

South Australian Government Submission
to
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia



**Government of
South Australia**

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2. Executive Summary

The South Australian Government welcomes the opportunity to express its support for multiculturalism. In providing this submission, we applaud the benefits of cultural diversity, and we wish to emphasise the important relationship between immigration, multiculturalism and our cultural and economic wealth as a nation.

The first comprehensive settlement study, *Migrant Services and Programs*, delivered in 1978 by Frank Galbally, acknowledged the need for change, by all parties concerned, in its definition of settlement as:

‘the complex process of adjusting to a new environment following migration. It is a long-term process affecting all immigrants... Its end point is the acceptance by and the feeling of belonging to the receiving society. It implies change both in the individual immigrant and the host society’¹.

The South Australian Government acknowledges the benefit, to all Australians, of migrant communities maintaining their language, culture and religion. An emphasis should also be placed on new arrivals respecting the foundations and principles of Australian society. These include:

- parliamentary democracy;
- the right to free speech;
- the rule of law;
- equality, access and equity; and
- religious tolerance and diversity.

This submission notes the importance of language as an essential element of culture, the benefits of multilingualism, and the critical importance English-language proficiency plays in the settlement process. It also notes the effect of racial and religious discrimination on the settlement process, and calls for leadership at a national level to examine this issue in more detail through the National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy.

The content of this submission is drawn from extensive consultation carried out over a significant period of time by Multicultural SA. The timing of this inquiry has provided an opportunity to use the information gleaned from a significant body of work undertaken with the support of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, in 2010 and 2011, regarding settlement issues for humanitarian entrants.

¹ Frank Galbally, *Migrant Services and Programs*, Commonwealth of Australia, 1978, page 29.

The South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission has also contributed, providing a breadth of relevant experience to inform content. The South Australian Government also wishes to thank those individuals and communities who have given their time to speak about their settlement experiences and to inform this discussion in the process.

In conclusion, the South Australian Government recommends the following:

That the Australian Government should:

- embrace and promote the concept of Australia as a harmonious, socially inclusive, multicultural society;
- acknowledge the value of cultural diversity, and the intrinsic links between language and culture, by investing in capacity building in migrant communities and promoting multilingualism; and
- provide an unequivocal response in addressing the damage caused to individuals and the community as a result of all types of discrimination including, racial and religious intolerance.

1. Introduction

The South Australian Government welcomes the Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia initiated by the Joint Standing Committee on Migration. As a Government, we concur with the comments made by the Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, in his speech to the Sydney Institute on 17 February, 2011:

‘Multiculturalism is about inviting every individual member of society to be everything they can be and supporting each new arrival in overcoming whatever obstacles they face as they adjust to a new country and society and allowing them to flourish as individuals. It is a matter of liberalism. A truly robust liberal society is a multicultural society.’

The contribution of migrant communities to the fabric of South Australian society is incalculable. South Australia has been shaped by the rich history of migration that has existed since European settlement began with colonisation in 1836.

When the settlers arrived in South Australia, they encountered a culturally and linguistically diverse community inhabited by more than 50 Aboriginal nations. South Australia’s early years as a colony were characterised by religious pluralism, despite it being founded at a time of great conflict in Britain, between the Church of England and the so-called dissenting denominations.²

For more than 35 years, South Australia has embraced multiculturalism as a policy for responding to the rich cultural diversity of our population. In March 2007, the following motion, moved by Grace Portolesi MP, now the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, received bipartisan support in the South Australian House of Assembly:

‘That this house reaffirms its commitment to multiculturalism as a policy based on mutual respect, understanding and coexistence, a commitment to democracy and the rule of law, the equality of men and women, respect for Australian citizenship, and a shared identity, and which values the cultural diversity and economic opportunity brought to Australia by migrants.’

In 2006, South Australia had a population of 1.5 million people, or 7.5 per cent of the nation’s population of 19.8 million. In 2006, 20.3 per cent of South Australians were born overseas and 12.2 per cent spoke a language other than English at home.³

Immigration has played a critical role in South Australia’s history, and the State continues to attract migrants, with the Government promoting South Australia as a destination of choice for potential citizens. The Government

² *Strengthening Religious Diversity and Harmony in South Australia - Report by the Taskforce on Religious Diversity*, South Australia, 2010.

³ *The People of South Australia: Statistics from the 2006 Census*, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008.

specifically uses the multicultural nature of South Australia as a drawcard, noting the enormous contribution of migrant communities to the State's culture and in linking it to the wider world.⁴

The State has also received a significant proportion of Australia's humanitarian migrants in recent years. In 2009/10, 1,550 such migrants arrived in South Australia, representing 11.4 per cent of the national intake of 13,619.⁵ The circumstances surrounding humanitarian arrivals are, of course, markedly different from those who have chosen to immigrate, and they require a different approach in the provision of settlement services. More detailed discussion of settlement issues can be found under Term of Reference 3 in this submission.

Over time, South Australia has responded positively to its changing demographic. The State has often led the way, implementing innovative approaches and practices aimed at assisting migrants to integrate into the community, while recognising the importance of maintaining their language and culture.

In 1965, South Australia was the first State in Australia to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race. In 1975, the then Premier, Don Dunstan, established the Ethnic Affairs Branch of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, which in the 1980s became the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission (SAMEAC).⁶ In March 1975, South Australia was the first State to have ethnic community radio. South Australia was also one of the first states to establish a government translation service, ensuring that information and services are provided in languages other than English, particularly in critical settings such as courts and hospitals. In 1989, the *South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1980* was amended to provide, for the first time, a definition of multiculturalism. The Act states that:

“multiculturalism” means policies and practices that recognise and respond to the ethnic diversity of the South Australian community and have as their primary objects the creation of conditions under which all groups and members of the community may

- (a) live and work together harmoniously;
- (b) fully and effectively participate in, and employ their skills and talents for the benefit of, the economic social and cultural life of the community; and
- (c) maintain and give expression to their distinctive cultural heritages.’

⁴ Immigration SA, *Multicultural community: Migrant state*, http://www.migration.sa.gov.au/sa/why_move/multicultural_community.jsp, accessed 3 May 2011.

⁵ Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Settlement Report*, <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/settlement-reporting-facility/>, accessed 15 April, 2011.

⁶ Don Dunstan Foundation, *Oral History Project*, Interview with Chris Sumner, 11 June 2008.

South Australia's is one of the only states to have an overarching Strategic Plan. Established in 2004, *South Australia's Strategic Plan (SASP)* consists of six major objectives, with 98 targets, and it is an essential guide to all Government action.

The *SASP* enshrines the importance of multiculturalism and the value of cultural diversity. This is specifically stated in Target 5.8:

'Multiculturalism – increase the percentage of South Australians who accept cultural diversity as a positive influence in the community.'

The target has been measured using a household survey which, in 2009, indicated that 89.4 per cent of those surveyed regarded cultural diversity as a positive influence.⁷

South Australia's Strategic Plan also has a number of other targets that relate to the Terms of Reference of this inquiry, including:

- T1.16 Share of overseas students – double South Australia's share of overseas students by 2014;
- T1.22 Total population – increase South Australia's population to 2 million by 2050, with an interim target of 1.64 million by 2014; and
- T1.24 Overseas migration – increase net overseas migration gain to 8,500 per annum by 2014.⁸

In preparing this submission, the views of a wide range of stakeholders have been considered.

As the agency responsible for advising the State Government on all matters relating to multicultural and ethnic affairs in South Australia, Multicultural SA (MSA) has contributed significantly. MSA has developed a unique insight into South Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, gleaned from continuous consultation over many years regarding a myriad of issues, including migration and settlement. MSA's vision is to foster and support 'an open, inclusive, cohesive and equitable multicultural society, where cultural, linguistic, religious and productive diversity is understood, valued and supported'.⁹

SAMEAC is a statutory authority established under the SAMEAC Act. The primary functions of the commission are:

- to increase awareness and understanding of the ethnic diversity of the South Australian community and the implications of that diversity; and

⁷ *South Australia's Strategic Plan Progress Report 2010*, viewed at <http://www.saplan.org.au/system/pdf/SASP%202010%20Progress%20report.pdf> on 28 March 2011.

⁸ *South Australian Strategic Plan* <http://www.saplan.org.au/objectives-targets>, accessed on 28 March 2011.

⁹ Multicultural SA, *What is Multicultural SA?*, <http://www.multicultural.sa.gov.au/AboutUs.htm>, accessed 4 May 2011.

- to advise the Government and public authorities on, and assist them in, all matters relating to the advancement of multiculturalism and ethnic affairs.

The views of SAMEAC members are canvassed regularly, and they have made important and insightful contributions to this submission.

The South Australian Government places a high priority on providing equitable access to all of its services and programs, ensuring that people of all backgrounds are provided with the opportunity to fully participate in every aspect of society.

For example, in 2009/10, MSA undertook a scoping study¹⁰ of settlement services for humanitarian entrants¹¹ in South Australia. This work was part of a continuous stream of activity aimed at improving the settlement experience for humanitarian entrants, in particular, and has benefited from close collaboration with, and the support of, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). During 2010 and 2011 there has been extensive consultation and discussion with State, Commonwealth and local government stakeholders, government and non-government service providers, and humanitarian-entrant communities.

This first stage of this work culminated in the Coordination of Settlement Services for Humanitarian Entrants Conference: Responding to Settlement Issues and Gaps. The conference, facilitated by MSA, brought together 120 delegates over two days. It also provided contemporary and relevant information in relation to this inquiry.

The South Australian Government strives to provide access to all relevant services and programs to new arrivals, longer-term settlers and subsequent generations of immigrant families in ways that assist in their integration, while valuing their diverse languages and cultural traditions.

It does so with an unflinching commitment to multiculturalism and in the knowledge that a culturally diverse community is a socially and economically rich one. Any attempts to water down the principles underpinning multiculturalism - as enshrined in South Australian legislation - would find no support from either the South Australian Government or the community.

Multiculturalism cannot be accidental. It must be vigorously pursued as an accepted platform upon which both government and society rests; it must be vigilantly protected; and it must be supported through ongoing resourcing. It

¹⁰ Multicultural SA Lebed Report (2010), *Scoping of Settlement Services for Humanitarian Entrants in South Australia*, Attorney-General's Department, March 2010.

¹¹ Definition of refugee and humanitarian entrant according to the *1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and *1967 Protocol*: Refugee is a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'. Humanitarian entrant is inclusive of the refugee category and people provided visas under the Special Humanitarian Program due to substantial discrimination amounting to a gross violation of their human rights in their home country. There are five humanitarian entrant visa sub-classes in Australia (Department of Immigration and Citizenship).

requires all Australians to value diversity while celebrating shared values and commitment to the rule of law and Australia's model of democracy, equality and freedom.

It is the South Australian Government's strongly held position that diversity is of itself insufficient to support a thriving, tolerant and prosperous society. Diversity hopes for the best outcomes. Multiculturalism - proactively embedding the principles of equity, access, participation, harmony and cultural diversity in how we govern and conduct civil society - delivers these outcomes.

3. Multiculturalism, Social Inclusion and Globalisation

Term of Reference 1

The role of multiculturalism in the Federal Government's social inclusion agenda

Australia is not, and has never been, monocultural. At the time of first European settlement, many Aboriginal nations existed across the continent, with an estimated 250¹² separate languages spoken, and a diverse range of spiritual beliefs and customs existing.

Social inclusion in Australia and multiculturalism are inextricably linked. The culturally diverse nature of our history, our current demographics, and the links between migration and our future economic wellbeing as a nation make it so. Cultural diversity does not, of itself, define society as multicultural. Multiculturalism, however, is how we respond positively to this diversity, providing services and programs that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity that is the South Australian community.

The Australian Government policy on multiculturalism 'speaks to fairness and inclusion' and, quite rightly, points out that 'Australia's multicultural composition is at the heart of our national identity and is intrinsic to our history and character'.¹³

Multicultural, immigration and settlement should not be divorced from the broader societal principles of access and equity. These principles mean that all Australians, regardless of cultural and/or linguistic background, should have the right to receive services from both the private and public sectors in the most effective form, including receiving information and being consulted in languages other than English if necessary. While it is important to address issues of disadvantage to achieve a socially inclusive society, multiculturalism requires an inclusive approach for all, irrespective of socio-economic status.

In February 2011, Ms Patricia Faulkner AO, Chair of the Australian Social Inclusion Board, made the following statement:

'Social inclusion means that every Australian has the opportunity to participate fully in society by learning, working and engaging with their community, and having a voice in decisions that affect them.'¹⁴

All Australians, including those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, deserve to feel valued and participate fully in the life of the community. The South Australian Government strongly supports the Australian Government's social inclusion agenda, as it seeks to address disadvantage that, by its very nature,

¹²The Federation of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Languages & Culture (Corporation), *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages*, <http://www.fatsilc.org.au/languages>, accessed 1 April, 2011.

¹³ The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy, Page 2, viewed at http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/pdf_doc/people-of-australia-multicultural-policy-booklet.pdf

¹⁴ Statement from Chair, Social Inclusion Board, Patricia Faulkner, 22 February 2011, at Australian Government, *Australian Social Inclusion Board*, <http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/Partnerships/Board/Pages/default.aspx>, accessed 4 May 2011.

results in exclusion. Migrants to this country come seeking the same outcomes as all Australian residents. Personal security, educational opportunities, health services, secure employment and affordable housing are all indicators of successful settlement that also coincide with indicators of social inclusion.

The South Australian Government has, itself, a significant social inclusion initiative. As a body independent of the State Government, the Social Inclusion Board's focus is on delivering practical advice on innovative ways to address some of the most difficult social problems we face. In doing so, it aims to provide opportunities for the most vulnerable members of society to participate fully in the social and economic life of the community, and to reach their human potential.¹⁵

Inclusion, discrimination and wellbeing

The South Australian Government applauds the development of a National Anti-Racism Partnership, as announced on 17 February, 2011, by the Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. Eliminating all forms of racial discrimination is critical to social inclusion.

The South Australian Department of Health (SA Health) has observed the need for a better understanding of the role of discrimination and its impact on the health and wellbeing of CALD communities, the manifestation of health inequalities, and the implications for social inclusion – particularly for new and emerging communities. This is an emerging area of study in public health epidemiology, and it might lead to an explanation of why some migrants are often healthy on migration but eventually have poorer health outcomes, compared with the general population, well after arrival.

The South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) has highlighted the importance of providing new migrants with information regarding their rights and potential avenues for redress. Information provision should form an integral part of any anti-racism strategy. Please note the collaborative work being undertaken in delivery of the New Workers Program, as described under Term of Reference (TOR) 3 in this submission. The EOC has also noted the reluctance of migrants, both humanitarian and skilled entrants, to lodge complaints for fear of jeopardising their immigration status, particularly the granting of permanent residence.

SA Health regards equitable access to South Australian government health services as an essential policy foundation and as pivotal to social inclusion. It has identified the following as the most critical elements in supporting equitable access and inclusive practice:

- access to interpreting services; and

¹⁵ Social Inclusion Initiative viewed at <http://www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au/page.php?id=2>

- access to special programs and services where needed, particularly health promotion and peer-education programs.

Access to interpreting services

As is the case for the general community, the majority of primary health care is delivered to the CALD population by general practitioners (GPs). Access to interpreting services is crucial to ensure quality and equitable health care for all people with poor or no English proficiency, and especially new migrants.

It is acknowledged that there have been improvements in uptake of the Australian Government's Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS) fee-free services for doctors in recent years. For example, there was a 25 per cent increase in 2009/10 and a 20 per cent increase in the previous financial year.

SA Health has identified two major impediments to interpreter usage. First, there is a lack of awareness among GPs of the value of using an interpreter and that each consultation takes more time when doing so. In fact, it usually requires nearly double the time of an average consultation. Incentives are needed in medical practice to encourage greater use of interpreters. Some incentives for consideration include additional remuneration for the time required for interpreter use and better mechanisms for ensuring GPs enrol in the TIS Doctors' Priority Line.

An increase in the uptake of interpreters might also require the TIS to market its services more vigorously to GPs and other eligible service providers, and work more closely with state and territory departments of health and other health agencies to identify measures for promoting the use of interpreters by health professionals.

The second issue regarding TIS services concerns the cost of access. In 2008/09, TIS services were extended to include pharmacies, and this is to be supported and commended. It is noted, however, that a number of health professionals, other than general and specialist medical practitioners, can provide services that are remunerated under the Medical Benefits Scheme but are not able to access fee-free TIS services for their clients. It is suggested that this situation should be remedied to ensure all Australian residents can access all Medicare services effectively.

Access to special programs and services

SA Health believes that health promotion and peer-education programs are critically important social-inclusion programs, as they provide deeper development of community knowledge and capacity. Peer-education programs develop community leaders as peer educators, provide peer support to change norms and knowledge, provide supporting programs and initiatives to establish peer networks and ideas, and can be applied across a wide range of issues.

In summary, multiculturalism is an essential element to social inclusion. If we do not recognise its significance, we will fail to develop a truly socially inclusive society, embedding generational disadvantage and damaging social cohesion.

In conclusion, while it should not be assumed that all those entering Australia with a view to settlement are disadvantaged, it is clear that humanitarian entrants often experience difficulty for a vast array of reasons and, as a result, are vulnerable to social exclusion. A more comprehensive discussion of this topic can be found under TOR 3 of this submission.

Term of Reference 2

The contribution of diaspora communities to Australia's relationships with Europe, the United Kingdom, the Middle East and the immediate Asia-Pacific region

Migration and globalisation

In an economic context, globalisation has resulted in the removal and reduction of many national barriers perceived to limit the flow of goods, capital, services and labour.

The Hawke and Keating governments embraced globalisation, undertaking major economic reform, which included reducing tariff barriers and deregulating Australian foreign exchange and finance systems. This prepared Australia for future global economic challenges, and was accompanied by the rise of nations such as China and India in the past decade. The global nature of finance and trade has had significant impacts on our labour market and economy. In short, Australia's economy is linked intimately to the global economy, and is influenced by its ebb and flow as never before. The recent global financial crisis is a stark reminder of this fact.

Our national and state-level success or failure with multiculturalism (as with social inclusion) critically affects our standing in the international community, impacting on diplomatic efforts, trade and investment, and ultimately visitor and immigration numbers. Recent incidents involving the safety of international students clearly demonstrate this. The immediacy of both traditional and social media quickly compound both positive and negative conceptions of Australia.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 22.2 per cent of Australians were born overseas, originating from 240 countries, with 15.8 per cent speaking languages other than English at home¹⁶. South Australians were born in more than 200 countries other than Australia.

The contribution of diaspora communities to our relationships with other nations is rarely quantified and possibly unquantifiable. This said, the culturally diverse nature of Australia has undoubtedly provided a unique

¹⁶ Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *The People of Australia*, Statistics from the 2006 Census, 2008.

opportunity to exploit globalisation through cultural and economic (including trade and investment) links. Both immigration and trades services such as onshore education and tourism contribute to this opportunity. Important links have been created in areas including education, trade, tourism, science, agriculture and the arts. There is no doubt that Australia's cultural diversity is an advantage in terms of fostering relationships with Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the United Kingdom. Each wave of migration provides another opportunity to extend these links and strengthen the bonds that already exist.

An example of this can be found in the South Australian agrifood and wine industries, which are major contributors to regional, state and national economies. Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA) submits that these enterprises have benefited from Australia's history of immigration and the culturally diverse nature of its workforce.

Examples of global links that provide local advantage in these industries include:

- the development of export opportunities using local knowledge of overseas markets;
- the introduction of produce and practices that advanced existing industries and created new ones. For example, Italian, Greek and Bulgarian immigrants created the horticulture industry around Virginia, South Australia, in the 1940s and 1950s;
- sustainable workforce development strategies that are critical to the long-term health of the agrifood and wine industries in South Australia. The engagement and support of skilled migrants is an important element for providing and retaining sufficient labour resources. To this end, the migrant workforce currently provides links to a broad network of skilled people in their country of origin; and
- the smallgoods industry created by migrants and, as a consequence, sound industry base knowledge and skills. People of European origin currently working in the smallgoods industry are invaluable in sourcing machinery, which in the main is manufactured in Europe.

The South Australian Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) has also confirmed that the business-migrant community, engaged in the export of South Australian products, provides a vital link to overseas networks, penetrating markets where entry would prove extremely difficult otherwise. International chambers of commerce based in South Australia play an important role in facilitating market access and bilateral trade, particularly in overseas niche markets where South Australia is not locally represented. In 2009/10 alone, the Council for International Trade and Commerce SA (CITCSA), the peak body for 39 international chambers of commerce and

business councils located in South Australia, reported on trade missions to China, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Latvia, India, Vietnam and Italy.¹⁷

South Australia has also used its strong cultural links with countries such as Italy to foster research and development opportunities. This has provided South Australian universities with access to European research funds that might not have been accessible otherwise.

Australia's cultural diversity has also been enriched by the participation of international students in our education sector. The first significant foray by the Australian Government into attracting overseas students began with the Colombo Plan, which provided entry to 20,000 students from the Asia Pacific between 1950 and the early 1980s. Research indicates that Colombo Plan students also provided an incentive for privately funded students from the region to attend tertiary institutions in Australia by reporting on the effectiveness and relatively low cost of an Australian education. The Colombo Plan also provided opportunities to strengthen diplomatic ties, enhancing the level of engagement by creating a point of focus.¹⁸

In 2010, more than 34,000 international students were resident in South Australia. In a report released by Access Economics in 2009, it was estimated that each international student (including friends and family visitors) contributed an average of \$28,921 in value to the Australian economy.¹⁹ International students, like other diaspora communities, maintain strong links to their country of origin, contributing to networks that facilitate international relationships in a variety of settings. It should be noted that the South Australian Government continues to welcome international students and is fully supportive of the community-engagement strategy outlined by the Council of Australian Governments' International Students Strategy for Australia, in place for 2010-2014. The 2010 StudyAdelaide Brand Health Report indicated that international students perceived that, of all Australian capital cities, Adelaide was seen as the best place to study. The top three reasons for favouring Adelaide, listed by international students were the cost of living, the quality of education and safety.²⁰

Another important contribution to Australia's relationship with other nations lies in the links available through humanitarian entrants. Humanitarian entrants are often forced to leave behind immediate and extended families when fleeing their country of origin. While distance and time may damage those ties, most make every effort to remain connected in some way, providing a bridge between Australia and their former homeland. The Refugee Council of Australia has noted, for example, the development of

¹⁷ Council for International Commerce and Trade, *Chairman's Report 2009/10*, http://www.citcsa.org.au/media/docs/chairmans_annual_report_09_10.pdf, viewed 5 April 2011.

¹⁸ Australian National University Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Colombo Plan, *Quarterly Bulletin*, Volume 4, Number 4, December 2003, viewed at <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/qb/articleFile.php?searchterm=4-4-2>, accessed 5 April 2011.

¹⁹ Access Economics, *The Australian education sector and the economic contribution of international students*, , 2009, viewed at <http://globalhighered.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/theaustralianeducationsectorandtheeconomiccontributionofinternationalstudents-2461.pdf>, accessed 5 April 2011.

²⁰ Press release, Hon Jack Snelling MP, SA Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education, 12 March, 2011.

effective partnerships and exchanges between African nations and Australia facilitated by humanitarian entrants of African descent²¹.

²¹ Refugee Council of Australia, *Annual Report 2009/10*, http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/resources/2009-10_Annual_Report.pdf, viewed 28 March, 2011.

4. Settlement and Participation

Term of Reference 3

Innovative ideas for settlement programs for new migrants, including refugees that support their full participation and integration into the broader Australian society

In addressing the issue of settlement and participation, distinctions must be made regarding the experiences and needs of those who have planned migration and those who have arrived as humanitarian entrants. Both groups will experience varying degrees of displacement. They might have to learn a new language, navigate an unfamiliar culture, understand a new legal system, develop new relationships and find paid employment.

For the purposes of this submission, and based on the rich vein of contemporary information provided by the work of MSA in 2010 and 2011, the focus of concern regarding settlement and participation issues is with humanitarian entrants.

Humanitarian entrants

While the process of settlement might be difficult, it can be argued it is particularly so for humanitarian entrants.

The South Australian Department for Families and Communities (DFC) plays a significant role in helping humanitarian arrivals to settle in South Australia. Three divisions of DFC – Housing SA, Community Connect and Families SA – work with humanitarian entrants to assist their integration into mainstream Australian life.

In practice, the operative paradigm for settlement places policymakers and service providers at centre stage. Plans are made with primary reference to the regulatory framework of migration and settlement, the policies (and so, the funds) of governments, and the delivery capabilities of service providers. This overlooks the contributions that new arrivals make to their own settlement. Such an approach can also take for granted the commitment, energy and hard work required on behalf of the settler to integrate fully into Australian society.

DFC has observed, in contrast, that settlement is achieved primarily by the settlers themselves through their day-by-day efforts at learning how systems work in Australia, becoming fluent in English, developing the skills needed for living successfully here and establishing networks of support.

There is much to be done in the area of research into settlement patterns, what contributes to successful settlement and how immigrants themselves manage the process of integrating into the host society without losing their own identity. Current research tends to focus on very specific aspects of the settlement experience, providing detailed information on limited parts of the

picture without providing an adequate overview of the patterns at work. Much of the focus is on the negative or deficiency aspects, such as needs, barriers and problems, rather than on the strengths and capabilities of new arrivals. Addressing shortcomings too easily becomes central to planning when it should fulfil an ancillary, supporting role.

As the South Australian government department responsible for delivering significant areas of service to humanitarian entrants, DFC suggests that the following three elements are essential to successful settlement and engagement:

- developing a policy and settlement method which recognises that new arrivals are at the centre of the settlement process and planning needs should revolve around their strengths and successes;
- developing the capacity, structures and resources of new communities as a priority among settlement strategies; and
- telling the settlement stories of recently arrived humanitarian entrant communities from their perspectives, highlighting their achievements.

The importance of a collaborative response

In 2009/10, MSA undertook a scoping study²² of settlement services for humanitarian entrants in South Australia. It revealed the existence of 21 sources of short- and medium-term funding,²³ and 87 providers delivering a wide range of services and programs in the areas of orientation, health, welfare, education, employment, housing, youth, community integration and recreation. Despite the wide range of services available from government and non-government sources, reports on the settlement experiences of refugees and others who have entered Australia under humanitarian considerations tell us that people are experiencing settlement-related issues not only in the early stages of settlement, but also in later years.

Report findings about issues that have an impact on the settlement experiences of humanitarian entrants across Australia consistently suggest a significant disparity between pre-arrival expectations and reality. This is especially the case in the initial few months. Humanitarian entrants arrive with great hope for a bright future and do not seem prepared for the difficulties that arise in relation to employment, language, culture and family.

The literature shows that young people are particularly vulnerable, with additional challenges arising from the expectations of dual cultures, consumerism, the legal system, education, family relationships and peer acceptance.

²² Multicultural SA, *Scoping of Settlement Services for Humanitarian Entrants in South Australia*, Attorney-General's Department, March 2010.

²³ On average, six months to two years.

This information prompted MSA to establish the Coordination of Settlement Services for Humanitarian Entrants in SA initiative in April 2010, an initiative hailed as an Australian first for bringing together all the players on humanitarian settlement and seeking action-based outcomes to which the players committed themselves. The purpose of the initiative is to implement a process that will ensure humanitarian entrants in South Australia have the best possible opportunities to settle, integrate, participate, contribute and enjoy the benefits of South Australia's multicultural society.

The initiative led to various activities during 2010, including extensive consultation with humanitarian-entrant communities, the exchange of knowledge and information between service providers (government and non-government), and the exploration of possible solutions to address the gaps in settlement-service provision.

This was followed by an action-planning period in which government and non-government stakeholders considered, on an individual or collaborative basis, innovative approaches to address the issues raised in community consultations.

The solutions suggested by communities had three themes:

- build the capacity of communities so that they can move from dependency to self-sufficiency;
- keep family relationships intact by supporting youth and families; and
- improve language proficiency.

The communities' feedback also revealed that humanitarian entrants in South Australia appreciated the efforts of government and non-government service providers.

Government and non-government organisation (NGO) stakeholders had the opportunity to provide feedback about their experiences, in the planning, funding and delivery of settlement services, so that a more comprehensive picture of settlement issues could be analysed.

The experiences of government agencies suggested that there was poor communication across the system. The lack of information across the sector was a significant barrier. The government agencies' view was that efficiency would be further enhanced with an information centre, and a comprehensive client-focused, early-intervention model of work with a higher level of case management for new arrivals.

The view of NGOs was that the short-term nature of the current grant system impacted on their ability to provide services, retain staff and strategically plan for the future. Many NGOs expressed the view that there is an unhealthy 'ownership' approach by some service providers towards new and emerging communities, and this has an impact on access to services. They stated that

this creates confusion and tension across the settlement-services system, discouraging collaboration and ultimately impeding service quality.

The coordination initiative led to an Action-Planning Conference, held in Adelaide on 16 and 17 March, 2011. The conference was attended by 120 delegates, representing 19 government departments (four Commonwealth, seven state and eight local), one statutory authority, 19 NGOs and 10 humanitarian-entrant communities.

The action plans developed are currently under consideration, and are clustered around the following themes (based on identified gaps and deficits in the settlement process for humanitarian entrants):

- information;
- language;
- employment and training;
- housing;
- education;
- health;
- youth and family; and
- isolation.

The Action-Planning Conference heard a number of innovative ideas designed to assist humanitarian entrants in the settlement process. They included:

- the provision of 'seed funding' to set up a program whereby newly arriving humanitarian entrants volunteer some time in their first six months by working with groups like Habitat for Humanity to build low-cost community housing. This would produce several beneficial outcomes, including providing a practical context in which to practice English, work experience and enhanced self-esteem;
- the development of a youth mentoring program, using the skills of mentors from the general community as well as those from a refugee background who have been in Australia for a reasonable length of time. Mentors would be trained in cultural awareness and mentoring techniques. They would be partnered with clients to assist them with not only developing but providing constant and prolonged support with achieving their career goals; and
- the creation of a 'one-stop shop' from which all humanitarian entrants could access information throughout their settlement journey. The administration should be undertaken by a team representing groups that are not current providers of settlement services, with funding coming from a neutral source. Currently the settlement journey is divided into categories based on DIAC definitions. The 'one-stop shop' would be open to humanitarian entrants for up to 10 years after arrival, as settlement can take up to one generation to achieve.

Health outcomes

The consultations that took place prior to the Action-Planning Conference referred to the previously mentioned inadequate knowledge and awareness of health issues as a significant issue for new humanitarian entrants.

A longitudinal survey on migrant health, commissioned by the then Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) in the 1990s, showed that humanitarian-migrant health continued to be very poor compared with all immigration categories for a significant time after arrival and post settlement.²⁴ This study was undertaken some time ago, and in the intervening time the source countries for humanitarian entrants have changed considerably.

Several NGOs stated that mental-health services, especially for young people, were insufficiently resourced in the early-settlement period, creating considerable pressure on already stretched longer-term settlement services.

SA Health has observed that specific services are essential for supporting improvements in refugee health and to develop the foundations of health literacy during initial settlement. This observation is based on the profile of humanitarian entrants including asylum seekers, which indicates:

- the presence of serious diseases related to the geographical and socio-economic environment of their country of origin;
- the subsequent health and environmental conditions in refugee camps in some cases;
- a history of torture and/or trauma; and
- possible low levels of education and literacy.

Across Australia, refugee-health services and Integrated Humanitarian Services Strategy (IHSS) providers collaborate to ensure the efficient referral of refugee and humanitarian migrants to refugee-health service providers.

Refugee and humanitarian-entrant health services form important primary and secondary health services for these communities, holding specialist expertise, knowledge and skills. It is important that these services are well integrated into service models and contracts for IHSS service delivery to ensure the appropriate provision of health assessments and services for humanitarian entrants. Refugee health services also play a vital role in supporting and enhancing the capacity of the wider health system by providing accredited training to GPs and other health professionals. SA Health has suggested that

²⁴ Sue Richardson, *et al*, *The Changing Settlement Experience of New Migrants: Interwave Comparison for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 of the LSIA*, Report to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University, June 2004, pp20-21, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/pdf/settlementv2.pdf>.

further funding should be made available to support and expand accredited GP training and education programs.

Primary healthcare services for refugees provide programs soon after arrival, and within the first 12 months of settlement, that aim to increase knowledge about the health system and about maintaining health. SA Health has suggested that health-promotion programs are needed beyond this time to further develop community health literacy and personal health skills. This includes the ability to negotiate healthcare needs with health professionals. Programs should be developed in partnership with community organisations and be tailored to the health needs of different population groups, such as families, women, men and young people.

SA Health has also noted the need for a new and continuing study in line with DIMA's 2004 study that analyses health outcomes for all classes of migrants compared with that of the Australian population. Such a study should take into account other variables, such as employment, type of employment, education status pre-migration, and current use of qualifications.

The needs of young humanitarian entrants

Settlement in a new homeland is a generational process. It is extremely important that the needs of young people are considered in the provision of settlement assistance and services.

People aged less than 30 years on arrival now comprise the significant majority, and a growing proportion of new arrivals to Australia under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program.²⁵ Young people have needs that are likely to differ from those of their parents, due to their age. Adults bring with them an array of life experiences. In contrast, young people are entering a transitional stage of their lives, working toward adulthood. Many might have spent only a short time in their country of birth or, as is the case for a significant number, spent the majority of their childhood in a refugee camp. For young people who arrive as refugees, the developmental challenges of adolescence can be compounded by traumatic experiences as a refugee, such as cultural displacement, isolation and practical issues surrounding settlement.

The consultations that took place prior to the Action-Planning Conference identified the breakdown of families, because of cultural generational circumstances, as a significant issue facing humanitarian entrants. NGOs made note of the complex needs of young people, particularly in the areas of education, language, housing and family cohesion. Many supported the view that parent and community engagement were critical to supporting young people, provided that it did not undermine the work of service providers who seek to empower youth and enable them to be self-sufficient and independent within and outside their family environments.

²⁵ Refugee Council of Australia, *Amplifying the voice of young refugees*, abridged report, 2009.

Multicultural Youth South Australia (MYSA) was funded by the Scanlon Foundation, under the auspices of the Australian Multicultural Foundation, to deliver Under the Radar, a project that started in 2007 and ended in 2010. The purpose of the project was to investigate, identify and respond to the key issues and needs that had an impact on the lives of at-risk young people from refugee backgrounds. The project was supported by a reference group comprising representatives of South Australia Police, DIAC, Families SA (Youth Justice Team), DFC, the African Communities' Council and the Multicultural Communities Council. MYSA's research has found that many refugee youth at risk lack supportive adults and positive role models in their lives²⁶.

A recent South Australian project worthy of note is Imagine the Future, which was funded through the South Australian Attorney-General's Department Proceeds of Crime fund. The project is a partnership between Baptist Care (SA) and Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Services (STTARS). It commenced in January 2010 and is a multi-pronged, early intervention project aimed at crime prevention. The project targets African humanitarian entrants aged 10 to 15. It uses one-on-one case management, working with schools and families, mentor support and adventure therapy.

The aim of the program is to work with young people and their families to:

- strengthen relationships among families, schools and police;
- promote health and wellbeing;
- improve life skills and understanding of Australian law; and
- set goals for the future.

The two-year project involves a quarterly intake of 10 participants considered at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity. While receiving intensive case management, participants also undertake an eight-week adventure therapy program which includes six day activities (for example, rock climbing and caving), an overnight camp, and a four-day expedition designed to facilitate positive relationships with case workers and police.

The program develops key skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork and conflict resolution. Depending on the level of need, participants receive a decreasing intensity of case management and are transitioned to a mentor-support model. Families SA (a division of DFC), South Australia Police, STTARS and schools are closely involved in the program, ensuring both maximum engagement and outcomes for participants.

Interim evaluations of the program are very positive. Teachers have reported that they find it to be very positive for students and believe their participation

²⁶ Multicultural Youth SA Best Practice Paper, Under the Radar Project, 2010.

has benefitted the community in some way. Teachers have also noticed that their students displayed an increase in self-confidence and improved resilience. They believed that students showed more respect for others and tried harder at school as a result of the program.

Findings from participants show that, upon completion of the program, they feel more supported by their community, and have goals for the future and an understanding that their own efforts and actions will determine their future.

Participant evaluations indicated increased respect for others, pride in who they are and what they have achieved, determination to work hard at solving their problems, and an increase in outdoor recreation skills and experiences.

Education

South Australia has developed a unique educational model designed to support settlement, participation and integration of new migrants, including refugees, into broader Australian society.

The South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) demonstrates an innovative approach. In collaboration with MSA, DECS supports the education, integration and participation of new migrants, including refugees.

An integrated action plan has been developed by DECS, providing a holistic approach to the provision of education and services to the early-childhood sector and schools. An integral part of the plan is a partnership with families to ensure that they are aware of the options available for their children to be successful in education and to develop the skills required to be active citizens.

The following programs are provided by DECS:

- *New Arrivals Program*
The New Arrivals Program, or NAP, is an intensive English-language and settlement program for students newly arrived in Australia. Students of refugee and migrant background enrol in a NAP centre before starting their mainstream schooling. The NAPs are situated in one country and 15 metropolitan schools, including the Adelaide Secondary School of English at Croydon and Thebarton Senior College at Torrensville.
- *English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs in Schools*
These programs provide funding to support intervention programs for ESL students who attend mainstream school.
- *Bilingual School Services Officers (BSSOs)*
BSSOs support students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to access the curriculum and work collaboratively with teachers and leaders in schools to provide language support for students.

- *Community Liaison Officers (CLOs)*
CLOs work in partnership with schools and communities to support parents' understanding of South Australia's education system, and to liaise with parents, schools and students to support engagement and participation, ensuring that effective pathways are identified for students to be successful.
- *Regional ESL Consultants in R-12*
These consultants provide ongoing support to schools to implement effective whole-school approaches that improve outcomes for ESL learners and indigenous students through the general support program.

In 2008, the Federal Government recognised the higher educational need of students from refugee backgrounds, with new enrolments attracting double the rate for non-refugee new arrivals. In July 2008, the Chief Executive of DECS agreed that this funding would be used to support humanitarian entrants. Known as Targeted Refugee Initiatives Funding (TRIF), it has been used in the following ways:

- additional allocation to schools to develop site-based initiatives for the engagement and wellbeing of refugee-background students;
- Additional NAP counselling time – allocation for NAP counsellor-based on refugee numbers;
- NAP transport – available to under 10s and those with complex travel to a NAP centre, to support safety of travel, maximise attendance and maximise the effectiveness of NAP as an early intervention program;
- Schools Interpreting and Translating Service (SASITS) – additional funds for interpreting and translating to reflect the increased diversity of the migrant and refugee intake across all DECS schools;
- educational psychologist – the increased need for psychological assessments of new arrivals in schools is directly related to enrolment levels and the high-support needs of students from refugee backgrounds;
- New Arrivals Teaching and Learning Support – a dedicated position to support NAP centre leaders and teachers to deliver a quality NAP program, including improvements to the transport service; and
- a data analyst position to ensure accurate data for ESL and NAP allocations, to strengthen the focus on student improvement and to track NAP/ESL students through their transitions across schools.

The NAP TRIF has been evaluated against the following objectives to:

- increase school capacity to address student-behaviour issues;
- increase parent, caregiver and refugee-community engagement with schools;
- improve engagement with learning for students with additional needs;
- improve student access and inclusion in the school and wider community;
- strengthen the effectiveness of transition programs; and
- increase access to relevant professional learning that enhances staff capacity in supporting new arrivals and refugee students.

DECS has reported that initial findings regarding the effectiveness of the NAP TRIF support improvement in all the key objectives.

DECS also provides support to four-year-old CALD and Aboriginal children, and their families, through the Preschool Bilingual Program. The program is State Government funded, and supports preschool services in increasing access and participation of CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who have limited or no English-speaking skills. The program also supports preschools in the development of a curriculum that fosters the child's home language and identity, literacy development, numeracy, and a sense of belonging, as described in the national Early Years Learning Framework. The focus is on maintaining the child's home language while supporting their development of English-language use.

The program provides professional development for preschool staff, specialist support for children and families who have experienced trauma, and interpreting and translating services for staff and families needing negotiated education plans.

Evidence shows that parents' educational achievements can influence their children's outcomes. Therefore, opportunities for parents to undergo adult education through children's centres have been created. These include:

- a multicultural community women's class (Parks Satellite School) established three years ago in partnership with the Parks Children's Centre, Thebarton Senior College, and the Australian Southeast Asian Women's Association. Thebarton College provides a teacher to support women, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, to complete their TAFE Certificate I in Community Services and undertake pathways for further education and employment. Women also receive support with day-to-day challenges, such as accessing Centrelink, immigration matters and referrals to health services. On-site crèche or childcare facilities and transport are provided. In 2011, the class is still underway, with 22 women from diverse backgrounds

attending. The class was a finalist in the 2010 Governor's Multicultural Awards;

- parental participation at the Cafe Enfield Children's Centre in Adult Learners' Week-funded programs. These include reading food labels (health literacy), money management (financial literacy), resume writing (employment literacy) and living stories (cultural literacy). Parents can also access learner-driving permit classes for families at a discounted rate. The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) for young parents is offered in partnership with Enfield High School. TAFE Certificate II Community Services (Child Care) is offered in partnership with the TAFE SA Croydon Campus; and
- linking parents, through the Salisbury and Cowandilla Children's Centre, in partnership with TAFE, with 'English for living in Australia' courses.

Employment

Humanitarian-entrant communities consulted by MSA in 2010 emphasised the importance of stable employment in a successful settlement process. Unemployment and the consequential low income limit access to integration, and this leads to isolation. They pointed out the importance of English-language skills in training, education and employment, and the difficulty of understanding the complex requirements of agencies such as Centrelink without those skills.

The communities made a number of practical suggestions to improve employment outcomes for humanitarian entrants:

- Job service agencies need to engage culturally competent staff and fashion specialist support based on the needs of humanitarian entrants.
- Consideration could be given to providing specialist job service agencies directed at refugee arrivals.
- Job service agencies should be assessed for quality performance on a regular basis by consulting with clients.
- English-language training should be provided on an ongoing basis, beyond the initial stages of settlement, as this is critical to gaining employment.
- A more flexible approach to accessing employment and training should be introduced, including for those in school.
- Traineeships, apprenticeships and work-experience places should be provided on arrival in order to eliminate what has been described as

the 'no experience, no job' cycle. This would speed up integration and enhance English-language skills.

- Employment and placement agreements with employers should be developed to engage humanitarian entrants.
- A thorough employability assessment should be provided on arrival.
- Skills-recognition and acknowledgement of experience obtained in particular industries should occur as soon as possible.
- Enterprise and small-business support should be provided to encourage humanitarian entrants to start small businesses in their areas of expertise.

Housing

The consultations undertaken in 2010 by MSA as part of the settlement coordination initiative indicated that homelessness due to housing instability is associated with inadequate long-term housing. It is further exacerbated by language difficulties, unemployment and poor access to information.

Compared with language and employment, housing was seen as being more attainable, particularly with the support provided on arrival. Language and employment, however, both required far more support than was currently available. Those consulted indicated that most housing-related difficulties seemed to develop after an initial support period.

It is worth noting that innovative responses to housing stress experienced by refugees in South Australia have been developed. The work of Anglicare SA is a case in point. A large and diverse community service organisation, it offers more than 100 service programs from in excess of 40 sites across Adelaide. Anglicare SA is a significant provider of social housing in South Australia, and it is currently contracted by DIAC to provide refugee accommodation services, under the IHSS program, for all newly arrived refugees in South Australia. Anglicare SA recognises the barriers and difficulties faced by refugees upon arrival and when trying to obtain affordable housing. It has developed several practical initiatives worthy of note:

- *Welcome Boxes*
New arrivals are provided with a box of personal items, along with the standard household goods package. These items are designed to add a welcoming personal touch in the properties when the families first arrive. For adults, the items include framed pictures (non-denominational), vases, crockery and tablecloths. For children, there are books and toys contained in a backpack.
- *Visual Key Cards*
In order to address initial language barriers, Anglicare SA has developed a set of laminated keycards to aid the purchase of products.

They feature, on one side, a picture of a certain product, and on the reverse side a picture indicating what the product is used for. This simple aid has been a great success, and Anglicare plans to expand the number of products featured.

- *Housing Workshops at Thebarton Senior College*
Anglicare's Private-Rental Referrals Officer provides targeted housing information to refugee students at Thebarton Senior College. In partnership with the college, Anglicare has developed an educational housing workshop that is designed to assist students and their families to better understand and navigate the private rental market.
- *Street Directories and Private Rental Training*
As a result of a donation from the Royal Automobile Association, Anglicare has secured a quantity of street directories to give to refugee families. These are provided as part of hands-on training designed to help them find and acquire rental accommodation. The street directories are used to orientate the recipient to the metropolitan area. They are also taught how to read the maps in order to attend open inspections when looking for private rental properties.

Language

Proficiency in English is critical to a successful settlement and engagement process.²⁷ Language research²⁸ shows that it takes two to three years to communicate, and five to 10 years to be academically competent in a language. By contrast, new arrivals currently receive only 510 hours of language training.

Without the ability to communicate proficiently in English, it is extremely difficult to obtain employment, negotiate housing, understand the laws and systems of Australia, or take part in the life of the nation. When consulted by MSA in 2010, humanitarian communities made the following suggestions about how to improve English proficiency in their communities:

- Begin language training before departure for Australia. This might save money, reduce stress and provide migrants who are better equipped to integrate, and to undertake education and employment.
- Recognise the importance of flexible training delivery based on individual assessment. It could take place in the classroom, the community, within the workplace, or on a formal or informal basis.
- After the eligible language training period, provide access to further training by using volunteers, members of the community, employers and practice sessions.

²⁷ Linda Burnett, Issues in Immigrant Settlement in Australia, Research Series 10, National Centre for English Language Teaching Research, Macquarie University, Sydney.

²⁸ SA Department of Education and Children's Services.

- Recruit community members to be part of language training in classrooms and in the community as an efficient method of delivery and integration. Many are already supporting their communities, including:
 - people with teaching and community-services backgrounds
 - people who are highly educated but unemployed, and
 - high school students who have acquired language fluency and are interested in entry opportunities into the workforce.

While the discussion above is focussed on the need to learn English, the connection between multiculturalism and multilingualism is also critical. A dynamic multicultural society is one that promotes opportunities for all citizens, regardless of cultural background, to learn a language in addition to their native tongue. Multilingualism contributes to the building of social capital and community cohesion.²⁹ It is an important component in building understanding and acceptance of diversity. All South Australian students learn a language other than English during their primary school years, as a mandatory component of the school curriculum. This requirement meets the objectives of multiculturalism, whilst skilling up South Australians to participate more fully in a globalised international environment.

The South Australian Government would welcome further discussion on this issue, particularly in the context of multicultural policy development at the national level.

Skilled migration

A survey of Skilled Independent Regional (SIR) visa holders,³⁰ conducted by DIAC, indicated that, at 18 months of residence in South Australia, nearly 98 per cent of skilled-visa holders were employed. Of these, 73 per cent were employed in a skilled occupation, although they might not be employed in the occupation for which they were granted entry.

These figures should not serve to mask, however, settlement issues that exist for those who arrive as skilled migrants. English-language capacity, recognition of skills and qualifications, and cultural issues, are all potential barriers to fully participating in society. As is the case with other arrivals, skilled migrants require support for themselves as well as for any accompanying members of their families.

In South Australia, the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) provides a Skills-Recognition Service to help migrants translate skills and qualifications to Australian requirements. The vocational education and training (VET) sector, including TAFE, is also involved in providing a range of education opportunities in English language and other skills.

²⁹ Anikó Hatoss, *Sustainable Multilingualism As An Essential Characteristic Of Multicultural Societies – The Case Of Australia*, University of Southern Queensland, 2005.

³⁰ Survey of Skilled Independent Regional (SIR) visa holders, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, June 2008.

DFEEST provides advice to Immigration SA to support the targeting of the state-sponsored Skilled Migration Program. The advice provided by DFEEST focuses on those occupations that are currently in skills shortage and/or for which future industry demand will exceed the supply of suitably qualified persons from the training system (primarily government funded). Skilled migration is of vital importance in regional areas of South Australia, helping to prevent capacity constraints that limit economic development.

Skills recognition

Employment is a critical matter for all new migrants, including refugees. Workforce participation leads to a smoother transition into the community and an easier settlement process. Participation can include undertaking training, volunteering and assisting in schools, as well as working in paid employment.

South Australia's unique service to new migrants (including humanitarian entrants) through the Skills Recognition Service of DFEEST is a program that could be used throughout Australia. It should be noted that the importance of skills recognition is also addressed in this submission in relation to workforce planning in the health sector.

DFEEST provides an entry point for new migrants to gain information and support about pathways to recognition of qualifications and skills, training opportunities and employment. New migrants experiencing significant barriers to either recognition or employment are supported through one-on-one case management. On arrival, information sessions are also provided for all migrants. Important topics covered include the law and the norms of acceptable behaviour in Australia.

In addition, information is provided to new migrants through the New Workers Program (NWP). It promotes the rights of workers in South Australia and provides information about how to access help or information about employment-related matters. The NWP is a collaborative initiative between the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission, Safework SA, the Fair Work Ombudsman, the Young Workers Legal Service, the Employee Ombudsman, Traineeship and Apprenticeship Services (DFEEST) and the South Australian Office of the Training Advocate. Presentations and information packages are provided at information sessions for new arrivals, TAFE SA English-Language Services, the Interlink Program and the Australian Refugee Association Jobs Program.

DFEEST also works with industry and government to establish clear pathways to recognition of qualifications and skills for registration, licensing and employment, and also leverages funds from a variety of sources to establish essential bridging or employment programs.

Current Commonwealth policy severely limits the availability of higher-level support from Job Service Australia for migrants who are deemed skilled. While these migrants are prized for their skills, they do not necessarily arrive to an employer-sponsored position and often have gaps in their understanding

of the Australian employment milieu, the accepted cultural norms and the law. A change in Commonwealth policy in relation to the eligibility of skilled migrants to utilise Job Services Australia would assist them in obtaining the necessary support to secure long-term employment. Long-term, stable employment clearly benefits the individual, that person's family and the Australian economy.

Term of Reference 4

Incentives to promote long-term settlement patterns that achieve greater social and economic benefits for Australian society as a whole

According to the South Australian Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) the proportion of the national intake of migrants that comes to South Australia has risen from about 2 per cent in the early 2000s to 7.1 per cent in June 2010. Net overseas migration (NOM) peaked at just above 18,000 in June 2009, and the number of permanent skilled migrants has increased from 1,300 in 2002/03 to 7,700 in 2009/10.

This growth is credited to the existence of state-specific regional migration mechanisms (referred to as regional status) for skilled migration visas. They allow South Australia (including Adelaide) to be defined as regional for the purposes of sponsoring skilled migrants.

The South Australian Government considers the success of regional dispersal mechanisms as vital to economic development and population outcomes in South Australia, and it recommends their continued use. This is particularly important to the performance of the State's minerals industry, which will in turn become critical to the whole nation's export performance.

In promoting long-term settlement, it is important that an inclusive approach is taken at all stages. If we want those migrating to consider Australia their home, it is important that they are supported in ways that assist their integration into the community and sustain them beyond the initial settlement period. Successful long-term settlement can only enhance the social and economic benefits afforded by migration that have been referred to elsewhere in this submission. The following represents a list, although not exhaustive, of elements that must be present if successful long-term settlement is to be achieved:

- recognising, valuing and respecting the diverse cultures, languages and religions of migrants and their families by supporting the maintenance, expression and sharing of those cultures, languages and religions;
- supporting the maintenance and learning of community languages which recognises their link with culture, their importance in delivering linguistically appropriate services, and their value in trade and international relations;

- supporting family formation and family cohesion, including family-reunion migration and family capacity-building to assist with the adjustment to differing cultural norms in regard to young people;
- providing English-language tuition beyond the initial settlement phase;
- ensuring that government and non-government services reflect the life stages of the migrant population and are delivered in a culturally appropriate way. It is important to recognise the needs of CALD communities in aged-care settings, as well as the needs of children who have recently arrived;
- recognising and promoting the social, cultural and economic benefits of migration, cultural diversity and multiculturalism;
- providing leadership at state and national levels aimed at eliminating racism, discrimination and religious intolerance;
- building community capacity in marginalised communities to provide these with the ability to support others; and
- delivering more intensive assistance in obtaining employment and affordable housing, particularly in the case of humanitarian entrants.

5. National Productive Capacity

Term of Reference 5

The role migration has played and contributes to building Australia's long-term productive capacity

Migration is critical for South Australia to meet its ongoing labour demands, with skilled migration an important contributor to the State's workforce needs. Net overseas migration (arrivals minus departures) into South Australia for 2009/10³¹ indicates that skilled migration accounts for approximately 70 per cent of all migration into the State.

A recent report from the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies highlights that the level of skilled migration in South Australia in 2008/09 was five times greater than it was 10 years before³². About 10 per cent of all skilled migrants permanently moving to Australia come to South Australia, and South Australia has a very large share (21.6 per cent) of the State-Specific and Regional Migration (SSRM) program.

South Australia's economic prospects are strong. In particular, the significance of the State's mineral resources, including what will become the world's largest mine at Olympic Dam, mean that the performance of the South Australian economy will become of great importance to the export performance of Australia as a whole. Any workforce-participation constraints could impede the export performance of key projects in the minerals and resources sector in South Australia. National population strategies need to address this issue through meaningful regional migration concessions for South Australia.

While the South Australian Government is committed to responding to the State's current and future skill needs through increased labour force participation, there are some skill needs that might not be best addressed through increasing workforce participation or skills development, given the time taken to train and the need for relevant experience. In South Australia, these skill needs are identified on an annual basis as part of the State Migration Plan. The South Australian Government plays a role in facilitating skilled migration to compliment our domestic workforce through a range of state-specific regional migration mechanisms.

Notwithstanding the comments above, it is also important to recognise the skills of those already resident in South Australia, facilitating wherever possible the recognition of overseas professional qualifications. Please refer to the comments under TOR 6 of this submission.

Primary Industries South Australia (PIRSA) highlights a number of examples of successful outcomes that demonstrate the contribution to national

³¹ Australian Demographic Statistics ABS Cat. No. 3101.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, September 2010.

³² South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, *Migration trends in South Australia 1998/99 to 2008/09*, January 2011.

productivity gleaned from its network of industry representatives across South Australia. They include:

- A confectionery business employed a skilled confectionery manufacturer from South Africa, who began on the factory floor before successfully moving up two positions into a technical manager role, and is now an asset to the company.
- In the smallgoods industry, a master smallgoods maker from Germany brought a high level of skill to a business, improving its production methods and imparting greater understanding of the science to fellow employees.
- The State's biggest potato and onion farm, at Virginia, rose from a sole proprietary business started by an immigrant.

There are numerous more examples similar to this in the horticultural and seafood industries.

Term of Reference 6

The profile of skilled migration to Australia and the extent to which Australia is fully utilising the skills of all migrants

As outlined earlier, South Australian state-sponsored skilled-visa holders experience high rates of employment within the local economy. The survey of Skilled Independent Regional visa-holders, conducted by DIAC, indicated that, after 18 months of residence in South Australia, nearly 98 per cent of skilled visa holders were employed. Of these, nearly three quarters were employed in a skilled occupation, although they might not be employed in the occupation for which they were granted entry.

DTED has indicated that its research shows that differences exist between migrants from English and non-English speaking backgrounds with respect to the employment skill level achieved, and the match between their employment in Australia and their previous experience. That is, the higher the proficiency of English, the greater the likelihood that the migrant's skills will be utilised in the local labour market.

The main barriers to employment for migrants, as identified by the migrants themselves, include: a lack of Australian work experiences and referees; visa requirements not being understood by employers (for example, that provisional visa holders have work rights); and limited job openings in their preferred occupation. Creating greater awareness of the work rights of various visas among employers would be one measure the Australian Government could take to support the greater utilisation of the skills of all migrants within the Australian workforce.

Given the aging of the workforce, which is particularly acute in South Australia, skilled migration is vital to maintaining the skills of the workforce and continuing to increase productivity. According to the Training and Skills

Commission's *Skills for Jobs 2010* report³³, skilled migration will account for about 14 per cent of the projected demand for qualifications in South Australia in the next five years.

However, SA Health has highlighted the danger of underutilising those with qualifications currently living in Australia, given, for example, the skills shortages that exist in the Australian health system.

Health Workforce Australia (HWA) has been given the task of developing a coordinated national approach to the recruitment and retention of international health professionals in Australia's public and non-government health sectors. HWA intends to review and map current approaches, develop targeted programs to boost ethical international recruitment, provide strategic advice to government and industry on improving access and support arrangements for the international health workforce, and assist employers efficiently to source skilled health professionals.

HWA notes that ongoing consultation and collaboration will be required with government health agencies, non-government organisations, regulatory agencies, professional colleges, accreditation agencies, immigration and a host of related international agencies to undertake this work.

SA Health is concerned that this approach does not consider health professionals already living in Australia who have unrecognised overseas qualifications. It is not known how many in South Australia have qualifications in the health professions. Of those with qualifications, there is little information as to how many would be available to work under supervision or in other modified circumstances, or how many could achieve recognition of their qualifications with appropriate support.

SA Health maintains that data such as this could be collected by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) by tracking all individual inquiries from overseas-trained health professionals in Australia, with particular interest in the number of persons with unrecognised overseas qualifications.

As a matter of course DIAC should initiate data collection in relation to this issue by tracking the progress of individuals who migrate to Australia on a permanent basis with pre-migration qualifications. Of specific interest would be whether they have had their qualifications recognised, what retraining was required and how long the process took.

Systematic and effective monitoring and communication is required so that CALD communities can be assured that the system of overseas skill- and qualification-recognition operates fairly and effectively. This principle should be applied across a range of industries that experience skills shortages.

³³ *Skills for Jobs*, Training and Skills Commission, 2010.

When seeking examples of best practice in settlement processes the work undertaken in Mt Gambier, South Australia with unlinked refugees³⁴ should form an important reference for this inquiry. In order to increase settlement in regional areas, the Commonwealth Government identified a range of conditions needed for successful regional refugee settlement. Mt Gambier was identified as a suitable location where such settlement could be established with refugees who originally came from a rural area and/or had the skills suited to rural areas. The first refugee families referred by DIAC arrived in June 2007. These were two Burmese families, both of which had spent long periods in refugee camps. Over the next 12 months, a further eight refugee families from Burma arrived. The pilot was evaluated by DIAC in 2008, and it was deemed to be highly successful from the point of view of both the community and the refugees. The pilot evaluation report offers 34 lessons that provide a template for best practice when settling unlinked humanitarian entrants in regional centres seeking to fill skill shortages.³⁵

PIRSA concludes that access to a skilled workforce continues to be a major challenge to agribusiness, and industry representatives have highlighted the instrumental historical, current and future roles of immigrants which contribute to our national productive capacity. Immigrants already provide a unique and flexible workforce that is critical to the success of many areas of the agrifood sector, particularly in remote and regional areas. Immigrants willingly fill roles that are unappealing to locals, and they are highly regarded for their work ethic and skills.

The agrifood sector readily utilises the skills of immigrants who arrive in Australia with a background in agrifood. PIRSA, however, has pointed to the need for an integrated strategy for sourcing agrifood sector labour and skills, with special attention given to making the most of the skilled immigrant workforce through facilitating the settlement of permanent immigrants and better organisation of seasonal immigrant workers. Major barriers identified by industry representatives include visa processes and conditions, rural infrastructure (transport and housing), and the utilisation and organisation of seasonal workers.

<p>Term of Reference 7 Potential government initiatives to better assist migrant communities establish business enterprises</p>

Business migration *per se* plays an important role in building the State's productive capacity. In South Australia, the aim of the Business Skills Migration (BSM) program is to bring new investment into the economy and create new jobs by attracting people with a demonstrated record of business or investment activity.

³⁴ Unlinked refugees are refugees who have been identified for resettlement in Australia under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program, who have not been proposed by someone already in Australia and who have no pre-existing family or strong social links already residing in Australia.

³⁵ *Mount Gambier -Report of an evaluation undertaken by Margaret Piper and Associates for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship November 2008*

During 2009 and 2010, state-sponsored business migrants injected more than \$47 million into business investment and were directly responsible for almost \$45 million in export earnings.

While business migrants arrive with a view to starting a business, other migrant communities are also capable of establishing businesses given the appropriate support to do so. There is ample evidence of the enterprising nature of migrants, including those who enter the country as refugees. One need only look at the successful businesses established by Vietnamese refugees throughout Australia in the late 1970s as an example of the entrepreneurship, hard work and tenacity required to establish a business.

Many humanitarian entrants have supported themselves and their families through engaging in business. These businesses have taken many forms and have usually been set up with very little or no resources, other than the personal determination, ingenuity and perseverance of the former refugees themselves.

Efforts should be made to provide customised training in business skills to humanitarian entrants. The development of successful businesses can only aid long-term sustainability and contribute to local economies.

In writing this submission, it became apparent that there is little information on the success or otherwise of differing approaches to business establishment by migrant communities. There is value in the Australian Government commissioning an audit of both mainstream and migrant-specific business support programs. This would serve to improve knowledge of the services available and identify gaps in services. Consultation with state and territory governments in the form of roundtables could form part of this process, and would longitudinal surveys of business migrants. For South Australia, with a strong small business profile, this would be of particular policy interest.