyle opportunities offered in larger urban areas; resonating with the traditional selective out-migration patterns of youth from regional and rural Australia (Hugo, 1974). Conversely, their older counterparts felt that their families would be content in staying in their current respective towns where a quiet rural life and steady employment was viewed as an appealing outcome to their migration experience. It remains to be seen if this is indeed the case if and when the families of these older migrants are allowed to enter Australia; with these new migrant youth perhaps likely to follow the same patterns of out-migration to capital cities for work and education opportunities as their Australian counterparts in the future.

Research literature purports a range of issues challenging settlement by migrants in regional areas, including exploitation by employers; social integration and inclusion into the community; lack of sufficient and/or appropriate housing, and provision of adequate services (Atem 2011; Johnston et al. 2009; Taylor and Stanovic 2005; Velayutham and Wise 2008; Webb et al. 2013). This current study clearly shows that there are multiple factors which drive both settlement and mobility of new migrants. While the retention of migrants in non-metropolitan areas will pose challenges and perhaps it is inevitable that some migrants will move on; there is also some indication of retention a proportion of new migrants in the region, particularly within the older population group.

Table 19: Future destination of migrants who are considering or intending to leave

	Bordertown (n=13)		Mount Gambier (n=11)		Naracoorte (n=16)		Total (n=40)	
Regional Centre	4	30.8%	4	36.4%	4	25.0%	12	30.0%
Rural Town	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	18.8%	3	7.5%
Capital City	5	38.5%	7	63.6%	7	43.8%	19	47.5%
Undecided	4	30.8%	0	0.0%	2	12.5%	6	15.0%

Source: Enabling Rural Migrant Settlement Survey, 2014

Examining the future destinations of participants who are considering or are intending to leave their respective locations revealed that metropolitan regions were not necessarily the preferred destination. Table 19 shows that just under half of participants (n=19) who are considering leaving intend to move to a capital city, while three participants were keen to move to another regional town and a further 12 participants wanted to move to a larger regional centre, with six participants undecided about the location of their next move.

Although metropolitan cities exert a strong pull over the future relocation of participants, it is encouraging to see that both rural towns and regional centres are preferred destinations for many. Below are some of the reasons cited by participants who preferred moving to another regional centre or rural town rather than to a metropolitan city:

*'Any place that is bigger than Naracoorte [but not major city] but need opportunity for my family and me'*

*'It depends on opportunity, size of the town does not matter'*

*'Any place that is bigger and has more opportunities....capital cities are more competitive and it will be harder for me to find work there'*

*'Not a big place, life is more difficult in a big place. Rent is expensive, many traffic, difficult [to drive around] and expensive for car parking. Expensive place to live'*

The above sentiments reflect the attractiveness of regional centres and rural towns for many migrants. For many migrant participants this included a perceived lower cost of living and a slower, more peaceful pace of life. For example, as AF6, an Afghan humanitarian participant relates, he initially disliked Bordertown as it was too small. However, whenever he travels to Adelaide, he finds it to be a very busy place and always looks forward to returning to Bordertown. In addition to the positives offered about living in a rural location such as the Limestone Coast many of the migrants interviewed for this study described having lived in a small town or village in their origin country making rural living a more attractive proposition than living in the city here in Australia.

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined the complexity of past and future migration patterns for participants in this study; highlighting the role of secondary migration underpinning much of the in-migration into the Limestone Coast region. The underlying factor driving migration of participants was employment, along with the appeal of strengthening ethnic communities in towns

such as Naracoorte and Bordertown. Chain migration often underpinned a lot of this mobility; for skilled migrants, as seen in the case study of some Filipinos, there was evidence of social networks perpetuating the in-migration of family and friends from their hometowns and communities and to a lesser extent this could be applied to humanitarian migrants, particularly for those in Mount Gambier. While it was not uncommon for many of these humanitarian migrants to have begun their journey in an urban setting, the secondary movements for many were quite circuitous within regional areas of Australia.

Many participants also indicated a desire to move elsewhere at some stage in the future. Almost three-quarters of skilled migrants indicated this future intention compared to just under half of humanitarian migrants. Employment was a significant driver for future moves for both migrant groups. However, for skilled migrants, this was more related to finding employment for themselves and/or partners that was commensurate with their skills and qualifications. Further, this migrant group appeared more likely to indicate lifestyle reasons as a motivating factor for future moves as well. While there were some participants who were uncertain as to whether to remain or leave, most reflected a preference to remain and emphasised that they were happy or content to continue living in their respective towns. This was especially so for humanitarian entrants who indicated they were uncertain about a future move. However, for this migrant group, many found it difficult to establish roots and settle in their current location without their families, who were still overseas. Nevertheless, this potential to remain and settle in the Limestone Coast highlights the role of policy and local community actions in encouraging longer-term settlement.

In terms of likely future destinations of participants wanting to out-migrate, metropolitan locations were a popular choice for nearly half. Over half reflected a desire to relocate to another rural town or regional centre or were undecided about where a future move may be. Humanitarian entrants were more likely to want to remain in a rural or regional location with the lower cost of living, peaceful lifestyle, and previous rural lifestyle important factors in choosing regional and rural destinations.

Clearly, a multitude of interwoven factors influence the mobility and settlement of skilled and humanitarian migrants in regional areas. The in-migration and settlement of migrants into the region can offset local population losses, but secondary migration processes characterising the movements of many migrants needs to be considered along with planned settlement schemes in order to increase future in-migration and encourage the retention of existing new migrants. Further, the hypermobility of humanitarian migrants in regional areas suggests a need to further understand their circular mobility patterns and how to harness this resource for regional development.



## 8. Discussion and Recommendations

Of particular interest to this study are the settlement experiences of immigrants in non-metropolitan areas, using the Limestone Coast of South Australia as a case study. The Limestone Coast provided valuable insights into both planned and unplanned settlement patterns of new migrants. In non-metropolitan areas population growth has been traditionally exacerbated by the outmigration of youth to urban areas for education and employment opportunities. Immigration, an often neglected element of counter-urbanisation, can have a significant role in addressing and arresting issues relating to labour shortages, depopulation and ageing in non-metropolitan areas. Further, the impacts of immigrants moving to non-metropolitan areas are often amplified due to small local population numbers; particularly in the working age population, usually most affected by net migration losses. This was the case in the Limestone Coast with two of the four LGAs in this study experiencing population increases in the overseas born population that 'off-set' other population losses. While this can be seen as a positive for local communities and industry, particularly with most in-migration being new migrants in the working age population, it also results in significant, and often unplanned, changes in the community.

Some of this movement to regional and rural Australia is the result of planned settlement programs, such as the State Specific and Regional Migration (SSRM), the Skilled Designated Area Sponsored visa (SDAS) and the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) initiatives introduced since 1996/1997. Other schemes that have influenced regional and rural Australia include the 457 temporary skilled worker scheme and the Working Holiday Maker visa. Alongside these schemes the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIPB) developed a new approach to identify and establish regional locations for humanitarian settlement, as has been seen in the Mount Gambier LGA for several years.

Unlike these targeted regional migration initiatives (that retain some measure of control in directing migrants to specific localities), the secondary migration of refugee-humanitarian migrants to non-metropolitan areas is not directly controlled by federal government but is in fact an indirect and unexpected outcome of the humanitarian program. There appears to be a dissonance between

immigration policy at the federal level and its impacts at the local level with secondary migration receiving insufficient attention from researchers and policy makers. The 'offset population' effect of the overseas born population in non-metropolitan areas is clear and the recent influx of refugee-humanitarian migrants to the Limestone Coast area is indicative that international migration has and will continue to play a significant role in regional Australia.

As established by Harte *et al.* (2011), the recent timing of such migrations, and the discrepancies between official statistics (i.e. ABS Census data and DIPB Settlement Database) and the actual distribution of refugee-humanitarian migrants, contributes to the lack of clarity on their settlement geography. Stakeholder interviews from the Limestone Coast study suggest high levels of secondary migration among migrants and their resulting settlement is estimated to be higher than indicated in official statistics. Such inconsistencies pose a challenge not only for regional settlement service providers who

rely on the above data sources to plan and provide adequate and appropriate services, but also for local government and other service providers; particularly in areas such as health, housing and education. Compiling statistics which accurately reflect the settlement geography of migrants is fundamental toward providing services and infrastructure in rural and regional Australia.

Studies have highlighted that successful immigration settlement programs require a combination of local initiatives, collaboration and supportive policy. Rural communities, however, often lack the capacity to investigate and address the demands of immigration. Settlement policy is predominantly a top down approach, driven by the federal government. Local governments and community organisations are often neglected when it comes to these policies and are largely left to their own (limited) devices. Local and state governments need to be deeply involved in the settlement framework as they have more intimate knowledge of their regional areas and a greater capacity to engage with local and community stakeholders. This study aimed to achieve a better understanding of the role of local government in the successful settlement of new migrants in rural and regional South Australia in order to facilitate the adjustment of the migrants and maximise their contribution to regional social and economic development. The following concluding observations address two themes for new migrants: facilitating settlement and enabling integration, within six key topic areas that have emerged from the data.

### **Regional Australia as a Preferred Destination for New Migrants.**

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It was encouraging to note that none of the migrant interview participants in this study indicated a dislike for living in the Limestone Coast area. Additionally, when exploring the secondary mobility patterns of migrants it was not uncommon for migrants to have relocated from another regional location in Australia to the Limestone Coast. Participants were also asked where they had been born and/or lived and worked before coming to Australia – for many this was described as being a small town or village, not dissimilar in size to the towns in the Limestone Coast. Combined, this information suggests that living and working in rural or regional Australia was not seen as a negative by new migrants and that there are many opportunities for rural and regional Australia to actively attract new migrants to their regions.

However, it would appear that intentions to remain and settle in a rural community were, in part, related to the age of the migrants interviewed. Older refugee-humanitarian participants as part of this study expressed stronger intentions to remain and settle; whereas younger participants indicated that any future migration would be motivated by brighter employment prospects and lifestyle opportunities offered in larger urban areas, resonating with the traditional selective out-migration patterns of youth from regional and rural Australia (Hugo, 1974). Conversely, their older counterparts felt that their families would be content in staying in their current respective towns where a quiet rural life and steady employment was viewed as an appealing outcome to their migration experience.

In general, this suggests that areas such as the Limestone Coast are attractive to many new migrants; particularly those that are older, more likely to want to settle with their families and those who come from a rural background. However, other factors are key to enabling both long term settlement and integration, including employment opportunities; family and friends; others from the same birthplace group, and access to culturally appropriate food and activities.

## Employment as a driver of settlement and integration

Findings from this study confirmed the important role of employment as both a driver of migration to the region but also in retaining migrants in the area longer term. While almost all secondary migration to the region was driven by employment opportunities the decision to stay or move on from the region was also centred around opportunities for work. For some this was because they were currently unemployed or underemployed, or because they were working in a job that they felt did not match their aspirations or skills.

Regional development is often hampered by the shortage of workers in industries such as agriculture, food processing, viticulture, mining, aged care and tourism; it would appear that refugee-humanitarian migrants are alleviating some of this shortage. This is particularly notable in the Limestone Coast in the viticulture and meat processing industries but there was also evidence of a strong role for both skilled and semi-skilled migrants in horticulture, the dairy industry, and pig farming. However, stakeholders were divided in their perceptions of migrants filling employment niches in the Limestone Coast. Some stakeholders felt that new migrants had an important role to play in taking up work that other Australians were no longer interested in doing – particularly in the ‘three D’ jobs (dirty, dangerous and demeaning). Other stakeholders suggested that in fact there were no un-met employment needs in the region and new migrants were competing for jobs along with other residents in the region. Evidence from inside some industries as part of this study, including meat processing, viticulture, aged care and pig farming, suggest that new migrants do have a role to play in regional industry and that overall they are seen as a valuable resource to the region. Migrant workers, overall, had a good reputation as reliable and hard working.

Beyond influencing mobility into and out of the region, work is essential to longer term settlement and successful integration of new migrants in the broader community. It is a pathway through which migrants improve their English, gain better communication skills and learn about other cultures to help them thrive in the Australian environment. Importantly, workplaces are also points of interaction with people from the local community creating common ground and personal exchanges which helps to start the long term process of mutual understanding and integration.

## Beyond Employment – English, Education and Entrepreneurship

Some stakeholders and some migrants (both skilled and refugee-humanitarian) felt that the biggest barrier to gaining work was poor English skills. The poor English skills of humanitarian migrants in this study were identified as making it difficult to interact in any depth with people outside of their own birthplace or language group and may help to explain the less frequent interactions with local Australians for this group. The workplace was seen as an important opportunity for interaction across different community groups because people from different backgrounds regularly interact with each other. The role of employment in developing language skills, enabling integration, and fostering social and support networks outside of birthplace groups should not be under-estimated. There were several issues raised about English language skills:

- Suggestions that the AMEP classes did not provide a high enough skill level for employment and that lack of English skills was the biggest barrier to a wide range of employment opportunities (particularly outside of the main industries that were currently employing migrants).
- While skilled migrants have to meet English language criteria in order to be granted an Australian visa, this requirement does not hold true for dependents of the primary migrant. Dependents are not normally entitled to settlement supports such as English language classes. Often partners of skilled migrants are themselves skilled and looking to be actively employed, but this may be hindered by English language ability. This was seen as a barrier to successful settlement and integration for these family members.
- Conversational English classes were seen as a valuable resource for all new migrants.

Conversational English was seen as not only an opportunity to continue practicing English after the AMEP course but also as a way of making connections to the wider local community. It is acknowledged that while this is a desirable outcome it relies heavily on (usually volunteer) community resources.

In addition to English skills, lack of opportunities for further education was raised by some participants (both stakeholders and migrants) as a disincentive to stay in the region. Migrants discussed seeking better higher education opportunities, either for themselves or for their partners and children as one of the drivers of future mobility. Of course this has been a driver for out-migration in regional and rural Australia for a very long time and therefore it is not surprising to see that new migrants, particularly younger migrants and

migrants with older children would be subject to the same processes. Many interviewees felt that a wider range of courses and education at TAFE and University in regional areas would encourage more migrants, especially skilled migrants and their families, to stay and settle in the long term. Other migrants expressed a desire to learn a new trade or to get qualifications in a trade they already had experience in. One effort, driven by local government, to increase these opportunities was the renovation of an old building and grounds to create a new community centre in Naracoorte. This project is going to offer new migrants the opportunity to learn skills in carpentry, painting and decorating, landscaping and building alongside local tradespeople while at the same time providing opportunities for integration, community capacity building, and a place of belonging for new migrants. Projects such as these offer something back to the community while building skills and community links for new migrants at the same time.

There was also growing evidence throughout the study of migrant entrepreneurship in the Limestone Coast region. Several examples of new businesses were given (e.g.: labour contracting, food and groceries). Some migrants also discussed their ideas for new businesses in the future (e.g.: hairdressing and beauty, import and export, restaurants). This shows a deeper level of settlement and integration beyond simply employment and suggests that with the right assistance and opportunities new migrants contribute positively to regional areas. It must be noted that new migrant businesses that provide other migrants with employment opportunities (as with the contractors) and familiar products and foods (as with the new grocery outlets) also enhance the likelihood of settlement of other new migrants.

## The Role of Families in the Settlement Process

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Interviews with both stakeholders and new migrants highlighted the role the family had in terms of settlement. Those migrants who move to the region as a family group presented a very different picture to those new migrants who had moved to the region on their own.

New migrants separated from family members expressed living with ongoing stress and worry about the safety of their family members and the ongoing uncertainty, in part due to changing Australian immigration rules, of when they will be reunited with their family members. There were a number of 'single' men in Bordertown and Naracoorte who displayed some degree of depression and anxiety, and expressed frustration at the impasse in bringing their families to Australia. They indicated that while they are mostly very content in their respective locations and would like to remain living in these communities, they felt that they were unable to put down roots and make long-term plans without their families.

Comments from stakeholder interviews in this study suggested that integration in the wider community was much easier for those who migrate as families compared to those who come on their own. Families, particularly with school aged children who become engaged in the local school community, create wider local networks or points of contact and have more opportunities for interaction in the broader community. Families were also seen as creating stability – families were considered more likely to stay and settle in the region.

However, there were two aspects to family ties that influenced intentions to remain in the Limestone Coast. Firstly, some participants indicated that if their wives and children did not like the area it might prompt a move to an urban location, despite a personal preference to settle in the region. Secondly, migrant interviewees discussed future mobility around providing opportunities for family members in terms of employment and education (for example: children who may want to attend University in the future may prompt a move by the whole family to an urban location). Thus, while families may create more stable settlement experiences for new migrants, it may lead to settlement in regions other than the Limestone Coast.

## Staying or going?

The success of planned regional migration schemes and the associated economic benefits to regional communities from secondary migration are very dependent not only on attracting migrants to the region but also on the ability of regions to retain migrants. Most participants in this study stated that they liked the town they were living in now, and were happy to remain in the region in the foreseeable future; but many expressed an open attitude to future mobility dependent on opportunities either where they were living now or in other areas. Migrants are, by nature, a group of people willing to move to create better opportunities for themselves and their families. For some, the chance to settle down and lead a quiet comfortable life with their families was considered the ideal outcome of the migration process; but for others it is understandable that continued mobility or secondary migration continues in their adopted country to further their opportunities. Thus not all migrants currently in the region will choose to stay in the Limestone Coast.

Although long-term settlement was considered an ideal by many stakeholders and migrants in this study, it is important to consider the benefits to regional communities from migrants with higher levels of mobility; even if they stay only briefly they contribute economically to the region through working in local industry, use of housing and other services and attracting other migrants to the region. It is clear migrants who come to the region as families have an easier time in both accessing information and resources to expedite the settlement process when they first arrive, but are also more likely to set more extensive roots in the local community which assists in integration and long-term settlement. However, it may be that the Limestone Coast provides a place for migrants that is less permanent in nature, as described by one stakeholder: 'this is a good place to make a start, and it's a good place to tell other people to make a start, rather than trying to hold people here'.

## Beyond Settlement - Enabling Integration

Overall, this study highlighted a great deal of acceptance of new migrants in the community. However, both the migrants themselves and some stakeholders who were interviewed said that for new migrants, particularly those from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds, this sense of acceptance did not go beyond basic pleasantries to true integration.

Integration is a process wherein immigrant newcomers and the communities in which they settle mutually adapt to one another (Jimenez 2011 p.4). Jimenez (2011) points out that integration takes a long time, in fact perhaps generations, to play out fully and this process is dependent on both the qualities and characteristics migrants have when they immigrate and the opportunities that exist in the host country. Many stakeholder participants in this study compared the current demographic changes in their communities to the post-war settlement of European migrants across the region, reflecting on what a significant change this had been for the community at that time over time this was seen as bringing positive changes to Australia and the region. Being able to place the current population changes within this context allows community members to place some historical perspective on changes and be more accepting of the current situation.

Stakeholders stressed the importance of opportunities to interact with migrants and develop a mutual understanding as imperative to facilitating integration. Community events such as Harmony Day and Refugee Day celebrations provide a good forum for bridging cultural understanding and were well attended. Taking this further and ensuring migrants feel comfortable about taking part in Australian celebrations such as ANZAC Day and Australia Day provide a bridge between cultures. The Migrant Resource Centres and the Local Councils across the Limestone Coast have shown great initiatives in working together to create these opportunities for interaction and understanding. Similarly schools across the region provided examples of actively creating supportive, inclusive environments where all cultures were acknowledged and understood. This needs to be a two way process whereby the new arrivals are seen to actively participate in local community events and the local community needs to be seen as accepting new cultures.



There were also examples across the region of where the local press had played an important role in fostering understanding, dispelling myths and highlighting the contributions of new migrants to the region. This is a simple and effective way for a positive message of migrant contributions to get out to the local community – for example, if migrant workers are meeting unmet labour demands and helping to sustain key industries in the region this could be publically highlighted and celebrated as a success story for the region and for the migrants.

Finally, there is some evidence that refugee and humanitarian migrants are keen to participate in volunteering activities in the community. Volunteering provides individuals with a sense of value as they contribute to society and not only assists new migrants in getting involved and engaged with their communities, but also, it helps them build skills to facilitate employment opportunities, improve English skills, and build positive settlement and integration outcomes. Nearly half of all migrants interviewed said they volunteered in the local community. At present most volunteering roles were associated with the settlement of other new migrants (e.g. acting as interpreters at schools and in other community organisations or running migrant support groups). This is a resource that could be facilitated beyond the migrant community encouraging integration, supporting the wider community, and helping to foster long term settlement. There is a role here for service organisations (such as Lions and Rotary), local councils, the Migrant Resource Centres and other community groups to create positive opportunities for migrants to become community volunteers.

## Concluding Remarks

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Australia is a nation built on migration, with almost 50 percent of the population a first or second generation migrant cultural diversity is an extant reality for many communities. Rural and regional areas such as the Limestone Coast are undergoing significant population change as a result of both planned and unplanned migrant settlement. Such planned approaches to regional settlement of new migrants and the ensuing secondary migration flows have instigated significant population change, but often the resources required to address these changes at the local level have not been timely and communities have faced significant adjustments to daily life.

The Limestone Coast region is a prime example of how state and federal resources, combined with local community groups and supportive local councils can create positive experiences from rapid population change. While there have been many examples of how different businesses and industries, community groups, schools and churches or individuals have worked to create a positive experience for new migrants in the region it is perhaps the ability of these organisations to work together through the Local Area Committees (LACs) that have proven to be an effective tool in coordinating support and identifying the gaps in service for new migrants. Local government and the Migrant Resource Centre SA have been two of the driving forces behind this effort. In particular, the role of local government in being able to inform and connect new migrants to local community and vice versa is of critical importance to achieving a positive community outcome.

## 9. Appendices

### Appendix One:

#### Industry case study – Meat Processing

Meat Processing in Australia is a significant employer with about 200,000 people involved in the red meat industry nationwide. This includes on-farm production, processing and retail (MLA 2013<sup>5</sup>). While agglomeration in this industry has been a trend in recent decades, the meat processing sector continues to struggle to attract and retain workers. The meat processing workforce experiences high turnover which is largely attributed to the rural orientation of meat processing plants across Australia and the labour intensive, physically demanding and sometimes dangerous nature of the work makes it a relatively less appealing job (Norton and Rafferty 2010); characteristics of DDD (dirty, demeaning and dangerous) occupations usually met by a migrant workforce due to the reluctant participation of natives in many developed economies.

This sector has a diverse workforce with temporary labour pools, usually Working Holiday Makers or temporary skilled migrants constituting a significant proportion of its labour supply (Norton and Rafferty 2010). However, it has been noted in the Limestone Coast (and elsewhere in Australia) that migrants of refugee-humanitarian backgrounds are an emerging labour supply for the meat processing sector. The recent influx of migrants to the Limestone Coast has allowed some companies to tap into this emerging labour pool to increase their scale of their operations. Over half of all migrants interviewed in the current study were working in the meatworks industry. Interviews with stakeholders in this industry detail the pathways leading employment of these migrants, the role they have for the meat processing sector as well as the emerging challenges and implications of this contemporary and unexpected source of labour.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.mla.com.au/files/4db78119-bfad-42f6-b955-a25b01145788/Beef-Fast-Facts-2013\\_EMAIL.pdf](http://www.mla.com.au/files/4db78119-bfad-42f6-b955-a25b01145788/Beef-Fast-Facts-2013_EMAIL.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> An area at the meat processing plant where a live animal is slaughtered.

### Composition of labour force

The significance of migrants working in the meat processing industry in the Limestone Coast is highlighted by analysing the composition of its workforce. One of the industry stakeholders interviewed indicated that out of their approximate 553 person workforce, about 300 (54.2%) were Australian-born and the remaining 253 (45.8%) were overseas-born.

It must be noted that in 2011, there were no migrants employed at this particular meat processing plant which not only highlights the speed and scale of migrants moving into regional towns but also their role in the meat processing industry. The second shift commenced in October 2013 and the recruitment of 457 skilled migrant workers from overseas began in June 2013. The stakeholder interviewed raised the fact that even if all the local labour supply was exhausted, the plant would still be unable to put on a second shift without the migrants – clearly meeting the labour market testing criteria as outlined in the Meat Industry Labour Agreement (MILA).

### Where are the migrants from?

The migrants working at the meatworks are broadly categorised as either skilled migrants or refugee-humanitarian migrants. Overall, it was estimated that there were up to about 20 different nationalities employed at this meat processing plant. It is acknowledged here that other migrant groups such as working holiday makers are also a source of labour for the meat processing industry, however, it is clear that the core migrant groups are skilled and refugee-humanitarian migrants. The key source countries for migrant workers as reflected by stakeholders are Philippines and Afghanistan; other source countries include Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

The employment of skilled migrants is mostly through the respective head offices of the meatworks and is conducted primarily with recruitment agencies that are based overseas in countries such as the Philippines – an established industry practice for recruiting overseas skilled migrants (e.g for a temporary business 457 subclass visa). These recruitment agencies not only assist prospective employers in evaluating their slaughter-person skills in meat processing, but also assist with their skilled migration applications. There are also other skilled migrants already living and working elsewhere in Australia who respond to local job advertisements and independently move to these regional based meatworks.

On the other hand, refugee-humanitarian migrants are mainly sourced from local employment agencies while a small number are 'walk-ins' who applied directly for work at the plant. The majority of these migrants are considered unskilled and are employed to work mainly in 'lesser skilled' positions at the plant such as the 'Kill Floor'<sup>6</sup>.

### **Advantages of engaging with a migrant workforce**

For this particular employer, engaging with a migrant workforce allowed it to introduce a second shift and expand its operating capacity. It was also cited that recruiting 457 skilled migrants was a far quicker process in filling skilled positions at the plant compared to training up an unskilled person which would have been a 5 year process. Overall, the skills of both skilled and refugee-humanitarian migrants were adjudged to be on par with their Australian counterparts. Further, their work ethic and attitude was also praised as they were seen to be more respectful at work.

### **Challenges of employing a migrant workforce**

There were several challenges highlighted by the stakeholder. The first was the limited English language ability of workers, however, this largely pertained to refugee-humanitarian migrants. English classes were provided by the company for the workers, however, it was reflected by the stakeholder that participation rates had significantly declined which adds to the challenge. It was acknowledged that initially, engaging migrant workers with limited English was ad-hoc to some extent, however, their training program is now more structured. For example, training courses were implemented in several languages while employees with good English language ability were sent for interpreting courses to assist with any interpretation needs at the plant. In addition, their payslips as well as the Enterprise Bargaining Agreements were translated in different languages.

The reliability of refugee-humanitarian employees as a labour source was also an issue. As indicated by other stakeholders in this industry, this group of migrants is not reliant and not stable with high levels of turnover which undermines the training invested by the company into the employee after their departure. The nature of some of their departures was due to a lack of understanding on Australian work practices. For example, it was not uncommon for an Afghan worker to visit their families still in Afghanistan or Pakistan without appropriate arrangement with their employer; some even do so only

after having worked for six months. Their visits could last from weeks to months before they would return to the company expecting to resume work - only to find that their position had been filled. In response, this stakeholder cited that a new policy was introduced that workers were only able to take time off from work to visit their families after working at the plant for at least 12 months. However, it is noted that the level of turnover is not too dissimilar to that of other transient workers or local Australians at this particular plant.

The fact that many refugee-humanitarian migrants do not drive also contributes to their unreliability. This was highlighted through the example of Afghan workers not turning up for work due to their colleague whom they carpool with falling sick.

### **Integration and retention**

In comparison with refugee-humanitarian migrants, skilled migrants were more reliable and better integrated. For this stakeholder, the fact that many of their skilled migrants were from the Philippines created an environment which allowed them to foster a close knit Filipino community. Further, it is noted that most of these migrants had their families living with them which would encourage their retention in the community. Conversely, Afghan migrants were typically 'single' men with family still living in their home countries which as mentioned was one of the factors driving their unreliability. The lack of a family network for Afghan migrants is considered a factor in discouraging their settlement. This is recognised by management as the stakeholder highlights how they work closely with the Migrant Resource Centre to host events outside of work such as sports day or refugee week to foster integration between their migrant employees and the local community.

Overall, as reflected by the stakeholder, the company would like to have more 457 skilled and refugee humanitarian migrants as they are crucial in meeting their labour demands. Further, they see that these migrants have a long-term role in the local community and also understand that retaining and integrating them is fundamental towards the community's development.

## Appendix Two: Industry case study – Aged Care

### The industry and the area:

The aged care industry has and will continue to boom in the coming years in response to an ageing population; this trend is underscored in rural and regional areas. Add to this the limited staff resources in regional areas and there are clear demands for aged care workers. Anecdotal evidence shows us recent increases in migrant workers in the aged care industry, partially in response to the casualised and low skilled nature of much of the employment in this industry. Several migrant interviewees for this project noted courses they were undertaking to achieve basic aged care qualifications.

The recent influx of migration to the Limestone Coast area and the resulting pool of migrants looking for employment, alongside the aged care certificate program available at the TAFE college located in Mount Gambier have created an increase in the number of migrants working in the aged care industry in the area. An interview with one of the main aged care providers in Mount Gambier carried out for this project illustrates the pathways and challenges to migrant employment in this area.

### How many migrant workers do you have and from what backgrounds?

At this large organisation, about five percent of the workers are from a migrant background. Originally these workers were mainly from a Filipino background (before planned migrant settlement to the region) but now most are from a Burmese background, with some Filipino and a few Congolese workers. Those from a migrant background tend to work more in residential care than the home and community care area. Over the past 10 years the migrant workforce has really grown and the employer has seen different challenges for migrants from different backgrounds; for example Filipinos had generally good English skills but newer migrant workers, from Burmese or Congolese background do not.

### How did employment of migrant workers at the organisation begin?

It has been a long process to generate a stream of migrant workers to the organisation. Recognising the need for workers and the availability of new migrant workers, a traineeship was offered to a member of the Burmese community and once a couple of people from this community started working at the organisation it began an ongoing stream of incoming migrant workers.

### Is the training migrants receive to work in this industry sufficient?

Most migrant workers get their Certificate III in Aged Care qualifications from the local TAFE however the organisation has had to provide extra on-the-job training because current orientation programs don't provide enough depth for the migrants. Additionally the level of English they are able to achieve through the TAFE English course is often insufficient, particularly for a specific industry. The local TAFE AMEP course coordinator makes this point:

*'When we talk about language we're talking about everyday language to get them started in the community...but when you actually start looking at vocational language the training in that language is actually quite specific again .... They're going to have to learn a whole batch of new language that goes with that vocation.'*

(AMEP Coordinator TAFE, Mount Gambier)





Karenni women performing at a community celebration in Mt Gambier.  
Sourced from the MRCSA photo archives.

### What have the experiences with migrant workers been like?

This organisation has had very good experiences with migrant workers and they are taking steps to continue to employ more migrant workers in the future. As quoted by the employer:

*'Migrant workers are very good. They are just committed to working. All they want to do is work...and they are very loyal. One of the things we try to teach the migrants is that they can say no...they are so keen to work they won't say no to a shift due to fear they won't be called again but we try to get the message across that it is ok to say no sometimes.'*

### Have you experienced any resistance from your older clients towards migrant workers?

For the most part older clients have been accepting but there have been some issues:

*'Some of the older people in their residential care are completely intolerant of migrants and do not want them [particularly Congolese migrants] to provide care.'*

### Do you think your organisation has a role in helping new migrants to successfully integrate and settle in the local community?

*'Definitely.'* The employer went on to provide many examples of how supportive the local staff are in helping new migrants to settle in, by offering things like furniture and any other things they need outside of work. There were also examples of broader integration between local and migrant staff, for example local staff members pulled together to help pay for the wedding of one of the migrant staff workers, and many of the staff from the organisation attended the wedding.



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