

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION**

**\*QON\***

**Question:** Verbal question regarding AMEP (new AMEP business model)

Ms GAMBARO: You are also introducing a new business model. How does the new business model that is being rolled out in July compare to the old business model? In terms of the categories of people that are entitled to the 510 hours, and I know of the humanitarian matter, can you also outline what other visa or category holders are entitled to the English language program?

**Answer:**

Key changes to the new business model, which was introduced in July 2011, are:

- the introduction of Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) counsellors providing educational and vocational guidance to clients;
- the introduction of Individual Pathway Guides to document and monitor client learning goals and outcomes. This provides an additional level of support to clients and clearly delineated pathways to further English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, education, employment or vocational training;
- the delivery of settlement courses to AMEP clients upon entry to and exit from the program. The courses will contribute to the achievement of both settlement and English learning outcomes;
- greater accessibility to the AMEP for youth aged between 15-17 years whose needs may not be met through mainstream schooling and strong support for specialised youth only classes wherever possible;
- the introduction of distance learning and self paced e-learning modules being delivered by a single national provider; and
- a stronger focus on creating pathways to employment and training, with the roll-out of a Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training course.

The AMEP is a voluntary program for eligible migrants who hold a permanent visa and have little or no English.

Access to the AMEP is extended to some temporary and provisional visa holders such as:

- Business Skills (Provisional);
- Interdependency (Provisional);
- Partner (Provisional and Temporary);
- Resolution of Status (Temporary);
- Skilled – Designated Area-sponsored (Provisional); and
- Skilled – Independent Regional (Provisional).

# JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

**\*QON\***

## CLEARANCE BLOCK:

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Agnes Kumar
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7213
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

# JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

**\*QON\***

**Question:** Verbal question regarding AMEP (number of people who complete full 510 hours)

Ms GAMBARO: Do you have any figures of how many people do the whole 510 hours? People stop for all sorts of reasons. I know the counsellors will encourage a more flexible pathway, but is there any way that we can encourage people to complete the 510 hours?

**Answer:**

During the period of January 2011 to December 2011, 2 123 clients exited the program and of these over 2 000 AMEP clients reached functional English and nearly 100 clients had completed 510 entitlement hours and are no longer eligible to participate in the AMEP. Clients have five years to complete the 510 hours.

Participation in the AMEP is voluntary and as such service providers continue to actively promote the AMEP raising potential client's awareness of their entitlement.

The AMEP provides a range of support services that enable clients to maximise their learning opportunities and facilitate their ongoing participation in AMEP. These include:

- access to free childcare for clients with under school aged children;
- dedicated AMEP counsellors providing clients with educational and vocational guidance to further ESL courses, education, employment and vocational training;
- specific youth courses; and
- settlement courses to reinforce important settlement information upon entry to and exit from the program.

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

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Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7213
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

# JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

**\*QON\***

**Question:** Verbal question regarding AMEP (assessments of English language levels)

Ms GAMBARO: When you assess people's level of English when they are about to do the AMEP, is IELTS used? What is the assessment tool? Also, there are a number of providers in this space. How do you ensure that the program that is being rolled out across the AMEP providers is consistent and is quality assured?

**Answer:**

No, IELTS is not used in the AMEP.

AMEP service providers assess the client's English language level by conducting an International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR) assessment. The ISLPR is a scale that describes the development of a second or foreign language proficiency in adolescent and adult learners.

The ISLPR provides a framework for assessing English language proficiency. The assessment is undertaken by English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers trained in administering the tool.

The performance of AMEP providers is monitored through:

- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that assess efficiency, effectiveness and the quality of services delivered;
- regular quarterly, half yearly and annual reports by service providers;
- client satisfaction surveys;
- regular contract management meetings;
- checks to verify that services are being delivered and maintained at an appropriate standard and comply with accreditation;
- a quality assurance program conducted by an independent body; and
- participation in periodic AMEP conferences and workshops.

## **CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

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Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Agnes Kumar
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7213
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

**Question:** Adult Migrant English Program - Additional hours of English language training under AMEP

1. The Department indicated that there is capacity to 'top up' with additional hours of English language training, if the person has not reached a reasonable level of language acquisition:

- a) Is an exit assessment done routinely for each client?
- b) Please explain precisely how an individual client accesses additional hours, and how this is funded?

**Answer:**

- a) Yes, client exit interviews are arranged for all clients prior to the anticipated completion of the client's AMEP entitlement.
- b) The Special Preparatory Program (SPP) offers increased assistance to all humanitarian entrants by providing up to 400 additional tuition hours for AMEP clients who have low educational levels and/or suffered difficult pre-migration experiences.

The Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training (SLPET) program provides selected clients with an employment/training focused course to assist the transition to work in Australia.

SLPET provides an additional 200 hours of tuition including vocational specific English and work experience placement. A client's suitability for SLPET is assessed by the AMEP counsellor. The SLPET program is targeted at clients who have:

- completed 75 percent or more of their AMEP tuition or who are close to attaining functional English;
- largely resolved their settlement issues;
- the necessary communications skills to participate in a workplace situation; and
- the necessary motivation and commitment to benefit from the course.

Both SPP and SLPET programs are funded from AMEP administered funds.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION****\*QON 1\*****CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

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Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Agnes Kumar
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7213
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

**Question:** Adult Migrant English Program - work related English training

2. Some submissions have voiced concern over the lack of work-related English language training, and stressed that the context is important to language acquisition:

- a) How does AMEP take into account the need for work related English?
- b) Is the AMEP flexible enough to provide English language tuition in workplaces?

**Answer:**

- a) The Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training (SLPET) program provides selected clients with a settlement and employment/training focused course to assist the transition to work in Australia.

AMEP counsellors conduct interviews to determine clients' need and readiness and helps place clients in the SLPET program.

The SLPET course assists AMEP clients to learn English while at the same time gain familiarity with Australian workplace language, culture and practices.

- b) Yes, the AMEP is flexible and can provide English language tuition in workplaces.

Courses are tailored to suit the needs of clients, which may include exposure to work situations through workplace visits, simulated workplace environments and/or facilitated short work experience placements.

As an example, during the period of 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011 AMEP service providers in Western Australia engaged industry and community partners to provide workplace experience for SLPET clients which included:

- Woolworths;
- Burswood Casino;
- hospitality placements in hotels;
- local Government; and
- aged care facilities.

# JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

**\*QON 2\***

## CLEARANCE BLOCK:

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Agnes Kumar
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7213
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	



**Question:** Adult Migrant English Program - Approaches to English language education

3. Some witnesses have said that having someone of their own language to explain the English words would help them acquire English more quickly e.g. French is a second or third language for many African refugees who would benefit from explanation of the English via a French speaker:

- a) What evidence is there that putting students of different levels of education, and language skill and from different language backgrounds all in the same class is the best approach to teaching English as a second language?
- b) Is there capacity to utilise people of different language backgrounds to teach English, but with the ability to also teach in their native language?

**Answer:**

- a) Clients are interviewed when they register with the AMEP and placed in a class that is appropriate to their English level and their prior learning experience.

The AMEP uses a national curriculum with a flexible syllabus designed to meet the cultural and linguistic need of clients.

All AMEP teachers have qualifications in the Certificate of Spoken and Written English (CSWE). CSWE licensing requires that the courses are delivered by teachers whose minimum qualifications consist of:

- a recognised Bachelor Degree; and
- a recognised postgraduate Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) qualification which covers the grammar of the English language, language learning, TESOL methodology and a practicum; or
- a Bachelor of Education with a TESOL major or equivalent which includes a minimum 60 hours practicum; and
- all teachers must hold a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or equivalent.

Teachers ensure that tuition activities undertaken by clients lead or contribute to the achievement of a CSWE language learning outcome.

- b) The AMEP provides bilingual support for clients with little or no English proficiency in the early stages of their AMEP study.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION****\*QON 3\*****CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Agnes Kumar
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7213
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

# JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

**\*QON 4\***

**Question:** Adult Migrant English Program – Hours of language training

4. Witnesses repeatedly said that 510 hours is not sufficient to learn English through the Adult Migrant English Program:

- a) Has the Department considered extending the number of hours available for participants? For example, would 600 hrs be a good average as many students would not take up the entire quota while others would have increased hours?

**Answer:**

- a) The Special Preparatory Program (SPP) provides up to 400 additional tuition hours to eligible humanitarian entrants who have low educational levels and/or suffered difficult pre-migration experiences.

The Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training (SLPET) course was developed to provide an additional 200 hours for clients who have completed 75 percent or more of their AMEP entitlement hours or who are close to functional English.

The SLPET course includes a minimum of 120 hours of face-to-face English language tuition and a minimum of 40 hours work placement.

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Agnes Kumar
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7213
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

**Question:** Research Budget Allocation

5. Funding allocations specifically for research do not appear to be separately identified in the Budget Papers or annual reports. Could you please identify the budget allocation for 2011-2012 for the following categories:

- a) Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit
- b) The Departments contribution to joint research projects with other agencies
- c) Research commissioned from external consultants?

**Answer:**

- a) In 2011-12, the Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit was internally allocated \$2.4m. Of this, \$950,000 was spent on commissioned research in 2011-12. In addition to this amount a further \$442,000 from quarantined funding was allocated to the Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit for research related to irregular maritime arrivals.
- b) The department in 2011-12 was allocated through a specific budget allocation \$50,000 for the Australian Population, Multicultural and Immigration Research Program, a joint Commonwealth/State/Territory venture that was established under the Commonwealth/State Standing Committee for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. The use of these funds for research has yet to be finalised as this Standing Committee, the governing body for the use of these funds, was disbanded in June 2011.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding, the department and the ABS fund the National Migrant Statistics Unit (\$535,000 pa from each agency) to develop migrant data and statistics. The department also contributes in-kind support to joint research projects with other agencies, such as data integration and analytical work with DEEWR under the auspices of the Inter-departmental Working Group on Refugees and other Vulnerable Migrants.

- c) In addition to the amounts allocated to the Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation unit for commissioned research, described at (a), the Economic Analysis Unit in 2011-12 was allocated \$488,696 to commission a Longitudinal Survey of Humanitarian entrants and \$193,000 for the external conduct of the Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants. The Adult Migrant English Program was also allocated \$540,000 in administered funds for externally commissioned research in 2011-12.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION****\*QON 5\*****CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Mark Cully	Name:	Anita Davis
Title:	Chief Economist	Branch/Section:	Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit
Phone:	(02) 6264 2713	Phone:	(02) 6264 2715
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

**Question:** Australian Population, Multicultural and Immigration Research Program

6. The Portfolio Budget Statements (2011-12) states that \$50,000 is allocated yearly to the Australian Population, Multicultural and Immigration Research Program:

- a) What is the organisational structure of the program?
- b) How are research priorities for the program decided?
- c) What types of research are conducted under the program, and how is that research oversighted?

**Answer:**

- a) The Australian Population, Multicultural and Immigration Research Program (APMIR) was established by the Commonwealth and State Governments to undertake studies in the areas of migration, migration settlement, multicultural affairs and population trends. The purpose of the program was to provide information to assist with the formulation and assessment of policies by Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers and Departments responsible for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) which was a working group of the Commonwealth/State Standing Committee for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (SCIMA) was established to oversee the APMIR. The RAC consisted of an officer nominated from each State and Territory Immigration and Multicultural/Ethnic Affairs Office and DIAC. The RAC had \$100,000 a year for joint research projects. DIAC contributed \$50,000 and the remainder was contributed by the states and territories on a population pro-rata basis.

SCIMA and hence RAC were formally disbanded in June 2011. Given these governance bodies were necessary to approve expenditure of APMIR funds, this research program also formally ceased from 1 July 2011.

- b) Research proposals were submitted to the RAC by its members at its biannual meeting, or on occasion 'out of session'. Research proposals were assessed by the RAC members and required unanimous agreement of the RAC members. Research proposals were submitted to SCIMA via a report of each RAC meeting.
- c) Research projects commissioned by the RAC were focused on migration and multicultural issues that were of mutual interest and relevance to all jurisdictions. Each research project was conducted under a contractual arrangement managed by DIAC. The SCIMA maintained broad oversight of research projects, and received an annual report including a financial statement of the research program trust fund.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION****\*QON 6\*****CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Mark Cully	Name:	Anita Davis
Title:	Chief Economist	Branch/Section:	Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit
Phone:	(02) 6264 2713	Phone:	(02) 6264 2715
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

# JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

\*QON 7\*

**Question:** Research Consultants

7. The Department relies on a combination of in-house and external consultants to conduct research:

- a) What proportion of research is commissioned from external consultants compared to in house?
- b) Does the Department formulate the research problem and the research questions?
- c) Who determines the research methodology?

**Answer:**

- a) Most departmental primary data collection (surveys, interviews etc) is commissioned. Analysis and reporting of survey, administrative and other data, and of secondary sources such as published research may be undertaken either in house or commissioned. As the department does not cost in-house research work, it is difficult to provide a definitive ratio of external and in-house analysis and reporting except to report that the large majority of the research published on the department's website is commissioned externally.
- b) Research projects are identified through a process of internal consultation and needs analysis across the department and externally. As part of this process, the research questions are formulated taking into account the needs of policy and program managers, government and departmental policy and program priorities, and known research / policy gaps. The result of these consultations is the development of a research brief that outlines in clear terms the research problem and questions. This brief is then used in the procurement process to select the preferred research provider, where an external provider is sought.
- c) The research methodology is in some cases outlined in the research brief prepared by the department. On other occasions, potential research providers are asked to develop an appropriate methodology in their tender proposals. The final methodology is agreed between DIAC and the selected provider before the commencement of the contract.

## CLEARANCE BLOCK:

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Mark Cully	Name:	Anita Davis
Title:	Chief Economist	Branch/Section:	Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit
Phone:	(02) 6264 2713	Phone:	(02) 6264 2715
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	



## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

\*QON 8\*

**Question:** Non-Government Organisations

8. Grassroots organisations are closest to their communities, and are a potential agent for research:

- a) What capacity does the Department have to support community based organisations to conduct or contribute to research that will provide direct real life experience of programs and policies on the ground?
- b) Some community organisations would also like the opportunity to research their own strategies in CALD communities. Is there any funding support from the Department for more localised research?

**Answer:**

- a) The Department does not currently provide direct funding for community based organisations to conduct research. Community based organisations frequently provide input to and participate in research conducted by commissioned research organisations on behalf of the Department. The views of community based organisations are also sought through other departmental consultation mechanisms, including through advisory bodies such as the Settlement Council of Australia.

Under the Settlement Grants Program and the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program, community based organisations can receive funding to provide information and training to clients based on their understanding of client needs.

- b) Within the Department's limited research budget, the majority of procured external research projects require specialised research expertise. Non-community based research organisations are typically best placed to deliver projects requiring a higher level of research expertise. Community based organisations, while not directly funded to deliver research, frequently provide input to commissioned research organisations as part of the data collection process for Departmental-funded research projects.

### CLEARANCE BLOCK:

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Joanne Constantinides
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs	Branch/Section:	A/g Director Settlement Research, Evaluation and Planning, Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7215	Phone:	(02) 69198 7217
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

**Question:** Effect of Research on Policy

9. There is general agreement that policy development and reform should be informed by research and evaluation in an iterative process over time:

- a) How does the Department integrate research into the policy development process?
- b) What mechanisms and models exist for the evaluation of policy and program implementation, and how does this feed back into policy development?
- c) Please give at least two concrete examples of research influencing policy?

**Answer:**

a) & b) Research and evaluation, whether conducted by or commissioned for the department, or undertaken by NGOs, think-tanks or academic institutions, contributes to policy outcomes in a variety of direct and indirect ways throughout different stages of the policy development process.

For example, research outputs may lead to specific and immediate adjustments being made to program level processes and activities. Research may also contribute to broad policy discourse on a particular issue, alongside other evidence and analysis such as submissions to the Prime Minister or Cabinet; advice to senior departmental executives or briefings to agencies across government. These various inputs may, in turn, lead to tangible policy outcomes being adopted or to new directions being plotted for policy discussions. This process may not always occur immediately, reflecting the fact that policy development requires ongoing analysis and evidence, consensus building and political support in order to effect change.

To assist in this process, the department undertakes a range of general dissemination activities to facilitate timely access to the findings and insights generated by its research. It publishes reports and papers of research, evaluation and analysis conducted by the department, hosts and presents at conferences, workshops and other fora, and networks with expert professionals both in Australia and internationally. These activities are all carried out with the objective of feeding into the ongoing policy development process and public discourse.

c) As part of its 2009-10 Research and Evaluation Program, DIAC commissioned ARTD Consultants (a commercial company that specialises in program evaluations) to evaluate the effectiveness of the Settlement Grants Program. The evaluation findings are being used to continue to ensure grants projects are targeted effectively and resourced efficiently. For example, the department has adopted a number of the report's recommendations in the SGP's 2011-12 funding round, including by funding more long-term grants. The department is also working towards streamlining performance reporting and monitoring, giving consideration to the impacts of distance and remoteness in terms of service delivery, and developing an annual program-wide SGP report that can be used for program management and evaluation.

DIAC's research and analysis activities have been an important component in the ongoing management of the Skilled Migration Program. The points test for General Skilled Migration was reviewed by the government in 2010. The *Continuous Survey of Australian Migrants* (CSAM) was used to model and calibrate the new points test by estimating the attributes and outcomes of those who would meet the

requirements for the new test, based on a known sample of those who had passed the old test. Similarly, since 2009-10, the department has been implementing a Long-Term Migration Planning Framework, which looks at both temporary and permanent migration flows over a multi-year period. These forecasting activities supplement official data including net overseas migration figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and contribute important information that is used by government to adjust the migration program's balance between population, labour market, economic, environmental and urban and regional development outcomes. Other research activities, including the conduct of the CSAM, and research into the long-term physical implications of net overseas migration have also fed into the migration planning work.

In 2011, DIAC released the findings of a commissioned research report by Professor Graeme Hugo from the University of Adelaide, who conducted a study on the *Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Entrants*. This research, along with the findings from other internal and external research, has helped to reaffirm anecdotal insights that support the idea that the policy of referring unlinked clients to regional Humanitarian Settlement Services locations is the right direction for the clients in the long-term. As a result, the department is now developing a referral strategy to settle unlinked Women at Risk in key regional locations that can tailor settlement responses to their particular needs.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION****\*QON 9\*****CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Mark Cully	Name:	Anita Davis
Title:	Chief Economist	Branch/Section:	Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit
Phone:	(02) 6264 2713	Phone:	(02) 6264 2715
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 10\*

**Question:** Social Inclusion Agenda

10. Numerous submitters have raised concern about the lack of cultural and linguistic diversity as indicators of exclusion in the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda:

- a) What role has the Department played in ensuring that the Social Inclusion Agenda incorporates CALD as an indicator of exclusion?
- b) b. What research, if any, has the Department done or proposes to do either in house or through joint or commissioned work into the link between CALD factors and economic and/or social disadvantage in Australia?

**Answer:**

- a) The Department has worked closely with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and other relevant stakeholders in contributing the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda, and highlighting the particular issues facing diverse communities.

The Agenda, as articulated in its policy statement A Stronger, Fairer Australia, recognises the particular challenges faced by refugees and other vulnerable migrants. Furthermore, the Australian Public Service Social Inclusion policy design and delivery Toolkit –which is designed to translate social inclusion principles into the daily practice of government and public administration – provides explicit guidance to agencies that they need to pay particular attention to vulnerable new arrivals and refugees in service delivery. Additionally the Toolkit provides case studies on effective approaches to servicing CALD clients.

Several DIAC senior departmental representatives attend Australian Social Inclusion Board (the Board) meetings led by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC).

The Board meets four times a year, and serves as the main advisory body to Government on ways to achieve better outcomes for the most disadvantaged in our community.

As part of the departmental attendance at the Board meetings, DIAC is responsible for occasionally responding to board queries and providing advice to Board members.

Multicultural matters are found in the Social Inclusion Agenda report, Foundations for a Stronger, Fairer Australia. The report includes a summary of The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy which acknowledges that the policy is in place to reaffirm the Government's unwavering support for a culturally diverse and socially cohesive nation. In addition, the policy acknowledges that government services and programs must be responsive to the needs of CALD communities.

- b) Refugees and other migrants are represented in reporting on some social inclusion indicators within the Australian Social Inclusion Board's report *How's Australia faring?: A compendium of social inclusion indicators*. Recently the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council provided advice to the Board on the value of including this client group within all key indicators to better evaluate outcomes (subject to data availability).

The Department has commissioned several research projects within the last five years that provide information on the link between CALD factors and economic and/or social disadvantage. A series

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 10\*

of research projects commissioned in 2008-09, under the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security, researched Muslim communities' economic, social and political participation. Reports for these projects are available at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/>

Two significant reports on migrant settlement outcomes were released by the Department in 2011, the Settlement Outcomes of New Arrivals report and the Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Entrants report. These reports are available at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/>

### CLEARANCE BLOCK:

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Warren Pearson
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Multicultural Affairs Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7226
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

**Question:** Disaggregation of Data

11. Several submitters have told the Committee that existing data collection is not sufficiently disaggregated by visa category, and this limits research into second generation settlement outcomes. On 2 April the Department said it was working on marrying the settlement database with census outcomes:

- a) Will the Department's work with the ABS overcome the problem of lack of disaggregated data?
- b) What will be the analytical benefits of the integration of settlement and census data?

**Answer:**

- a) The Migrants Quality Study was conducted to assess the feasibility of linking the Settlement Database (SDB) to the ABS's Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD) without the use of name and address as linking variables.

This study indicated that linking the SDB to the SLCD was feasible and could produce useful information that no other data source currently provides. However, some quality issues were identified and further work was proposed to ensure that the linked data are correctly interpreted and appropriately used.

Findings of the quality study *Assessing the Quality of Linking Migrant Settlement Records to Census Data (ABS cat. no. 1351.0.55.027)* were released in August 2009.

As a result of the study, improvements to the SDB were made by DIAC. These improvements have laid the groundwork for a new Census Data Enhancement Project linking the SDB and 2011 Census data. The aims of this new study will be to determine the extent to which the quality of data-linking is improved and to evaluate opportunities for further development.

The most recent information about the planned work has been released in *Census Data Enhancement Project: An Update, Oct 2010 (ABS cat. no. 2062.0)*

- b) The benefit of linking SDB and Census data is that variations in family formation, labour market outcomes and other socio-economic outcomes for different migrant groups and different visa categories can be more readily identified and understood.

Results of this work, based on a matching of data from the SDB and 2006 Census data were published by the ABS in two articles:

*Settlement Outcomes for Humanitarian Program Migrants Experimental Estimates from the Migrants Statistical Study (ABS Catalogue 3416.0)*

*Experimental Estimates From The Migrants Statistical Study (ABS Catalogue 3416.0)*

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION    \*QON 11\***

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Mark Cully	Name:	David Smith
Title:	Chief Economist	Branch/Section:	Economic Analysis Unit
Phone:	(02) 6264 2713	Phone:	(02) 6264 1326
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	



## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 12\*

**Question:** National Settlement Framework

12. On 2 April the Department informed the Committee that the Council of Immigration and Settlement will build a national settlement framework.

- a) Could you please elaborate in more detail how the framework is to be developed, how it will integrate three levels of government and how it will assist in building capacity for a broader research program?

**Answer:**

- a) The Select Council on Immigration and Citizenship (SCIS) has established a working group comprised of representatives of the Commonwealth, each State and Territory and the Australian Local Government Association to develop the Framework. It is expected that the Framework will be finalised by the end of 2012.

The principles-based Framework with commitment from members will facilitate:

- collaboration between jurisdictions during settlement planning to ensure informed decisions can be made to achieve successful settlement outcomes for migrants;
- coordination in the provision of services to minimise duplication and identify and address service gaps; and
- enhanced evaluation of services through communication and sharing of best practice.

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Joanne Constantinides
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs	Branch/Section:	A/g Director Settlement Research, Evaluation and Planning, Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7215	Phone:	(02) 69198 7217
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 13\*

**Question:** Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants

13. The department's Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants reports every six months on the experience of Family and Skilled Stream migrants in the Australian workplace:

- a) What have the results revealed? How effective has this survey been in informing Government policy?
- b) Has the Department considered adopting similar surveys for other visa categories?
- c) What is the current status of the survey given that no new results have been published online since 2010?
- d) Does the Survey include the experience of temporary skilled migrants?

**Answer:**

- a) The department's Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants (CSAM) shows that recently arrived skilled migrants have strong labour market outcomes. Data collected from across all four completed CSAM surveys shows that twelve months after arrival/grant of visa, the labour force participation rate of Skill Stream Primary Applicants and their partner was 96.5 per cent and 74.4 per cent respectively – a figure well above the Australian average of 66.5 per cent in November 2011.

Outcomes were particularly impressive for those sponsored by an employer. Only 0.5 per cent of Employer Sponsored migrants were unemployed and their participation rate was 99.1 per cent. They outperformed other categories in terms of full-time employment (95.9 per cent) and 81.0 per cent were in skilled-employment – that is, in management, a professional occupation or a trade occupation.

Points tested Independent migrants – migrants without any form of sponsorship – also had strong results. They had very high participation rates of over 96.3 per cent, low unemployment rates of around 3.0 per cent and a large percentage were employed in a skilled job – particularly offshore migrants who had 84.3 per cent in skilled employment.

Skilled Graduate migrants – recently graduated international students – had similarly strong participation rates and low unemployment rates. They did however have lower rates of full-time employment (only 78.2 per cent of jobs were full-time) and lower skilled employment (only 59.9 per cent of jobs were management, professional or trades). This was however still greater than the Australian averages of 69.9 per cent and 49.0 per cent respectively.

Family Stream migrants had less favourable employment outcomes with 18.0 per cent unemployed and only 39.4 per cent in a skilled occupation after 12 months. It should be remembered however that these migrants were not selected on the basis of their skills. Also many factors which feed into these outcomes are also temporary in nature and include: time needed to adjust to a new labour market; time to arrange child care; and waiting to find a job in their particular field.

*Use of the survey*

Information from the survey has been utilised internally to:

- Assist in last year's re-design of the General Skilled Migration Points test, providing evidence to support its focus on better English, work experience and greater recognition of overseas qualifications.
  - Update the Department's Migrant Fiscal Impact model through providing information on migrant employment outcomes.
  - Contribute towards the Migration Program submission, through comparing the labour market outcomes of different categories of Skill Stream migrants.
  - Analyse employment outcomes for migrants with different nominated occupations. This information is used by Skills Australia to help in updating its Skilled Occupation List.
- b) The scope of the survey is limited to Family and Skill Stream migrants. Humanitarian entrants - the other permanent migration category – are in scope of the department's new longitudinal survey of refugees – *Building a New Life in Australia*. More information about this survey can be found at [www.immi.gov.au/media/research/lsm/](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/lsm/)
- c) The CSAM has been run on five occasions, with responses received from almost 18 000 recently arrived migrants in total.

The contract to run this survey finished at the end of 2011. A re-designed CSAM will commence in late 2012. This new survey will be run annually, but with larger sample sizes.

The Department is compiling a report that will present key survey findings for all survey cohorts. Included in this report will be analysis of how migrant employment outcomes and earnings change with increased time in Australia, a comparison of outcomes between different skilled migrant categories, migrants' main occupations and industries of employment and the labour market outcomes of the partners of skilled migrants.

As well as this, information from the CSAM on the employment outcomes for all four completed survey cohorts will be included in the 2010-11 edition of *Population Flows, Immigration Aspects*. This report is expected to be published on the DIAC website in May 2012.

- d) Temporary migrants are not included in the CSAM, instead these migrants fall in scope of other surveys run by the department. For instance the department is currently running a survey of subclass 457 migrants and their sponsors to: determine the effectiveness of the 457 program in meeting employers' skilled labour needs; examine the experiences of workers in the 457 program; and identify processes that facilitate better program use. Separate surveys targeted at working holiday makers and international students are planned for coming years.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION      \*QON 13\***

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Mark Cully	Name:	David Smith
Title:	Chief Economist	Branch/Section:	Economic Analysis Unit
Phone:	(02) 6264 2713	Phone:	(02) 6264 1326
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 14\*

**Question:** Global mobility and impact of temporary migration

14. The Department has indicated an intention to research global mobility trends in response to the changing patterns of migration, especially of skilled workers:

- a) Will research in this area also include the social, economic and civic impact of temporary migration in Australia?

**Answer:**

- a) There is a growing body of academic literature and policy discourse highlighting that global mobility patterns are becoming increasingly temporary and circular in nature. Reflecting these evolving patterns in migration, a number of the department's ongoing research projects will incorporate examination of the implications of temporary migration on various policies and programs. For example, the department is conducting ongoing research on the social effects of migration that will attempt to understand the social dynamics of change in which migrants are integral, in particular localities. While this project does not specifically single out temporary migrants from the broader community, it is expected that the research will provide a basis for understanding a range of different dynamics of social change across Australia, as well as a varied and detailed picture of the way in which temporary migrants feed in to such change.

The department is currently commissioning a survey of 457 employees and their employers, and expects to undertake further surveys in future financial years of other major temporary cohorts such as students and working holiday makers. These surveys will provide valuable data which may be analysed to understand the outcomes of these temporary migrants.

Future research activities may further consider the impacts of temporary migration where relevant.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION    \*QON 14\***

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Mark Cully	Name:	Anita Davis
Title:	Chief Economist	Branch/Section:	Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit
Phone:	(02) 6264 2713	Phone:	(02) 6264 2715
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 15\*

**Question:**      Diasporas

15. The linkages between diaspora communities in Australia and their communities overseas has not been an area of research in Australia:

- a) Given the potential economic and social importance of these links, is this a topic that the Department has identified as worthy of research?
- b) If so, how and when does the Department propose to conduct such research?

**Answer:**

a) & b) While it is a potentially valuable area of study from a whole-of-government perspective, the linkages between diaspora communities in Australia and their communities overseas is generally considered an issue of greater relevance to other government agencies. For example, DIAC notes the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) testimony to the Joint Standing Committee, highlighting the contribution that diasporas make to Australia's economy and international relationships. DIAC has traditionally played only a minor role in issues involving the links between diaspora communities in Australia and their home societies, focusing mainly on immigration, not emigration.

However, there is growing recognition in migration research about the contribution diasporas make to both the sending and receiving country. DIAC's own research in a range of quite separate areas has touched on issues relevant to diasporas. For example, ongoing research into the social impacts of migration has considered the important role that migrant networks and linkages can play in helping to maintain migration flows to and from particular locations. DIAC will maintain a watching brief over policy discourse on diasporas, but has no immediate plans to undertake specific research.

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Mark Cully	Name:	Anita Davis
Title:	Chief Economist	Branch/Section:	Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit
Phone:	(02) 6264 2713	Phone:	(02) 6264 2715
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 16\*

**Question:** Australian diaspora

16. In 2003, the Department partnered with the Committee on Economic Development in Australian and Professor Graeme Hugo to conduct research into the approximately one million Australians living outside of Australia:

- a) What, if any, policy development was considered or adopted as a result of that research?
- b) Is there any intention to update that research in the near future?

**Answer:**

- a) The department supported the 2003 research report, *Australia's Diaspora: Its Size, Nature and Policy Implications*, as part of an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant. ARC industry linkage grants provide government agencies with opportunities to support Australian research activities and innovation globally and to benefit the community. Support of this nature is provided to assist researchers to build the evidence base on issues of public interest and to inform debates or policy discourse. ARC grants are provided as a result of researchers applying for support; they are not a result of departments commissioning research.

In this particular case, Professor Hugo's research contributed significantly to ongoing policy debates in the early to mid 2000s regarding the potential benefits, opportunities and new policy implications created by Australia's diaspora overseas. In particular, the report was a key source informing the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee's Inquiry into Australian expatriates. It helped to develop a better understanding of the emigration process and its economic and social implications.

In turn, the policy debates arising from the Committee's inquiry led to a number of its recommendations being adopted by relevant government agencies. For example, this department has sought to improve the statistical information collected in relation to Australian expatriates; to provide more detailed, accurate and specific citizenship advice and information to Australian expatriates; and to improve citizenship advice and services at Australian overseas missions.

- b) The department is unaware of Professor Hugo's future intentions regarding this research.



**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION    \*QON 16\***

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Mark Cully	Name:	Anita Davis
Title:	Chief Economist	Branch/Section:	Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit
Phone:	(02) 6264 2713	Phone:	(02) 6264 2715
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 17\*

**Question:** Settlement and Participation

17. The Settlement Grants Program is designed to assist eligible migrants who have arrived in Australia in the last five years to become self reliant and participate in Australian society (submission, p. 18):

- a) On average, how many applications are received by the Department in regards to the Settlement Grants Program?
- b) What is the budget allocation to the Grants Program?

**Answer:**

- a) In the 2012-13 funding round, 225 applications were received for funding under the Settlement Grants Program.
- b) The budget allocation for the Settlement Grants Program in 2012-13 is \$39 385 000. In 2011-12 the budget allocation for the SGP was \$38 710 000.

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Agnes Kumar
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7213
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 18\*

**Question:** Funding of migrant and ethno-specific organisations

18. The Committee has been told that tendering processes are working against cooperation in the community service sector. Organisations are competing for funds and there is significant shift toward established mainstream organisations at the expense of a more grassroots ethno specific groups:

- a) Can you explain the broad policy approach to the allocation of grants and contracting of services?
- b) What is the government's position on funding generic migrant resource centres as opposed to ethno specific organisations?
- c) What mechanisms are in place to ensure that, in fact, the mainstream organisations accurately reflect and incorporate CALD communities into their structures and workforces?

**Answer:**

- a) The Settlement Grants Program is a discretionary, merit-based program. SGP funding is directed to those clients in most need. Funding priorities are based on the type, level and location of settlement needs. Applications are assessed against a number of criteria including consistency with the SGP target group and services types, the suitability of proposed service(s), organisational capability to deliver service(s), and the ability to comply with reporting and accountability requirements.
- b) The Government recognises that organisations that identify themselves as MRCs have had a long history of working with new migrant communities and have over the years established themselves as a one-stop shop for a range of services new arrivals need to access. For this reason, MRCs are generally successful in receiving SGP funding. The government also recognises the crucial role ethno-specific organisations play in the settlement of newly-arrived entrants. Consequently the government is looking to link smaller, new communities and groups with larger well established settlement providers to improve the range of settlement services and options available for people requiring settlement assistance.
- c) The Australian Government's Access and Equity Strategy requires government agencies to meet client needs through general programs and services that meet the needs of Australia's diverse population. The goal is for services to be accessible to migrants and humanitarian entrants and responsive to their needs.

As part of their access and equity obligations, government agencies and their service providers should consider how best to meet these needs, including through an assessment of staff training needs and the provision of training.

The government announced a strengthening of the existing Access and Equity arrangements as part of *The People of Australia - Australia's Multicultural Policy*. The department outlined this policy and its various initiatives in its submission to the Access and Equity Inquiry announced by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon Kate Lundy on 18 November 2011. This Inquiry is being conducted by an independent Panel of eminent community members, chaired by Mr Peter Hughes PSM, a former Deputy Secretary of Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). The Inquiry will consider the Australian Government's current approach to Access and Equity and its implementation, and will provide prioritised recommendations to the government for improving the responsiveness of services to a culturally and linguistically diverse population. The Panel will deliver its report to Government by 30 June 2012.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION      \*QON 18\***

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Agnes Kumar
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Settlement Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7213
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 19\*

**Question:** Orientation

19. The Department conducts an onshore orientation program “which builds on the measures of the offshore cultural orientation program to deliver competency based outcomes “(submission, p. 15):

- a) How long is the orientation program, who teaches it and what does it entail?
- b) What are some of the competency outcomes?
- c) Is there a similar program in place for non-humanitarian migrants?

**Answer:**

- a) The timing and pacing of orientation sessions is adapted to suit the individual needs of clients, although in most cases clients commence orientation within the first two to six weeks of arrival in Australia. The length of the course can vary, as a client completes the program once they have demonstrated proficiency in each core competency.

The orientation program is delivered by non-government organisations across 24 regions of Australia. These organisations were selected based on their specialist knowledge of the needs of humanitarian entrants and demonstrated ability to provide orientation support, as well as other services to clients.

The program focuses on providing clients with practical skills and knowledge to help them settle into the Australian community and covers the following topics:

- life in Australia;
  - local orientation and settling in;
  - money management;
  - renting;
  - youth issues;
  - education;
  - family life;
  - health;
  - work;
  - cultural issues;
  - Australian law;
  - ongoing settlement and social help; and
  - the humanitarian program and Citizenship.
- b) Orientation program facilitators assess clients’ competencies in the following areas:
    - finding information and accessing services;
    - making an appointment;
    - managing transport;
    - money management;
    - understanding tenancy issues;
    - employment and education; and
    - comprehending Australian law.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION      \*QON 19\***

- c) There are complementary programs within the Department for non-humanitarian migrants, including the Adult Migrant English Program and the Settlement Grants Program. Information on these programs can be found in the Humanitarian Settlement Services Onshore Orientation Program booklet, which is also available online at: <http://www.immi.gov.au/visas/humanitarian/offshore/more-information.htm>

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Tim Ricketts
Title:	First Assistant Secretary Citizenship Settlement & Multicultural Affairs	Branch/Section:	Refugee Support / HSS Contract Management
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7163
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 20\*

**Question:** Whole of Government Coordination

20. There have been repeated calls for a more whole of government, and national approach to embed multiculturalism:

- a) Can you explain the policy infrastructure, and how all federal agencies, and all levels of government in Australia are brought into the policy and implementation framework for multiculturalism?
- b) Local Government is on the front line of service delivery, and works closely at a community level with services and CALD communities. How are the interests of local government reflected in policy and planning advice to Government?

**Answer:**

- a) *The People of Australia – Australia’s Multicultural Policy* is a policy designed as a whole of government document that addresses a range of issues through initiatives involving employment, education and sport.

As part of the policy, all levels of government are reminded to remain responsive to the challenges that arise from our increasingly globalised world. The policy clearly states the acknowledgement that government services and programs must be responsive to the needs of our culturally diverse communities.

This responsiveness is demonstrated through the Government’s commitment to an access and equity framework to ensure that the onus is on government to provide accessible services to Australians from all backgrounds.

In addition, a key initiative of the policy is the implementation of the National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy. This arrangement is primarily between several key agencies, including:

- the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Race Discrimination Commissioner;
- the Department of Immigration and Citizenship;
- the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs;
- the Australian Multicultural Council; and
- the Attorney-General’s Department.

The partnership will also consult extensively with non-government organisations in shaping and implementing its strategy. This arrangement will:

- draw together expertise on anti-racism and multicultural matters to form a critical mass;
- expand the number and influence of networks in the refugee, migrant and broader community sectors;
- enhance the leadership capacities of both government and civic society to be agents of change across Australia; and
- support a commitment to innovation, effective communication and accountability in the development and implementation of social policy in this key area.

DIAC takes responsibility for the ongoing management and promotion of *The People of Australia – Australia’s Multicultural Policy*, including providing regular updates to government on

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 20\*

implementation, and will remain committed in engaging all levels of government on the policy and its implementation.

- b) DIAC currently participates in a range of multilateral fora involving all levels of government. These fora, including state based Settlement Planning Committees, are used to gather information about existing and emerging settlement needs and the availability and effectiveness of services to meet those needs. Settlement network fora vary across jurisdictions; however they generally involve a range of stakeholders including local governments, particularly in areas receiving significant levels of migration.

The Select Council on Immigration and Settlement is currently drafting a national settlement framework which will focus on three main elements, planning, service delivery and outcomes. The Working group for this project includes representation from the Australian Local Government Association.

The Framework will facilitate collaboration between all three levels of government through multilateral fora, including Settlement Planning Committees, to ensure informed decisions can be made to achieve successful settlement outcomes for migrants.

### CLEARANCE BLOCK:

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Warren Pearson
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Multicultural Affairs Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7226
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	



## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 21\*

**Question:** Multiculturalism

21. Some submissions have noted that the 'The People of Australia' policy does not clearly define multicultural terms or concepts. It has been suggested that cosmopolitanism may be more accurate way of describing Australian society:

- a) Can you outline precisely what the Department understands to be the key principles of the Government's current multiculturalism policy?

**Answer:**

- a) *The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy* provides a clear commitment to the Australian government, including the promotion of fairness and respect.

It is a landmark whole-of-government policy that will guide our approach to multicultural affairs in Australia. The policy recognises the diversity of Australian society and reaffirms the Government's unwavering support for a culturally diverse society.

The policy also acknowledges that government services and programs must be responsive to the needs of our culturally diverse communities.

This is demonstrated through the policy's four guiding principles:

- The Australian Government celebrates and values the benefits of cultural diversity for all Australians, within the broader aims of national unity, community harmony and maintenance of our democratic values.
- The Australian Government is committed to a just, inclusive and socially cohesive society where everyone can participate in the opportunities that Australia offers and where government services are responsive to the needs of Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- The Australian Government welcomes the economic, trade and investment benefits which arise from our successful multicultural nation.
- The Australian Government will act to promote understanding and acceptance while responding to expressions of intolerance and discrimination with strength, and where necessary, with the force of the law.

The principles represent the Government's embrace of and responsibility to be responsiveness to the challenges that arise from our increasingly globalised world.

In addition, the implementation of the initiatives listed in the policy is vital in not only acting on the policy, but also promoting it within the Australian community. The policy initiatives include:

- the establishment of the Australian Multicultural Council;
- the implementation of a National Anti-Racism Strategy;
- the strengthening of the access and equity framework;
- the establishment of a Multicultural Arts and Festival Grants program; and
- the establishment of a Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program.

These initiatives are well underway.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION    \*QON 21\***

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Warren Pearson
Title:	First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Multicultural Affairs Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7226
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 22\*

**Question:** Multiculturalism

22. The Committee has received a lot of submissions that are hostile to Muslim immigration. Many fear that multiculturalism equates to cultural relativism that will change Australian laws, especially in relation to the status of women:

- a) Can you put on record the government's view on where multiculturalism fits in the Australian legal system and international human rights framework?

**Answer:**

- a) The Government is committed to ensuring that all Australians embrace our shared values and cultural traditions.

As set out in *The People of Australia—Australia's Multicultural Policy*, Australia's successful multicultural society and our democracy are built around shared rights and responsibilities that are fundamental to living in Australia.

Australians of all cultures and religions are able to express their beliefs and to practise their religion without intimidation and without interference, as long as this complies with Australian law.

For example, the Government is not considering the introduction of any part of Sharia law into the Australian legal system, and has clearly stated that there should be one law for all Australians.

In a recent article featured in *The Australian* on 2 February 2012, The Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, indicated that:

You can't legislate attitude. For this reason, our political leaders need to foster and nurture multiculturalism by providing leadership and evidence of the virtues of multiculturalism, not by passing a law; the federal government should and does ensure access to services for people from a range of cultural backgrounds, without legislation. Each government department and agency already has access and equity obligations to ensure appropriate levels of support.

Each government department and agency has access and equity obligations to ensure appropriate levels of support are provided to culturally and linguistically diverse people. The access and equity framework is currently being strengthened through the current Access and Equity Inquiry that will provide advice and recommendations to the Australian Government in June 2012 on how existing services are provided and how they could be improved.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION      \*QON 22\***

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Garry Fleming	Name:	Warren Pearson
Title:	FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division	Branch/Section:	Multicultural Affairs Branch
Phone:	(02) 6198 7108	Phone:	(02) 6198 7226
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 23\*

**Question:** State Migration Plans

23. State Migration Plans allow individual states and territories to sponsor General Skilled Migration applicants to fill local skill shortages. Some States and Territories have nominated a much larger list of occupations for state-sponsored migration:

- a) Is greater national coordination required to effectively distribute skilled migrants in accordance with state and territory skill shortages?
- b) What is the mechanism for evaluating State Migration Plans?
- c) How is the settlement of humanitarian entrants coordinated in conjunction with State Migration Plans?

**Answer:**

- a) The best way to effectively distribute skilled migrants in accordance with skills shortages is employer demand driven skilled migration – this is a dominant feature of our migration programs. In addition, the operation of State Migration Plans also recognises that skill needs vary greatly across the different regions of Australia. The skills needed in the north west of Western Australia are vastly different to the skills needed in Hobart or Melbourne.

The Plans provide flexibility for state and territory governments to nominate skilled migrants to meet the particular needs of their labour markets. The agreements specify an overall number of State sponsored GSM applicants that each state and territory can nominate and what occupations they can nominate skilled migrants to work in.

While state and territory governments have always had the capacity to nominate applicants for the purposes of the General Skilled Migration Program, the Plans are intended to improve the targeting of this part of the program.

Rather than requiring national coordination, Plans provide each State and Territory government the opportunity to use their knowledge and understanding of their local and regional labour markets to target the migrants most likely to be successful in their jurisdiction.

- b) Plans include processes for annual and midyear reviews, which allow the parties to consider all issues associated with the Plans.

Plans are also informally evaluated through the *Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants* (CSAM), which commenced in September 2009, with the first results published in early 2010.

The main objective of the CSAM is to provide timely information on the labour market outcomes of recent migrants.

The CSAM reports on migrant workforce participation, their levels of unemployment and the quality of their jobs as measured by skill levels and earnings. There is also some comparison of outcomes between different migrant groups and with the Australian population.

- c) State Migration Plans are only concerned with skilled visa applicants.

The Plans do not include any provisions in relation to humanitarian entrants.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION    \*QON 23\***

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Peter Speldewinde	Name:	Jim Dawson
Title:	Acting First Assistant Secretary, Migration and Visa Policy Division	Branch/Section:	SkillSelect and State Liaison
Phone:	(02) 6264 1888	Phone:	(02) 6264 3673
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ <input type="checkbox"/> NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ <input type="checkbox"/> NA	

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION \*QON 24\*

**Question:** Tasmania

24. Tasmania receives a proportionately larger intake of humanitarian entrants than other States. It has high unemployment, and many skilled migrants move to the mainland for work and to be closer to larger migrant communities and access employment:

- a) Is the Department able to regulate the flow of skilled migrants between states and territories in order to address local skill shortages or higher levels of unemployment?
- b) Does the Department consider the social consequences of local migration settlement when approving visa applications?
- c) How does the Department take account of work opportunities, and other economic and social infrastructure when deciding where to settle humanitarian entrants?

**Answer:**

- a) By being employer demand driven, the skilled migration program provides a means of encouraging the distribution of migrants across different regions in Australia, depending on the needs of employers in those regions. The program offers employers the ability to source foreign skilled workers to address their skills needs where they have been unable to locate workers from the Australian labour market.

In this context, it is vitally important that visa programs remain responsive to the needs of employers, since they are best positioned to identify the skills that they need to maintain, grow and expand their businesses. The migration program does this through various mechanisms, including the Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) and the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS). These are demand-driven programs where places are not allocated on a State or Territory basis, but instead depend on employers' need for skilled workers.

Other elements of the migration program provide incentives for skilled migrants to establish themselves in designated regions or in particular states or territories. These include:

State Migration Plans, which provide for additional points for skilled migrants nominated by a state/territory and seeking to enter through a points tested visa category.

The use of skilled provisional visas that allow for family sponsorship of a skilled migrant and provide a pathway to a permanent visa on the basis of working and living in a regional area for a specified period of time.

Additional points are available for skilled migrants who studied at a regional campus in Australia.

Regional Migration Agreements (RMAs) which are an initiative announced by Government that will allow regional areas and the Commonwealth to enter into an agreement to sponsor workers from outside Australia, while maintaining a strong focus on training opportunities for Australians.

Once an individual gains permanent residence, the Department has limited power to regulate their movement within Australia. The RSMS program includes cancellation powers in some circumstances and the provisional visas include conditions that require the visa holder to remain in a regional area.

- b) Consultations on the skilled migration program are undertaken by the department each year to assist the government in determining the size and composition of the annual migration program which is announced as part of the budget. When granting skilled migration visas consideration is given to the criteria contained within the relevant visa. Certain visas require a nomination from a State or Territory government under their State Migration Plan. The State governments consider a range of matters in determining who they will sponsor based on their knowledge of their specific needs and the means of addressing this varies from state to state. There is no criterion within the visas which relates to the social consequences of settlement.

Similarly with humanitarian visas, when granting visa applications consideration is given to the eligibility of the applicant against the visa requirements. The subsequent settlement of humanitarian entrants primarily takes into consideration family and community links within Australia, and the availability of adequate settlement support and services.

- c) The settlement of humanitarian entrants is based first and foremost on reuniting those who have close family or other ties or links in Australia but resettling them in the same location or close to where the links are located.

In the case of Tasmania, as with all states and territories, humanitarian clients are settling where they will be close to family members who can provide vital support and enable families to be reunited after what can sometimes be long periods of separation while they await visas from refugee camps overseas.

There are a small number of humanitarian clients who have no links to Australia and consideration is given to the best possible location to address their particular settlement needs taking into account their refugee background, language needs, ethnicity and skills and education. Often this is a regional location in Australia.

The Department takes a number of factors into account in settling humanitarian entrants in regional locations:

- suitable accommodation
- English language and other education services
- opportunities to get into employment
- health services
- opportunities to connect with and feel safe in a new home through a welcoming community.

Other important factors in regional settlement include town population sizes, sufficient capacity and infrastructure, availability of other settlement and mainstream services and the existence of non-government and other organisations who can assist in supporting new arrivals.

The department collects a range of information in relation to the settlement needs of humanitarian entrants as part of its settlement planning activities. This information informs settlement funding, policies and programs



**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION    \*QON 24\***

**CLEARANCE BLOCK:**

RESPONSIBLE FAS		CONTACT OFFICER	
Name:	Peter Speldewinde	Name:	Jim Dawson
Title:	Acting First Assistant Secretary, Migration and Visa Policy Division	Branch/Section:	SkillSelect and State Liaison
Phone:	(02) 6264 1888	Phone:	(02) 6264 3673
Stats:	Cleared	Y/ <input type="checkbox"/> NA	
Finance:	Cleared	Y/ <input type="checkbox"/> NA	

**Questions on Notice**  
**Proof Transcript 21 March 2012, Canberra, pp.3-4**

**Ms GAMBARO:** Thank you very much for coming along today. I want to ask a few questions relating to the Adult Migrant English Program. Firstly, what was the total amount spent on the program in the 2011-12 year? You are also introducing a new business model. How does the new business model that is being rolled out in July compare to the old business model? In terms of the categories of people that are entitled to the 510 hours, and I know of the humanitarian matter, can you also outline what other visa or category holders are entitled to the English language program? I have got a few other questions but I will let you deal with those.

**Mr Fleming:** A lot of the detail I will have to get back to you on notice.

**Ms GAMBARO:** Sure. I have got more questions.

**Mr Fleming:** Basically, the program is available to all refugee and humanitarian entrants under the humanitarian program. It is also available to some family entrants and family members of skilled entrants. I have ready access to more precise information, which we can get to you quickly. Again, I do not have the precise figure with me, but it is in the order of \$200 million.

**Ms GAMBARO:** So about \$200 million.

**Mr Fleming:** Yes, spent a year.

...

**Ms GAMBARO:** Do you have any figures of how many people do the whole 510 hours? People stop for all sorts of reasons. I know the counsellors will encourage a more flexible pathway, but is there any way that we can encourage people to complete the 510 hours?

**Mr Fleming:** I will get those figures for you on notice.

**Ms GAMBARO:** I know I am asking this in—

**Mr Fleming:** We do have those figures and we will be able to get them back to you very quickly.

...

**Ms GAMBARO:** When you assess people's level of English when they are about to do the AMEP, is IELTS used? What is the assessment tool? Also, there are a number of providers in this space. How do you ensure that the program that is being rolled out across the AMEP providers is consistent and is quality assured?

**Mr Fleming:** I do not have that detail with me but, again, we will be able to get back to you very quickly with that information.

## Attachment B

### Additional Questions on Notice

#### *Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)*

1. The Department indicated that there is capacity to 'top up' with additional hours of English language training, if the person has not reached a reasonable level of language acquisition:
  - a. Is an exit assessment done routinely for each client?
  - b. Please explain precisely how an individual client accesses additional hours, and how this is funded?
  
2. Some submissions have voiced concern over the lack of work-related English language training, and stressed that the context is important to language acquisition:
  - a. How does AMEP take into account the need for work related English?
  - b. Is the AMEP flexible enough to provide English language tuition in workplaces?
  
3. Some witnesses have said that having someone of their own language to explain the English words would help them acquire English more quickly e.g. French is a second or third language for many African refugees who would benefit from explanation of the English via a French speaker:
  - a. What evidence is there that putting students of different levels of education, and language skill and from different language backgrounds all in the same class is the best approach to teaching English as a second language?
  - b. Is there capacity to utilise people of different language backgrounds to teach English, but with the ability to also teach in their native language?
  
4. Witnesses repeatedly said that 510 hours is not sufficient to learn English through the Adult Migrant English Program:
  - a. Has the Department considered extending the number of hours available for participants? For example, would 600 hrs be a good average as many students would not take up the entire quota while others would have increased hours?

### *Research Budget Allocation*

5. Funding allocations specifically for research do not appear to be separately identified in the Budget Papers or annual reports. Could you please identify the budget allocation for 2011 – 12 for the follow categories:
  - a. Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit; and
  - b. The Departments contribution to joint research projects with other agencies;
  - c. Research commissioned from external consultants?

### *Australia Population, Multicultural and Immigration Research Program*

6. The Portfolio Budget Statements (2011-12) states that \$50,000 is allocated yearly to the Australia Population, Multicultural and Immigration Research Program:
  - a) What is the organisational structure of the program?
  - b) How are research priorities for the program decided?
  - c) What types of research are conducted under the program, and how is that research oversighted?

### *Research Consultants*

7. The Department relies on a combination of in house and external consultants to conduct research:
  - a. What proportion of research is commissioned from external consultants compared to in house?
  - b. Does the Department formulate the research problem and the research questions?
  - c. Who determines the research methodology?

### *Non-Government Organisations*

8. Grassroots organisations are closest to their communities, and are a potential agent for research:
  - a. What capacity does the Department have to support community based organisations to conduct or contribute to research that will provide direct real life experience of programs and policies on the ground?
  - b. Some community organisations would also like the opportunity to research their own strategies in CALD communities. Is there any funding support from the Department for more localised research?

### *Effect of Research on Policy*

9. There is general agreement that policy development and reform should be informed by research and evaluation in an iterative process over time:
  - a) How does the Department integrate research into the policy development process?
  - b) What mechanisms and models exist for the evaluation of policy and program implementation, and how does this feed back into policy development?
  - c) Please give at least two concrete examples of research influencing policy?

### *Social Inclusion Agenda*

10. Numerous submitters have raised concern about the lack of cultural and linguistic diversity as indicators of exclusion in the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda:
  - a. What role has the Department played in ensuring that the Social Inclusion Agenda incorporates CALD as an indicator of exclusion?
  - b. What research, if any, has the Department done or proposes to do either in house or through joint or commissioned work into the link between CALD factors and economic and/or social disadvantage in Australia?

### *Disaggregation of Data*

11. Several submitters have told the Committee that existing data collection is not sufficiently disaggregated by visa category, and this limits research into second generation settlement outcomes. On 2 April the Department said it was working on marrying the settlement database with census outcomes:
  - a. Will the Department's work with the ABS overcome the problem of lack of disaggregated data?
  - b. What will be the analytical benefits of the integration of settlement and census data?

### *National Settlement Framework*

12. On 2 April the Department informed the Committee that the Council of Immigration and Settlement will build a national settlement framework:
  - a. Could you please elaborate in more detail how the framework is to be developed, how it will integrate three levels of government and how it will assist in building capacity for a broader research program?

### *Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants*

13. The Department's Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants reports every six months on the experience of Family and Skilled Stream migrants in the Australian workplace:
- a. What have the results revealed? How effective has this survey been in informing Government policy?
  - b. Has the Department considered adopting similar surveys for other visa categories?
  - c. What is the current status of the survey given that no new results have been published online since 2010?
  - d. Does the Survey include the experience of temporary skilled migrants?

### *Global mobility and impact of temporary migration*

14. The Department has indicated an intention to research global mobility trends in response to the changing patterns of migration, especially of skilled workers:
- a. Will research in this area also include the social, economic and civic impact of temporary migration in Australia?

### *Diasporas*

15. The linkages between diaspora communities in Australia and their communities overseas has not been an area of research in Australia:
- a. Given the potential economic and social importance of these links, is this a topic that the Department has identified as worthy of research?
  - b. If so, how and when does the Department propose to conduct such research?

### *Australian diaspora*

16. In 2003, the Department partnered with the Committee on Economic Development in Australian and Professor Graeme Hugo to conduct research into the approximately one million Australians living outside of Australia:<sup>1</sup>
- a. What, if any, policy development was considered or adopted as a result of that research?
  - b. Is there any intention to update that research in the near future?

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<sup>1</sup> Graeme Hugo et al, *Australia's Diaspora: Its Size, Nature and Policy Implications*, CEDA Information Paper No.80, 2003.

### *Settlement and Participation*

17. The Settlement Grants Program is designed to assist eligible migrants who have arrived in Australia in the last five years to become self reliant and participate in Australian society (submission, p. 18):
- a. On average, how many applications are received by the Department in regards to the Settlement Grants Program?
  - b. What is the budget allocation to the Grants Program?

### *Funding of migrant and ethno-specific organisations*

18. The Committee has been told that tendering processes are working against cooperation in the community service sector. Organisations are competing for funds and there is significant shift toward established mainstream organisations at the expense of a more grassroots ethno specific groups:
- a. Can you explain the broad policy approach to the allocation of grants and contracting of services?
  - b. What is the government's position on funding generic migrant resource centres as opposed to ethno specific organisations?
  - c. What mechanisms are in place to ensure that, in fact, the mainstream organisations accurately reflect and incorporate CALD communities into their structures and workforces?

### *Orientation*

19. The Department conducts an onshore orientation program "which builds on the measures of the offshore cultural orientation program to deliver competency based outcomes "(submission, p. 15):
- a. How long is the orientation program, who teaches it and what does it entail?
  - b. What are some of the competency outcomes?
  - c. Is there a similar program in place for non-humanitarian migrants?

### *Whole of Government Coordination*

20. There have been repeated calls for a more whole of government, and national approach to embed multiculturalism:
- a. Can you explain the policy infrastructure, and how all federal agencies, and all levels of government in Australia are brought into the policy and implementation framework for multiculturalism?
  - b. Local Government is on the front line of service delivery, and works closely at a community level with services and CALD communities. How are the interests of local government reflected in policy and planning advice to Government?

## *Multiculturalism*

21. Some submissions have noted that the *'The People of Australia'* policy does not clearly define multicultural terms or concepts. It has been suggested that cosmopolitanism may be more accurate way of describing Australian society:
  - a. Can you outline precisely what the Department understands to be the key principles of the Government's current multiculturalism policy?
  
22. The Committee has received a lot of submissions that are hostile to Muslim immigration. Many fear that multiculturalism equates to cultural relativism that will change Australian laws, especially in relation to the status of women:
  - a. Can you put on record the government's view on where multiculturalism fits in the Australian legal system and international human rights framework?

## *State Migration Plans*

23. State Migration Plans allow individual states and territories to sponsor General Skilled Migration applicants to fill local skill shortages. Some States and Territories have nominated a much larger list of occupations for state-sponsored migration:
  - a. Is greater national coordination required to effectively distribute skilled migrants in accordance with state and territory skill shortages?
  - b. What is the mechanism for evaluating State Migration Plans?
  - c. How is the settlement of humanitarian entrants coordinated in conjunction with State Migration Plans?

## *Tasmania*

24. Tasmania receives a proportionately larger intake of humanitarian entrants than other States. It has high unemployment, and many skilled migrants move to the mainland for work and to be closer to larger migrant communities and access employment:
  - a. Is the Department able to regulate the flow of skilled migrants between states and territories to in order to address local skill shortages or higher levels of unemployment?
  - b. Does the Department consider the social consequences of local migration settlement when approving visa applications?
  - c. How does the Department take account of work opportunities, and other economic and social infrastructure when deciding where to settle humanitarian entrants?