



Australian Government
Settlement Services Advisory Council

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

As Chair of the Settlement Services Advisory Council (the Council), I wish to formally offer the expertise of the Council to give evidence at the committee hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration.

The Council (*formerly known as the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council*) is an expert, non-statutory, ministerially-appointed body established in 1997. Council members have a strong interest and experience in settlement policy issues and collectively provide expert advice to the Government to guide policy and program innovation.

The Council's Terms of Reference include providing advice to the Government on how to strengthen social cohesion and maximising the social and economic participation of migrants and refugees through specific settlement services, English language, educational and vocational programs, employment pathway programs and programs that maximise the benefits of Australia's cultural diversity and promote the importance of mutual respect, shared responsibility.

After the Government's announcement to increase Australia's Humanitarian Program, the Council was asked to provide the Minister for Social Services with advice on improving migrant settlement outcomes.

The Council undertook nationwide consultations with State and Territory Government officers, services providers, community groups and faith based agencies the outcomes of which identified where changes to settlement programs and services could be made to improve the lifetime wellbeing and social and economic participation of migrants. The 38 recommendations covered areas such as communications, employment, health and support for women and children.

A principle recommendation was consideration of the specific needs of children and young people due to their pre-arrival experiences. Recommendations included:

- the establishment of mechanisms to support mainstream youth programs to be more responsive to the needs of young people;
- management of and care of Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors; and



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- increasing the focus of specialist torture and trauma support services under the Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (PASTT) to provide services to children and young people and linking school liaison programs with PASTT services.

The Council's recommendations also recognise the importance of English language ability on a migrant's settlement outcomes and encouraged Commonwealth Departments to work together to determine how to improve outcomes in English language acquisition, vocational training and employment for migrants.

The recommendations encourage those involved in developing settlement policies and programs to work to ensure best settlement outcomes are achieved through coordinated settlement process, targeted networks and support systems and collaborative and innovative service delivery, programs and policies.

The Council looks forward to the opportunity to address a committee hearing to discuss its work and how it may assist the Joint Standing Committee on Migration.

Yours sincerely,

Paris Aristotle
Chair, Settlement Services Advisory Council

2 March 2017