

Settlement and participation

Introduction

- 9.1 Settling in a new country can be a difficult and daunting experience. Public and private settlement programs aim to positively enhance the settlement experience for new migrants and refugees by helping them overcome initial and long term settlement barriers. This not only promotes settlement patterns that achieve greater social and economic benefits for Australia, but helps create a feeling of social inclusiveness for migrants and refugees within the broader Australian community.
- 9.2 This chapter examines the main issues on the settlement and participation of migrants and refugees in Australia and the services currently available to address these issues.

English language training

- 9.3 English language proficiency plays a fundamental role in the successful settlement of migrants and refugees. In enhancing the ability of newly arrived migrants to participate in mainstream Australian society, English language proficiency also reduces the risk of social exclusion through language barriers. The Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) found that newly arrived communities from refugee backgrounds valued both the

encouragement and the ability to access English tuition services when arriving in Australia.¹

Adult Migrant English Program

9.4 The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is the Australian Government's largest settlement program, providing free settlement focused English courses for eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants who do not have a competent command of English. As part of the program's arrangements, all AMEP clients are entitled to access up to 510 hours of English courses over a period of five years from the commencement of their visa. Administered by DIAC, the AMEP is contracted to service providers around Australia, including universities, TAFEs, state educational departments, community colleges and private educational institutions.²

Key changes to the AMEP's business model

9.5 In July 2011, the AMEP introduced a new business model to enhance both the flexibility and accessibility of its English program. DIAC informed the Committee that these changes include:

- the introduction of AMEP counsellors providing education and vocational guidance to clients;
- the introduction of Individual Pathway Guides to document and monitor client learning goals and outcomes;
- the introduction of distance learning and e-learning modules being delivered by a single national provider;
- the delivery of settlement courses to AMEP clients upon entry to, and exit from, the program;
- accessibility to the AMEP for youth aged between 15–17 years; and
- a stronger focus on creating pathways to employment and training through the rollout of a Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training Course.³

1 Adult Migrant English Service (AMES), *Submission 118*, p. 5.

2 Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), 'Fact Sheet 94-English Courses for Eligible Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia', <www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/94amep.htm> viewed 3 July 2012.

3 DIAC, *Supplementary submission 450.1*, p. 1.

- 9.6 The AMEP's new business plan aims to improve the overall settlement process for newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants. DIAC told the Committee that the new provision of counselling services and Individual Pathway Guides has already helped retain people in the AMEP and provide a more flexible learning structure for its clients.⁴
- 9.7 While the Committee acknowledges the AMEP's new business plan, evidence to the inquiry has been critical of the AMEP's overall structure and provision of services.

Issues with AMEP

- 9.8 The AMEP's lack of flexibility in the delivery of its English language program has been criticised as not catering to the life circumstances of newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants. People entitled to the service are required to register and commence classes within one year of their arrival or are no longer entitled to access the 510 hours of English lessons. However, employment, personal and family commitments can result in newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants not being able to undertake the full number of allocated hours, thereby resulting in a loss of valuable English lessons.⁵
- 9.9 For humanitarian entrants who have fled their home country and disbanded their financial assets, the main incentive once arriving in Australia is finding employment. As stated in RISE's submission:
- The additional financial burden placed on this group of immigrants means that the focus shifts from learning English and up-skilling themselves for a more sustainable future to an immediate and critical need to gain employment and in many cases reduce large amounts of debt incurred.⁶
- 9.10 The importance of securing a form of income once arriving in Australia can undermine one's ability to learn English. The Committee found that many humanitarian entrants sought to gain work immediately upon arriving in Australia. This meant that their hours of work would clash with the AMEP course delivery times.⁷ As a result, the requirement to enrol and undertake lessons within the first year of arrival can be

4 Mr Garry Fleming, First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Division, DIAC, *Committee Hansard*, 21 March 2012, pp. 3-4.

5 Darebin City Council, *Submission 394*, p. 11.

6 RISE (Refugees, Survivors and Ex-Detainees), *Submission 428*, p. 5.

7 Assisting Collaborative Community Employment Support Services Inc. (ACCES Services Inc.), *Submission 71*, p. 5.

particularly challenging for individuals attempting to manage a vast array of social and employment commitments.

- 9.11 The employment services provider Job Prospects was aware of CALD job seekers who had finished the AMEP without being able to effectively speak, read or understand English. Of those still enrolled, Job Prospects found that their commitment to employment has meant that they are unable to effectively utilise the full potential of the AMEP.⁸
- 9.12 In recognising the difficulty in managing financial, work and personal commitments with the AMEP's 510 hours of English lessons, the Committee was presented with a number of different options to help clients better manage their commitments. These suggestions focused on the AMEP's ability to more effectively cater to the needs of its clientele by incorporating English language lessons with job training.
- 9.13 The Federation of Ethnic Communities Council Australia (FECCA) saw the need to teach practical English and place greater focus on the acquisition of employment-focused English.⁹ Feedback attained from humanitarian entrants working in the Tasmanian Government's work placement programs reinforced FECCA's view, noting that English language proficiency and communicational skills are enhanced in a workplace environment.¹⁰
- 9.14 Currently the Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training (SLPET) provides an additional 200 hours of vocational specific English and work experience placement for clients of the AMEP that have completed over 75 per cent of their AMEP tuition and have developed the necessary communication skills to participate in the Australian workplace.¹¹
- 9.15 In providing English language in a contextualised workplace setting, AMES, a provider of AMEP services, adds an additional training qualification when delivering SLPET:

We have had some very successful programs working with the hospitality industry where we were able to combine English with a certificate I and II in hospitality and then work experience with the Sofitel here in Melbourne. People were then able to get work as a consequence. By adding the vocational training certificate, it is

8 Job Prospects, *Submission 489*, p. 2.

9 Federation of Ethnic Communities Council Australia (FECCA), *Submission 176*, p. 5.

10 Department of Premier and Cabinet Tasmania, *Submission 441*, p. 18.

11 DIAC, *Supplementary submission 450.1*, p. 5.

contextualising the English... Students in the classroom with the support of an English language teacher have actually been able to understand the requirements of the employer, whether that is the occupational health and safety standards or how they fill in particular reports for the employer.¹²

- 9.16 However, AMES felt that SLPET should be more embedded within the AMEP to ensure that more providers embrace the capacity. Additionally, they thought that SLPET should occur earlier in the program.¹³

510 hours

- 9.17 Research by the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services shows that it takes two to three years of English lessons to effectively communicate in English.¹⁴ On this basis, the Committee received evidence claiming that the current provision of 510 hours of learning is not sufficient to develop a competent command of English.¹⁵ As stated in AMES's submission:

There has been an expectation in the past that the program should be able to equip AMEP Clients with 'Functional English' in 510 hours of tuition. However given that the majority of AMEP Clients (approximately 60 per cent) begin the program with little or no English, this expectation is unattainable and unrealistic.¹⁶

- 9.18 The Committee heard of humanitarian entrants arriving in Australia with little, or no, formal education in their own native language thereby making it particularly difficult for them to engage with the AMEP. Ms Robyn Turner, Principal of Mount Gambier North School, said that:

...if you are a humanitarian refugee and you have had no English and no education, it is going to take you about seven years. The challenge there is to keep the children's hopes and dreams alive, but not to have such artificial dreams that they are not achievable immediately.¹⁷

12 Ms Catherine Scarth, Chief Executive Officer, AMES, *Committee Hansard*, 3 February 2012, p. 18.

13 Ms Scarth, AMES, *Committee Hansard*, 3 February 2012, pp. 17- 18.

14 South Australian Government, *Submission 470*, p. 29.

15 Mr Pino Migliorino, Chair, FECCA, *Committee Hansard*, 15 June 2011, p. 5., Angels of Mercy, *Submission 25*, p. 2.

16 AMES, *Submission 118*, p. 8.

17 *Committee Hansard*, 29 July 2011, p. 10.

- 9.19 Another issue presented to the Committee was the underlying effects trauma has on an individual's learning capacity. Research has revealed that 25 per cent of humanitarian entrants have had some experience of torture or trauma. Such negative experiences can have a profound effect on the individual's memory, concentration, confidence and engagement in the classroom and therefore affect their ability to learn English.¹⁸
- 9.20 However, migrants and refugees undertaking the 510 hours of English lessons may either not require as much language tuition or be at a level of competency for more advanced classes in specific subject areas.
- 9.21 In aiming to address these issues, DIAC has in place the Special Preparatory Program (SPP) which offers increased assistance to all humanitarian entrants by providing up to 400 additional tuition hours for AMEP clients who have low educational levels and/or suffered difficult pre-migration experiences.¹⁹ Humanitarian entrants under 25 years of age may be eligible for an additional 400 hours of English courses, and clients 25 years of age and over may be eligible for an additional 100 hours of English courses.²⁰
- 9.22 The Committee notes with concern that the current AMEP is not compulsory for eligible participants. The Committee strongly emphasises that the Australian Government should consider options designed to encourage greater participation and higher completion rates in the AMEP.

Recommendation 18

- 9.23 **The Committee recommends that DIAC refine the AMEP through the provision of flexible learning times, greater personalised services and context specific language services related to employment and tertiary study. The Committee recommends an integrated model that links participants to other educational, skills or community based activities.**

18 Australian Multicultural Advisory Council, *Submission 399*, p. 7.

19 DIAC, *Supplementary submission 450.1*, p. 5.

20 DIAC, 'Fact Sheet 94- English Courses for Eligible Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia', <www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/94amep.htm> viewed 3 July 2012.

Recommendation 19

- 9.24 **The Committee recommends that the SLPET program be fully embedded within the AMEP model to ensure that all private providers offer an additional 200 hours of vocational specific English training and work experience placement for clients that have completed over 75 per cent of their AMEP tuition.**
- 9.25 The Committee acknowledges the difficulty for AMEP providers in offering vocational specific English training and work experience placement for clients. For this reason, the Government needs to facilitate greater linkages between private AMEP providers and industries relevant to the skills set of AMEP participants. This in turn will contribute to the individual development of vocational specific English.

Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)

- 9.26 The LLNP is a program run by the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE) that provides eligible job seekers with up to 800 hours of free language, literacy and numeracy training. Initially administered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) at the time of inquiry, the LLNP is designed to assist job seekers whose skills are below the level considered necessary to secure sustainable employment or pursue further education and training.²¹
- 9.27 Representatives from DEEWR told the Committee that the program provides contextualised training to its clients in order to achieve individual goals. They stated that approximately 30 per cent of the LLNP's clientele are from CALD backgrounds.²²
- 9.28 When in Mt Gambier, the Committee heard of problems regarding the accessibility of certain components of the LLNP in regional areas. Ms Noelene Moore, a TAFE lecturer from South Australia, told the Committee that:

The language component of that program is part of contracts that TAFE negotiate or tender for with the government. At the moment the contract for the language component is with TAFE South Australia in metropolitan Adelaide and TAFE... Unfortunately

21 Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations (DEEWR), *Submission 474*, p. 12.

22 Ms Borka Buseska, Director, Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, 6 July 2011, pp. 7-8.

TAFE Regional does not have a contract with the language component of that program, which is why TAFE Mount Gambier cannot offer the programs that migrants in the city have access to. We do not have the capacity to deliver those programs.²³

- 9.29 In terms of the content delivered in the LLNP, the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW noted in their submission that there needs to be additional focus on more practical employment skills, such as an overview of Australian workplaces and standards, and professional communication skills.²⁴

Workplace English Language and Literacy Program (WELL)

- 9.30 WELL is a program run by DIISRTE that funds organisations to assist workers to improve their language, literacy and numeracy skills. The program was initially administered by DEEWR but has recently transferred to DIISRTE. DEEWR's submission notes that funding is available on a competitive grants basis to organisations for English language and literacy training linked to job-related workplace training, and is designed to help workers meet their current and future employment and training needs.²⁵
- 9.31 In considering the important role of English language and literacy training linked to job-related workplace training, the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council believed that WELL was significantly underutilised and called for the refocusing of the program so that it is industry led rather than employer led.²⁶

Cultural competency

- 9.32 Cultural competency refers to the level of knowledge, awareness, skills, practices and processes required for an individual/organisation to effectively function in situations characterised by cultural diversity.²⁷ Given Australia's cultural diversity, cultural competency ensures the social inclusion of CALD groups through recognition of their cultural and

23 *Committee Hansard*, 29 July 2011, pp. 25–26.

24 Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW, *Submission 105*, p. 5.

25 DEEWR, *Submission 474*, p. 12.

26 Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC), *Submission 399*, p. 11.

27 Mr Robert Bean, Managing Director, Cultural Diversity Services Pty Ltd, *Committee Hansard*, 28 July 2011, p. 17.

linguistic needs. This ensures the successful settlement of newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants whilst encouraging their overall participation in Australian society.

- 9.33 In responding to the needs of CALD individuals and groups, cultural competency allows for the effective utilisation of migrant skills in contributing to Australia's national productive capacity. The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW commented that highly skilled migrants may be inclined to withdraw from their skilled occupation if they are to be confronted by a lack of awareness of their culture in the workplace.²⁸

Report into the effectiveness of cross-cultural training in the Australian context

- 9.34 In 2006, the then Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs released on behalf of the Joint Commonwealth, State and Territory Research Advisory Committee a report regarding the effectiveness of cross-cultural training in the Australian public and community sectors. The report found that although cross-cultural training had improved in Australia over the period 2000-2005, the level of training activity was low compared to the estimated levels of demand and recommendations for increased cross-cultural training.²⁹

- 9.35 The report's recommendations included the:
- development of cultural competence management, and assessment, framework;
 - promotion of training programs and resources for managing cultural diversity and cross-cultural communication;
 - establishment of a national cross-cultural trainers professional association; and
 - development of a cross-cultural training provider's registry.³⁰

- 9.36 The Committee is aware that some of the recommendations made in the report have been acted upon, such as moves toward state government cultural competence policy and the development of freely available

28 Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW, *Submission 105*, p. 7.

29 *The Effectiveness of Cross-Cultural Training in the Australian Context*, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 2006, pp. 1-2.

30 *The Effectiveness of Cross-Cultural Training in the Australian Context*, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 2006, pp. 6-7.

training resources.³¹ However, evidence to the Committee revealed ongoing concerns regarding cultural competency in Australia.

Ongoing issues of cultural competency

Lack of cross-cultural training in the workplace

- 9.37 Enhancing the participation of migrants and refugees in the Australian workplace requires a work environment that is aware of the cultural needs of all individuals. This can be achieved through the effective delivery of cross-cultural training in the workplace. The Committee received evidence from private organisations responsible for the delivery of cultural competency and awareness training.³²
- 9.38 Research has revealed that nine out of ten people who do cross-cultural training believe it should be mandatory for everybody in their customer services while eight out of ten believe it should be mandatory for the entire organisation. However, Mr Bean from Cultural Diversity Services Pty Ltd told the Committee that in 2010 and 2011 approximately 80 000 employees received an average of five hours cross-cultural training, representing less than one per cent of the workforce. Less than three per cent of those 80 000 people were managers.³³
- 9.39 While the Committee recognises the importance of private organisations delivering cross-cultural training in the workplace, evidence suggests there is a lack of universal cultural competency and education and training in both the private and public sector. This means that the delivery of some services may inadvertently disadvantage CALD people.
- 9.40 In one instance, the Multicultural Development Association (MDA) informed the Committee of what they considered to be the limited cultural competency of Queensland Government staff to interact with refugees and CALD people within the justice system. They noted that:

The ability to recognise the need for an interpreter and the skills required to professionally engage with an interpreter requires a solid foundation of cultural competency for police officers, judicial officers, corrective services officers and other individuals working

31 Cultural Diversity Services Pty Ltd, *Submission 101*, p. 3.

32 See: Cultural Diversity Services Pty Ltd, *Submission 101*, Cross-cultural communications and management, *Submission 475*.

33 *Committee Hansard*, 28 July 2011, p. 17.

within the justice system through ongoing cultural competency training.³⁴

- 9.41 Mental health services can also suffer from a lack of cultural competency and awareness. Participants of Multicultural Mental Health Australia's (MMHA) consultation gave various examples of how a lack of cultural competence had led to misdiagnosis and culturally inappropriate treatment, such as the failure to recognise the experiences of clients who had suffered from torture and trauma.³⁵
- 9.42 While the Committee does recognise the recent moves by some State governments to incorporate cross-cultural training courses within their provision of services, there is still a distinct lack of universal cross-cultural training in the workplace. This can lead to quite superficial understandings of cultural competency and awareness.³⁶

Culturally-appropriate aged care

- 9.43 Australia's CALD population is ageing at a greater rate than the general Australian population. For example, 31 per cent of all Victorians aged 65 years and over are from a CALD community. As a result, access for aged care services is rising and the demand for culturally appropriate services increasing.³⁷
- 9.44 Mr Thomas Camporeale, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Community Service Manager, Comitato Assistenza Italiani (Co.As.It.), informed the Committee that culturally appropriate aged care services are essential in addressing the needs of Australia's ageing CALD population. Speaking on Australia's Italian community, he said that these needs are a result of unresolved settlement issues from the fifties and sixties, such as the lack of English lessons and accessible information on government structures and bureaucracy. He stated:

Even though it is 50 years on, for a lot of people, those issues are still there and they are still real. Now they are reverting back to first language, which in many cases can be a regional dialect, not even standard Italian. The guilt of family members who are second generation and [the] different priorities to caring for mum and dad are having a real impact. People are very confused about how to

34 Multicultural Development Association (MDA), *Submission 421*, p. 4.

35 Multicultural Mental Health Australia (MMHA), *Submission 397*, p. 26.

36 Ms Melise Bourne, Education and Policy Officer, Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care, *Committee Hansard*, 23 February 2012, p. 10.

37 Victorian Government, *Submission 482*, p. 17.

approach aged care. It is a really dangerous view – I do not really promote difference in that sense. To me it is a community that has particular needs and those particular needs should be seen as a priority for that community – like many other communities or minority groups may have. But I think that, in a country like Australia where we do recognise difference as a positive thing, we should be able to consider what those needs may be for that community and how best to care for that community.³⁸

9.45 One challenging issue is the provision of culturally appropriate aged care services for CALD sufferers of dementia. The Committee found that sufferers of dementia can revert back to specific regional dialects of their home country which can make it extremely difficult for both carers and relatives to effectively communicate with them.³⁹

9.46 As a result of these concerns, representatives from Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care and Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra spoke of the growing need for culturally appropriate awareness in aged care services. They told the Committee that:

There is a significant lack of acceptance by organisations of the need for culturally appropriate care and the training required to develop the cultural competence of their staff. This is because there is a perception that staff are already trained and equipped. There is a fear of admitting deficiencies in cultural awareness and understanding or the low priority assigned to CALD-specific education.⁴⁰

9.47 The lack of culturally appropriate aged care means that multiculturalism is not being adequately practiced in the aged care system. As shown in **Case study 9.1**, this can lead to instances of carers and nursing staff unwillingly discriminating against elderly CALD individuals.

38 *Committee Hansard*, 23 February 2012, p. 17.

39 Ms Terrie Leoleos, General Manager, Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra, *Committee Hansard*, 23 February 2012, p. 12.

40 Ms Bourne, *Committee Hansard*, 23 February 2012, p. 9.

Case study 9.1 Example of poor culturally appropriate aged care

An elderly woman living in an aged care facility was violently refusing to eat food. She did not speak any English and her ethnic background was not known by either the caring or nursing staff. As her refusal to eat persisted, the caring and nursing staff decided to force feed her and ended up tranquilising her. However, the staff later found out that the elderly woman was Greek Orthodox and had in fact been fasting.

Source Mr Bean, *Cultural Diversity Services Pty Ltd*, Committee Hansard, 28 July 2011, p. 17.

- 9.48 The Committee was asked to consider the implementation of a national standard of cultural competency across the workforce delivered through education programs and training.⁴¹
- 9.49 For example, the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health identified seven key domains for the effective delivery of cultural competence: organisational values, governance, planning, monitoring and evaluation, communication, staff development, organisational infrastructure, and services and incentives. Their submission recognised the potential effectiveness of delivering services that are able to efficiently respond to the needs of CALD individuals and thereby lead to greater health and well-being outcomes.⁴²
- 9.50 In regards to the provision of culturally competent services, the Committee acknowledges the recommendation made in the Access and Equity inquiry into the responsiveness of Australian Government services to Australia's CALD population, which stated that:
- ...the Australian Government incorporate Access and Equity considerations and obligations into funding partnerships with states and territories and into whole-of-government guidelines on tender specifications and contractual arrangements for outsourced service delivery by its agencies.⁴³

41 Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW Inc, *Submission 105*, p. 7, Culturally Competent Mental Health Services, *Submission 397*, p. 26, FECCA, *Submission 176*, p. 5, Darebin City Council, *Submission 394*, p. 12, Diversity Health Institute, *Submission 412*, p. 3.

42 Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, *Submission 300*, pp. 6-8.

43 Access and Equity Inquiry Panel, *Access and Equity for a Multicultural Australia: Inquiry into the Responsiveness of Australian Government Services to Australia's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Population*, June 2012, p. 7.

Recommendation 20

- 9.51 **The Committee recommends that the Australian Government further explore the issue of standards and official accreditation for cultural competency training. This should include the investigation of existing successful models to enhance cultural competency awareness and ongoing development to meet needs.**

Recommendation 21

- 9.52 **The Committee recommends that the Australian Government recognise the role of ethno-specific organisations in the delivery of aged care services and review the demand for culturally appropriate aged care services in the immediate future.**

Housing

- 9.53 Housing continues to be an important area of settlement and participation for migrants and humanitarian entrants, particularly within the initial settlement period. Housing stability ensures that migrants are able to physically establish themselves in Australia and address all of their other settlement needs.

Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS)

- 9.54 In attempting to address the concerns of new humanitarian arrivals, the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program of DIAC provides intensive support to newly arrived humanitarian clients during their initial settlement period (usually six to 12 months). Operating since April 2011, the program supports humanitarian clients to begin their new lives and focuses on capacity building, building clients' confidence and ability to participate economically and socially in the wider Australian community, and equipping them with the knowledge and skills they will need to access services in the future. DIAC's website notes that support

through the HSS is tailored to individual client needs, including the specific needs of young people.⁴⁴

- 9.55 DIAC's submission outlined the list of services provided by the HSS in addressing the issue of homelessness among newly arrived humanitarian entrants. These include:
- clients being housed from the time of their arrival in accommodation predominantly sourced from the private rental market;
 - the payment of clients' initial rent and utilities for the first four weeks after arrival, and the provision of a basic household goods package which aims to ease the financial pressures experienced shortly after arrival;
 - ongoing accommodation support for the duration of the program; and
 - assessment of a client's accommodation situation prior to exiting HSS to ensure they are not at risk of homelessness. If clients are identified as being in an unsuitable living situation they will not be exited from the HSS program.⁴⁵
- 9.56 While the Committee recognises the importance of the HSS in helping newly arrived humanitarian entrants find permanent accommodation, a number of issues were raised both in regards to the wider factors affecting the availability and attainment of housing for migrants and refugees, and DIAC's current provision of services.

Accommodation barriers for newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants

- 9.57 Newly arrived migrant and humanitarian entrant families are generally found to be quite mobile in their initial stages of settlement. Research has found that their average number of moves in 4.5 years was 2.2 as compared to once in seven to 10 years for Australian home owners.⁴⁶ The Committee found that such mobility reflected the barriers faced by migrants and refugees attempting to find suitable accommodation. This can have a profound effect on overall settlement outcomes, such as health, education and the feeling of social inclusion.

44 DIAC, 'Humanitarian Settlement Services', < www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-programs/hss.htm > viewed 11 July 2012.

45 DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 16.

46 Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ), *Submission 86*, p. 3.

Appropriate and affordable housing

- 9.58 Appropriate housing is essential to the health, education and employment outcomes of migrants and humanitarian entrants. Evidence to the Committee revealed that the families of migrants and humanitarian entrants are generally larger than the average Australian family. For example, the average number of children per migrant household in Queensland was 3.7 as compared to 1.9 for the rest of the state.⁴⁷
- 9.59 Large family sizes of up to 10 people require housing specifically designed to accommodate large groups of people. Finding properties with five bedrooms or more can be particularly difficult, with those that do exist charging very high rents. For instance, the ACT Government noted that housing affordability, availability and size continue to be major barriers to long term settlement patterns in the Canberra region, particularly for large families of humanitarian entrants.⁴⁸
- 9.60 The difficulty in attaining appropriate housing for larger families due to a lack of supply can lead to a cycle of eviction and displacement. As submitted by Queensland Shelter:
- Lack of supply leads to overcrowding, and ultimately risks families being evicted or their leases not being renewed. This in turn forces families to either seek larger houses which are invariably more expensive, or lie about the number of individuals who will be residing in the household, which has potential to continue the cycle of being evicted and having to move regularly when estate agents discover the truth. Increased supply of diverse housing stock is needed to assist these families into housing.⁴⁹
- 9.61 Linked into the issue of appropriate housing is the problem of migrants and humanitarian entrants finding affordable property that is in close proximity to employment, social services and educational institutions. The Committee heard of one family who were required to move to a different location whilst waiting for long-term housing to become available. Having four children who were already settled in at the local school, the family decided to continue their children's enrolment despite it being a three hour round trip on public transport. The family felt it was important for

47 ECCQ, *Submission 86*, p. 3.

48 ACT Government, *Submission 140*, p. 15.

49 Queensland Shelter, *Submission 90*, p. 4.

the children to maintain their social relationships and not be uprooted through constant resettlement.⁵⁰

Discrimination and racism

9.62 The Committee found that discrimination and racism can be experienced by migrants and humanitarian entrants when attempting to acquire a property in the Australian housing market. This can occur on the basis of their cultural background or limited English language skills. When asked about the cause of racial discrimination in tenancy agreements, Ms Fiona Caniglia, Policy and Advocacy Officer, Ethnic Communities Council Queensland, informed the Committee that:

...language can be a barrier with people negotiating leases. We have found in our research that people did need support to negotiate lease agreements, signing important documents, doing condition reports – all of these processes are very language-rich and require a good understanding of what you are looking at, what you are signing.⁵¹

9.63 While there are no peak bodies or national structures within the real estate industry, Queensland Shelter believed that real estate agents that have received a large volume of applicants are generally less-inclined to select an application that requires extra time and involves more processes due to the limited English skills of the applicant.⁵²

9.64 However, some evidence recognised the positive role some agencies have played in working with not-for-profit organisations in developing leasing arrangements. This is one potential initiative ECCQ believes can help migrants.

CALD women

9.65 As of 2006, women from CALD backgrounds equated to 23.8 per cent of the total Australian female population, or approximately 2 397 300 people. According to the Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Alliance (AIRWA), the percentage of CALD women living in Australia would account for 40 per cent if it included women born in Australia with one or more parents born overseas.⁵³ Despite the large number of CALD women

50 Ms Fiona Caniglia, Policy and Advocacy Officer, ECCQ, *Committee Hansard*, 11 July 2011, p. 3.

51 *Committee Hansard*, 11 July 2011, p. 4.

52 Queensland Shelter, *Submission 90*, p. 4.

53 Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Alliance (AIRWA), *Submission 425*, p. 4.

living in Australia, many submissions to the Committee expressed concern about the vulnerabilities and barriers faced by migrant women. While many outside of the workforce are financially dependent on men as a source of income, those in paid work tend to have relatively low wages, limited opportunities for English language training and poor working conditions.⁵⁴ All of these factors can lead to social exclusion and difficulties in settlement and participation.

- 9.66 The Australian Psychological Society believes that migrant and refugee women are prone to social exclusion due to their visa status or their caring responsibilities. They also note that women face barriers participating in the community and accessing appropriate settlement support services due to childcare responsibilities and lack of transport.⁵⁵
- 9.67 This can infringe upon a CALD woman's ability to participate in Australian society. As noted in the ACT Government's 'Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013', lack of English language skills is considered to be one of the most significant barriers for women to participate in society and achieve social connectedness.⁵⁶
- 9.68 Another area of concern for CALD women is the ability to access specific and appropriate health services. As expressed in the Royal Australian Women's Hospital's (Melbourne) submission, the health literacy of CALD women is relatively low because of language and cultural barriers. With women commonly regarded as the primary care-giver in some cultures, the inability of CALD women to coherently communicate with health care professionals can have wider ramifications for their family. The Royal Australian Women's Hospital (Melbourne) notes that this could lead to untreated illnesses, medication errors and a lack of knowledge regarding overall health and wellbeing.⁵⁷
- 9.69 The Australian Government has committed to strengthen its access and equity framework in order to ensure government programs are responsive to the needs of CALD individuals. However, AIRWA believes that there is still a gap between the lived reality of CALD women and Government policies. One particular issue brought before the Committee was domestic violence.⁵⁸

54 Multicultural Mental Health Australia, *Submission 397*, p. 38.

55 The Australian Psychological Society, *Submission 422*, p. 9.

56 ACT Government, *Submission 140*, p. 56.

57 The Royal Australian Women's Hospital (Melbourne), *Submission 89*, p. 2.

58 AIRWA, *Submission 425*, p. 6.

Domestic violence

- 9.70 The Committee recognises that domestic violence can be an issue for CALD women due to their lack of understanding or awareness of the legal rights they have under Australian law. When questioned over the effectiveness of government policy in promoting Australia's zero tolerance of domestic violence in all families, Ms Joumanah El-Matrah of the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights told the Committee that long-term relationships need to be built in order to facilitate feelings of trust and confidence before women are prepared to speak about their experiences in the home.⁵⁹ It is the view of the Australia India Society of Victoria that Indian women are unlikely to access domestic violence services, thereby leading to feelings of loneliness and depression and possibly suicide.⁶⁰
- 9.71 One of the underlying causes of domestic violence in CALD households is feelings of social exclusion due to barriers in settlement and participation. The Committee also found that domestic violence can occur within CALD communities in instances where men experience a significant gender difference in Australia as compared to the patriarchal role held in their home country.⁶¹
- 9.72 AIRWA notes that many of the barriers faced by CALD women are indicative of intersecting discriminations not exclusive to gender, such as their cultural, religious and linguistic background. AIRWA therefore submitted that initiatives designed to address the needs of CALD women will be most effective when simultaneously dealing with gender and cultural discrimination.⁶²

Translating services

- 9.73 The Committee was informed that CALD women are prone to being inconsistently and inappropriately represented by their interpreter, particularly when it comes to issues of domestic violence. Ms Joumanah El-Matrah, Executive Director, Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, stated that:

It has been our experience and the experience of many other domestic violence services that when an interpreter is brought in

59 Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, *Submission 460*, pp. 8-9.

60 Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, *Submission 460*, p. 2.

61 ACCES Services Inc., *Submission 71*, p. 2.

62 Ms Vivi Germanos-Koutsounadis, Chair, AIRWA, *Committee Hansard*, 12 October 2011, pp.1-2.

to interpret situations of domestic violence, you are not always getting a neutral or professional interpreter who is basically just representing what the client is saying.⁶³

- 9.74 While acknowledging that some interpreters are responsible, professional and confidential, Ms El-Matrah spoke of how other interpreters are subject to their own personal opinion of the situation and may feel that they have been bestowed with the responsibility of representing their community.⁶⁴
- 9.75 Biased translating services can also have an effect on CALD women attempting to access and engage with Australian institutions and services. As outlined in **Case study 9.2**, MDA has been required to provide support to a CALD woman who was a victim of inappropriate translating.

Case study 9.2 CALD woman engaging with the Australian justice system

Police attended a reported domestic violence incident between a refugee woman and her husband. When making a formal report about the incident, the attending officers used the husband's friend as the interpreter, despite the friend having no training or qualifications as an interpreter. The interpreting by the husband's friend was intentionally biased and depicted the woman as highly volatile, mentally ill and unsuitable to care for her children.

The report was used by Child Safety Services in assessing the safety and living conditions of the children of the couple. The children were subsequently removed from the woman's care and placed with relatives, resulting in the youngest child being abruptly weaned from breastfeeding. Despite numerous attempts by the woman to engage with Child Safety Services, there was minimal communication with her. In her words 'Every time I talked to child safety they didn't take me serious, they made out I was crazy'.

Significant individual advocacy about this issue was undertaken by the woman's MDA caseworker. Prior to her initial Magistrates Court hearing MDA advocated to ensure she had adequate language support throughout her legal proceedings, and a professional interpreter was ultimately engaged. Through the interpreter it was determined that the information which guided the decision to remove the children was misleading and false. The children were returned to the mother's care. However, it was too late for the youngest child to continue breastfeeding.

Source MDA, Submission 421, p. 7.

63 *Committee Hansard*, 29 February, p. 2.

64 Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, *Submission 460*, p. 2.

- 9.76 The Committee is aware of a range of programs designed to help CALD women overcome settlement and participation barriers in different areas. These programs aim to educate CALD women and instil within them the skills necessary to participate and embrace the opportunities within Australia. An example of such a program is discussed in Chapter 10.

Recommendation 22

- 9.77 **The Committee recommends that the Australian Government develop programs designed to reduce the isolation of CALD women and improve their access to employment, education and mainstream services.**

Recommendation 23

- 9.78 **The Committee recommends that the Australian Government evaluate the adequacy of interpreting services available to the CALD community.**

Youth

- 9.79 The Committee found that young CALD people are prone to face particular barriers in accessing services and participating in Australian society. The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) identified these barriers as including language, culture, racism, discrimination and unfamiliarity with Australian systems and processes. Their submission went on to state that:

These factors can place multicultural young people at social and economic disadvantage within Australian society, which in turn can place them at a higher risk of social isolation.⁶⁵

- 9.80 Additionally, the changing notion of identity through transnational forces can make it particularly difficult for young people to recognise their place in society. This can potentially lead to feelings of social exclusion. It was suggested to the Committee that policy needs to be directed towards the creation of an environment that facilitates the free exploration of young

65 Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), *Submission 392*, p. 2.

people's identity through culture and ethnicity. Mr Ross Barnett from the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria stated that:

There is evidence that large numbers of youth from a CALD background feel that they do not belong. In 2009 the ECCV published a paper entitled 'Kaleidoscopic Kultures' which concluded that it is crucial that young people in our diverse society are supported with environments that encourage free exploration of their identity, as there is evidence that ethnic identity has evolved into a broader notion of cultural identity. Identity among our young is no longer confined to a set of values and behaviours linked with particular ethnicities, heritage or the past. I think that in a global society what is happening is that so many different things influence youth, but they still need support to develop an identity which enables them to take their place in our society.⁶⁶

- 9.81 The Committee acknowledges the existence of both private and public programs designed to help young CALD people overcome barriers to their social participation. For example, the Victorian Government provides funding to the Centre for Multicultural Youth to undertake research and better inform government policy to meet the needs of young CALD people. This has led to the Victorian Government's recent commitment to provide additional funding to young CALD people living in regional and rural Victoria.⁶⁷
- 9.82 The Committee is also aware of the forthcoming National Cultural Policy which aims to reflect the cultural diversity of modern Australia by encouraging Australians to become engaged in the nation's art and creativity scene. According to the Government, the National Cultural Policy will reflect the diversity of modern Australia; protect and support Indigenous languages and culture; make the most of emerging technologies and new ideas; strengthen the capacity of the arts to contribute to society and the economy; support excellence and strengthen the role arts and creativity play in telling Australian stories.⁶⁸
- 9.83 Evidence to the Committee proposed a range of different measures to help young CALD people overcome these barriers. Supported by the

66 *Committee Hansard*, 29 March 2011, p. 6.

67 Victorian Government, *Submission 482*, p. 14.

68 Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet, Office for the Arts, *National Cultural Policy: A discussion paper*, 2011, p. 11.

Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, MYAN's recommendations to the Committee included:

- school and community-based programs that promote positive images of culturally diverse young people and combat racism and discrimination;
- community-based leadership or mentoring programs with a focus on the development of skills and networks;
- group-based opportunities to engage with other young people from diverse backgrounds to explore multiculturalism, identity and belonging in Australia;
- continuity of support (established in the development of the new settlement framework) for young humanitarian entrants across all stages of the settlement services system. This includes a discreet focus on young people in the SGP; and
- programs and activities that bring families together to discuss Australian laws, customs, rights and responsibilities.⁶⁹

9.84 Another proposal made to the Committee was the potential of sport in contributing to the development of social and leadership skills, enhancing community engagement, social cohesion and community capacity building.⁷⁰ Similarly, arts and culture programs can play a formative role for younger generations in expressing their identity and contribute to their understanding and awareness of cultural diversity.⁷¹

Recommendation 24

9.85 **The Committee recommends that the Australian Government works with the State and Territory Governments via COAG to develop programs to address the specific barriers faced by CALD youth.**

Government funding and grants

9.86 A number of submissions to the Committee expressed the importance of government funding for organisations that provide local and ethno-specific settlement and participation services. More specifically, these organisations deliver culturally appropriate local services and help

69 Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), *Submission 392*, p. 5.

70 AIRWA, *Submission 425*, p. 10.

71 Kultor Network, *Submission 473*, p. 2.

facilitate their clientele's accessibility to Australia's mainstream settlement and community services. The NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance (NSW SLASA) submitted:

Existing research has proved that establishing links between migrants, refugees, humanitarian entrants and the wider community is one of the keys to 'successful' settlement. Ethno specific community organizations have been the key to establish these links for many years. They have acted as spearhead in introducing the community to the mainstream by represented theme as well as providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services to facilitate the settlement process. These organisations are the 'link' between communities and mainstream; they are also the voice and the advocators on behalf of their needs as well as the encouragers of communities to showcase their culture, participate and connect with what is happening in the wider community.⁷²

9.87 It was the experience of NSW SLASA that knowledge and understanding of Australian culture, society and government systems are translated through local community and ethno-specific organisations to newly arrived CALD individuals and communities.⁷³

9.88 Government funding for these types of organisations are primarily sourced from two programs administered by DIAC: the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) and the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program (DSCP).

Settlement Grants Program

9.89 Administered by DIAC, SGP is designed to assist eligible migrants who have arrived in Australia in the last five years to become self-reliant and participate in Australian society. Organisations are eligible to receive grant funding should their core services include:

- orientation to Australia to promote self-reliance, life skills and familiarity with the local environment; and
- activities to provide opportunities for eligible new entrants to participate and engage in Australian society.⁷⁴

72 NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance (NSW SLASA), *Submission 111*, p. 5.

73 NSW SLASA, *Submission 111*, p. 5.

74 DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 18.

- 9.90 SGP is the main source of Government funding for local ethno-specific organisations. However, the Committee was informed that due to the limited amount of grant funds available under SGP, community groups are forced to compete for funding, in turn creating a competitive environment which undermines their overall pursuit of social cohesion in the local community.⁷⁵
- 9.91 There has also been a notable shift in the provision of funding from local organisations to larger mainstream organisations.⁷⁶ NSW SLASA noted that this shift has created stress and questioned the longevity of such organisations. Their submission stated that:

In the last 2010 Settlement Grants Program (SGP) funding round the Department of Immigration allocated 1.2 million to two Migrant Resource Centres in South Western Sydney, but funding to the Lao Community Advancement, Timorese Australian Council, Assyrian Australian Association, Chinese Migrant Welfare Association, Serbian Orthodox Welfare, Vietnamese Australian Welfare Association, NSW Spanish and Latin American Association (NSW SLASA) from the Settlement Grants Programs (SGP) ceased completely or was reduced heavily. This situation has created a lot of stress and uncertainty within ethno-specific communities.⁷⁷

Diversity and Social Cohesion Program

- 9.92 DSCP is a new initiative that provides grant funding to local community groups and organisations to deliver projects that address local community relations issues in order to enhance social cohesion and facilitate cultural diversity.
- 9.93 While recognising the flexibility in grant provisions, the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) is of the view that the current funding pool is not sufficient in satisfying the DSCP's policy objectives. Given the shift of SGP funding and the Government's commitment to funding multicultural arts and festivals, RCOA notes that consideration must be given to how other community development needs will be funded.⁷⁸

75 Mrs Amanda Bray, Fairfield City Council, *Committee Hansard*, 24 October 2011, p. 38.

76 African Think Tank Inc., *Submission 408*, p. 11.

77 NSW SLASA, *Submission 111*, p. 6.

78 Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA), *Submission 416*, p. 8.

Social harmony funding

- 9.94 In order to address issues of settlement and participation for migrants and refugees, the Committee recognises the importance of promoting initiatives designed to enhance the social harmony of Australia. The Committee heard of a range of private and public initiatives designed to address the barriers faced by CALD individuals and communities during their settlement and participation in Australian society. While encouraging initiatives that promote social harmony, the Committee is wary of recent government programs designed to address issues of social inclusion through the paradigm of national security and terrorism prevention.

Countering Violent Extremism Strategy

- 9.95 The Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) strategy aims to reduce the potential for a home-grown terrorist attack by building the resilience of potentially vulnerable communities and individuals, and encouraging positive and constructive community participation. The CVE strategy includes the administration of grants to community groups to prevent violent extremism within their local community. This gives communities the skills and resources to understand and address intolerant messages and discourage violent extremism.⁷⁹
- 9.96 Ms Jamie Lowe, National Security Policy and Programs Branch of the Attorney-General's Department, told the Committee that while there isn't a specific path to radicalisation, there are a number of influencing factors, such as:
- ...social isolation, perceived lack of employment and educational opportunities, lack of access to senior decision making, not engaging or fully understanding how to engage with the democratic process or judging that it is not effective in delivering outcomes...The type of grievances we have had communicated back to us have been along those lines: perceived lack of opportunity.⁸⁰
- 9.97 While the CVE strategy does not specifically focus on newly arrived migrants or any particular ethnic, religious or cultural groups, Ms Lowe stated that many CVE recipients of grants represent new and emerging

79 Ms Jamie Lowe, National Security Policy and Programs Branch, National Security Law and Policy Division, Attorney-General's Department, *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2012, p. 1.

80 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2012, p. 2.

communities, with factors of social isolation and discrimination featuring in migrant communities.⁸¹

Committee comment

9.98 In recognising the role of the CVE strategy within Australia's broader counter-terrorism framework, the Committee considers that such programs run the risk of inadvertently creating grievances by viewing areas of social isolation, social exclusion and identity issues only through the prism of national security and counter-terrorism. The policy of multiculturalism has been successful in addressing issues of social exclusion, young people, cultural identity and community cohesion since it was first adopted as a policy 40 years ago.

9.99 The Committee made a recommendation in Chapter 4 on the development of a strategic plan to support the regular convening of interfaith and intercultural dialogues that go beyond community leaders and foster wider inter-community understanding.

81 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2012, p. 1.

