



Wimmera Development Association



WIMMERA
SOUTHERN MALLEE
*Collaborative
Approaches
to settlement*

*Prepared for Wimmera
Development
Association, Horsham*



WDA acknowledge the support of the Victorian Government

We acknowledge the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history and take this opportunity to move forward hand in hand.

Report prepared by



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1. Introduction

“Ultimately, a successful society where diversity thrives and cities prosper is one where citizens are able to realise their full potential as active and equal citizens and where the reciprocal relationship with the host nation is a fair and equitable one, creating opportunities to add value to the social cohesion and economic landscape of the host nation.”

Helen Kapalos, Chairperson VMC

1.1 Background

This project was managed by the *Wimmera Southern Mallee Partnership Fund for Wimmera Driven Projects* through funding and support from the *EVOLVE Strategic Capacity Building Partnership Project*. The *EVOLVE Partnership*, funded by the Victorian Government, works collaboratively to support and deliver capacity-building, social cohesion and community participation initiatives in the Central Highlands and Wimmera Southern Mallee regions of Victoria. The EVOLVE partners are: Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council Inc. (BRMC), City of Ballarat, Ballarat Community Health (BCH), Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and Wimmera Development Association (WDA).

Migrant and CALD communities play an important role in the economic and social development of the Wimmera Southern-Mallee region and the Partnership seek to strengthen settlement services and assistance available to eligible migrants in Horsham initially, extending out to West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Northern Grampians and Yarriambiack municipalities over the course of the 4 year program.

The strengthening of settlement services is expected to be achieved by:

1. Developing an integrated approach to settlement planning, service delivery and outcomes through collaboration between local government, community organisations, business, service providers and the education sector.
2. Delivering on key priority areas set out in the National Settlement Planning Framework including education and training, language services, health and wellbeing, civic participation, social inclusion and employment.
3. Establishing clear referral routes for more effective access to regional services for migrant and CALD communities.
4. Building the capacity of local businesses by generating employment pathways for migrants and CALD communities.
5. Embedding the Settlement agenda within the Horsham Rural City Council Community Action Plan.
6. Providing a more ‘joined up’ inter-agency approach to improve the overall delivery of Settlement related services in the area.

To support the Wimmera Development Association to achieve these objectives, Myriad International were contracted to research and prepare a report that:

- Identifies relevant service delivery agencies within the Wimmera Southern Mallee, including their scope of activities, relevant contacts and referral processes.
- Recommends how access to regional services for migrant and CALD communities can be included in Local Government Community Action Plans.
- Recommendations on how migrants may be incorporated into the local workforce.
- Include a recommended implementation schedule and timeline

1.2 The Wimmera Southern Mallee Region



The Wimmera Southern Mallee in central western Victoria represents one of the world's great wheat and cereal growing regions.

The region is made up of many small, rural communities with Horsham as its major regional centre. It is also home to some of Victoria's most iconic natural attractions, including the Grampians National Park, the Wimmera River, major wetlands and lakes, and Mt Arapiles, a world renowned rock-climbing destination.

The region encompasses five local government areas including Hindmarsh Shire, Horsham Rural City, Northern Grampians Shire, West Wimmera Shire and Yarriambiack Shire.

Regional Development Victoria (RDV), the Victorian Government's lead agency in developing rural and regional Victoria, established nine Regional Partnerships across the State, including the Wimmera Southern Mallee Partnership, to give regional communities greater say about what matters to them and ensure their voices reach the heart of government. These partnerships will significantly increase collaboration between communities, industry, businesses and government to address the most important challenges and opportunities in each region.

Opportunities and issues that the Wimmera Southern Mallee Partnership will tackle include expanding high-value agricultural production and developing innovative agricultural products, attracting new residents and services for ageing residents, and diversifying the economy.

State-wide Budget Investments benefiting regions under the 2017/18 Victorian Budget included:

- \$29 million for priority initiatives by the Partnerships, as well as funding to enable more comprehensive engagement in each region and to undertake further development of regional priorities.
- \$45 million to the Connecting Regional Communities Program to support digital initiatives such as broadband trials, digital agricultural applications and blackspot minimisation.
- \$1.45 billion for upgrades to regional rail infrastructure across the state.
- 25% reduction in the payroll tax rate for regional businesses – expected to benefit 4,000 businesses.
- \$50 million to double the First Home Owner Grant to \$20 000 for new homes in regional areas.
- \$1.7 million to re-establish the Victorian Rural Women’s Network (RWN) to promote women’s economic participation and professional development.

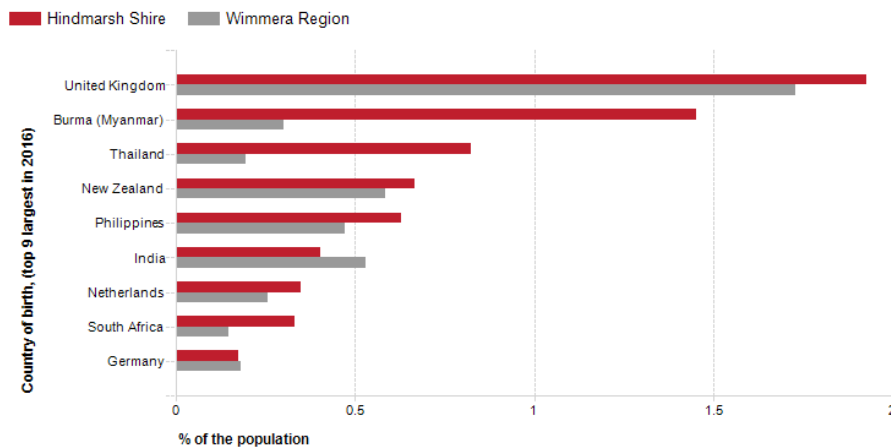
Specific Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership budget highlights include:

- Funding to develop a business model for a Networked Grains Centre of Excellence to advance the Wimmera Southern Mallee region’s competitive advantage in agri-science
- Funding for future planning to develop a thriving tourism industry in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

1.3 Key Settlement Locations in the Region

Hindmarsh

Birthplace, 2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

.id
the population experts

Hindmarsh Shire is located in the Wimmera region in western Victoria and covers an area of 7,527km². Situated on the Western Highway, 375km west of Melbourne, Hindmarsh Shire is alive with business opportunities as it lies on the second-busiest freight corridor in Australia. At the 2016 Census had a population of over 5,500. The Shire's four main towns are Dimboola, Jeparit, Nhill and Rainbow. Each community has its own identity, but all towns offer spacious rural living, inclusive small communities, and wonderful natural amenities.

Nhill

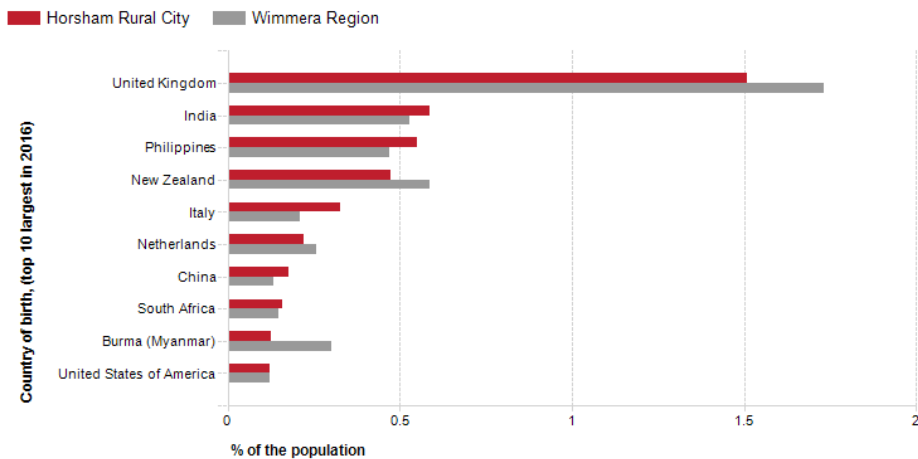
Nhill is the administrative headquarters for Shire of Hindmarsh and residents are mainly employed in either farming or food processing, most notably in grain and fowl. At the 2016 census, Nhill had a population of 2,184.¹

The town is home to a community of Karen people. Originally coming to Australia as refugees, the Karen community settled in Nhill in the early 2010s to work at the Luv-a-Duck food processing facility. Today there around 200 members of the Karen community living in Nhill making up about 10 per cent of the population.

Horsham

¹ http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC21927

Birthplace, 2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.



Horsham is a regional city in the Wimmera region of western Victoria, Australia. Located on the Wimmera River, Horsham is approximately 300 kilometres (190 mi) north-west of the state capital Melbourne. In April 2017, Horsham City had an estimated population of 16,792² with its unofficial subdivisions bringing that total to 17,643. It is the most populous city in the Wimmera region, and it is the main administrative centre for the Rural City of Horsham local government area.

As at the 2016 Census³, 86.9% of people in Horsham were born in Australia. The most common countries of birth were England 1.1%, India 0.8%, Philippines 0.6%, New Zealand 0.5% and Italy 0.4%. A total of 78.5% of people had both parents born in Australia and 8.6% of people had both parents born overseas. The most common countries of birth for male parents were Australia 81.6%, England 2.4%, Italy 1.0%, India 1.0% and New Zealand 0.7%.

West Wimmera

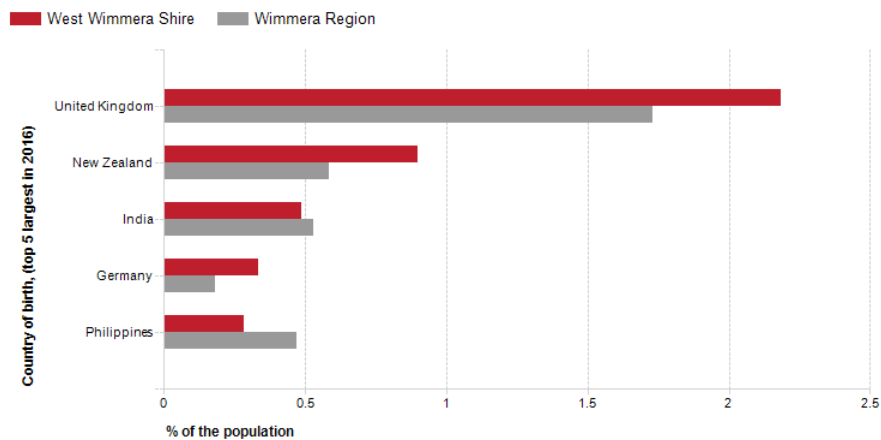
²

http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC21197?opendocument

³

http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC21197?opendocument

Birthplace, 2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data)
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The municipality encompasses 9,108 square kilometres, including sections of the Little Desert National Park and Big Desert National Park, as well as over two thousand natural wetlands.

The main economic driver of the municipality is agriculture, including broadacre grain, intensive animal, seed, sheep and wool production, as well as olive and timber. Agricultural businesses range from international corporate investments, remotely managed farms, large family enterprises with extensive diversification, traditional mixed farms and hobby farms.

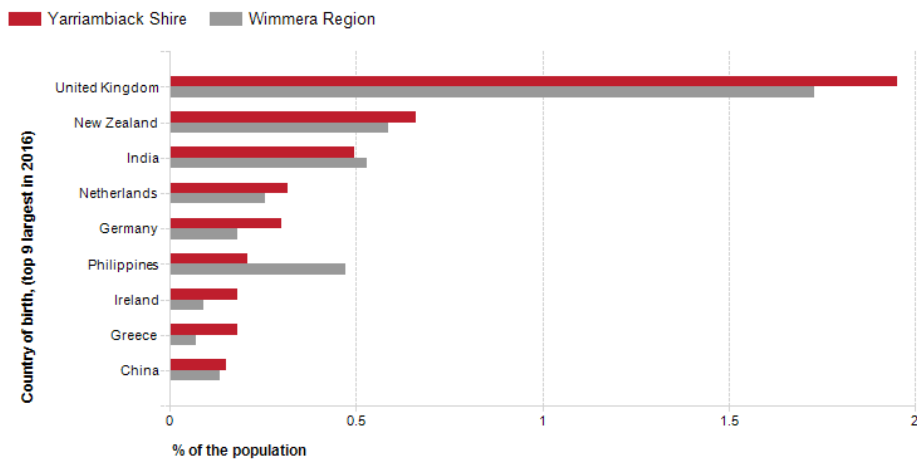
West Wimmera is experiencing a decline in population levels from 4,521 (2011 ABS) to 3,912 in 2016⁴. West Wimmera communities access health, community services and education facilities through the main towns of Edenhope, Kaniva, Goroke and Harrow

Overall, 5.5% of the population was born overseas, and only 2.2% were from a non-English speaking background. There has been a small increase in the number of residents born in India and Philippines in the last 6 years.

Yarriambiack

⁴ <http://profile.id.com.au/wimmera-region/population?WebID=120>

Birthplace, 2016



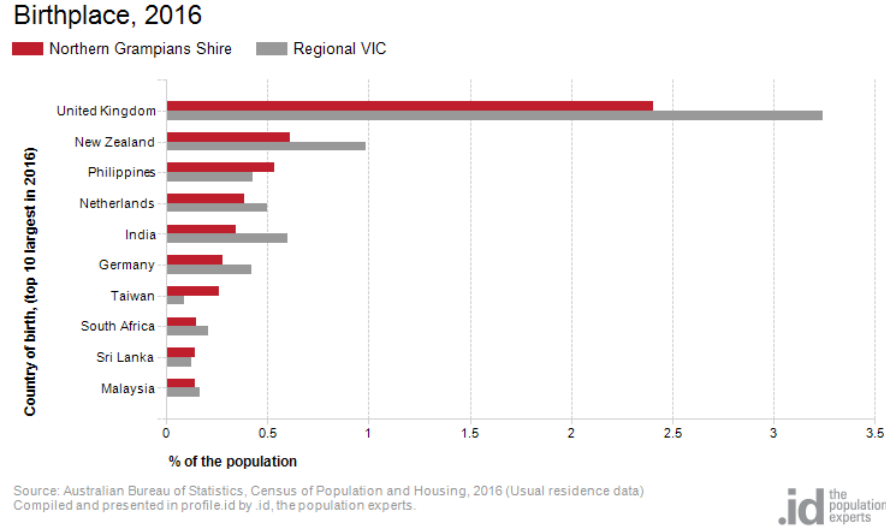
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.



The Shire of Yarriambiack is located in the north-western part of Victoria. It covers an area of 7,158 square kilometres and, at the 2016 Census, had a population of 6,674.

The population is concentrated in a number of small towns which service the surrounding broad hectare farming properties. Yarriambiack Shire is the heartland of grain production and handling in the Wimmera and Mallee. The main industry is agriculture which accounts for almost half the workforce. Overall, 5.6% of the population was born overseas, and 2.6% were from a non-English speaking background. There has been a small increase in the number of residents born in India, Netherlands, Ireland and Greece in the last 6 years.

Northern Grampians



The Northern Grampians Shire is located to the north east of the Grampians and about 230kms north-west of Melbourne. It covers an area of 5,918 square kilometres (2,285 sq mi) and at the 2016 Census had a population of approximately 11,500.

Its economy is based on agriculture, gold mining, tourism, wine production and manufacturing. Stawell, the main centre, is home to brick, textiles and meat production, while the Grampians area is a popular holiday destination. The main industries include agriculture, metal or mining, meat and meat product manufacturing and other food manufacturing.

Overall, 7.3% of the population was born overseas, and 3.9% were from a non-English speaking background, compared with 11.0% and 6.1% respectively for regional Victoria. Interestingly, between 2011 and 2016, the number of people born overseas increased by 86 or 11.5%, and the number of people from a non-English speaking background increased by 124 or 39.2%. The most significant increases in overseas born were from Philippines, India, Taiwan, Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

Emerging Opportunities⁵

Whilst the migrant population within the Northern Grampians Shire remains relatively low, this is expected to change with the funding boost the region will receive under the Labor Government's *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund*

In June 2017 the Victorian Government announced that over 1,300 new jobs will be created in the Northern Grampians region with a massive expansion of Nectar Farms, powered by wind energy.

⁵ <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/more-than-1300-sweet-jobs-for-stawells-nectar-farms/>
<http://www.nectarfarms.com.au/why-glasshouse-farming>

The \$565 million project will build a huge wind farm with battery storage to power the expansion of Nectar Farms. Nectar Farms will establish its first facility at Stawell creating 250 ongoing jobs and 300 direct and indirect construction jobs.

This development offers much potential to attract migrants to the region to fill the employment opportunities created by the project.

1.4 The Wimmera Development Association

The Wimmera Development Association (WDA) is the peak economic development organisation for the Wimmera Southern-Mallee region supporting existing local businesses, and promoting economic development opportunities to investors. WDA is a vital link between industry and government lobbying for improved regional infrastructure, and advocating for regional priority issues. WDA works collaboratively with a breadth of stakeholders to progress their objectives.

WDA are also funded to deliver the Settlement Grants Program in the region.

Settlement Grants Program (SGP)

Grants for settlement services are guided by the following overarching policy principles. Settlement Grants Providers will:

- work in communities to support responsive local services, build capacity and community connections, and create a welcoming environment and opportunities for new arrivals
- work with individuals through the provision of casework services to connect them to mainstream services
- promote access and equity by playing a brokerage and advocacy role with Government agencies on behalf of new communities.

Targeted support is also expected to be provided for new and emerging communities to help build their capacity to assist in their settlement.

The types of services delivered under grants for settlement services are aimed at delivering a 'settlement' outcome for clients, comprised of the key settlement dimensions of:

- social participation
- economic well-being
- independence
- personal well-being
- community connectedness.

The Grant is provided as part of the settlement services program to assist humanitarian entrants and eligible migrants to become self-reliant and participate equitably in Australian society as soon as possible and thereby minimize their longer-term reliance on social services.

Services can only be directed to those permanent residents who have arrived in Australia in the last five years as:

- Humanitarian entrants and/o
- Family stream migrants with low English proficiency; and/or
- Dependents of skilled migrants in rural and regional areas with low English proficiency

Types of services that can be delivered under the SGP include:

1. Casework/coordination and settlement service delivery
2. Community coordination and development
3. Youth settlement services
4. Support for ethno-specific communities

Under the DSS Streamlined Grant Agreement, WDA are required to undertake the following service types:

- ***Casework/coordination and settlement service delivery***
This involves providing settlement related information, advice, advocacy or referral services to individuals or their families due to issues arising from their settlement experience. This service type can include but is not limited to life skills classes and information on rights and responsibilities, including partnerships and programs that assist clients to become job ready.
- ***Community coordination and development***
This involves providing assistance to newly arrived clients to make social connections. This service type can include but is not limited to leadership and mentoring activities and advocacy support to link with mainstream employment, education, English language and other mainstream services in order to become self-sustaining as soon as possible.

Further information about types of services delivered under the SGP are included as Appendix 1.

WDA achievements under the SGP

The WDA Regional Settlement Grant Program has assisted new arrivals to the Region through support in case management, child care, community projects and liaison, training and education programs, referrals, advocacy, information session and, has strengthened responsiveness to the needs of migrants by regional service organisations.

The Karen communities in Nhill and Horsham, families of skilled migrants, emerging African communities and professional migrants employed in health and grains research are all adding to the diversity and skills of the region.

1.5 Review of the Settlement Grants Program

An independent evaluation⁶ of Settlement Grants was undertaken in 2016-17. The evaluation found there is a strong consensus that the Settlement Grants program fills an important niche in the range of available services. The evaluation also found:

- the program is appropriately targeted
- the five year eligibility limit is appropriate for most clients
- the program is appropriately flexible allowing services to adapt to local contexts while at the same time focusing on the needs of the eligible client group
- most services are well-integrated with the local service system
- the program appears to be efficient.

The evaluation was conducted by the UNSW Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) who identified six options for program enhancements in the evaluation report:

1. Meeting client needs: Consider providing a medium level of support that sits between the intensive case management support delivered through the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) and Complex Case Support (CCS) programs and the low-intensity case support provided through the Settlement Grant program. Consideration should be given to whether this should be funded through Settlement Grants or through another funding source.

2. Program structure: Consider two activity streams that focus on:

- individual supports as part of a life course approach, noting that different client cohorts face different settlement-related challenges that require a tailored response e.g. youth and older clients
- community-based supports that support ethno-specific communities, including mentoring and leadership training and capacity building.

3. Program eligibility: Provide support for high needs clients in a culturally appropriate way beyond five years through Settlement Grants or another funding stream. It is important that the program continues to focus on independence and self-reliance, and that clients do not become dependent on Settlement Grants in the long term.

4. Settlement Grants and the wider service system: Settlement Grant policy makers should continue to liaise with policy makers responsible for relevant mainstream services across departments. DSS should encourage sector collaboration through the grant round and through requirements detailed in funding agreements.

⁶ <https://www.dss.gov.au/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/settlement-services/settlement-grants/settlement-grants-independent-evaluation/evaluation-of-settlement-grants-final-report>

5. Policy and program settings: Program objectives should be clarified (particularly in relation to the employment, English language and education) and continue to emphasise both social and economic participation, and fostering independence and self-reliance.

To increase accountability and maintain quality of the services clearer guidance should be provided on the outcomes, what to expect, and how to achieve and measure these. There should be more opportunities for service providers to share best practice or 'good news stories' to allow for a clear sense of what providers can do and to disseminate innovative practice. Consideration should also be given to how to encourage innovation through the program.

6. Data Exchange (DEX) & monitoring: An improved evidence base is required. To support improvements service providers would benefit from increased support and guidance on the DSS Data Exchange system (DEX) so that robust administrative data is submitted.

The Department is considering the evaluation findings and the six SPRC suggestions. The evaluation will inform the development of program settings for the next open selection round for Settlement Grants.

The Department is conducting consultations with settlement stakeholders on proposed changes to the program in the form of face-to-face roundtable discussions in late November 2017.

2. Strengths and opportunities supporting migrant settlement in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region

“The resettlement not only provided significant economic stimulus, it enriched the community through exposure to another culture and has made Nhill a better place to live.”

Hindmarsh Shire Council CEO Tony Doyle

2.1 Wimmera Settlement Committee

The Wimmera Settlement Committee oversees management of the SGP. At the time of undertaking this research, Committee members included:

- Ralph Kenyon, WDA
- John Millington, WDA Committee
- Tha Hser Bley Dah, Settlement services officer Nhill
- Emily Telfer, WDA settlement services officer
- John Ackland, Chair of the *Wimmera* Settlement Committee
- Melissa Douglas, SES
- Rae Talbot, Yarrilinks
- Leanne Seipolt, Wimmera Health Care Group
- Robbie Millar, Centre for Participation
- Debbie Milgate, Visiting Primary School Nurse
- Genevieve Smith, Horsham College Work Experience/ Work placements coordinator
- Eddie Nsanzimana, Nexus youth worker
- Sue Martin, CFA

2.2 Consultations with region stakeholders delivering services relevant to the National Settlement Planning Framework

Consultations to inform this report included:

- Fifteen individual interviews with a range of relevant stakeholders including service providers, schools, local government, local employers, community organisations, and peak bodies.
- A face to face forum with stakeholders held in Horsham

The following key questions informed individual interviews:

- *Describe the work you do and how this helps with the successful settlement of newly arrived refugees in the region*
- *Who are the key partners that you work with – eg. Other agencies/community groups/local government?*
- *What have been some of the challenges and what have been some of the successes?*
- *Are there any suggestions you have about how your organisation can be better integrated into a more integrated settlement services system in the area?*
- *What would you do to improve service delivery in the region?*

Work supporting the successful settlement of newly arrived communities in the region and key agencies / groups involved in activities supporting settlement

Please refer to the WDA Stakeholder Map for a breakdown of work supporting the successful settlement of newly arrived communities in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

Stakeholder consultations identified the following agencies / networks / organisations had collaborated with or supported agencies to deliver settlement related activities:

- AMES
- Hindmarsh Shire Council
- Australian Native Flower Company
- Nhill College
- Federal government
- WDA
- Department of Education
- Horsham Rural City Council
- Vic Roads
- Uniting Care
- Grampians Community Health
- Women's Benevolence Fund
- Australian Wildflowers Farm
- Real estate agents
- Nhill Learning Centre

Challenges in delivering settlement support

Throughout the consultation phase undertaken to inform this report, it became startlingly obvious that there exists significant underfunding to respond to the overwhelming level of work required in the region to support the settlement of newly arrived communities. There are a very small number of highly committed agencies which deliver the bulk of settlement support services and programs, many of which do so with limited, if any, government funding.

The following key features relevant to settlement within the region exacerbate challenges faced by those working with new arrival communities:

- The region is spread over a large expanse of land often requiring long travel times to access services or to support clients.
- There are limited funding opportunities and these are usually short term – this makes it difficult to allocate the level of resources required and also results in short term staffing so prevents sustainability of relationships and initiatives.
- New arrival community needs differ depending on location and arrival status – there is a mix of humanitarian background, family reunion and skilled migrant communities moving into the region. Whilst for many the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region is a secondary migration location, settlement support needs remain high. This is due to:
 - Ongoing needs of humanitarian background communities who are still adapting to life in Australia
 - Very limited local community networks / social isolation
 - Lack of access to extended family support and settings relevant to cultural identity

Lack of Funding

All region based stakeholders consulted identified access to funding as the key challenge in delivering settlement support.

“Settlement funding is limited so organisations like ours have to be creative around where we can support.”

There are high levels of need for specialised education and training programs that enable pathways into mainstream education and employment. Many services are focusing resources on English language classes, work ready programs, homework support, health and safety, and are also working with local employers to establish accredited training programs around specific skills shortage areas such as aged care and nursing.

“There are a whole bunch of urgently needed community education activities that can’t happen without funding.”

In Horsham alone, there is a significant shortage of medical practitioners which has attempted to be addressed by bringing in skilled migrants. However, services have identified that this is proving unsustainable as the partners of these professionals are not adapting to local settings.

“We are losing doctors because wives are not connected to the community. They can’t find work and don’t have any community networks. We have ideas to engage them but no resources to do this work.”

Support services for young people are another area of demand that cannot be adequately met. Whilst Headspace has recently established services in Horsham, there are also a number of community organisations undertaking youth engagement activities in an effort to ensure they remain in the education system and are socially connected. Most of these initiatives operate with limited budgets and rely on volunteers and collaborations to continue.

“The majority of the work relies on funding and this is the biggest hurdle and we have to continue to submit funding applications. This is an ongoing roller coaster to keep on top of different funding programs. It’s difficult to get funding out of state government because we are a marginal electorate.”

Local Government

Horsham Rural City Council have provided support for services providers working with new arrival communities and actively contributed to community consultation processes aimed at identifying community needs but have limited funding to assist in providing for identified needs.

“Local government has been instrumental whilst not offering lots of money. If we were to look at getting more refugees they would be keen to work with us on doing that. But like a lot of rural local governments the priority is still road, rubbish and rates.”

Whilst other small rural councils had established settlement support roles, Horsham were yet to dedicate specific roles to this work despite the growing number of migrant and refugee communities settling in the town.

“If WDA don’t have the capacity then I am surprised that a community the size of Horsham doesn’t have someone to provide those services.”

Lack of infrastructure and resources

The importance of the WDA Settlement Committee was highlighted by stakeholders as a key component of pooling together limited resources but a more concentrated effort was needed in advocating for resources and ensuring a coordinated approach to delivering settlement services.

“This kind of thing needs to keep happening. But where we fall over is when there are gaps there are no organisations with the capacity to fill the gaps. Whilst we can get together we don’t always have the

capacity to respond. For example, as a settlement committee we were looking into and talking to council about how we could attract some of the Syrian refugees but we don't have the system to be able to support this. The settlement work is still very ad hoc."

"To bring in 100 new families into an area you would need significant infrastructure around that to enable it to work."

Stakeholders had identified a strong demand from local employers around attracting new arrival communities to fill jobs in the region but were struggling with providing the necessary supports that would be needed for local settlement.

"We are working with local employers to look at how we can help. They are driving change and really supportive of giving these communities opportunities and applying for funds. But there is no infrastructure so it's very challenging. We are using employer meeting and training rooms to train workers but they also have families who need to participate in the community and get their kids into school which requires a whole other level of resources and infrastructure."

"The demand for a workforce in the region will continue to grow so we really need to be working now to look at how we can support migrants and refugees to come and work and live here."

Key challenges around infrastructure and resources repeatedly identified by stakeholders included core relocation needs for migrant and refugee communities:

- Transport
- Training (particularly specialised training in agriculture)
- Accommodation
- Lack of local services that force communities to travel long distances

"I am only three days a week so to take someone to an appointment can take a full day. This is significant impact."

There were also assumptions that the WDA were not addressing settlement needs they had been funded for and that other services were filling these gaps.

Lack of coordinated approaches

Whilst settlement support services were coping with supporting workers moving into the region, issues emerge when their families relocate to join them. The range of needs this relocation creates are currently addressed by a diversity of stakeholders without a central coordination body to ensure there are no gaps in settlement support. Additionally, there are settlement needs that fall outside the SGP funding scope and there is no agreed response within the region with many services accessing already stretched resources to meet these.

"Once the males are happy then the rest of the family follow. The males are okay once we arrange housing but once the women arrive then we need better coordination. We are talking about new school

places, new job active needs and social integration but there is no one service to coordinate all this from.”

“Because it is secondary settlement and some may have been in Australia longer than five years there are not always funding programs to meet their needs. We need to look at other options but we really need a full-time role now to coordinate what services there exist so we can be fully utilising what we have.”

Successes in delivering settlement support

Despite the many challenges and limitations that impact the Wimmera Southern Mallee region in delivering settlement support, the region is to be commended for the numerous successes that have been achieved.

The following successes were identified as part of the research for this report and highlight the untiring commitment of local communities and service providers to attracting and embracing new arrival communities.

High levels of community acceptance

Although there is a long history of ‘mainstream’ demographics in the region, there has been a positive response to increasing diversity and in volunteerism that has enabled social inclusion. Stakeholders suggested that a key factor in community support for new arrivals was that they were not seen as taking away local jobs but rather filling workforce gaps that ensure the sustainability of local communities.

“They don’t see the refugees taking their jobs but helping to fix the issue that they have.”

“Employers in the area have seen the successes with luv a duck in Nhill and want to encourage more migrants and refugees to move here.”

Nhill Learning Centre

In September 2015 Nhill Learning Centre was awarded 2015 Community Training Provider of Year at the Victorian Training Awards and also received the AMES Diversity Innovation Award at the 2015 Victorian Learn Local Awards. These awards are a testament to the work being undertaken by the Centre.

Nhill Neighbourhood House Learning Centre Inc

The Nhill Neighbourhood House Learning Centre has been awarded the Celebrating Diversity Award in recognition of the volunteer English Mentor program which was introduced to respond to the needs of new arrival communities and contribute to their successful integration.

Good Practice Initiatives

CASE STUDY 1: GROWING FUTURES (Capacity Building – Hindmarsh)

The Growing Futures program provides a hands-on introduction to agriculture and horticulture for Wimmera migrant communities and disengaged youth. Participants are involved in a range training programs based on farming, gardening and floristry.

The program was developed by the Nhill Learning Centre who successfully applied to Hindmarsh Shire Council to lease Nhill's former kindergarten building in Clarence Street for the project. An Adult Community Further Education Board grant also contributed to funding the program.

"There are a lot of jobs within horticulture and agriculture in our region and this is a way people can get a taste of that and start gaining skills in those areas."

Annette Creek, Executive Officer Nhill Learning Centre

The program not only teaches key skills relevant to work opportunities in the region but also offers an environment that fosters social cohesion and participation for people who might not have had previous opportunities to access learning.

In addition to the contribution this program makes to employment pathways, it is also an excellent example of utilising existing community resources to most effect. The venue is centrally located and easily accessible by participants and will also be used for community purposes when the program is not running.

CASE STUDY 2: NHILL COLLEGE (Social Integration – Nhill)

The arrival of the Karen community has seen a reversal in the declining student enrolments over recent years. Almost 10% of students are enrolled as English as a second language. The students are predominantly mainly made up of Karen students who are represented across all year levels from prep to year 12.

The school has established supportive links with the surrounding community and students have access to a wealth of opportunities to support their learning and career paths. Volunteers also make a welcome and significant contribution to classroom and extracurricular activities.

The impact of the changing demographic has been a positive one.

"The Karen students at the school are extremely positive and appreciative of any opportunities they are given. They bring a drive to the school that is having an impact on the other students who are responding

by noticeably trying harder at their studies and other school activities.”

A key goal of the EAL coordinator is to develop students' language skills, especially in the older year levels, to help them gain work or further study after secondary school.

A homework support program has also been established to support students. The Wimmera Settlement After School ESL Activities Program targets migrant and refugee young people living in the Wimmera. The program aims to support the educational needs of young people and is inclusive of all wishing to attend. Each program has a trained coordinator as a number of volunteer tutors. Students attending are provided with afternoon tea and can participate in craft activities, as well as receiving assistance with homework tasks.

The College employs a Karen Language Assistant who liaises directly with the school families and provides translating and interpreting services as well as classroom assistance in both primary and secondary sections of the school.

Liaison processes between the school and parents ensures that information relevant to education reaches home.

“Understanding the schools in Australia is a real challenge. The pathways are tricky particularly around VCAL or higher education. There are not many employment opportunities for young people in the area generally. The Karen students have no networks within the area so it is challenging. We address this by engaging the parents and getting them more involved with the school so we can use this time to give them information. The primary students will hold a concert and the Karen mums come and help with costumes. It’s a great community.”

Suggestions for improved and integrated settlement services

Stakeholders offered a number of suggestions for improved and integrated settlement services and were keen to contribute to collaborations that ensured gaps were minimised and resources fully utilized.

Stakeholders believed the Wimmera Settlement Committee offered a critical starting point for developing a more integrated approach to settlement services. Ideas for moving forward included:

- Increasing representation on the Committee, particularly by local employers
- Hosting events that generate interest and collaboration. The Wyndham Employers Forum was proposed as a good example that could be replicated in the region. An economic development breakfast with guest speakers showcasing success stories was another idea.

- Developing and implementing a WDA led Community Volunteers program to match new arrivals with a local community member to accompany them to appointments during initial settlement.
- Improved presence of the WDA Settlement Officer – greater liaison and communication with other stakeholders delivering settlement related activities. This would improve awareness of emerging issues so potential responses could be identified and also improve potential for collaboration.
- Advocating to local government to play a greater role in settlement support
- Developing culturally responsive approaches to health literature and health education/promotion specific and relevant to refugee communities.
- Linking into the work that local government bodies such as Hindmarsh Council are doing to engage local employers in settlement initiatives.

“We talk to businesses who don’t have migrant staff and are trying to build their confidence and highlight the opportunities available and getting them to consider it.”

- Rotating the location of the Wimmera Settlement Committee to improve regular attendance by members who are not based in Horsham.

“There are other players that are missing in settlement planning. If the meeting happened in Nhill it could involve more of us. It’s a two hour round trip to Horsham so once or twice a year it would be great to have this locally.”

“Networks are vital. A lot of these are informal and based on relationships with each other.”

- More localised funding arrangements that reflect the reality of different communities and location based needs.

“The need for localised funding is a big one. I can see how big the settlement officer role is locally and they are doing work well beyond their paid hours.”

- Events such as cultural festivals that celebrate local diversity and provide critical opportunities for intercultural dialogue and engagement.

2.3 WDA Stakeholder Forum

As part of this project, a stakeholder forum was hosted by the WDA in Horsham on 13th November 2017. Representatives included:

- A Victorian Multicultural Commission Commissioner
- The Settlement Council of Australia CEO
- Nhill Learning Centre

- Centre for Participation
- Refugee Community Health- West Wimmera
- Migrant Employment Coordinator, Hindmarsh Council
- Headspace
- Wimmera Development Association
- Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council
- Wimmera Settlement Committee
- Yarriambiack SC
- Northern Grampians- Inv Attraction Off

A total of fifteen participants attended the forum.

Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)

The VMC Commissioner indicated that the Victorian government is currently working towards a refugee settlement planning strategy to include regional Victoria. It is expected that under the new strategy settlement planning groups will include partnerships between the corporate sector and non-government organisations.

The recently released VMC *Victorian Settlement Journey Report* looks at the role that government can play in supporting settlement of refugees and newly arrived migrants. The report proposes a holistic approach informed by Canadian and US experience as well as the Australian. The Report also urges an expanded understanding of settlement to include welcoming initiatives that link mainstream communities with new rival groups.

In relation to a regional focus the Commissioner stated that the VMC is being advised by Regional Development Victoria around suitable settlement locations. Regional areas with an interest in attracting new arrival communities should be developing a strong business case highlighting the benefits of migration to their region.

The Commissioner highlighted that the Wimmera Southern Mallee region offers a number of advantages that should be harnessed in promoting the region as a preferred settlement location. These include:

- That Horsham offers one of the best agricultural training programs in Australia
- That the Wimmera region offers a plethora of employment opportunities for those interested in agriculture

The importance of training programs was highlighted as the VMC hosted community consultations with Syrian communities in 2016 and found that whilst many came from farming backgrounds, farming in regional Victoria is very different to the Middle East and skills development programs would be critical to bridging this gap.

Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA)

As the peak body representing the settlement sector, SCOA has been actively advocating to the federal government around increasing settlement in regional locations.

SCOA's CEO highlighted that currently about 20% of new arrivals are settling in regional areas under the government's humanitarian resettlement program but 80% are still being settled in metropolitan areas given existing links with communities in cities. Current government policy will not prescribe regional settlement where a new arrival has metropolitan based community connections but do send communities without these links to regional areas. To be considered as a preferred settlement location, regional areas need to have demonstrated settling a minimum of 200 people within a six month period. For example, the regional area of Armidale in NSW have advocated for many years and will now be receiving 200 Syrian refugees in 2018.

"You need to be actively advocating for regional settlement of you want them there."

In considering settlement locations the government will look at imperatives including:

- Strong community support
- Availability of infrastructure
- Employment and training opportunities

There are currently many regional locations actively undertaking work to highlight why they are an ideal regional location but the government is unlikely to consider these locations if there is not adequate representation from their communities to keep refugees there.

SCOA suggested that the Wimmera region was well placed as an important secondary settlement location and offered a strong evidence base of success in this area. Large numbers of humanitarian entrants who initially settled in metropolitan areas such as Broadmeadows and Dandenong are now actively looking at regional locations where there might be more accessible housing and employment. These are important opportunities for Wimmera to be considering.

Additional opportunities were presented by the current estimates of about 30,000 people in Australia at the moment who are on safe haven visas (5 year visas) and who will then have the chance to settle in regional areas.

The SCOA CEO also urged stakeholders to use the National Settlement Services Outcomes Standards to guide their settlement planning.

Current Settlement Challenges for the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region

Key settlement challenges for the region identified by participants at the forum were consistent with the issues raised in stakeholder interviews. They included:

- That community needs were influenced by location – for example, Horsham and Nhill community needs differed.

“Integrated settlement needs to be local and appropriately funded.”

- Regional grants for the area are grouped with Ballarat which is a three hour distance. This creates access barriers to services so local services end up doing the work with no funding. Even in larger towns like Ballarat lots of services are really stretched because lots of funding is going into travel to try and reach more isolated communities.

“The government needs to break down funding so it reaches community towns. Nhill has 200 refugees in a town of 1800 and the services just don’t make it there.”

- Volunteers are dropping out because they are exhausted trying to cover work that is provided by services in larger areas.

“Ballarat is regional but towns like Horsham are rural. They are left out on their own and rely on volunteers.”

“Thousands of hours are given by the community on a voluntary basis because the services aren’t there and people are burning out.”

- Businesses are very keen to employ refugees but funding is needed to run work ready and skills development programs.
- Whilst smaller towns are continuing to try and attract more migrants to fill the demand for workers their settlement worker funding is running out. There is no stability in funded roles so services do not know if they will have the resources to support new arrivals if they do arrive.
- Areas which are expected to be covered by current funding arrangements are not in fact receiving services as travel issues have not been considered in funding arrangements. As a result, local services are carrying the load without any funding.

“Why can’t places like Nhill be funded independently instead of accessing funds from others? They received no direct funding and then were asked to do the work voluntarily because none of the services could get out there.”

“The government are pitching communities against each other. They are competing to access a limited resource base instead of focusing on doing the work.”

“Nhill get promoted as having good settlement outcomes but this is not because of government support. It is because of the great work being done by communities.”

- Skilled migrants are initially attracted to the region but do not stay as there is no support provided for this cohort.
- Language challenges – access to interpreters is extremely difficult in health settings.

- Limited specialist services in the area to appropriately service humanitarian communities. For example, torture and trauma counselling
- Lack of opportunities and resources for consultation, review and implementation of best practice settlement service
- Disjointed delivery of services for service users
- Lack of cohesion for settlement service delivery between service providers
- Ad-hoc funding and associated demands of funding applications
- Distinction between regional and local settlement service delivery - regional areas have distinct migrant profiles and challenges specific to local areas (e.g. Difference between Horsham and Nhill)
- Connectivity to enable more online communications

The greatest challenge identified by participants is that there is no agency cohesion and no referral process as the resources needed to provide for this are not available.

“There is no process at all for working together to get outcomes and we are working in reactive rather than proactive ways.”

Participants urged for a region wide conversation that brings together all stakeholder groups including local government, business, peak bodies, service providers, education providers and others to ‘take stock’, determine mutual objectives and expectations, and develop a mutually agreed and owned road map aimed at achieving those objectives.

“Our work is currently ad hoc. Disparate organisations are doing the best possible without resources. There are pockets of excellence and great organisations but communication is not there.”

Settlement Successes in the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region

Participants identified the following as features of successful settlement in the region:

- Untiring commitment of staff and volunteers
- Strong community groups and active not-for-profit organisations raising the profile of migrants in the area For example, Oasis, Paw Po, Aussie-Filipino social club
- Engaged and supportive faith groups. For example, HIWA
- Unique businesses and employers committed to employing migrant and refugee communities. For example, Luv-A-Duc, Australian Wild Flowers, Oscars.

- Effective regional partnerships striving to improve settlement service delivery across the Wimmera region (Evolve)

Working towards an integrated approach

Participants agreed that a jointly agreed framework setting out which services deliver what programs needed to be developed. Currently, there is a lack of communication around what different stakeholders are doing and also a perception that many in the community may not even be aware there are services available to them.

“We all work hard but don’t stop to talk enough. There are not enough resources to allow us to sit together and work it out.”

Additional suggestions and recommendations made by participants to work towards an integrated approach included:

- Stability in funded positions to improve access to workers
- A community resource / directory that supports people to identify where they can go for help
- Cultural competency training for workers and cultural capability development for organisations
- A specific resource on support services for employers to attract new arrivals in employment

“Employers have no idea about how to access refugees for employment. The jobs and people are there but it’s about how to match them up.”

“We have lots of employment opportunities but we can’t move because of bureaucracy. There is no support provided in Horsham.”

- Regional partnerships
- Transparency around what services are available – some service providers do not have any clear information about what they provide
- Identification of who has ultimate responsibility around settlement support including:
 - A central access point for all information about what services exist
 - Helping stakeholders to connect with the community and keep up to date with emerging needs
 - What resources are currently available and these can best be utilised
 - Referral pathways
 - Information transfer
 - Leading the building of welcoming communities
- More inter-agency delivery of settlement services. For example, health, counselling, education, social, not-for-profit, religious groups, business etc
- Partnerships and information transfer between settlement service providers
- Effective engagement and support of local employers

Horsham Rural City Council are in the process of creating a Community Development Directory and participants suggested this would be a great opportunity to document all the services in the region.

Participants also identified the following as directions they would like to see in a Wimmera Regional Settlement Strategy:

- Building on current employment successes with local businesses
- Providing more support to local businesses to employ migrant workers
- A recognition of differences between regional and local service delivery
- Clear referral routes for inter-agency service delivery
- Consistency and improved service delivery through longer term funding contracts
- Partnerships between regional groups for funding and information transfer
- Priority areas of settlement services and support with adequate guidelines, funding and training.
- Clearer pathways for migrants to move from primary Humanitarian Settlement in metropolitan areas to secondary settlement in regional areas.
- Improved resources and support for complex cases in regional areas

3. Improving access to regional services for migrant and humanitarian communities at the local level

This section of the report responds to the following project deliverable: Recommend how access to regional services for migrants and CALD communities can be included in local government community action plans.

3.1 Hindmarsh Shire Council

Hindmarsh Shire represents a good practice example in demonstrating how access to regional services for migrant and CALD communities can be included in local government community action plans.

Hindmarsh Shire is Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) being home to people from more than twenty five different countries around the world. The shire embraces the migrants and refugees who have made the choice to move to the region, often for employment in many different fields. The Karen Community is by far the largest ethnic group within the Shire and their settlement has had a significant economic impact, particularly in Nhill, allowing for business expansion, boosting numbers in kindergarten and schools and stimulating the local property market.

Many migrants are also working in the Shire’s Hospitals and Aged Care facilities, while others have shown confidence in our Shire by operating businesses. Regardless of employment status, every migrant or refugee is a valued member of the community and are encouraged to recognise and celebrate their own culture and history.

The Hindmarsh Council Plan 2017-2021 is reflective of an unprecedented amount of community consultation undertaken by Council in the preceding years and includes four broad key result areas:

- Community Liveability;
- Built and Natural Environment;
- Competitive and Innovative Economy; and
- Our People, Our Processes.

Council continues to deal with the challenges of population decline, skill shortages, and maintenance of essential infrastructure. Over the life of the Plan, Council intends to work closely with governments and

their agencies, the Wimmera Development Association, neighbouring councils, the business community and other organisations to find solutions to these challenges.

The key result areas in Council's plan closely align with the region's priorities as reflected in the

- Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Strategic Plan (WSMRSP) and the work of the
- Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership.

Hindmarsh Shire has already developed a strategic response to migrant communities with the development of the Karen Community Action Plan which is now in its second iteration. Since the development of the first Karen Community Action Plan in 2014, the Karen community in Nhill has gone from strength to strength. In partnership with the local community, the Karen community has made tangible and significant impacts on the local economy, as well as contributing to the cultural and social fabric of Nhill.

The current Karen Community Action Plan is aligned with the Hindmarsh Shire Council Plan 2017 – 2021 and will continue the long term strategic direction for Council to develop a thriving local economy through increased capacity and leadership within the Karen community of Nhill.

The key aim of the 2017 Karen Community Action Plan is to build on the actions of the 2014 plan and support the Karen community in increasing their access to settlement services at a local and regional level, developing their leaders with training and education opportunities, increasing employment opportunities through employment and business development and providing new opportunities in sport, recreation, arts and cultural activities. Empowering the Karen community through continued learning, training opportunities and mentoring support will see increased capacity throughout the Nhill and Hindmarsh community in areas such as hospitality, tourism, health and agriculture.

The Karen Community Action Plan includes the following key priority areas:

- Lifestyle – covering early childhood services, increase participation in civic and community life, targeted youth engagement, literacy, intercultural dialogue, arts and housing.
- Education, enterprise and employment – covering employment opportunities, traineeships, apprenticeships and internships, education access, community enterprise and community facilities.
- Increased leadership – covering leadership roles, developing youth leaders and community capacity building.
- Services and support – covering increased access to Medicare and Centrelink services, local Citizenship testing service, sustainable ESL support at local schools, Hospital Tours, service access rights and information.

The Plan relies on strong partnerships and collaboration with a breadth of partners.

3.2 Horsham Rural City Council

Multicultural diversity within Horsham remains low with 11% of the population born overseas and only 3% speaking a language other than English at home.

The Horsham Council Plan 2017-2021 includes five key goals:

1. Community and Cultural Development
2. Sustaining the Economy
3. Asset Management
4. Governance and Business Excellence
5. Natural Environment

The Council Plan sets out the following specific commitments with potential relevance to migrant and refugee communities:

- It commits to fostering an environment that embraces diversity as an integral part of the community (guiding principle)
- It acknowledges that there is an increase in people from diverse cultures moving to the municipality.

Whilst all of the goal areas set out in Council's Plan readily lend themselves to inclusive approaches for CALD communities Council has not embraced the opportunity to do so. Indeed, the only mention of a direct commitment around cultural diversity within the Plan's activities is the last priority action under Goal 4 - Governance and Business Excellence where Council commits to *'supporting cultural awareness training and programs'*.

Although leading agencies such as the WDA have identified and are responding to the plethora of opportunities increased migration can make to the region, this research has not identified visible levels of leadership by Horsham Council in this area. A priority in moving forward as a desirable destination for new arrival communities will require a significantly strengthened approach and contribution by local government in supporting business and other sectors in Horsham to attract migrants to the area.

Across all key goal areas set out in Council's plan, there are a range of stakeholders delivering strategies and initiatives that readily contribute to outcomes for migrant communities. Some examples are set out below.

Council key goal area	Examples of actions being delivered by stakeholders in Horsham
Community and Cultural Development	Wimmera Development Agency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community projects and liaison • Settlement support • Information sessions • Horsham and Nhill After School Activities Multicultural

	<p>Homework Clubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nhill Butterfly Playgroup • Horsham Jellybeans Playgroup • ESL classes in Horsham and Nhill
Sustaining the Economy	<p>Centre for Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and skills development programs for migrant women • Horsham Hospitality Workforce Pathways Program for migrant women • Social enterprise program – Harmony Van • Co-operative selling of local goods (grocery items, craft, clothes, food) • Market / Community Garden Enterprise
Asset Management	<p>Centre for Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning to establish a multicultural community hub
Governance and Business Excellence	<p>Leadership Wimmera:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stimulates, facilitates and sustains regional leadership. • provides two leadership programs to enhance and develop leadership skills and promote leadership in the region.
Natural Environment	<p>Hindmarsh Landcare Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers environmental and community-based projects in the Nhill region of Victoria. • Contributes to social inclusion of the community • Community garden planting by the local Karen refugees. The garden now supplies many refugee families with fresh products.

This research has identified that Horsham Rural City Council is not currently well placed to readily adopt strategies that improve access to regional services for migrant communities. It is highly recommended that the following initial steps are undertaken:

- That key stakeholder groups such as the WDA begin a dialogue process with Council to ascertain levels of support and secure commitment to promoting Horsham as a destination of choice for migrant and humanitarian background communities.
- That Council work towards providing resources / dedicated role(s) around enhancing engagement, access and equity for multicultural communities. This should include collaborations with services and other stakeholder agencies currently undertaking this work.
- That Council commit to organisational capability development around working within multicultural contexts.

- That Council engage with Hindmarsh Shire Council to learn from and adopt good practice approaches in access to regional services for CALD communities.

3.3 Key Recommendations

1. That the Wimmera Settlement Committee strongly advocate for Horsham Rural City Council to work towards adopting the *'The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities'*⁷.

The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities is a central element of the Welcoming Cities network. The Standard aims to enable local councils to:

- Benchmark their cultural diversity and inclusion policies and practices across the organisation
- Identify where and how further efforts could be directed
- Assess progress over time

2. That the Wimmera Settlement Committee begins a dialogue process with the Northern Grampians Shire Council to explore collaborations that will:

- Result in Council representation on the Wimmera Settlement Committee
- Support attracting migrant and new arrival communities to the region as part of the job creation opportunities emerging through the expansion of the Nectar Farms
- Begin developing settlement support pathways and initiatives through Council and other services located in Stawell in particular.

⁷ <https://welcomingcities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/The-Australian-Standard-for-Welcoming-Cities-Public-Draft-version-1-digital-1.pdf>

4. Strengthening representation of migrant and humanitarian communities in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region workforce

This section of the report responds to the following project deliverable: Recommend how migrants may be incorporated into the local workforce.

4.1 Introduction

In 2016, the Settlement Council of Australia released the *Foundations of Economic Engagement Model for migrants from a refugee background*⁸. These eight foundations provide a solid basis from which economic engagement can be fostered and lasting, suitable employment secured. These foundations are interdependent and where one or more is lacking in respect of a particular migrant or group of migrants, the chances of successful economic engagement can be severely impacted.

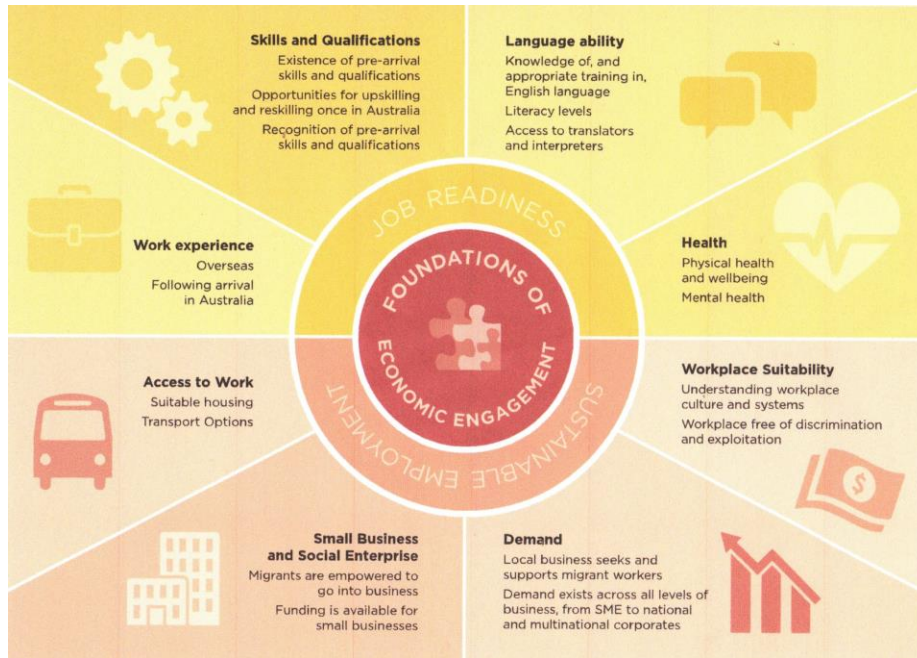
Not only are employment outcomes a high priority for government, but they are also a key driver for migrants themselves, who view their labour market integration as vital to their “successful immigration”.⁹ Naturally, securing lasting employment has considerable benefits for migrants as they establish their new lives in Australia. However, it must not be forgotten that the effects of migration flow through every aspect of the economy and migration results in a net fiscal benefit to Australia’s bottom line.¹⁰

⁸ SCOA, *Unlocking Potential – foundations of economic engagement for migrants from a refugee background, 2017*

⁹ Productivity Commission (2016), *Migrant Intake into Australia*, p147.

¹⁰ OECD (2014), *Is Migration Good For The Economy*, p1.

SCOA Foundations of Economic Engagement Model for migrants from a refugee background



Australia’s approach to the provision of settlement services has been identified by the Productivity Commission as playing a crucial role in empowering migrants to seek employment outcomes that are suitable and provide a solid foundation for establishing life in Australia.¹¹

While direct employment services are not typically funded through settlement service providers (they have historically been provided by mainstream agencies), it is increasingly the case that members of the settlement sector are including innovative and highly successful employment programs in their suite of services to new migrants.¹²

In 2017 SCOA held a series of Employment Innovation forums in thirteen locations across Australia. They aimed to highlight existing successful initiatives and facilitate the development of new ideas and innovation to drive improved employment outcomes for refugees and migrants in each region across the country. Numerous exciting and ground breaking initiatives of the sector were shared in the forums representing best practice examples in achieving the Foundations of Economic Engagement.

¹¹ Productivity Commission (2016), *Migrant Intake into Australia*, p178.

¹² SSI (2016), *Working It Out*, p14

4.2 Good Practice examples of migrant employment across Australia

CASE STUDY 1: Teys Australia Biloela and Access Community Services Limited Partnership (Queensland)

Linkages to SCOA Foundations of Economic Engagement

Language ability
Skills and Qualifications
Access to Work
Demand
Workplace Sustainability

The Biloela plant has been operating for 55 years, the last 33 as a Teys Plant. The site is one of the largest local employers in the Biloela area, with a workforce of 420 staff and production employees on site. The work force in Biloela has always had a strong multicultural base; initially made up with locals and migrants from Italy, Greece and Russia.

From 2003 onwards, the plant was facing serious labour shortages with record levels of unemployment in the area as low as 1.9%. The plant could not maintain full production and operated at around 70% to 80% capacity. This was mainly due to the mining boom, large construction projects, inflated wages and cost of living. Job seekers had a variety of choices and youth were moving to the cities.

Teys Australia Biloela 457 Program

Teys looked to the 457 visa program in an effort to engage the workforce required to operate at full capacity. Since 2005 Teys has employed 457 program workers from Brazil, Vietnam and China. While the initial trial involved only Primary Visa holders, the company has supported long term visa holders to reunite with partners and children.

Resources supplied by the company within the 457 program include full time interpreters and an English teacher, a teacher's aide, bus to transport to and from work on all shifts, housing and furniture packages.

The introduction of English language classes was critical in improved independence, improved self-confidence, community involvement and sporting clubs participation.

The company recognised that workers were impacted as a result of family separation and this was causing increased absenteeism, loneliness, guilt, depression and behavioral problems.

The company remodeled the program to keep families together at all times and created employment opportunities for both the primary and secondary visa holders. As a result, they now have up to two

generations working at the plant with many who have reached ten years of service. A large percentage of these workers have now transitioned to permanent residency or citizenship.

Access Community Services REAP program

Due to the strong success the company experienced with the 457 visa program, they formed a partnership with SCOA member Access Community Services to build on their migrant workforce. Through Access the company has now employed humanitarian entrants from Burma, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

Resources for the REAP program supplied by the company and Access include:

- Information sessions
- Recruitment process
- Relocation services
- Induction & onboarding
- Part time Interpreters (buddy system)
- Full Time English Teacher (TAFE)
- Bus to transport to and from work on all shifts
- Housing and furniture packages

The REAP program was initially only a 12 month program, however Teys and Access continued providing employment opportunities to successful candidates after the official program had concluded.

Families have been settled together and employment created for both partners. Small support groups are set up in each department which a large percentage of have now transitioned to permanent residency or citizenship.

The successful outcome of the REAP program led to Teys Australia Biloela being nominated by Access Community Services for the Migration Council of Australia (MCA) Business Inclusion awards.

Teys Australia Biloela Skills Training

Teys Australia Biloela is committed to providing long term employment and training opportunities to every successful candidate. Every employee has the opportunity to not only have full time employment, but also a career pathway with training and development opportunities. All Staff are trained on site.

During the recruitment process prior background and skills are assessed and previous skills are used to help match roles. Some of the training opportunities provided on site include:

- A four day induction program
- Certificate II, Certificate III in Meat Processing
- On the job training
- Certificate IV Leadership

- Quality Assurance
- Workplace Health & Safety
- Working at Heights
- Chemical Handling
- Forklift
- Animal Welfare
- Senior First Aid
- CPR

Due to the low level of education of many REAP program staff, training has been adapted to suit needs and includes basic English and numeracy skills. Induction material has been remodeled to include more audio and video, delivered in small groups to allow for interpreting and for extra training time is provided so they can progress only when ready.

CASE STUDY 2: Parks Victoria - Working Beyond Boundaries (Victoria)

Linkages to SCOA Foundations of Economic Engagement

- Work Experience
- Language ability
- Workplace Sustainability
- Skills and Qualifications
- Health

Parks Victoria in Australia is running a highly successful partnership program that is helping refugees gain employment and language skills while connecting with their local park, to the benefit of both the people and the park. The program includes a thriving community garden program, complete with a horticultural educational facility.

The location is Werribee, a rapidly growing urban area just west of Melbourne, the capital city of Victoria, which includes people from a variety of ethnicities and backgrounds, many of whom have come to Australia as refugees from war and conflict.

In the grounds of the Werribee Mansion, managed by Parks Victoria, an historic home surrounded by gardens that include heritage listed trees and the State’s Rose Garden, is a revolution in community horticulture.

A group of volunteers from the Karen community – refugees from Burma – have helped to transform a dormant community garden into a thriving kitchen, full of vegetables and herbs.

“These volunteers were initially afraid of coming into the park, unsure that they would be welcome, and understandably wary of people in uniform. The garden has become their outlet and a way for them to meet with other people from the community. The sound of laughter has become a musical soundtrack in the park.”

Dr Bill Jackson, Parks Victoria Chief Executive.

When the project started it focused on women from refugee communities, and aimed to address some of the mental health issues associated with the effects of post traumatic disorders, including depression and isolation. Now the project also includes younger members of the community that have left school and been unable to gain employment, mainly due to lack of English rather than lack of skills.

The program has a strong social and educational component that makes it quite unique. It now includes a training organisation providing on-site classes in vocational English and horticulture as well as the Parks Victoria Traineeship program, mainly aimed at people under 25 who are given the opportunity to work alongside rangers and learn park management and horticulture based skills.

The project is a partnership between Parks Victoria and SCOA members AMES Australia and the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The Werribee Mansion Hotel onsite gets a share of the fresh produce for its restaurant as well as a great story to tell their guests.

“I am very happy here. It is good to come here and do something. I love working with plants and working with the people here is good.”

Dutchie

25 year old Karen refugee

CASE STUDY 3: CALD Education and Employment Pathways (CEEP) Program (Ballarat)

Linkages to SCOA Foundations of Economic Engagement

Skills and Qualifications

Work Experience

Language ability

Workplace Sustainability

Demand

With funding from the Department of Education and Training, the City of Ballarat, together with partners Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC), Ballarat Community Health (BCH) and Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) has developed delivered the CALD Education and Employment Pathways (CEEP) Program which aimed to enhance social inclusion, employment and educational pathways for sixty (60) Culturally, Linguistically and Religiously Diverse (CALD) men, women and youth.

This program was undertaken through training specifically designed to meet the needs of migrants to enable them to achieve positive employment and education career goals.

The program supported migrant participants to:

- Build their confidence and be skills ready for work or study in the Australian environment.
- Undertake training and personal development opportunities to better navigate the 'Australian way of life' and expectations of Australian employers.
- Participate in a mentoring program.
- Undertake work experience or volunteering opportunities.
- Identify and access employment or education opportunities.
- Make friends and enhance social connections.

Other aspects of the program included engaging and enhancing relationships with employers to promote the benefits of diversity within the workplace, and seeking opportunities to increase employment for CALD people in Ballarat.

CEEP involved four key phases:

Phase 1	Engaging with CALD individuals to determine their social, employment and education career goals
Phase 2	Skills Development: Delivering training and development initiatives to enhance life skills in Australia, employment, education opportunities and social networks
Phase 3	Engaging with the Community, Industry and Educational Institutions to secure for program participants relevant education placement, workplace experience, employment and mentors
Phase 4	Supporting and mentoring program participants post their employment or during their non-vocational education.

The program achieved a number of significant successes and resulted in positive local media stories.

An example of project activities includes:

- Community Engagement with community members, stakeholder services and industry to seek support and consensus on the goals of the program and establish partnerships.

- Skills Development training for program participants in accordance to their identified training needs and vocational pathways. Participants undertook the ‘Living in Australia’ module and ‘Make it Work’ modules. They also participated in one-on-one sessions to guide them through goal setting and education / employment pathway planning.
- A business breakfast with Ballarat employers to promote employment, industry placements, internships, work experience and volunteering. These employers had volunteered to mentor participants in accordance with their aptitude, skills and educational background. Employers undertook a mentoring workshop developed by Ballarat Community Health to ensure they have the competencies to mentor program participants.

4.3 Good Practice examples of migrant employment Wimmera Southern Mallee

CASE STUDY 1: Luv-a-Duck (Nhill)¹³

Linkages to SCOA Foundations of Economic Engagement

Language ability
 Skills and qualifications
 Access to work
 Demand
 Workplace sustainability

The Luv-a-Duck regional resettlement experience, initiated at the local level, has yielded significant outcomes for Nhill and the Karen refugee community. This case study provides new and important insights into the economic and social value that can accrue through these initiatives, and identifies factors that contribute to their success. These insights can both create the case for, and inform planning of, resettlement in other Australian communities.

Since early 2010, approximately 160 Karen refugees have resettled in Nhill, in north western Victoria. Nhill is a small, relatively isolated agricultural town in the wheat-belt Wimmera region of Victoria. Like a number of small regional towns, Nhill has faced a declining working-age population, which has had flow-on implications for the economic and social prosperity of the town. The context of a declining population, combined with very low unemployment, was a key catalyst in this resettlement. In particular there was a need for labour to support expansion of, the largest local commercial business, and driven

¹³ <https://www.ames.net.au/files/file/Research/19933%20AMES%20Nhill%20Report%20LR.pdf>

by a combination of economic and humanitarian motivations, Luv-a-Duck management identified the Karen as potential employees.

Through a staged recruitment and resettlement process, the Karen community now comprises approximately 10% of the Nhill population, including significant numbers of working age adults and families with young children. Furthermore, labour force participation linked to this population increase is high. Fifty-four Karen are directly employed in Luv-a-Duck, and seven are employed in businesses that supply Luv-a-Duck. Beyond this, the increased population has enabled the creation and filling of additional jobs across a number of broader community businesses and services.

A total of 70.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions have been added to the regional economy over the five year period of analysis, representing approximately 3% of total employment across Hindmarsh. The economic impact of this increased labour supply, in terms of Gross Regional Product is estimated to be \$41.5 million in net present value terms. The wider social impacts of the resettlement of the Karen in Nhill provide the story behind the numbers. In short the Karen resettlement in Nhill has helped to:

- redress population decline for the township
- revitalise local services and attract increased government funding
- increase social capital across both communities

The necessary factor in the success of the Karen resettlement has been employment. However, while critical, employment is not of itself sufficient for successful resettlement and a number of other contributing factors have been identified. These include:

- strong leadership in the host community
- a host community which is well prepared for the new settlers
- initial accommodation for the new arrivals
- support for the new families
- management of the degree and complexity of 'cultural adjustment' on both sides
- strong leadership in the settling community
- potential settlers prepared for the new environment

Of these, strong leadership has been a key contributing factor in this now well established venture that began as a small idea and has evolved into a revitalised and vibrant small regional community.

CASE STUDY 2: Paw Po Products (Social Enterprise – Nhill)

Linkages to SCOA Foundations of Economic Engagement

Language ability
Skills and Qualifications
Health

Access to Work
Demand
Workplace Sustainability
Small Business and Social Enterprise

In January 2010, a busload of Karen refugees visited Nhill for the first time. A fortnight later, the first families arrived to settle in the area.

Seven years later, the main street is full of chatter as the women weave, sew and work on their ever-expanding, handcrafted range.

Having arrived in Nhill with little or no English, the Karen women worked closely with the Nhill Learning Centre to expand their language and life skills. Sewing classes were included in the program after the women, aged between 18 and 70, expressed a desire to work with their own traditional fabrics. Although most in the group had never sewn before, the women steadily gained confidence and competency with the help of the Program's Co-coordinator, along with a core group of dedicated volunteer seamstresses.

Each participant worked with a volunteer on a one- to-one basis to develop their proficiency, and underwent testing to be issued with a certificate for completion of basic machine skills.

The Karen women then began by sourcing their fabric from refugee camps on the Thai-Myanmar border, but are now weaving more and more of their own textiles using traditional looms.

Aware of the potentially limited market for purely conventional products, the women have been keen to create a range that recognises the fusion of traditional and contemporary culture.

As the business develops, so do the Karen women. Learning to negotiate, monitor finances, implement pricing and advertise effectively is central to their day-to-day work.

The Federal Government (through the National Stronger Communities Program) and the Nhill Learning Centre each contributed \$10,000 to the Paw Po shop to turn the dream of creating a business into reality.

"It is a great example of firstly, another shop opening in a country town. Secondly, it is encouraging a community to interact and integrate, thirdly, it shows the rest of Australia you can integrate refugees into country towns and it can be a real success.

"If you're driving through Nhill, stop, have a feed, buy some of this great craft and celebrate the diversity of our regional and small country towns."

Federal Member for Mallee Andrew Broad

The work of the Paw Po Shop is expanding and they now also have a partnership with Laharum's Australian Native Flower Company to make and sell floral using native blooms.

4.4 National Research on employment for migrant communities¹⁴

The SCOA Employment Innovation forums held throughout Australia involved representatives from service providers, businesses and CALD communities. The following are key challenges and success factors identified through the feedback from stakeholders who were actively engaged in initiatives aiming enhance employment pathways for new arrival communities.

Challenges

Challenges for newly arrived communities included:

- The skills of new arrivals are under-utilised because there are no processes in place for recognition of prior learning or experience
- Recognition of overseas skills is complex and costly
- A lack of coaching and mentoring programs to support workforce participation
- A lack of networks and connections which are critical for accessing jobs
- Language limitations
- Access to relevant information

Challenges for employers included:

- Employer lack of cultural competence and capabilities
- The expectation by employers for Australian based work experience
- Unconscious bias, discrimination, stereotypes and ingrained stigma
- An absence of multicultural liaison officers to engage with communities and develop employment pathways / work experience opportunities

Success factors

Success factors for newly arrived communities included:

- English for the workplace programs
- Work experience
- Training that is targeted and relevant
- Community leaders to promote positive stories

¹⁴ SCOA, NSSOS Project Evaluation Report 2017

- Access to mentoring
- Work placement programs
- Internships
- Introduction to Australian workplace culture
- Access to transport
- No cost preparatory programs
- Purposeful and meaningful employment programs
- Understanding workplace rights

Success factors for employers included:

- Provision of transport services to access the workplace
- On the job learning customised in response to language needs
- Values that support diversity and inclusion
- Cultural competence and capabilities
- Flexibility
- Provision of opportunities for upskilling through work experience
- Pathways to further qualifications
- Adaptability
- Whole-of-Staff ownership - not just CEO
- Paid work experience / placements

4.5 Recommendations on how migrants may be incorporated into the local workforce.

A key feature relevant to all the case studies documented above is that they involved partnerships between service providers, employers and adopted approaches responsive to the direct needs and aspirations of the communities involved.

The most critical learnings and recommendations applicable to incorporating migrants into the Wimmera Southern Mallee region workforce are those identified as success factors in the Luv-a-Duck success story, as identified in the AMES and Deloitte Access Economics Report “Small Town Big Returns”¹⁵.

These include:

- Suitable employment opportunities – long term jobs that support communities to settle effectively and achieve financial independence

¹⁵ <https://www.ames.net.au/files/file/Research/19933%20AMES%20Nhill%20Report%20LR.pdf>

- Strong leadership and support from local champions who have influence within the local community – this includes those who can advocate with service providers for the types of support new settlers will need, provide a first point of call for migrants needing advice/assistance and can involve the local community in general.
- A receptive local community – ensuring the local community has a positive attitude to migrants, involving local community leaders and volunteers to engage with new arrivals, providing information and training that builds cultural responsiveness of employers.
- Accommodation – ensuring access to affordable and suitable housing in accessible locations, support to secure housing, support from the local real estate industry.
- Support for families – orientation and community engagement / social activities for families, language classes, volunteer roles, local mentors, information sessions, access to schooling.
- Managing cultural adjustment – activities that allow for intercultural engagement but also access to a critical mass of same ethnic community members.
- Leadership within the settling community – supporting the development of community leaders, communication with employers to ensure mutual needs between employer and community are met, multicultural liaison officers.
- Preparing new arrivals – local orientation programs, information sessions / work ready programs, information provision on local services and supports.

Findings from the research involved in this project also suggest the following as recommendations that service providers such as WDA can pursue to improve workforce participation by new arrival communities:

- Developing employer networks through dialogue and collaboration. This may include –
 - hosting employment expos that invite employers to showcase their businesses and enable newly arrived communities to make direct contact
 - running regular breakfast seminars with guest speakers – these may include success stories in employment of migrants, professional development to build cultural capabilities of businesses, dialogue to identify partnerships and emerging workforce needs of local employers
- Working with new arrival communities at the individual level to develop strengths-based approaches to employment pathways. This may include –
 - undertaking collaborative assessment of individual needs, goals, trauma, health and education needs that strengthen employment readiness

- providing ongoing support to individuals in accessing employment – guidance and feedback, problem solving, walking the journey with the client
 - targeted and tailored approaches according to individual needs
- Delivering workplace readiness training that equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to function effectively in the Australian workplace
- Leading meaningful consultation and involvement with both employers and communities to ensure employment pathway initiatives are responsive to local industry needs

Key Recommendation

That the WDA establish a Regional Employment Taskforce which leads partnerships to embrace the growth potential of the region. Taskforce objectives should include developing the connectivity of a breadth of stakeholders invested in employment, strengthening employment pathways through collaborations and, promoting future industries to strengthen population growth in the region. The Taskforce should adopt employment opportunities for new arrival communities as a key objective of its work.

5. An integrated approach to settlement

5.1 Victorian Government Context

The Victorian Multicultural Commission recently released “*A Settlement Journey - a Case for a Holistic Approach to how we settle new arrivals In Victoria: Learnings from Canada and the USA*¹⁶”. This document sets out findings and conclusions from international research around best practice in successfully settling new arrivals, as well as strategic directions the Victorian Government will pursue to strengthen settlement across Victoria.

Key findings from the research are set out as seven key themes:

1. *A case for political leadership to galvanize a nation towards positive outcomes for newly arrived refugees.*
2. *Connect, collaborate and coordinate settlement agencies to ensure positive settlement service delivery outcomes.*
3. *Right pathways to a new start of settlement services and programs to support refugees and humanitarian entrants.*
4. *Identity politics and media narratives are a major determinant of national discourse and can impact the cohesiveness of a society.*
5. *A home for everyone – building welcoming communities and preparing refugees prior to their arrival directly correlates with good settlement outcomes.*
6. *Social inclusion through the power of sports, arts and culture programs in peacebuilding and engaging communities.*
7. *Measuring outcomes to ensure the effectiveness of any settlement system*

The strategic directions set out in the document will become the blueprint for a Victorian Settlement Planning Strategy and are of direct relevance to the Wimmera Southern Mallee region should the region remain committed to becoming a destination of choice for new arrival communities.

These strategic directions include:

- Political leadership including ongoing discussions with federal, state and local government leaders on the importance of political leadership, positive narratives and resources around multiculturalism and settlement of new arrivals with particular focus on the Syrian and Iraqi cohort.

¹⁶ https://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/images/2017/ASettlementJourney_LearningsfromCanadaAndUSA2016.pdf

- VMC's role as the lead agency responsible for steering Victoria's coordinated settlement response is supported including discussions with local government on opportunities for refugee settlement and local government assistance and service provision for both newly arrived and settled refugees.
- State-based initiatives including cooperative partnerships across federal, state, local government settlement agencies and private and philanthropic partners to encourage wrap-around settlement service responsiveness to the specific needs of refugees.
- Establish or expand existing settlement coordination committees to oversee Victoria's settlement response. Membership could include whole-of-government representatives, stakeholder, host community and private sector organisations.
- Resourcing Effective Settlement including integrated service pathways and joined-up collaborative approaches with regards to partnerships and coordination of settlement services to meet refugee and host community needs.
- Encouraging information sharing for better local area coordination, including sharing of resources (for example, bilingual workers) and all levels of government and multiple sectors to work together to improve the settlement experiences of new arrivals by utilising *'The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities'*¹⁷ in Victoria.
- Media Representation including encouraging greater media engagement in informing public and community discourse on multiculturalism and promoting positive representation of new arrivals.
- Getting involved promoting intercultural and civic engagement by building local councils' capacity to reach out and connect people of diverse backgrounds.
- Connected Communities including community-based partnerships to provide stronger linkages and avenues for sports, arts and cultural programs for new arrivals to support their short and long-term settlement needs.
- Measuring settlement outcomes including community consultations to gain insight into the settlement experience, challenges and successes, as well as feedback and improvements to better support future groups of arrivals.

¹⁷ <https://welcomingcities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/The-Australian-Standard-for-Welcoming-Cities-Public-Draft-version-1-digital-1.pdf>

5.2 Key project findings and conclusions

The Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan¹⁸ provides a vision for long term prosperity and sustainable growth and highlights the significant investment being in a settlement network, infrastructure, economic development and the environment. Attracting and retaining new arrival communities will achieve significant contributions towards the vision of the Growth Plan and offer opportunities for a more diverse and innovative economy. The economic contribution potential of new arrival communities is already being evidenced by the impact of the Karen community in Nhill.

This project identified the Hindmarsh Shire, and in particular the town of Nhill, as standout examples in the region in demonstrating leadership and initiative around supporting new arrival communities to significantly contribute to the economic and social development potential of the region. The achievements in this area are a critical resource in informing expansion of outcomes to other areas and rural cities in the region and to realizing the potential of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan.

The existing strengths base of the region includes a genuine commitment to attracting new arrivals within the region, a breadth of sectors invested in undertaking work to secure the sustainability of migration into the region, and strong agricultural growth potential.

There are however, immediate challenges needing to be addressed in moving towards an integrated approach to settlement if sustainability of migration into the region is to be achieved. Consultations informing this project found the following key issues impacting the capacity to achieve an integrated settlement system:

- There is no one body that has a strategic influence in the region in relation to the settlement of new arrival migrant and humanitarian communities. The stakeholder mapping process identified a range of organisations and service providers undertaking a breadth of work which was largely individually led.
- Most of the settlement support work being undertaken in the region is either under-funded or not funded requiring services to utilise an already stretched resource base, volunteers and philanthropic funds to support settlement needs. This lack of funding is increasing levels of tension between stakeholder groups.
- There is a lack of communication between the various stakeholders to enable shared knowledge of the various programs and initiatives being implemented to support settlement.

¹⁸ https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/6125/Wimmera-Southern-Mallee-Regional-Growth-Plan-Summary-May-2014.pdf

- Apart from Hindmarsh Shire Council there is little support from local government around settlement despite the critical role local government has been recognised as playing in achieving settlement outcomes.
- There is little collaboration between key stakeholders undertaking settlement related work thereby resulting in limited support for great initiatives that were identified. The lack of collaboration also increases the risk of resource duplication in a resource poor context.
- Organisational readiness in relation to engaging with migrant and refugee communities is a key gap particularly at local government and employer levels.

5.3 Recommendations for working towards an inter-agency integrated response to the delivery of settlement services

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This project has found that the WDA need to undertake a series of initial actions that will have the Association better placed as the key strategic influencer in relation to the settlement of new arrival migrant and humanitarian communities in the region. Embedding this leadership role will be critical if the WDA is committed to developing an integrated approach to settlement planning, service delivery and outcomes through collaboration between local government, community organisations, business, service providers and the education sector.

These actions, in order of priority, include:

- Expanding the WDA Regional Settlement Committee to include improved representation from all stakeholder groups across all towns delivering settlement services (local government, community organisations, business, service providers, education sector). Meeting locations should also be rotated to improve attendance.
- Working with the WDA Regional Settlement Committee to develop a regional settlement strategy that is collaborative, has shared ownership and contributes to developing a settlement culture where stakeholders are willing to work together to achieve integrated responses through consistent referral processes, shared resources, information transfer, partnerships and common objectives.

Strategy directions should address:

- Building on current employment successes with local businesses

- Providing more support to local businesses to employ migrant workers
- A recognition of differences between regional and local service delivery
- Clear referral routes for inter-agency service delivery
- Consistency and improved service delivery through longer term funding contracts
- Partnerships between regional groups for funding and information transfer
- Priority areas of settlement services and support with adequate guidelines, funding and training.
- Clearer pathways for migrants to move from primary Humanitarian Settlement in metropolitan areas to secondary settlement in regional areas.
- Improved resources and support for complex cases in regional areas

The strategic planning process should be informed by the National Settlement Service Outcomes Standards¹⁹ which reflect the priority areas set out in the National Settlement Framework. This will enable the Settlement Committee to identify strengths and gaps in settlement good practice.

A strengthened presence by the WDA Regional Settlement Committee also improves potential for Wimmera to lead a Regional Advisory Group as part of the state government's proposed settlement planning strategy.

- Developing a communication strategy that allows for shared information around settlement initiatives being undertaken by the range of stakeholders in the region and improves transparency around available funding, resources and outcomes being delivered.
- Advocating for Horsham Rural City Council to work towards adopting the *The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities*²⁰.

The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities is a central element of the Welcoming Cities network. The Standard aims to enable local councils to:

- Benchmark their cultural diversity and inclusion policies and practices across the organisation
 - Identify where and how further efforts could be directed
 - Assess progress over time
- Initiating a dialogue process with the Northern Grampians Shire Council to explore collaborations that will:
 - Result in Council representation on the Wimmera Settlement Committee

¹⁹ <http://www.scoa.org.au/research-and-publications/national-settlement-service-outcomes-standards-may-2016>

²⁰ <https://welcomingcities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/The-Australian-Standard-for-Welcoming-Cities-Public-Draft-version-1-digital-1.pdf>

- Support attracting migrant and new arrival communities to the region as part of the job creation opportunities emerging through the expansion of the Nectar Farms
- Begin developing settlement support pathways and initiatives through Council and other services located in Stawell in particular.

Councils should also be encouraged to establish linkages with the Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues Network (VLGMIN) which is auspiced by the Municipal Association of Victoria. VLGMIN shares information between councils, advocates on behalf of councils and promotes best practice in cultural diversity. The network also provides advice and contacts for relevant services, and access and equity projects, lobbies on issues affecting multicultural affairs, including by making submissions and holds annual forums and meetings every two months.

- Establishing a Regional Employment Taskforce which leads partnerships to embrace the growth potential of the region. Taskforce objectives should include developing the connectivity of a breadth of stakeholders invested in employment, strengthening employment pathways through collaborations and, promoting future industries to strengthen population growth in the region.

The following present existing opportunities for integrating employment initiatives targeted at new arrival communities:

- Leadership Wimmera
 - Building Resilience in Farming and Agribusiness project WDA
 - The Wimmera Business Awards
 - Wimmera Internship Program
 - Grampians Workforce Development Strategy
- Improving linkages between the WDA Settlement Program and the economic development focus of the Association. The WDA has in place a range of innovative initiatives such as Leadership Wimmera but there is no evidence of linkages to harness opportunities between the different programs. This could make a substantial contribution to improved workforce engagement of new arrival communities.

The WDA should also liaise with the Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) to harness opportunities / support that SCOA can offer around the work being done nationally to improve settlement related employment outcomes.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Integrated approaches to settlement support

- Hosting events that generate interest and collaboration. The Wyndham Employers Forum was proposed as a good example that could be replicated in the region. An economic development breakfast with guest speakers showcasing success stories was another idea.
- Developing and implementing a WDA led Community Volunteers program to match new arrivals with a local community member to accompany them to appointments during initial settlement.
- Improved presence of the WDA Settlement Officer – greater liaison and communication with other stakeholders delivering settlement related activities. This would improve awareness of emerging issues so potential responses could be identified and also improve potential for collaboration.
- Developing culturally responsive approaches to health literature and health education/promotion specific and relevant to refugee communities.
- Linking into the work that local government bodies such as Hindmarsh Council are doing to engage local employers in settlement initiatives.
- More localised funding arrangements that reflect the reality of different communities and location based needs.
- A community resource / directory that supports people to identify where they can go for help
- Cultural competency training for workers and cultural capability development for organisations
- A specific resource on support services for employers to attract new arrivals in employment

Employment

- Strong leadership and support from local champions who have influence within the local community – this includes those who can advocate with service providers for the types of support new settlers will need, provide a first point of call for migrants needing advice/assistance and can involve the local community in general.
- A receptive local community – ensuring the local community has a positive attitude to migrants, involving local community leaders and volunteers to engage with new arrivals, providing information and training that builds cultural responsiveness of employers.
- Accommodation – ensuring access to affordable and suitable housing in accessible locations, support to secure housing, support from the local real estate industry.
- Support for families – orientation and community engagement / social activities for families, language classes, volunteer roles, local mentors, information sessions, access to schooling.
- Managing cultural adjustment – activities that allow for intercultural engagement but also access to a critical mass of same ethnic community members.
- Leadership within the settling community – supporting the development of community leaders, communication with employers to ensure mutual needs between employer and community are met, multicultural liaison officers.
- Preparing new arrivals – local orientation programs, information sessions / work ready programs, information provision on local services and supports.
- Developing employer networks through dialogue and collaboration. This may include –

- hosting employment expos that invite employers to showcase their businesses and enable newly arrived communities to make direct contact
- running regular breakfast seminars with guest speakers – these may include success stories in employment of migrants, professional development to build cultural capabilities of businesses, dialogue to identify partnerships and emerging workforce needs of local employers
- Working with new arrival communities at the individual level to develop strengths-based approaches to employment pathways. This may include –
 - undertaking collaborative assessment of individual needs, goals, trauma, health and education needs that strengthen employment readiness
 - providing ongoing support to individuals in accessing employment – guidance and feedback, problem solving, walking the journey with the client
 - targeted and tailored approaches according to individual needs
- Delivering workplace readiness training that equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to function effectively in the Australian workplace
- Leading meaningful consultation and involvement with both employers and communities to ensure employment pathway initiatives are responsive to local industry needs

Local Government Capability Development

- Undertaking dialogue process with Horsham Rural City Council & Northern Grampians Shire Council to improve levels of support and secure commitment to promoting Horsham and Stawell as a destination of choice for migrant and humanitarian background communities.
- Encouraging Horsham Council to work towards providing resources / dedicated role(s) around enhancing engagement, access and equity for multicultural communities. This should include collaborations with services and other stakeholder agencies currently undertaking this work.
- Encouraging Horsham Council to commit to organisational capability development around working within multicultural contexts.
- Encouraging Horsham Council engage with Hindmarsh Shire Council to learn from and adopt good practice approaches in access to regional services for CALD communities.

Appendix 1: Services Types under the SGP

Service Type Overview

5. Casework/coordination and settlement service delivery
6. Community coordination and development
7. Youth settlement services
8. Support for ethno-specific communities

1. Casework/Coordination and Settlement Service Delivery

Casework services involve the provision of settlement related information, advice, advocacy or referral services to individuals or families either on request or as assessed as required due to issues arising from the client's settlement experience.

This may include a needs assessment and/or the development of individual case plans and/or support for clients referred from Humanitarian Settlement Services.

This service type can include programs that assist clients to become 'job ready' by building capabilities in employment and education.

Casework services include, but are not limited to:

- an initial assessment of individual client needs and the development of a case plan
- referral to appropriate services or provider
- advice, information and support to explore training options
- advice, information and support to explore employment opportunities
- developing partnerships with employment providers and employers who can assist eligible clients to become 'job ready' through training, and/or work experience or other job readiness activities
- developing partnerships with technical colleges and other educational institutions that can help clients move into the Australian workforce, strengthen vocational English, get their skills recognised, prepare job applications, participate in training and other job-readiness activities
- referral to housing services and advice on tenancy rights and responsibilities
- the provision of immigration related administrative assistance without the use of a migration agent such as obtaining forms and assisting with the completion of forms
- advice on banking practices, consumer rights, police and the law, the health system as well as family, relationship and social support issues.

Settlement service delivery and coordination can also involve the coordination and provision of group information sessions.

Coordination and delivery of services include, but are not limited to:

- group information sessions teaching life skills such as information on banking practices, tenancy rights and responsibilities, consumer rights, police and the law, employment issues including skills development and job readiness, the health system and family, relationship and social support issues.
- inviting experts to provide information sessions on topics such as housing, including tenancy rights, employment issues including interview skills and writing a CV, education and training options
- homework support programs
- driver education
- computer training and sewing/craft groups

2. Community Coordination and Development

Some new arrivals need assistance to make social connections – for example, new arrivals with low levels of English proficiency, from small and establishing communities, youth, the elderly and those settling in rural areas. Additionally, new and emerging community groups may need leadership, mentoring and advocacy support to link with mainstream employment, education, English language and other mainstream services in order to become self-sustaining as soon as possible. Targeted support provided by Settlement Services grants assists to maximise productive diversity and social cohesion.

Under these grants, services may include but are not limited to providing a brokerage role for government agencies to assist new arrivals connect with their services, working in partnerships with establishing communities and the local neighbourhood to build self-reliance, working in local neighbourhoods to support local services and provide a welcoming environment for new arrivals and supporting newly arrived community leaders and organisations to develop self-supporting skills.

Community coordination and development services include, but are not limited to:

1. activities that foster client participation in the wider Australian community
2. providing a brokerage role for government agencies by helping them to connect with new and emerging communities and arrivals
3. providing cultural awareness training
4. working in partnership with new and emerging community groups, building their capacity to be self-sustaining
5. supporting newly arrived community leaders or organisations by providing training and mentoring

3. Youth Settlement Services

Newly arrived young migrants, including refugee young people, can face significant challenges in their settlement including acquiring English language skills, finding jobs, entering formal schooling, moving between cultures, finding housing and connecting to and navigating mainstream services. Newly arrived

young people benefit from a more targeted service delivery approach from providers who can offer specialised and customised services to help young people from diverse backgrounds. For the purposes of Settlement Grants, youth are defined as people between the ages of 15 and 24 years.

Youth settlement services include but are not limited to developing programs that build capabilities in employment, education, leadership, social skills and linking to the local community, developing innovative approaches to engage young refugees and migrants, providing a brokerage role for mainstream and other government agencies by fostering connections with refugee and migrant youth and their families, and homework support programs.

Youth settlement services include, but are not limited to:

- activities for newly arrived eligible youth that explore orientation to life in Australia including information on accessing mental health services, and their rights and responsibilities under Australian law and the repercussions of enacting their rights
- casework services including assessment of needs, development of case plans and arranging suitable group activities
- providing a brokerage role for government agencies by fostering connections with refugee and migrant youth and their families
- fostering, supporting and promoting community development activities that link refugee youth to existing youth services and facilitating a sense of belonging in the local community
- in partnership with newly arrived youth, develop programmes which build capabilities in leadership, education, employment readiness, social skills and maintaining local community links
- developing innovative approaches to engage young refugees and migrants homework support groups.

Support for Ethno-specific Communities

Ethno-specific organisations play a crucial role in the settlement of newly arrived migrants and refugees, as they understand the immediate needs of new arrivals and have ready access to networks through which new arrivals can be identified, contacted and supported. Some relatively new communities may lack 'critical mass' to develop information networks and maximise social inclusion and participation. Settlement services provides targeted support in these areas, including services that can refer new entrants to existing support groups and services, local sporting organisations, social clubs and parents and citizens groups. These services are generally provided by new and emerging ethno-specific community organisations and ethno-specific peak bodies.

Ethno-specific community services include, but are not limited to:

- fostering the ability of new and emerging communities to connect with each other and with more established communities, and/or appropriate services.
- engaging with government agencies, service providers and the Australian community at large
- referring new entrants to existing support groups to decrease social isolation and increase

interaction with other communities (for example, cultural/historical excursions, multicultural cooking groups, men's sheds etc.) and local sports or social clubs such as parents and citizen's groups

Appendix 2: Interviewees

1. Anette Creek, Executive Officer Nhill Learning Centre
2. Robbie Millar, Learning and Community Development Manager, Centre for Participation
3. Paul Harrip, Manager Quality and Edge Learning Group
4. Daniel OpDe Coul, Business Development, Oscar Furniture
5. Phil King, Manager Community Development, Hindmarsh Shire Council
6. Maggie Bridgewater, Migrant Employment Coordinator, Hindmarsh Shire Council
7. Michele Schwarz, EAL Coordinator, Nhill College
8. Casey Hiscock, Refugee Health Nurse, Nhill Acute Ward
9. Theblay Sher, Coordinator **Nhill Homework Club**
10. Tha Hser Bleh Dah, Settlement Officer, Hindmarsh Shire Council
11. Emily Telfer, Settlement Officer, Wimmera Development Association
12. Frances Salenga, Coordinator Cultural Diversity, Ballarat Council
13. Nick Tebbey, CEO, Settlement Council of Australia
14. Mirta Gonzalez, National Settlement Planning Manager, AMES
15. Helen Kapalos, Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

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