



Answer to question:

PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

MIGRATION, PATHWAY TO NATION BUILDING INQUIRY

QUESTION:

ACTING CHAIR: ...Coming from a regional area myself, I am very interested in the issue of retaining migrants to regional areas once they arrive. Can you tell us the key elements of successful programs, whether they are in Australia, Canada, New Zealand or anywhere else, to give us an understanding of what needs to be done in terms of policy?

ANSWER:

Armidale, NSW, is Australia's newest regional refugee settlement location, with around 600 Ezidis settling there from early 2018 onwards. SSI had the contract with the Department of Home Affairs to resettle the Yazidi refugees in Armidale under the Humanitarian Settlement Program.

As outlined in our evidence to the Committee, the University of New England, in partnership with SSI, initiated research to gauge community attitudes during the first four years of refugee settlement. The findings of the survey showed over time increasing positive attitudes within the community regarding the refugee community and increased levels of contact with the refugee community. The increasing positive attitudes were most marked among those parts of the community that started with more negative views around refugee settlement. Please find attached a copy of the report, *'From the resistant to the champions: Community attitudes during the first four years of refugee settlement in Armidale'*. It can also be accessed on SSI's website at:

[https://www.ssi.org.au/images/insights/Community attitudes toward refugee settlement in Armidale Report 2023 1.pdf](https://www.ssi.org.au/images/insights/Community_attitudes_toward_refugee_settlement_in_Armidale_Report_2023_1.pdf)

SSI has also recently published a policy paper called: *"Regional Migration and Settlement: Putting down roots to revitalise regional communities in Australia"*. The paper focuses on policy approaches to improve retention of newcomers in regional areas and to encourage newcomers already living in cities to relocate to regional areas. It is informed by policy approaches in Canada. Canada has had more success in settling and retaining newcomers outside of major cities through initiatives like the Provincial Nominee Scheme and Local Immigration Partnerships and there is an opportunity to draw insights from this experience. In 2017, 34 per cent of skilled migrants landed in destinations outside Canada's three most populous provinces compared to just 10 per cent in 1997.

The Local Immigration Partnerships is an example of a successful locally led, place-based approach where all levels of government, settlement service providers, employers and mainstream services work collaboratively to attract and retain newcomers in regional areas.

Under, the Provincial Nominee Scheme, the provincial level of government plays a key role in setting targets and selecting and supporting skilled migrants.

Please find attached a copy of this paper. It can also be accessed on SSI's website at:
<https://www.ssi.org.au/ssi-insights/public-policy-agenda>