



Our Ref: F190289
Your Ref:

29 August 2019

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission on Inquiry into migration in regional Australia

On behalf of the Shire of Manjimup, I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide comment with reference to the Committee's Terms of Reference, and express the Shire's strong support for the resettlement of migrants in rural and regional areas.

The Manjimup Shire Council has supported the resettling of migrants for a number of years. The Shire of Manjimup has a strong multicultural heritage associated with both pre and post war migration. The region is a major employer of backpackers for up to nine months each year and has a strengthening Tongan workforce under the Pacific Island Workforce Scheme. There is little evidence of racial tension as a result of the increasing multicultural workforce. Refugees resettled in the region in more recent decades appear to have integrated well and remain within the local community longer term.

Council's position is also supported by the adopted Manjimup SuperTown Growth Plan which encourages investigation into the economic opportunities pertaining to migrant resettlement. The plan itself was established after extensive community consultation.

Following the September 2015 announcement by the Australian Federal Government of its intention to resettle 12,000 Syrian refugees in Australia, followed by the State Government of Western Australia agreeing to resettle, as a first year intake, 1,500 refugees in the Perth metropolitan area. The Manjimup Shire Council expressed its strong support for rural and regional resettlement of refugees.

Following this announcement the Manjimup Shire Council, at its meeting of 11 December 2015, unanimously voted to support refugee resettlement in our Shire located in the lower south west of Western Australia. The Council decision was not taken lightly and is borne from the Syrian refugee crisis magnifying the growing global issue of refugees endeavouring to reach borders to avoid conflict zones at the time. The following recommendation was adopted:

- **Extends its ongoing sympathy and support to individuals and families affected by the Syrian and broader refugee crisis;**
- **Offers support from the Shire of Manjimup communities to participate in the refugee resettlement program;**
- **Encourages regional resettlement as an excellent means of both supporting refugees and stimulating the growth and viability of rural and regional Australia; and**
- **Formally advise both the State and Australian Governments that the Shire of Manjimup invites refugee resettlement within the region.**

I do acknowledge that whilst migrant resettlement is likely to have a positive economic stimulus impact, and potentially provide a ready labour source for the local economy, there would also be a number of hurdles that would need to be addressed. Physical accommodation would need to be brought in and social support services would need to be enhanced so as to address the specific needs of migrants. In saying this these hurdles are not insurmountable and in return local communities could offer migrants a safe and supportive environment to re-establish themselves.

I urge you to give strong consideration to the opportunities associated with rural and regional resettlement of Australia's migrant intake. The Shire of Manjimup is willing to work in collaboration with the State and Federal Government to support migrant resettlement within our local government area.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 9771 7777 if should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Campbell
Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Manjimup