



Answer to question:

PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

MIGRATION, PATHWAY TO NATION BUILDING INQUIRY

QUESTION:

CHAIR: You suggested that in Canada they do have access to not just the government services but also safety net provisions. ... Can you tell us more about Canada?

ANSWER:

In Canada, migrant workers have access to free health care under the health insurance system of the province or territory they are working. However, when they first arrive in Canada, it may take some time before they are covered by the provincial or territorial health insurance system. If there is a period where a worker is not covered by the provincial or territorial health insurance where they are working, the employer must obtain and pay for private health insurance that covers emergency medical care.

If a migrant loses their job through no fault of their own, or if they leave their job because of abuse, they may qualify to receive Employment Insurance benefits. Foreign workers employed in insurable employment are required to pay Employment Insurance (EI) premiums. Provided that all eligibility conditions are met, foreign workers are entitled to receive regular loss of employment benefits as well as other benefits related to sickness, maternity leave, parental leave, compassionate care and family caregiver benefits in the same fashion as Canadian citizens and permanent residents.¹

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/protected-rights.html#h2.7>
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-regular-benefit/eligibility.html>
<https://www.holthelaw.com/blog/can-foreign-workers-get-employment-insurance-benefits-in-canada#:~:text=Provided%20that%20all%20eligibility%20conditions,Canadian%20citizens%20and%20permanent%20resident>

QUESTION:

CHAIR: What sort of power does the Office of the Fairness Commissioner have? The success rate that you referred to is incredible. What is exactly the task?

ANSWER:

It is a provincial body in Ontario that recognises overseas skills qualifications. Canada's Ontario province successfully pioneered the fairness commissioner model in 2006. Under this model, the Fairness Access to Regulated Professions Act 2006 was passed. The legislation grants applicants to regulated professions several rights including the following:

- The right to obtain clear information about the requirements, assessment criteria, processes, and timelines;
- The right to timely decisions;
- The right to an explanation of the reasons driving the results of the assessment;
- The right to request a review or appeal;
- The right to a transparent, objective, impartial and fair assessment of their qualification by adequately trained assessors; and
- The right to access application records.

The Canadian legislation also established the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) which is responsible for dismantling barriers to recognition by streamlining processes, improving information and providing support. The provinces of Manitoba, Quebec and Nova Scotia have also followed suit, and passed similar legislation. The OFC has resulted in increased accessibility, fairness and equal treatment of overseas trained migrants and refugees in regulated professions and trades in Ontario. Ten years following its establishment, the OFC realised a 59% increase in foreign trained licensed professionals. The highest numbers of foreign trained licensed professionals during this period were lawyers, teachers, physiotherapists, pharmacists, dentists, social workers, physicians, engineers, nurses, and engineering technicians.²

² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]. (2017). Making Integration Work: Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications. Available online at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/makingintegration-work-assessment-and-recognition-of-foreign-qualifications_9789264278271-en

QUESTION

CHAIR: I'd be interested, not just for you but also for our own committee's sake, in looking at Toowoomba. It is an example of a targeted settlement for Yazidis, and it's probably a good idea to have a look at how that is going. Thank you for your feedback, but if you could provide details of people on the ground there that we could talk to about the whole process of resettlement and how that's going—to do a bit of a stocktake on it—that would be useful to the committee, especially in relation to this outstanding issue of a place of worship.

ANSWER:

This article outlines the issues we mentioned in Toowoomba:

[Toowoomba Yazidi community seeking place of worship to keep their ancient culture alive](#)

The 2021 Census revealed Toowoomba is now home to the largest group of Yazidi people in Australia. Community spaces and places of worship play a vital role in supporting migrants and refugees during the process of settlement. If immigration in regional areas is being promoted, there needs to be adequate support available for those who settle regionally through settlement support, job placement and training, support networks, orientation and more.

Here are additional research projects showing the success of settlement in Toowoomba:

- [Refugees are integrating just fine in regional Australia](#)
- [We studied Afghan refugees for 3 years to find out what life is like for them in Australia](#)

QUESTION

CHAIR: Thank you. Can you tell us more about Canada?

ANSWER:

In recent years the majority of federal funding for settlement services has been for refugees and humanitarian entrants, however settlement is a process that all people who migrate to Australia go through. Therefore, we recommend the government expand settlement services to ensure all migrants who come to Australia are eligible for at least a basic level of support and broaden the eligibility of services, so that access to settlement services is based on need rather than visa pathway. This is in contrast to other countries competing for international talent. In **Canada for example, settlement services are referred to as ‘newcomer services’** and are available to permanent residents, refugees, and individuals who have been approved for permanent residency on an ongoing basis.³

Of particular note in relation to Canadian settlement services:

- In 2018-19, 55% of Economic Class (skilled migrants) to Canada accessed employment-related services, 38% accessed language training and 42% accessed information/orientation services.
- Canada spends more than \$787M on settlement support for newcomers, remaining at a competitive advantage to Australia for talent and family members
- In Canada, use of social assistance by members of the Family class increases over time, and remains high for refugees.
- The Canadian government argues, “Through high-quality settlement programming, immigrant success in Canada will continue to advance. The successful settlement and integration of newcomers is critical to ensuring public support for immigration.”

New Zealand is currently reviewing its NZ Migrant Settlement Integration Strategy (NZMSIS) and NZ Refugee Resettlement Strategy (NZRRS). The review of the Migrant Strategy includes exploring recommendations to improve settlement support for migrants under the Samoa Quota and Pacific Access Category.

To remain competitive on the global stage, and retain talent, Australia must provide appropriate social supports to help all new migrants to Australia to succeed. Migration is only increasing globally, and the delivery of settlement services will continue to be a significant policy issue in host countries into the future.

³ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC]. (2022). Newcomer services. Available online at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/newcomers.html> ; Welcome BC. (2022). Settlement Services. Available online at: <https://www.welcomebc.ca/StartYour-Life-in-B-C/Settlement-Services> ; Government of Canada. (2019). IRCC Minister Transition Binder 2019: Settlement and Integration. Available online at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/transition-binders/minister-2019/settlement.html>

Additional resources about Canada's newcomer services include:

- [Settlement Outcomes HIGHLIGHTS Report Summary Findings from IRCC's First Settlement Outcomes Report 2021](#)
- [IRCC Minister Transition Binder 2019: Settlement and Integration](#)
- [Welcome BC – Settlement Services](#). An example of how settlement eligibility varies by province, but in British Columbia, the BC Settlement and Integration Services (BCSIS) program allows for a broad range of people to access settlement supports.

Eligible clients include:

- temporary workers with a valid work permit
- international post-secondary students (if services are not offered at their educational institution)
- Provincial Nominees awaiting a decision on their application for permanent residence
- refugee claimants (and some limited supports for refugees)
- naturalized Canadian citizens
- displaced Ukrainians and their immediate family members arriving through the CUAET program

The following are academic papers in relation to Canadian settlement services:

- [A needs-based model for settlement service delivery for newcomers to Canada](#)
- [Newcomer Services in the Greater Toronto Area: an Exploration of the Range and Funding Sources of Settlement Services](#)
- [An Anatomy of Settlement Services in Canada: A Guide](#)

QUESTION

CHAIR: The top. Do you suggest that having something comparable in Australia might help solve some of these problems?

ANSWER

Information about the Office of the Fairness Commissioner of Ontario in Canada:

- <https://www.fairnesscommissioner.ca/en/About/Pages/default.aspx>

Refugee Council recently did this case study on skills recognition amongst dentists:

- [Industry accreditation as a barrier to employment: A case study – Dentistry](#)