WHAT WORKS

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES FOR REFUGEE AND HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS

June 2010

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COVER PHOTO: Talee Kunoo, a Karen refugee from Burma, with Gay Lew Talee, a harvest hand, and Adam Ballan, owner of Ballan Farms in Werribee, Victoria. Talee Kunoo was assisted to find work through the AMES Labour Harvest Program. © AMES 2009.

RCOA (2010) What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants - 2 -
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gaining stable, adequately-remunerated, fulfilling employment is a significant contributor towards successful resettlement for refugee and humanitarian entrants. Despite these entrants’ eagerness to participate in the Australian workforce and the wealth of skills and experience that they bring to Australia, research has shown that former refugees are overrepresented among the ranks of underemployed, low-paid, low-skilled, precariously employed and casualised members of the labour force, and that they face many specific barriers to employment.

The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) received funding through the Sidney Myer Foundation to undertake national research into sustainable employment pathways and refugee background communities. The overarching aim of this research has been to map, analyse and model solutions to the barriers that refugee entrants face in making the transition to meaningful, sustainable employment in Australia. What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants presents the findings from this investigation.

Methodology

In exploring what works in supporting the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants settling in Australia, RCOA conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews across the eight states and territories involving 28 employment service providers, 11 employees from refugee backgrounds and 11 employers. This included 28 face-to-face interviews, 14 telephone interviews and eight services participating by completing a written questionnaire. A comprehensive review of Australian and international literature was also undertaken, as was a mapping exercise of employment services targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants across Australia.

Barriers to employment

While the focus of this research was on exploring what works in supporting the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants, What Works does provide a brief overview of literature exploring the barriers to refugee and humanitarian entrants’ participation in the Australian labour market. The employment barriers identified through consultations and existing research include:

- Limited English proficiency;
- Lack of Australian work experience;
- Limited access to transport and affordable housing close to employment;
- Lack of knowledge of Australian workplace culture and systems;
- Pressures of juggling employment and domestic responsibilities;
- Lack of appropriate services to support employment transitions;
- The refugee and resettlement experience and its impact on job-seeking;
- Downward mobility and the pressure to accept insecure employment;
- Discrimination in employment;
- Difficulties with recognition of skills, qualifications and experience;
- Lack of qualifications;
- The Australian labour market and disadvantage; and
- Visa restrictions for asylum seekers.

Policy and program responses

Australia’s refugee and humanitarian entrants are far from a homogenous group; they come from enormously diverse backgrounds and bring with them a range of skills and life experiences. There are, however, some common barriers that people from refugee backgrounds face in entering the
Australian labour force which require a range of targeted employment transition initiatives, particularly in the early stages of settlement. Targeted policy and program responses – funded and implemented through a range of different sources – that have found to be effective can be grouped into the following overarching (although not mutually exclusive) service types:

- Individual case management and referral services;
- Mentoring programs with an employment focus;
- Information and training on Australian work culture and systems;
- Work experience programs;
- Industry-related training targeting migrant and refugee communities;
- Services providing career advice, planning and job search support;
- Social enterprise and initiatives supporting small business development;
- Services advocating and liaising directly with employers;
- Services providing support with skills and qualification recognition;
- English language classes with an employment focus; and
- Post-employment follow-up and support.

These targeted employment services operate alongside a nationwide network of generalist employment services, primarily Job Services Australia (formerly the Job Network) services funded through the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). Job Services Australia (JSA) was established as a one stop shop where jobseekers are referred through the one provider to access a range of employment services. In the absence of a national employment strategy focusing on refugee and humanitarian entrants, provisions for this sub-group of jobseekers are through generalist JSA providers and a limited number of specialist JSA services targeting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. However, there are fewer service providers claiming particular expertise in working with people from refugee backgrounds funded under the JSA than the previous Job Network, and these specialist services are required to provide the same suite of services as other JSA providers and with the same resources.

As the JSA model was only rolled out as of 1 July 2009, it has not been possible within this research to comment on the efficacy of this model in terms of employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants. However, the limitations of the previous Job Network model have been well documented through this and other research. And while the Federal Government has highlighted improvements that JSA will have over the old Job Network model that may have an impact on refugee and humanitarian entrants, there are indications that a generalist one stop shop is unlikely to provide the flexibility or resources that would allow services to provide the kinds of targeted supports outlined in the what works chapter of this report. Indeed, it is hoped that the findings from this research will further inform future directions of JSA by emphasising elements of good practice that have proven effective in supporting the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Findings: What works

The focus of RCOA’s consultations was on what works in supporting the transition of refugee and humanitarian entrants to employment. Interviews with employees, employers and employment services drew on existing literature documenting employment barriers and good practice models to test and expand on the relative importance of different approaches in creating effective employment pathways for refugee and humanitarian entrants. Some key themes emerged from the interviews that suggest a range of things that need to happen in order for refugee and humanitarian entrants to be able to make use of their skills to find meaningful, sustainable employment in Australia. These elements of success have been broken down into five broad themes:

1. Specialist employment services targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants;
2. Employers who value and are committed to workforce diversity;
3. Coordination and collaboration among refugee entrants and their communities, education and training providers, employment services and employers;
4. Initiatives tapping into the entrepreneurial spirit of former refugees through social enterprise and small business development; and
5. Building awareness within refugee background communities about career pathways in Australia.

Under each of these themes, a number of strategies or approaches were identified by interviewees as being effective. It should be noted that further research would be required in order to conduct a thorough evaluation of the relative effectiveness of each of the identified approaches. Instead, strategies or approaches that interviewees deemed as effective have been included as a series of case studies to illustrate the diverse, targeted approaches that are needed to meet the needs of such a diverse group of jobseekers.

1. Specialist employment services targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants

Whether delivered by specialist agencies or through generalist employment services, there was a strong theme that emerged from interviews of the need for targeted approaches to supporting the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants. In particular, targeted approaches meant service providers recognising the particular barriers that refugee entrants’ face in entering the Australian labour market and that a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be successful in meeting the needs of such a diverse group of jobseekers.

Overall, effective approaches provided by targeted employment services that were identified in interviews included:

- Individual casework and referral to other services;
- Work experience placement;
- Support with applying for work: job search, applications and interview skills;
- Advocacy and liaison with employers;
- Orientation to Australian work culture and systems;
- Career advice, guidance and planning;
- Mentoring;
- Post-employment support;
- Services for asylum seekers;
- Employing bicultural/bilingual workers; and
- Addressing racism and discrimination in employment and the wider community.

2. Employers who value and are committed to workforce diversity

While specialist services were seen as important in facilitating supported employment transitions for refugee and humanitarian entrants, there was a general consensus among those consulted that employment services can only do so much. In order for refugee entrants to be able to find meaningful, sustainable employment in Australia, employers also need to see the value of workplace diversity and be willing to give someone a chance to apply their strengths, skills and experience in an Australian workplace.

Interviewees identified a number of successful approaches used by employers to tap into the strengths and support a diverse workforce (including workers from refugee backgrounds). These included:

- Giving people the chance and using alternative recruitment strategies;
- Providing good orientation and induction to new employees;
- Creating supportive team environments;
- Providing diversity training for all staff and supervisors;
- Seeing advantage in workplace diversity;
- Operating flexibly; and
- Treating workers equitably and fairly.
3. Coordination and collaboration among refugee entrants and their communities, education and training providers, employment services and employers

For recently arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants, navigating complex and unfamiliar service systems can be extraordinarily challenging. A strong theme to emerge from interviews was the benefits of strong coordination and collaboration between service providers, industry and communities. In particular, many interviewees talked about the positive flow-on effects of developing strong links between settlement and employment services, education and training providers, industry or employer groups, and refugee entrants and their communities.

Approaches that were highlighted in interviews as being beneficial to building a collaborative and coordinated service response which enables sustainable employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants included:

- Intermediate labour market programs;
- Partnerships between employers, employment services and communities;
- Opportunities for refugee entrants to learn sufficient English on arrival to enable long-term, meaningful engagement in the Australian labour market;
- English courses linked with vocational pathways;
- Recognition of overseas skills and qualifications;
- Industry-linked and -recognised training; and
- Regional or rural settlement driven by employment.

4. Initiatives tapping into entrepreneurial spirit through social enterprise and small business development

Research suggests that assisting former refugees to establish their own businesses can contribute to creating employment opportunities for refugee and humanitarian entrants who are more recently arrived, although the benefits of such initiatives are only likely to be seen in the longer term. Indeed research suggests that migrants from non-English-speaking-backgrounds are comparatively more successful at establishing small business enterprises when compared to Australian-born entrepreneurs and migrants from English-speaking backgrounds.

Interviews conducted with employment services involved in supporting small business development, as well as employees and supervisors working in social enterprise initiatives, highlighted a number of strategies that were considered influential in enabling entrepreneurs from refugee backgrounds to start and sustain their own businesses. These included:

- Targeted small business training and support;
- Enterprise facilitation; and
- Social enterprise.

5. Building awareness within refugee backgrounds communities about career pathways in Australia

The final theme that emerged from interviews relating to what works in supporting the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants was the need to foster realistic expectations and awareness within refugee background communities about career pathways in Australia. While this may be part of the role of specialist employment services, interviewees talked about community awareness-building needing to happen through a variety of different avenues and at different stages of settlement. In particular, strategies for how to build community awareness included:

- Creating awareness of career pathways through pre-embarkation and on-arrival orientation;
- Programs that promote possibilities to young people; and
- Initiatives that build social capital.
Recommendations

In terms of recommendations that support the successful transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants into employment, the following recommendations point to areas where the findings documented in this report may be further elaborated to inform local and national approaches. Key recommendations include:

**Developing a national refugee employment strategy**
- RCOA recommends that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) develop a national refugee employment strategy to map out settlement pathways and supports that will lead to more sustainable and meaningful employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants.

**Ensuring employment services effectively meet the needs of refugee and humanitarian entrants**
- RCOA recommends that DEEWR, as part of its monitoring and evaluation of the new Job Services Australia (JSA) model, review its effectiveness in meeting the needs of refugee and humanitarian entrants, including evaluating how JSA providers are working with local employment initiatives targeting refugee entrants and how to better utilise the expertise of specialist JSA providers.
- RCOA welcomes the re-introduction of the Innovation Fund as part of Job Services Australia model and calls on DEEWR to ensure that the Innovation Fund Panel includes sufficient representation of organisations with specialist expertise in assisting refugee and humanitarian entrants.

**Investing in intermediate labour market initiatives targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants**
- RCOA recommends a greater investment by both private and public funding sources of Intermediate Labour Market programs that provide a bridge to refugee and humanitarian entrants into longer term employment.
- RCOA recommends greater investment in social enterprise initiatives that bring together refugee and humanitarian entrants and their communities and community services and that have a focus on employment outcomes.
- RCOA recommends DEEWR establish an incentive scheme to encourage and support employers to provide traineeships and apprenticeships targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants, including and particularly through the Federal and State public service.

**Recognising employers who value and are committed to workforce diversity**
- RCOA recommends a proactive national communications campaign promoting the business benefits of cultural diversity.
- RCOA recommends the further promotion of national Diversity Awards that help recognise employers who take initiative.
3. INTRODUCTION

“Getting this job, I feel more settled in Australia. I think 90 per cent of the people I know are from [my work]. It's more than a job. I cannot express… I just want to open my heart and show you what is inside, because it's such a change.”

- Employee, Burkinabè, Community organisation (VIC)

The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) is the national umbrella body for refugees and the organisations and individuals who support them. RCOA advocates for flexible, humane and practical policies towards refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons, within Australia and internationally. RCOA does this by undertaking national and international research, policy analysis, political advocacy, training and community education.

The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) received funding through the Sidney Myer Foundation to undertake national research into sustainable employment pathways and refugee background communities. The overarching aim of this research has been to map, analyse and model solutions to the barriers that refugee and humanitarian entrants face in making the transition to meaningful, sustainable employment in Australia. What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants presents the findings from this investigation.

3.1 Why focus on refugee entrants and employment transitions?

Australia has a long history of successfully resettling refugees and is recognised as a world leader in refugee resettlement. Since Federation, Australia has offered a permanent home to more than 740,000 refugee and humanitarian entrants who have enriched the nation enormously (RCOA 2010a:8). Australia’s current offshore Refugee and Humanitarian Program represents one of the few planned resettlement programs in the world and contributes to the international framework – overseen by UNHCR – of finding durable solutions for those for whom repatriation or integration in countries of first asylum are not possible.

However, there is increasing recognition that the achievement of sound settlement outcomes is a complex process and one that requires a comprehensive, integrated approach to service delivery that acknowledges and responds to the diversity of needs of refugee and humanitarian entrants. Reaching these goals is not simply a matter of increasing the overall level of resources devoted to refugee resettlement. An effective strategy must also focus on building on and adapting local and international best practice, as well as creating synergies between existing services and initiatives to enable a more efficient use of existing resources.

Gaining stable, adequately-remunerated, fulfilling employment is a significant contributor towards the successful resettlement of refugees. Through annual community consultations into Australia’s Refugee and Humanitarian Program¹, RCOA has consistently found that refugee and humanitarian entrants are frustrated and increasingly despondent as their willingness to apply their skills and experience to gainful employment in Australia is thwarted by structural barriers to obtaining work. Quite apart from the social costs of unemployment and underemployment, the loss of economic opportunities from a failure to find pathways to rapid, sustainable employment is also significant.

While much has been written about the barriers to employment that refugee and humanitarian entrants face and the impact that they have on individuals’ lives, there is comparatively little research that has focused on mapping, analysing and modelling solutions to those problems. In many instances, job placement mechanisms operate with a short time horizon, are often grounded in ideological responses to unemployment and do not draw on international best practice. Where successful projects are run, they are often done so in isolation, with limited funding, for discrete

¹ http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/consultations.html
time periods and not necessarily linked with other similar initiatives operating in other parts of Australia.

3.2 Research aims

The overarching aim of this research has been to expand the evidence base by mapping, analysing and modelling solutions to the barriers that refugee and humanitarian entrants face in making the transition to meaningful, sustainable employment in Australia.

Objectives to meet this aim include:

1. Conduct a review of recent analyses of approaches to addressing employment problems among refugee and humanitarian entrants;
2. Conduct qualitative, historical analysis of successful employment projects currently operating and once operated in Australia, through in-depth interviews with service providers, refugee clients, and employers;
3. Analyse approaches to employment pathways for refugee and humanitarian entrants in other countries with a view to identifying those elements of project conception and delivery that could be translated to the Australian context;
4. Examine the linkages required between specific programs focused on employment and those programs relating to other aspects of settlement to ensure better, overall settlement outcomes; and
5. In consultation with settlement service providers, refugee entrants and employers, develop an employment pathways strategy to promote to government.

3.3 Methodology

The first phase of this research involved an extensive literature review to engage with current thinking both in Australia and internationally about what works in supporting the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants (see Chapter 8 for full list of references). The international literature review focused on identifying innovative employment service models in countries with significant refugee settlement and with comparative labour market systems to Australia. Employment models from the Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States of America were reviewed. This literature review informed the consultation questions and structure.

The main source of primary data was gathered through semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted between February and June 2009. Overall, 50 employees from refugee backgrounds, employment service providers, and employers were consulted (refer to Appendix 9.1 for a list of participating organisations and businesses). Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone using an interview schedule (refer to Appendix 9.2 for interview schedules), and most interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Seven employment services and one employer participated in the research by completing a written questionnaire. Due to the vast amount of information collected, analysis involved coding and organising qualitative data by theme.

Quantitative data was also gathered through consultations with employment service providers. Using an ordinal scale, services were asked to rate the relative importance of pre-identified employment barriers and factors for success. A mapping exercise of employment services targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants across all states and territories provided additional quantitative data on the geographical spread of targeted initiatives, funding sources and service models (refer to Appendix 9.3).

With regards to the primary data collected, the following provides an overview of methodological considerations:
Mapping of employment services targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants

In late-2008, a mapping exercise was undertaken to identify services across Australia that target refugee and humanitarian entrants to support employment transitions. Services were identified through RCOA’s membership base, an internet search, and through follow-up email and phone calls. This mapping exercise was condensed and categorised by funding source and service components (refer to Appendix 9.3). It should be noted that this exercise is unlikely to provide a comprehensive current listing of all employment services and programs targeting refugee entrants due to the short-term and localised nature of many initiatives. The aim of this exercise was to (1) identify services for consultation, and (2) to highlight the scope and diversity of service providers, funding sources and approaches that sit outside of the generalist Job Network model.2

Consultations with employment services

From the mapping exercise, 89 services were contacted either for an interview or to request completion of a questionnaire. Services targeted for interview were chosen on the basis of their demonstrated experience in working with refugee and humanitarian entrants. Specific services were also selected for follow-up to ensure the sample was representative of the range of different service models and funding sources. Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and three hours. In total, 28 employment services were consulted, 11 by face-to-face interview, 10 by phone interview and 7 through completion of a written questionnaire.

The following provides a breakdown of where the service providers consulted were located, the length of time the employment service has (or had) been operating, the funding source and the primary focus of the organisation in which the service was based:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time employment service has been operating</th>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 year</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 and &lt; 2 years</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>5 and &lt; 10 years</td>
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<td>10 + years</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Face-to-face interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Settlement service provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education or training provider</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethno-specific or multicultural service provider</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalist welfare/community organisation</td>
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<td>Employment service provider</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Queensland</td>
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<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
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</table>

2 At the time that this mapping exercise was undertaken, generalist employment services were predominantly funded through DEEWR’s Job Network. The Job Network has since been replaced by Job Services Australia (as of July 2009). Job Network services were excluded from the mapping exercise, even where these may have been provided by a multicultural service provider (e.g. Migrant Resource Centres). Refer to Section 4.2.7 for a discussion of the limitations of the Job Network model.

3 Services may be included in more than one category.
Consultations with employees from refugee backgrounds

Through consultation with employment services, interviewees were asked to identify individuals from refugee backgrounds who were currently working and who the service provider could put RCOA in touch with. Through this snowball sampling, 11 individuals were contacted and followed up for face-to-face interviews. Selection criteria for employee interviewees were on the basis of a person having: (1) settled in Australia under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program; (2) made a successful transition into employment; and (3) had some experience of employment services.

Although the sample size was small, interviewees represented a relatively broad spectrum of ages, cultural backgrounds and period of settlement in Australia. As face-to-face in-depth interviews were the preferred method to be able to fully explore people’s individual stories of finding work in Australia, interviewees were mostly located in Victoria where the research was coordinated (nine of the interviews were conducted in Victoria, one in ACT and one in NSW). The interviews lasted between 15 minutes to one hour. The following is an overview of the characteristics of employee interviewees:

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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consultations with employers

The final group of interviewees were employers that were either (1) affiliated with an employment service targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants; or (2) whose workforce included a significant number of employees from refugee backgrounds. Using snowball sampling, 11 employers (managers or supervisors) were identified through the service provider consultations and were followed-up for interview. The employers were selected to represent a range of different industry types. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour and focused on exploring employers’ experiences of and reflections on what works in supporting employees from refugee backgrounds in their workplace.

The following provides a breakdown of employers interviewed by consultation type, state/territory, industry and experience of employing workers from refugee backgrounds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation type - employers</th>
<th>Face-to-face interview</th>
<th>Phone interview</th>
<th>Written questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of employer</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th>Australian Capital Territory</th>
<th>South Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Industry type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community service</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health service</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged care provider</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning service</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial service</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government (State)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Experience employing refugees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience employing refugees</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliated with an employment program or service targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant proportion of workforce are from refugee backgrounds</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Limitations and further research

Due to the short timeframe for this project and the in-depth qualitative methods used, the sample size of people consulted across the three groups (employees, employment services and employers) was necessarily limited. However, clear and common themes of what works did emerge through the coding of transcribed data across the three different groups. It should be noted that further research would be required in order to conduct a thorough evaluation of the relative effectiveness of the strategies and approaches identified by interviewees. Instead, strategies or approaches that interviewees deemed as effective have been included as a series of case studies to illustrate the diverse, targeted approaches that have been trialled to meet the needs of such a diverse group of jobseekers.

The omission of Job Network-funded services from the consultations (held between February and June 2009) was intentional and due to the timing of the project and the fact that the Job Network funding model was due to be replaced by a new model in July 2009. By focusing on employment initiatives that exist outside of the generalist employment models, it was hoped that the lessons and experiences of specialised services may inform employment service models more generally, including the new Job Services Australia (JSA).

### Note on use of terminology

Throughout this research report, we refer to people who have resettled in Australia on refugee and humanitarian visas as *refugee and humanitarian entrants, refugee entrants, former refugees* or *people from refugee backgrounds*. This acknowledges the fact that, once a refugee has gained permanent residency in Australia, his or her status changes. It also acknowledges the concern regularly expressed by many former refugees that being forced to flee your homeland is an experience not an identity – a concern which is often posed in the question: “When do I stop being labelled a refugee?” Yet the refugee experience does have a significant impact on a person’s settlement in Australia, particularly in the early years. Therefore, it is appropriate to use the term “refugee” in different ways in recognition of the impact this experience has on people’s lives long after they have reached the relative safety of Australian shores.

### 3.4 Report structure

Chapter 4 of this report provides an overview of literature exploring the experiences of refugee and humanitarian entrants in the Australian labour market. The review focuses on research on barriers to employment, as well as an overview of the policy and program responses that have been introduced to address these barriers.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of findings from RCOA’s research into what works in supporting the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants. Findings are organised into five broad themes:

1. Specialist employment services targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants;
2. Employers who value and are committed to workforce diversity;
(5.3) Coordination and collaboration among refugee entrants and their communities, education and training providers, employment services and employers;
(5.4) Initiatives tapping into the entrepreneurial spirit of former refugees through social enterprise and small business development; and
(5.5) Building awareness within refugee background communities about career pathways in Australia.

Strategies or approaches that were identified by interviewees as effective are detailed under each of these themes, including quotes from interviewees and case studies of initiatives that have been trialled.

Chapter 6 contains four individual case studies of former refugees’ experiences of making the successful transition to employment in Australia and their reflections on what helped and hindered them along the way.

Chapter 7 presents recommendations emerging from the research about what should be done to ensure refugee and humanitarian entrants are able to find meaningful, sustainable employment in Australia.

3.5 Acknowledgements

The Refugee Council of Australia would like to sincerely thank the Sidney Myer Foundation for providing the funding that has allowed us to undertake this important national research.

This research would not have been possible without the valuable input of the individuals, service providers and businesses we consulted and who generously shared their time and experiences to inform our findings. A full list of participating service providers and businesses can be found in Appendix 9.1.

This research project was coordinated by Louise Olliff, Settlement Policy Officer, RCOA Melbourne. RCOA staff involved in conducting interviews, reviewing literature and writing up findings included: Rebecca Eckard, Natalie Gooch, Lydia Ho and Louise Olliff and student interns Tim Clarke and Kylie Holmes.
4. BACKGROUND: REFUGEE AND HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS IN THE AUSTRALIAN LABOUR MARKET

The following chapter provides an overview of literature exploring the experiences of refugee and humanitarian entrants in the Australian labour market – their participation rates (Section 4.1), the barriers faced by new arrivals in making the transition into employment (Section 4.2), as well as programs and policies across Australia that have been introduced to help refugee and humanitarian entrants overcome barriers to employment (Section 4.3). A full list of resources used in this literature review can be found in Chapter 8. Personal quotes included in this chapter highlight the issues identified in literature from the perspective of employees, employers and service providers interviewed as part of this research.

4.1 Refugee and humanitarian entrants in the Australian labour market

Gaining stable, adequately-remunerated, fulfilling employment is a significant contributor towards the successful resettlement of refugees. This and other research has highlighted the high motivation levels and aspirations of refugee and humanitarian entrants with regards to employment (Carrington et al 2007; Flanagan 2007). For example, all of the employees interviewed as part of this research talked about the importance of work in providing a sense of belonging and meaning in Australia:

"I want to do something. I don't want to just sit down at home and get Centrelink money. I want to do something and help other people as well. I want to help myself and my family and my community."

- Employee, Sudanese, Cleaning social enterprise (VIC)

Despite the eagerness of new arrivals to participate in the Australian workforce, low official rates of unemployment, and the range of skills and qualifications people coming under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program possess that match local shortages, refugee and humanitarian entrants continue to confront significant difficulties in accessing employment opportunities. The limited research that has been undertaken (Carrington et al 2007; Flanagan 2007; Liebig 2006; Richardson et al 2004) supports the anecdotal evidence (RCOA 2008; RCOA 2009; RCOA 2010a) that refugee and humanitarian entrants are overrepresented among the ranks of underemployed, lowly-paid, low-skilled, precariously employed and casualised members of the Australian labour force.

Statistics from the Department of Immigration’s Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) showed humanitarian migrants from 1999-2000 to be the worst off of the migrant visa groups, with 12% unemployed 18 months after arrival, compared to 8% in the preferential family or family stream (see Figure 4.1.1). It is interesting to note that unemployment rates dropped over time for all migrant categories except humanitarian migrants, which in fact rose by 1% (11% after six months to 12% after 18 months), suggesting significant barriers experienced are not decreasing over time (Richardson et al 2004:12).

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4 Research on labour market participation referred to in this literature review was published at a time of record low unemployment in Australia.

5 The LSIA is the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia and is the most comprehensive survey of immigrants ever to be undertaken in Australia. The LSIA seeks to provide government and other agencies with reliable data to monitor and improve immigration and settlement policies, programs and services. LSIA 1 surveyed migrants who arrived in Australia between September 1993 and August 1995. LSIA 2 surveyed migrants who arrived in Australia between September 1999 and August 2000. For more information about LSIA, go to http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/lsia/lsia01.htm

6 The LSIA refers to all people coming under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program as ‘humanitarian migrants’.
Figure 4.1.1 Labour force status by visa group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour Force Status</th>
<th>Cohort Wave</th>
<th>Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Preferential family/family stream</th>
<th>Business skills/ Employer Nomination Scheme</th>
<th>Humanitarian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1W1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1W2</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1W1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1W2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in Labour Force</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1W1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1W2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Richardson et al 2004:13)

Figure 4.1.2 shows the more prolonged periods of unemployment experienced by humanitarian migrants compared to other migrant groups, with 12% of humanitarian migrants remaining unemployed for the whole period of time from their arrival to the time of the second LSIA interview (18 months to two years after arriving in Australia).

Figure 4.1.2 Periods of unemployment (in the period between Arrival and C2W2 interviews) of Primary Applicants, by visa group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of time unemployed</th>
<th>Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Preferential family/family stream</th>
<th>Business skills/ Employer Nomination Scheme</th>
<th>Humanitarian</th>
<th>Average across all visa categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to half the time</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than half, but not all the time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, DIAC, www.immi.gov.au/media/research/lsia/tables/labour_e.pdf)

---

7 Includes Primary Applicant and migrating unit spouse
In terms of sustainable well-remunerated employment, the LSIA statistics show that whilst three-quarters of migrants employed were working full-time (defined as 35 hours or more) in Cohort 2 (1999-2000), almost half of humanitarian migrants who were working in Cohort 2 (1999-2000) were working only part-time, indicating the higher rates of underemployment of refugee and humanitarian entrants (Richardson et al 2004:21).

With regards to downwards mobility, the LSIA statistics also indicate the high percentage of humanitarian migrants accepting work below the skill level they had attained before coming to Australia. That is, a high proportion of employed humanitarian entrants were working as labourers and related workers 18 months after arriving in Australia (40%). Yet, only 13% had been working as labourers in their last job in their country of origin, and 40% had previously had jobs either as tradespersons and related workers or professionals (see Figure 4.1.3).

Figure 4.1.3 Main occupation of Primary Applicants before arriving in Australia and at time of C2W1 and C2W2 interviews, by visa group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Period of time</th>
<th>Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Preferential family/family stream</th>
<th>Business skills/employer nomination scheme</th>
<th>Average across all visa categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and Administrators</td>
<td>FCR</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>FCR</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professionals</td>
<td>FCR</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradespersons and Related Workers</td>
<td>FCR</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Clerical and Service Workers</td>
<td>FCR</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers</td>
<td>FCR</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Production and Transport Workers</td>
<td>FCR</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers</td>
<td>FCR</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers and Related Workers</td>
<td>FCR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2W2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, DIAC http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/lsia/tables/labour_c.pdf)

9 Last job held in former country of residence
Humanitarian migrants in Cohort 2 (1999-2000) reported substantially lower average income per week compared to other migrant groups, earning $373 per week after 18 months compared to $616 earned by those coming under the preferential family/family stream, and the highest group Business skills/Employer Nomination Scheme earning $903 per week. Statistics show the situation for refugee and humanitarian entrants does not improve after time, with a decrease in average weekly income from $385 per week to $373 per week reported between Wave 1 (after six months) and Wave 2 (after 18 months) (see Figure 4.1.4).

Figure 4.1.4 Average earnings of migrants with earnings\(^{10}\) by visa group (2001 dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa Group</th>
<th>Average Income per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concessional Family/Skilled African-linked</td>
<td>$591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>$777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferential family/family stream</td>
<td>$530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business skills/Employer Nomination Scheme</td>
<td>$1,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian</td>
<td>$373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>$624</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Richardson et al 2004:34)

4.2 Barriers to employment

The barriers to refugee and humanitarian entrants’ securing meaningful, sustainable employment in Australia have been well documented by the Refugee Council of Australia (2008; 2009; 2010a) and through a wide array of literature (AMES 2008; Berman et al 2008; Carrington et al 2007; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007; Dunlop 2005; ECCV 2009; Flanagan 2007; Ho and Alcorso 2004; JSCM 2006; Junankar and Mahuteau 2004; Kamp 2008; Khoo 2007; Kyle et al 2004; Liebig 2006; Productivity Commission 2006; Richardson et al 2004; Stevens 1998; Taylor and Stanovic 2005), and have not been the primary focus of this research. The following provides an overview of research findings regarding some of the historically-consistent and newer factors impinging on refugee and humanitarian entrants' participation in the Australian labour market.

4.2.1 Quantitative findings

Employment services were asked through RCOA’s consultations to identify what they thought were the main barriers or challenges refugees face in making the transition into sustainable employment. The list of barriers was derived from a review of literature, with an additional question asking interviewees to identify any additional barriers not listed. Employees from refugee backgrounds were also asked to reflect on the main challenges or difficulties they faced in making the transition to employment. These are included in the following discussion, but not in the quantitative findings.

In terms of looking at the most significant barriers, the quantitative findings (Figure 4.2.1) suggest that lack of English and lack of Australian work experience were thought to have the most significant impact on successful employment outcomes. A lack of drivers’ licence and Australian referees also rated highly. Other major barriers were: opportunities to learn English while working, limited understanding of Australian work culture and systems, family obligations limiting work opportunities, and a lack of social networks or contacts.

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10 The average is calculated to exclude those who receive no earnings – that is, it is earnings averaged across only those Primary Applicants and Migrating Unit Spouses who had positive earnings. The values are adjusted for inflation, and expressed in September 2001 dollars (those current for Cohort 2, Wave 2).
4.2.2 English proficiency

I wanted to work and attended job skills training. The Job Network agency would give you the Yellow Pages at home to use to look for jobs and ask you if there was anyone at home to help you. But I didn't have anyone at home to help me look through it, or with paperwork associated with applying for jobs. I was not able to fill in the application forms needed to apply for jobs.

- Employee, Sudanese, Health service (NSW)

Refugee and humanitarian entrants, by virtue of their forced migration experience and countries of origin, often arrive in Australia with limited or no English. For example, between 2004 and 2009, 78% of the 65,919 humanitarian entrants rated their on-arrival English proficiency as either poor (29%) or nil (49%). Much of the existing literature indicates that having the capacity to communicate in English is one of the most important prerequisites for refugee and humanitarian entrants attempting to compete in the Australian labour market (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:66; ECCV 2009; Productivity Commission 2006; Richardson et al 2004; Stevens 1998). Research suggests there is a direct correlation between levels of English proficiency, labour market participation rates and income, with those with limited English (both written and spoken) more likely to be unemployed or in lower income brackets (Richardson et al 2004).

In addition to the basic challenge for new arrivals of developing proficiency in English, studies have highlighted the tension that refugee and humanitarian entrants feel between an awareness of the importance of persisting with English classes to improve future job prospects and the pressure to take up employment immediately, even if this compromises their capacity to continue English classes (Flanagan 2007; Kyle et al 2004; RCOA 2008).

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While the difficulties confronting refugee entrants with little to no proficiency in English are relatively well known, Junankar and Mahuteau (2004) outline particular challenges for those who are able to communicate at a basic or even competent level in English. Junankar and Mahuteau highlight the somewhat paradoxical situation in which highly-skilled refugee entrants with reasonable English proficiency may end up unemployed while their less-fluent counterparts can find work more easily. This may be because, even though their English comprehension is high, they are not well-versed in the nuances of the language that are required for some of the more specialised occupations. While a general expansion of vocabulary is useful, it has been found that a greater focus on vocational English that is ideally matched with work experience would be more valuable (JSCM 2006:268).

4.2.3 Lack of Australian work experience

"It's not that they don't want to work, they haven't found opportunity..., and when they look for a job they say you must have experience, but to have experience you must first have opportunity to get the experience."

- University student and volunteer, Sudanese, Community organisation (VIC)

A lack of Australian work experience is a major barrier for refugee and humanitarian entrants in securing employment. Many employers do not recognise overseas work experience and require applicants to demonstrate they have had experience in like-employment in Australia, but new arrivals struggle to get the entry-level jobs that will allow them to gain that experience (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007; ECCV 2009). Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007:72) found that a lack of Australian work experience and the related inability to provide Australian references were significant issues in the employment outcomes for participants in their study. Even for those whose formal qualifications were recognised, this did not seem to be of much worth without local experience.

With regards to work experience, women confront additional challenges that flow not only from their family responsibilities, but from the gendered nature of the labour markets in their home countries (ECCV 2009; RCOA 2008). Many refugee women have a long history of engaging in paid work outside the home, but often such work has been located within the informal economy (e.g. in local markets). While the skills women have obtained in these sectors are invaluable and provide evidence of aptitude and application, they are not readily recognised within Western labour markets.

4.2.4 Limited access to transport and affordable housing close to employment

"[Transport issues] are absolutely vital, and probably have the biggest impact in Murray Bridge on employment opportunities. One of the main employers is located 20 kilometres out of town where there is no public transport. There are only four buses per day from Adelaide to Murray Bridge. It is a case of, if you don't have your licence or a car, you don't get the job."

- Service provider, Murray Bridge New Settler Services, Lutheran Community Care (SA)

The issues of limited access to affordable housing and transport are closely correlated with participation in the labour force, and present a particular challenge for newly settled refugee and humanitarian entrants. That is, the ability to secure decent housing is dependent on income and, in turn, sustainable employment (Kyle et al 2004:6). As accommodation costs and housing shortages force refugee entrants to live further and further away from employment opportunities, educational facilities and other amenities, the need for a readily accessible, efficient form of transportation is vital (ECCV 2008; RCOA 2009:51-6). The lack of safe, efficient and affordable public transport in outer metropolitan and regional areas is therefore a major barrier in accessing employment opportunities (RCOA 2008:62), particularly where the types of occupations in which refugee and humanitarian entrants are initially being employed (such as industrial cleaning or factory work) require them to work at times when it is frequently impossible to access public transport. In addition, for refugee entrants who have to balance family responsibilities – such as accompanying
children to school, as well as other obligations such as AMEP classes – negotiating infrequent and indirect public transport is excessively complicated, tiring and time-consuming (RCOA 2008; RCOA 2009).

Where public transport is not viable or accessible, private transportation is a necessity and the importance of holding a drivers’ licence cannot be overstated. This is particularly the case in rural and regional areas. The difficulties refugee and humanitarian entrants face in obtaining a drivers’ licence has been identified as a major barrier to employment (Flanagan 2007; RCOA 2008:64). In addition to getting to and from work, there are many basic job opportunities – such as employment in car yards as vehicle cleaners – that are closed off to those who do not hold licences. These problems are compounded by the increasingly tough and expensive requirements for obtaining a licence (RCOA 2010a). Without access to a car, someone with a full licence who can supervise driving practice, or affordable or free driving lessons, the cost of obtaining a licence is becoming so prohibitive for refugee and humanitarian entrants that some risk driving unlicensed (Flanagan 2007).

4.2.5 Lack of knowledge of Australian workplace systems and culture

“For people coming from Africa, we're not used to talking about ourselves. There is this saying, 'Only empty bottles make noise'. Here, people say: ‘Tell me something about yourself?’ and I say: 'I'm ----'. And they say: 'Yes, I know your name...'.”

- Employee, Burkinabè, Community organisation (VIC)

“I think one consistent thing that comes up is [employees from refugee backgrounds'] fear of asking for leave. They just don't like taking days off. They are so conscientious. We had one [employee] who came up to their area manager, in confidence, and was so distressed that they'd heard that people were taking sick days and they weren't actually sick. They were mortified! And we had to say: ‘Yeah, that happens in Australia'. So we had to coach them to talk to their team leader, and that they're entitled to take their leave. They're nervous that they won't have a job to come back to. They don't understand that it's law here and it has to be taken.”

- Employer, Financial services (VIC)

Studies have found that a lack of knowledge of Australian workplace culture and systems can be a barrier to both finding and sustaining employment (AMES Research & Policy Division 2009; ECCV 2009; Flanagan 2007). For example, Australian employers expect prospective employees to sell themselves and their experience in interviews, which can run counter to the values and norms of some cultural communities who are socialised to value modesty and to defer to authority (ECCV 2009).

In terms of sustaining employment, a lack of knowledge of workplace practices and culture can also have negative impact on job safety and the longer-term engagement of refugee and humanitarian entrants in the workforce. For example, WorkSafe in Victoria report that there has been a significant rise in the number of injuries to people of African background (especially women), and it is the highest of any community (Centacare and JewishAid 2007).

4.2.6 Pressure to juggle employment and domestic responsibilities

“The women we are working with find it difficult to be away from their children all day. It's not easy for them. In Australia, you have to trust the system and let your children go, and go and earn a living.”

- Employer, Retail small business and social enterprise (NSW)

Just as in the overwhelming majority of Australian households, the responsibility for undertaking caring and household duties among refugee and humanitarian entrants tends to fall disproportionately to women (ECCV 2009). This is especially so when it comes to providing primary
care for children, infirm and elderly relatives, and in the context of families migrating without extended family members who may otherwise have provided such care (e.g. grandparents). Ho and Alcorso (2004) note that upon arrival, men’s employment generally assumes priority within migrant families, while women’s primary responsibility is to facilitate the settlement of the family into a new environment. This is further supported by a report on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women in Victoria (VOMA et al 2005) which found that, in the context of migration, women generally bear the responsibility for setting up the house and caring for family after arrival. As such, the act of migration itself often results in an escalation in women’s roles as wives or mothers to the extent that women’s careers and employment status are often considered secondary to those of men (cited in ECCV 2009).

Compounding this situation, Flanagan (2007:46) highlights the issue of poor access to culturally-appropriate childcare for refugee and humanitarian entrants being a barrier to women entering the labour force or participating in language or other training (see also ECCV 2009; Kyle et al 2004). ECCV (2009:10-1) notes that the high cost and lack of culturally-appropriate childcare options are significant barriers to women’s ability to participate in the workforce.

4.2.7 Lack of targeted services to support employment transitions

"I used to be with [a Job Network provider] and I didn't get anything... They're very serious. It's like government stuff.... When you promote something friendly, people will love it and come. But if you're just giving orders: ‘You need to come to interview. You need to look for job...’ And nobody helps. You just have to go and touch the screen and look for job. With nothing! No experience, nothing. This is a big problem with new arrivals when they come to Australia. They don't get that support."

- Employee, Sudanese, Cleaning social enterprise (VIC)

Recent literature has highlighted the lack of settlement services targeted at labour market integration that can provide the support needed to facilitate the employment transitions of newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants (Flanagan 2007; Kyle et al 2004:iii; Liebig 2006:4). Since the establishment of the Job Network in 1998 there are no longer migrant-specific employment service providers let alone Federally-funded services catering specially for refugee and humanitarian entrants (although some Job Network/JSA providers claim to have particular expertise in assisting migrants).

With regards to generalist employment services that are meant to support refugee and humanitarian entrants to make the transition into work, a number of studies have highlighted the deficiencies of the Job Network 12 and Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET) program 13, and the poor employment outcomes achieved by this group of jobseekers (Berman et al 2008; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:27; Dunlop 2005; ECCV 2009:12-3; Flanagan 2007; Kyle et al 2004:iii). Common concerns pertaining to generalist employment services include:

- A lack of appreciation among generalist employment services of the particular needs or refugee and humanitarian entrants and their employment histories (Berman et al 2008; Kyle et al 2004; RCOA 2008);
- Inadequate emphasis on finding work that is appropriate to refugee and humanitarian entrants’ skill levels, interest and experience. This is in part attributed to Job Network providers being remunerated based on the numbers of clients they place as opposed to the quality or sustainability of those placements (Flanagan 2007:29; RCOA 2008);
- Poor information provision by generalist employment services (including lack of use of interpreters) leading to a poor understanding of the division between Centrelink and Job Network services (Kyle et al 2004:iii; RCOA 2008);
- Employment services requiring high-level computer and English literacy that may be outside of refugees’ experience (i.e. use of computer job kiosks for self-directed job search), with no

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12 The Job Network was replaced by Job Services Australia in July 2009.
13 The JPET program was de-funded in 2008.
support by staff in using this technology (Dunlop 2005:43; Kyle et al 2004);

- Overly complex systems and requirements with many refugee background clients having a poor understanding of rights and obligations, and of the appeal mechanisms available to them (Berman et al 2008; Kyle et al 2004:iii); and

- Adverse impact of Job Network requirements on refugee entrants’ capacity to attend English classes. Because compliance with Job Network requirements is a condition of receiving Centrelink support but attendance at AMEP is voluntary, refugees feel that that they have no choice but to adhere to Job Network demands, even if doing so may compromise their longer term employment outcomes (Flanagan 2007).

Much of this criticism is, of course, directed at generalist employment service models that have since been replaced (i.e. Job Network). Although a new employment services model was introduced in 2009 and any evaluation of the efficacy of this model is some way off, many of the previous concerns raised regarding the old Job Network model are likely to be equally pertinent to the new Job Services Australia (JSA) model. Indeed, participants at the Refugee Council of Australia’s national community consultations held in December 2009 did not or could not distinguish between the former Job Network and the current JSA. Concerns raised at these consultations included that the ineffectiveness of generalist employment service models may be further exacerbated under the JSA due to the fact that successful contractors have to prove they will cater to all client streams, and there were fewer contracts awarded under the new model to organisations who claim to have particular expertise in working with people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Comments from service providers also suggested that the new JSA model has incorporated greater administrative requirements without a commensurate increase in funding, and that the system is still very much designed for providers working with individual clients who have a good understanding of Australian employment systems and workplace culture and are fluent in English. That is, JSA providers are not resourced to provide the kind of targeted individual and community support that would equip newly-arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants with the necessary job-seeking skills and understanding of Australian workplace culture. (RCOA 2010a:69-71)

4.2.8 The refugee experience and resettlement

"An understanding that some people are not ready for work is important, and ASRC has tough expectations regarding this… If they get a job then lose it, it’s heartbreaking for everyone involved. ASRC gauge readiness for work through strategies such as seeing if a client is contactable by phone, if the client contacts them, if they show up on time. If it is considered an individual is not ready, they are supported through counselling and training until such time as they are."

- Service Provider, Employment Program, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (VIC)

Literature exploring Australia’s role and responsibilities as one of the few states with a planned refugee resettlement program have reiterated the point that, while successful employment pathways are a crucial part of ensuring and measuring good settlement outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants, the nature of the forced migration experience means that employment along the lines of what may be expected of other migrants or those in the general Australian population may not always be appropriate or desirable (Kyle et al 2004:iii; RCOA 2008; Stevens 1998; Stevens 1997). Further, refugee and humanitarian entrants are not, and should not be, selected on the basis of their human capital (i.e. labour market potential) (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:63).

In terms of how the refugee experience impacts on employment, past experiences of torture and trauma, destitution and extended periods of time living in refugee camps can and do give rise to profound physical and psychosocial impacts that may mean pressure to engage in paid employment soon after arrival can compound trauma and make settlement even more difficult (ECCV 2009; Flanagan 2007:54; RCOA 2008; Stevens 1998). As a result of their experiences, many former refugees have developed chronic physical and mental health problems that impact
adversely on their capacity to maintain acceptable forms of employment within the context of the Australian labour market (Khoo 2007). In the same vein, while there is much evidence to suggest that gaining paid employment is an important contributor towards assisting former refugees to overcome the mental health impacts of their migration experience, it is also true that some physical health problems can be intensified by pressure to find and keep a job (Khoo 2007). On the other hand, Kyle et al (2004:ii) report that, for the vast majority of recently arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants, unemployment means low income, which in turn can exacerbate health issues and present a barrier to well-being in a range of other ways.

4.2.9 Downward mobility and pressure to accept insecure employment

"Refugees came here and they don't speak much English and, because they're told to find a job, they went through employment services to do the factory work. And some of them cut their fingers or their hand because some of them don't know how to use the machines. They don't know how to communicate or ask people. And I think this is the hardest thing the government is putting refugees through at the moment, because you're just pushing them. You didn't give them other choices. [They say]: 'You've got to take this job or I'm going to stop your payment'. If they don't accept these 'choices, they can't survive.'

- Employee, Sudanese, Childcare service (VIC)

There are a number of recent studies which suggest refugee and humanitarian entrants who were occupationally well-established before coming to Australia suffer substantial occupational downward mobility and loss of occupational status, even many years after arriving in Australia (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:68-9; Flanagan 2007; Junankar and Mahuteau 2005; Richardson et al 2004). Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007) report that as many as 49.3% of refugee and humanitarian entrants in their sample were employed in occupations below their skill level (see also Figure 4.1.3).

The reasons described in research for why refugee and humanitarian entrants are concentrated in low-paid work with poor conditions well below their capabilities include:

- The perception among the general Australian community, some employers and generalist employment service providers that refugee entrants should be available for unattractive jobs where labour shortages are acute (Castles et al 1992:89; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007). For example, JSCM (2006:262) provided a case study of a 34-year-old skilled refugee entrant from Sierra Leone who has his post-graduate qualifications in engineering assessed and recognised, but was told by a Job Network provider that “he consider working in factories or as a manual labourer” as he is “a strong and healthy young man, able to lift heavy boxes”.

- Many refugee and humanitarian entrants cannot afford to wait until the best job for them becomes available due to economic necessity (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:69; Dunlop 2005:10). Not only is there pressure to support their family in Australia and to send remittances to relatives who remain in unsafe situations overseas, there is also strong pressure placed on refugee and humanitarian entrants by Centrelink and Job Network providers to find work as quickly as possible once registered (Kyle et al 2004:5). This pressure is exacerbated by the system of non-compliance which threatens their income (Flanagan 2007:61-3).

- The capacity for refugee and humanitarian entrants to leave low-paid and low-skilled jobs decreases the longer they remain in those industries, due to loss of original skills and missed opportunities for networking and career progression (Kyle et al 2004; Richardson et al 2004). This is a dual loss to both Australia (through under-utilisation of skilled workers) and to individuals.

- The preparedness of Australian-born job-seekers to settle for low-status and low-paid jobs is at an historic low, in part due to low unemployment rates (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury
4.2.10 Discrimination in employment

“I applied for a hundred jobs, but when they see me, there's a feeling I get from their facial expression... They say: ‘We gave the job to someone else’ or ‘We'll give you a call’, but you never hear from them.”

- Employee, Sudanese, Childcare service (VIC)

Discrimination has been identified in literature as a profound barrier to refugee and humanitarian entrants finding and sustaining employment (Berman et al 2008; Carrington et al 2007; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007; ECCV 2009; Flanagan 2007; Liebig 2006). For example, Junankar et al (2004) show that the unemployment probability of Asian immigrants surveyed in the first three waves of the LSIA15 is significantly higher than that of the other immigrant groups, even after controlling for socio-economic characteristics – including visa-group and English proficiency (cited in Liebig 2006:42). In her study of experiences of refugee and humanitarian entrants in Tasmania, Flanagan (2007:52) found that participants reported experiencing discriminatory and racist comments in work environments and this was named directly as a barrier to employment. Similarly, interviews of employers and former refugees conducted by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007:25) found that “some employers suggested that it was the migrants’ fault that they could not get jobs, due to ‘personality differences’, ‘bad attitudes’ such as ‘lack of gratitude’ or being ‘too proud’ of their country of origin, being ‘too enthusiastic’ or not enthusiastic enough, exaggerating their abilities or ‘not selling themselves enough’, or simply because they lacked understanding of Australian work culture (including racist jokes)”.

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury’s (2007) compelling study exploring the effects of visible difference on employment outcomes of three recently arrived refugee entrant groups (ex-Yugoslavs, black Africans, and people from the Middle East) found different outcomes for respondents from the three backgrounds despite similar levels of human capital (English proficiency and qualification level) and similar length of residence. The authors contend that these differential outcomes are due to both structural and interpersonal racism, and cannot be explained using the traditional analysis that argues there are only four main factors influencing employment outcomes: English proficiency, length of residence in Australia, educational qualifications and visa type.

Berman et al’s (2008:iv-v) comprehensive research on racial and religious discrimination in employment found evidence of:

- Discrimination in recruitment;
- Underemployment and lack of recognition of qualifications;
- Discrimination and disadvantage in accessing and utilising job search agencies;
- Over-representation of migrants in low skilled, low paid employment;
- Under-representation of migrants in the public sector;
- Bias against migrants in promotion;
- Intimidation in the workplace;
- Religious discrimination;
- Additional discrimination related to gender;
- Discrimination in small and medium enterprises;
- Racism in the media and stereotyping of communities; and
- Difficulties accessing the complaints process.

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14 This research was published before the global financial crisis of 2008-09, at a time of record low unemployment in Australia.
15 The LSIA is the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia and is the most comprehensive survey of immigrants ever to be undertaken in Australia. The LSIA seeks to provide government and other agencies with reliable data to monitor and improve immigration and settlement policies, programs and services. LSIA 1 surveyed migrants who arrived in Australia between September 1993 and August 1995. LSIA 2 surveyed migrants who arrived in Australia between September 1999 and August 2000. For more information about LSIA, go to http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/lsia/lsia01.htm
4.2.11 Difficulties with recognition of skills, qualifications and experience

"Someone told me that in Melbourne we have the best educated taxi drivers in the world... because they come from different countries [and are] already well educated, but they don't get the job."

- University student and volunteer, Sudanese, Community organisation (VIC)

Literature indicates that, contrary to popular belief, refugee and humanitarian entrants are not concentrated in poor jobs because they are all unskilled, cannot communicate well in English, and/or do not have work experience readily transferable to the Australian context (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007). Results from the 2006 Australian Census show, for example, that 38.8% of Sudanese-born Australians, 36.9% of Iraqis and 33.7% of Afghans held post-secondary school-level qualifications, as compared with 52.5% of the general Australian population (DIAC 2007). Indeed, a large proportion of refugee and humanitarian entrants were occupationally well-established before arriving in Australia (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007; DIAC 2007). Many of these individuals hold tertiary qualifications and/or have many years experience in specialist vocations. Anecdotally, quite a number of refugee and humanitarian entrants also have skills and experience that are a good occupational fit for the labour shortages currently a feature of Australian job market (AMES 2008:2; RCOA 2008; RCOA 2009). However, refugee entrants find that these skills, qualifications and experience are not sufficient for securing work in occupations at the same level or close to the level of that enjoyed in their home countries (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:73; Constable et al 2004; Flanagan 2007; Liebig 2006:35).

The obstacles encountered by refugee and humanitarian entrants of having prior skills, experience and qualifications recognised include:

- Prohibitive costs for bridging courses and supplementary examinations (Berman et al 2008; JSCM 2006). Many refugee entrants could have their qualifications recognised through a simple completion of additional course or examinations, but the high cost of undertaking these processes can place them beyond the reach of new entrants coping with other financial pressures. Often upgrading qualifications is delayed because pressing and current financial needs leave no option but to enter the low-skilled labour market, from which many refugee entrants never re-emerge (JSCM 2006: 267);

- Limitations on translation services. Refugee and humanitarian entrants only receive a limited number of free document translations. Not uncommonly, documents evidencing qualifications exceed this number and require full translation to be useful, not the partial translations generally provided (RCOA 2008);

- Refugee and humanitarian entrants are placed in a situation where they are required to demonstrate Australian workplace experience before being considered eligible for employment, but are unable to obtain the jobs that will provide them with that experience. Some have extensive and relevant work experience overseas, but this is not recognised by employers (Berman et al 2008; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:72; Flanagan 2007); and

- Research has indicated that there are overly complex processes and structures across national and state regulatory bodies that prevent qualifications and experience from being recognised (Berman et al 2008; Carrington et al 2007: Chapter 3; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:78; JSCM 2006; Liebig 2006; Productivity Commission 2006:Chapter 9).

This lack of recognition of skills and qualifications does not only apply to those acquired overseas. A number of participants in RCOA’s research highlighted the frustration of completing vocational and tertiary qualifications at Australian institutions and these being unrecognised or not resulting in employment outcomes:

"I have a friend who has five certificates – aged care, hospitality, welfare... and still no job."

- Employee, Burkinabè, Community organisation (VIC)
“After I finished [my Certificate III in Children's Services], it was hard because a lot of childcare centres didn't recognise [the registered training organisation]. If I'd been told before: when you finish your course, after nine months, you are not going to get a job with that certificate, I'm not going to do it! I'm not going to waste my time! […] It's not just upsetting me; it's upsetting a lot of people as well. These people, they've wasted their time doing courses, and after that [employers] say: 'We don't recognise that course'."

- Employee, Sudanese, Childcare service (VIC)

4.2.12 Lack of qualifications

"I think it's hard to get a job simply because, if you come to this country as an adult, there are many things that you miss because you were not born here. And if you come from somewhere like where I come from, in Africa, there are different levels of technology and development. But it doesn't mean you won't be able to find work. It's only a matter of time."  

- Employee, Eritrean, Community organisation (VIC)

While many refugee and humanitarian entrants were occupationally well-established prior to arriving in Australia, others will not have had the opportunities to attain qualifications and employment experience due to the nature of their migration experience. In particular, individuals who were born or spent protracted periods of time in refugee camps, have been detained, or have been in constant transition between countries of residence, are unlikely to have had opportunities to undertake formal education and training of the variety that is considered useful in the Australian job market.

For many women arriving on refugee and humanitarian program visas, a lack of education is likely to be a significant barrier to either integration into employment or further training (ECCV 2009:9). For this sub-group, a lack of qualifications or work experience is a major barrier to entry even in low-skilled occupations. For example, Flanagan (2007) reports that the formal qualifications required to get even low skilled work were a significant barrier to work for research participants. Interviewees reported being told that they were required to achieve IELTS Level 58 in English plus certification in work place skills in order to get low-skilled manual work as kitchen hands or cleaners.

4.2.13 The Australian labour market and disadvantage

"I went to [a Job Network provider], and the only thing they told me is you have to do training in accounting or aged care… and they're offering me training instead of giving me a job. I said, I already have Aged Care [Certificate] and I want to work in my field. But they always sent me to something lower or to do more training."

- Employee, Burkinabè, Community organisation (VIC)

Like all Australians attempting to secure stable, decently-remunerated employment, refugee and humanitarian entrants are confronting a domestic employment landscape that is markedly different from that of previous generations. These changes include an increase in precariousness of employment attributed, among other things, to: growing casualisation, the demise of collective bargaining, reduced award conditions, and less protection against unfair dismissal, as well as the global financial crisis and reductions in blue collar manufacturing jobs (Carrington et al 2007:34; Dunlop 2005; Flanagan 2007; Kamp 2008:29). As Richardson et al (2004:57) report, “less skilled migrants are a particularly good barometer of improved economic conditions because they tend to have the most tenuous connections to the labour market; they are often the first to be laid off in times of recession, and they are most prone to being ‘churned’ through short-term, low-paid jobs (which discourages their continued participation)".

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007:77) further argue that the humanitarian intake in Australia ensures that “profit-seeking capital has access to a supply of labour to cover undesirable jobs that the local..."
population shuns”. Their findings from a comparative study of employment outcomes for three refugee entrant groups found that lower levels of employment and employment in jobs below their qualifications indicate that refugee and humanitarian entrants are disadvantaged generally, and within that disadvantage there are degrees of disadvantage resulting from visible difference (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:77).

4.2.14 Asylum seekers and employment

Asylum seekers face all of the barriers to employment that refugee and other humanitarian entrants face, as well as additional obstacles, including lack of understanding about the rights of asylum seekers and even the stigmatisation of businesses employing asylum seekers living in the Australian community. Asylum seekers have extremely limited and sometimes no access to other generalist or refugee-targeted support services, including employment assistance. Without a targeted approach to employment support services and pathways to employment for asylum seekers in the community, those people who have work rights will not be able to participate fully in the job market and remain reliant on charitable organisations.

4.3 Policy and program responses

In recognition that refugee and humanitarian entrants face particular barriers to entering the Australian labour force (outlined in Section 4.2), a range of targeted employment initiatives have been trialled across Australia. An overview of the types of targeted initiatives that are being, or have been, trialled can be found in the appendices (Section 9.3). While this mapping exercise is unlikely to be comprehensive – with many local initiatives having short timeframes and diverse funding sources that make them hard to track – it paints a picture of the enormous variety of models and approaches used. For example, some initiatives have been developed to support refugee entrants and other migrants who come to Australia with professional skills and a good grasp of English, while others target jobseekers who settle with more limited English, employment and educational experiences. Different approaches are therefore necessary to ensure employment pathways match the diversity of refugee entrants’ experiences and aspirations.

Generally, employment services targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants can be grouped into the following overarching models or service types, with some providers combining a number of different models or service types within the one program:

- **Individual case management and referral services** – e.g. caseworkers providing intensive assistance to support employment outcomes; caseworkers providing less formal as-needed support; caseworkers referring and advocating on behalf of clients with others services.

- **Mentoring programs with employment focus** – e.g. one-to-one mentoring; group mentoring; mentors-mentees linked by profession or industry; mentoring programs operating within a workplace to support new employees.

- **Information and training on Australian work culture and systems** – e.g. individual support or group programs to help participants explore Australian workplace cultures, including understanding workplace relationships and communicating cross-culturally; resource development; employment forums.

- **Work experience placement programs** – e.g. paid or unpaid placements; traineeships; short- or longer-term supported placements; placement programs with strong links and employer commitment to participants securing ongoing employment.

- **Industry-related training targeting refugee and migrant communities** – e.g. Certificate-level and pre-Certificate courses in areas including children’s services, hospitality, aged care,

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16 An asylum seeker is someone who has fled their own country and applies to the government of another country for protection as a refugee. Asylum seekers in Australia arrive by plane or boat and are waiting on a decision on their refugee status.

17 There are many more services that are funded to provide settlement or other welfare support to refugee and humanitarian entrants where employment may be one of the areas in which support is provided (e.g. IHSS, SGP). However, unless employment is the primary focus of the settlement service, these have not been included in the mapping exercise.
community welfare, building and construction, with strong focus on people from non-English speaking backgrounds; some with established links to skills shortage areas and employers.

- **Services providing career advice, planning and job search support** – e.g. individual pathway planning; group programs; career forums; access to computers, internet, newspapers, phone, fax; support with CV and job application writing.

- **Social enterprise or initiatives supporting small business development** – e.g. small business training and group programs; business mentoring; enterprise facilitation; social enterprise development with focus on refugee and humanitarian entrants and their communities.

- **Services advocating and liaising with employers** – e.g. services building relationships with employers to facilitate employment outcomes for clients; training of employers on diversity issues; broader community education on diversity; bringing together of services, communities and businesses to work collaboratively.

- **Services providing support with skills and qualification recognition** – e.g. support or information for individuals or groups on pathways to getting overseas qualifications/skills recognised; bridging courses; facilitating access to government departments overseeing qualification/skills recognition processes.

- **English language classes with employment focus** – e.g. group or individual tutoring with focus on English for the workplace; English learning supported through practical workplace experience; bilingual trainers and facilitators.

- **Post-employment follow-up and support** – e.g. liaising with employers and employees post-employment to address any issues that can arise from things such as employee’s lack of familiarity with Australian workplace systems and culture or an employer’s lack of experience in managing a diverse workforce.

In terms of how these targeted initiatives are funded, Appendix 9.3 highlights the considerable diversity of funding sources. Sources identified through this mapping exercise include:

- Local government;
- State and territory governments (see *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* case study);
- Federal government;
- Philanthropic trusts;
- Corporate social responsibility funds;
- Self-funded social enterprises;
- Community organisations (through fundraising and global budgets); and
- Unfunded volunteer-run community initiatives.

**Skilling Queenslanders for Work (Queensland)**

*Skilling Queenslanders for Work* is an example of a state government funding stream that has been used to fund innovative local initiatives addressing employment transitions for refugee and humanitarian entrants.

*Skilling Queenslanders for Work* was implemented on 1 July 2007, replacing the *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative, in response to the changing needs of the job market (DEIR 2009:24). The aim of the initiative is to “maximise the skilled workforce by both increasing community capacity to meet the changing needs of the labour market, and giving disadvantaged jobseekers the skills and training they need to compete for full-time employment”. The funding focus is on a range of disadvantaged groups, including young people, Indigenous people, mature-aged jobseekers, and migrants and refugees.

The funding for 2007-08 was $79.4 million dollars, which DEIR (2009:25) reports as having assisted more than 22,000 people to engage in the labour market. In 2008-09, funding was granted to 24 services who concentrated specifically on refugee and migrant clients, with 1,295 refugee and migrant jobseekers supported (DEIR 2009:27).
It should be noted that the targeted employment services captured in the mapping exercise operate alongside a nation-wide network of generalist employment services, primarily Job Services Australia (formerly Job Network) providers who are funded through the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). Job Services Australia (JSA) was established as a one stop shop where jobseekers are referred through a single provider to access a range of employment services (e.g. job search, New Enterprise Incentive Scheme, training opportunities).

In the absence of a national employment strategy focusing on refugee and humanitarian entrants, provisions for this group of jobseekers are through generalist JSA providers and a limited number of specialist JSA services targeting people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. However, there are fewer service providers claiming particular expertise in working with people from refugee backgrounds funded under the JSA than the previous Job Network, and these specialist providers are required to provide the same suite of services as other JSA providers and with the same levels of funding and accountability framework. For example, Figure 4.3.1 illustrates the settlement of refugee and humanitarian entrants by state and territory and the distribution of specialist CALD providers. Figure 4.3.2 shows the top 10 local government areas (LGAs) of refugee resettlement by state and the existence of specialist CALD JSA providers in these areas. Both of these figures highlight the absence of any strategic framework for funding specialist services in areas where there is significant settlement of refugee and humanitarian entrants.

**Figure 4.3.1 – Number of refugee and humanitarian entrants settling by Australian state and territory, 2005-2010**, and funding of specialist CALD JSA services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th># (%) refugee and humanitarian entrants</th>
<th>Specialist CALD provider funded through JSA, 2009</th>
<th>JSA Region where specialist CALD providers are funded to operate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>20,599 (31.5%)</td>
<td>Community First Step</td>
<td>Fairfield (Bonnyrigg, Fairfield)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)</td>
<td>Bayside (Box Hill, Dandenong, Glen Waverley, Moorabbin, Noble Park, Oakleigh, Springvale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)</td>
<td>Calder (Broadmeadows, Brunswick East, Coburg, Glenroy, North Melbourne, Sunbury)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Job Futures Ltd</td>
<td>Geelong (Geelong West, Geelong, Norlane)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)</td>
<td>Plenty (Epping, Heidelberg, Preston)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)</td>
<td>Westgate (Footscray, Laverton, Melton South, Melton, St Albans, Sunshine, Werribee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>18,862 (28.8%)</td>
<td>Community First</td>
<td>Central and West Metro (Fremantle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community First</td>
<td>East Metro (Cannington)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ASeTTS</td>
<td>North Metro (Girrawheen, Joondalup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>7,674 (11.7%)</td>
<td>ACCES Services Inc</td>
<td>Logan (Beenleigh, Hillcrest, Logan Central)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>7,551 (11.5%)</td>
<td>ARAC Jobs</td>
<td>Western Adelaide (Kilkenny, Underdale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>7,154 (10.9%)</td>
<td>ARA Jobs</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1,425 (2.2%)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>726 (1.1%)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>725 (1.1%)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As the JSA model was only rolled out as of 1 July 2009, it is not possible to comment on the efficacy of this model in terms of employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants. However, the limitations of the previous Job Network model have been well documented through this and other research (see Section 4.2.7). And while the Federal Government has highlighted improvements that JSA will have over the old Job Network model that may have an impact on refugee and humanitarian entrants19, there are many indications that a generalist one stop shop model does not provide the flexibility or resources that would allow services to provide the kinds of

18 DIAC Settlement Database (www.immi.gov.au/settlement) for period 1/1/05 – 31/12/09, accessed 11/2/10
targeted supports outlined in the following chapter of this report. Indeed, it is hoped that the findings from this research will further inform the implementation of the JSA model by emphasising elements of good practice that have proven effective in supporting employment transitions for refugee and humanitarian entrants.

**Figure 4.3.2 – Top 10 local government areas of refugee and humanitarian settlement in NSW, Victoria, WA, Queensland and South Australia (2005-2010) with specialist CALD JSA services operating**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Fairfield</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Blacktown</th>
<th>Auburn</th>
<th>Parramatta</th>
<th>Holroyd</th>
<th>Canterbury</th>
<th>Bankstown</th>
<th>Wollongong</th>
<th>Newcastle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># ppl</td>
<td>3,905</td>
<td>2,506</td>
<td>2,331</td>
<td>2,017</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>1,063</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD JSA</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Greater Danden’g</th>
<th>Hume</th>
<th>Brimbank</th>
<th>Wyndham</th>
<th>Casey</th>
<th>Maroon-dah</th>
<th>Manbury-nong</th>
<th>Hobsons Bay</th>
<th>Greater Sheppart’n</th>
<th>Whittlesea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># ppl</td>
<td>3,351</td>
<td>2,024</td>
<td>1,988</td>
<td>1,574</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD JSA</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Stirling</th>
<th>Canning</th>
<th>Wanneroo</th>
<th>Bayswater</th>
<th>Gosnells</th>
<th>Belmont</th>
<th>Swan</th>
<th>Victoria Park</th>
<th>Armadale</th>
<th>Cockburn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># ppl</td>
<td>2,463</td>
<td>1,076</td>
<td>1,021</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD JSA</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Brisbane</th>
<th>Logan</th>
<th>Toowoomb-ba</th>
<th>Gold Coast</th>
<th>Calms</th>
<th>Ipswich</th>
<th>Townsville</th>
<th>Gatton</th>
<th>Rock-hampton</th>
<th>Pine Rivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># ppl</td>
<td>4,198</td>
<td>1,555</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD JSA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Pt Adel’de Enfield</th>
<th>Salisbury</th>
<th>Charles Sturt</th>
<th>Playford</th>
<th>West Torrens</th>
<th>Marion</th>
<th>Campbell-town</th>
<th>Holdfast Bay</th>
<th>Tea Tree Gully</th>
<th>Mount Gambier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># ppl</td>
<td>1,690</td>
<td>1,227</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD JSA</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. FINDINGS: WHAT WORKS IN SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION OF REFUGEE AND HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS INTO EMPLOYMENT

The following section provides a discussion of findings from a series of in-depth interviews conducted across Australia with employment service providers, employers and employees from refugee backgrounds working in different industries. The focus of these interviews was on factors for success and drew from existing literature documenting employment barriers and good practice models (see Section 4) to test and expand on the relative importance of different service types in creating effective employment pathways for refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Some key themes emerged from interviews that suggest a range of things that need to happen in order for refugee and humanitarian entrants to be able to make use of their skills to find meaningful, sustainable employment in Australia. These elements of success can be broken down into five broad themes:

1. Specialist employment services targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants;
2. Employers who value and are committed to workforce diversity;
3. Coordination and collaboration among refugee entrants and their communities, education and training providers, employment services and employers;
4. Initiatives tapping into the entrepreneurial spirit of former refugees through social enterprise and small business development; and
5. Building awareness within refugee background communities about career pathways in Australia.

Under each of these themes, a number of effective strategies or approaches were identified by interviewees and through a review of international literature. It should be noted that further research would be required in order to conduct a thorough evaluation of the relative effectiveness of these different strategies and approaches. Instead, strategies or approaches that interviewees deemed as effective have been included as a series of case studies to illustrate the diverse, targeted approaches that are needed to meet the needs of such a diverse group of jobseekers.

5.1 Specialist employment services targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants

“I think there needs to be a specialist [employment] agency. Refugees don't just need work; they need moral support. They need someone who understands that, as a refugee, you lose everything... Before you were valued, you had an identity, a community; you were respected. This is gone when you come to Australia. You lose so much [and] you need someone who understands your situation and is sympathetic; who can go below the surface and understands the diversity of experiences.”

- Employee, Eritrean, Health services (ACT)

Whether delivered by specialist agencies (i.e. multicultural, ethno-specific or settlement service providers) or through generalist employment services (e.g. Job Services Australia), there was a strong theme that emerged from interviews of the need for targeted approaches to supporting the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants. In particular, targeted approaches meant service providers recognising the particular barriers that refugee entrants’ face in entering the Australian labour market and that a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be successful in meeting the needs of such a diverse group of jobseekers. As one service provider described:

“If I feel very strongly that that's where [this employment support] should be. It shouldn't be in specialist agencies; it should be within mainstream agencies. But it needs to be
supported within the mainstream service with workers who are culturally appropriate and understand the needs. They need to have a dedicated team or staff member to the area, that means they have had the appropriate training and understand that some of the issues are different. And this doesn’t have to be a degree; it can be a half-day workshop for staff about cultural appropriateness. When you have a good worker in one of these agencies, the difference is phenomenal."

- Service provider, RAMSS/CRS, Anglicare NT

In terms of what a targeted employment service would offer, service providers consulted were asked to rate different service components in terms of their impact on successful employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants. The list of service components was derived from an initial review of literature (particularly the BSL-EMC Given the Chance model, see Mestan 2008), with a question asking interviewees to identify any additional service components not listed. Figure 5.1 shows the types of service components that were considered to have the greatest impact on employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants, with casework being seen as having the most significant impact, followed by work experience placements and support with resume writing. Other effective service components were: support with job search, liaising and advocating with employers, and providing information on Australian work culture and systems.

**Figure 5.1 How would you rate the following service components in terms of their impact on successful employment outcomes for refugees?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Component</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casework</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience placements</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume writing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support with job search</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaising &amp; advocating with employers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training on Aus. work culture and systems</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview skills</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career advice, guidance and planning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokerage</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral to other services</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry-related training</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post employment support</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-cultural/lingual workers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and childcare</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, successful strategies or approaches used by employment services targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants that were talked about in interviews, and are discussed in more detail below, included:

- Individual casework and referral to other services;
- Work experience placements;
- Support with applying for work: job search, applications and interview skills;
- Advocating and liaising with employers;
- Orientation to Australian work culture and systems;
- Career advice, guidance and planning;
- Mentoring;
- Post-employment support;
- Services for asylum seekers;
- Employing bicultural or bilingual workers within employment services; and
- Addressing racism and discrimination in employment and the wider community.

One specialist employment service that has combined a range of these strategies and was identified by a number of interviewees as an effective model is the *Given the Chance* program developed by the Ecumenical Migration Centre-Brotherhood of St Laurence (see case study below). Although developed at a local level in Melbourne and with a relatively small number of participants, *Given the Chance* offers a model that could be replicated in different areas and adapted to suit the needs of a range of employer or industry types as well as participant profiles.

**Given the Chance (Victoria)**

*Given the Chance* (GtC) is a targeted program for refugee and humanitarian entrants that has been developed by the Ecumenical Migration Centre-Brotherhood of St Laurence (EMC-BSL) over a number of years. GtC is designed to assist refugee and humanitarian entrants overcome social and employment barriers, and has been funded primarily through philanthropy, with some additional funding sourced from the state government.

GtC applies a multi-disciplinary case management approach, guiding participants into the following integrated and specialised support services:

- **Individual pathways planning, case management and referral** – In addition to career planning, the program coordinator provides ongoing support and case management assistance for up to one year, including post-employment support. Participants are referred as necessary to counselling and other services.
- **Mentoring** – Participants are matched with mentors from the business, community, and government sector. Mentors volunteer to meet with a refugee at least fortnightly for 12 months, to provide them with personal support, often related to employment.
- **Employment training** – Participants attend GtC pre-employment training, which focuses on employment skills such as job search techniques, resume writing and interview skills.
- **Work placements** – Participants undertake (paid) work placements for 8-12 weeks to promote understanding of the Australian labour market and work culture, build networks, and gain experience.
- **Support in the workplace** – GtC has developed a Community of Support model (see Section 5.2.3) to facilitate supportive workplace environments and delivers Building Bridges training to staff who will be working alongside GtC participants (including team members, workplace mentors, supervisors and managers).

In terms of key factors attributed to the effectiveness of program, EMC-BSL describe the importance of work experience, developing strong support for employers, and mentoring:

“*Our preferred approach is ‘job first’ then placement (rather than work experience); so working with employers where there are jobs that they have identified. In a way, what we’re doing is a longer recruitment process. We then organise an eight-week placement with appropriate supports and pre-placement training... This doesn’t mean that participants are necessarily going to get the job at the end, but they will have all of the supports both from GtC and within the workplace to get through the transition period and have the opportunity to show the employer what they can do...*”

“*Another vital component of the program is the Building Bridges training for employers. Building Bridges is a framework that supports employers to understand the refugee experience, cross-cultural communication, and explore their workplace’s own culture and expectations so that this can be communicated clearly to the participant.*

“*Linking refugees with mentors from the wider community is a key component of the program. Mentors volunteer to meet with participants for 12 months at fortnightly intervals, to provide them with personal support and advice in the context of finding appropriate employment... We try to match mentors with mentees based on professional background and career goals.*”

Overall, Kyle et al (2004:20-22) have shown that targeted employment support programs such as GtC can have better outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants and be more cost-
5.1.1 Individual casework and referral to other services

“We have workers who provide intensive one-on-one casework support with refugee young people. We often provide a lot of intensive support because young people have complex needs… It’s more than just telling someone where to apply for a job. I have sat with young people who are doing induction training for employers… […] They have to watch an OHS video and answer questions, and some of them just won’t get it unless you can provide that individual support and time to explain what is happening. It’s very intensive, but you see outcomes.”

- Service provider, Multicultural Youth Services (ACT)

Many of the employees and service providers consulted talked about the pivotal role played by caseworkers within employment services who were trusted by clients, had the time and resources to be able to explore a person’s career aspirations, skills and qualifications, and who were sensitive to the issues and experiences of refugees. For example, one employee (originally from Eritrea) talked about the influential role played by a sympathetic caseworker in an employment service who had provided sound advice about the steps he needed to take to find work in the community services sector:

“I think having someone who is willing to help, take an interest in you, and also being interactive. I think the person from the employment agency felt that I deserved to be employed. He knew I could do well, he was just trying to help me to find that first step.”

- Employee, Eritrean, Community organisation (VIC)

Many of the services consulted that provide casework acknowledged that this is often resource- and time-intensive support, as it involves helping refugee and humanitarian entrants navigate complex systems, expectations and cultures. It is often also intensive due to the complex and parallel settlement issues that refugee entrants’ are negotiating as a result of their migration experience. For example, service providers talked about needing to provide referrals to a range of ancillary services in conjunction with providing support with employment. This involved referring clients to agencies for support with issues including: housing, health, torture and trauma, family migration, domestic violence, legal, access to recreational and sporting programs, taxation, Centrelink, education and training, overseas qualification recognition, and drug and alcohol problems.

Arbeiterwohlfahrt: Profession-Job-Future (Germany)

Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO) in Germany has developed a pilot project in Hamburg partnering with the Social Benefit Office and the public employment service “to provide a refugee-sensitive approach in employment assistance” (Mestan 2008:51). The model represents a successful alliance between a community organisation and the public employment service.

Refugees who register for work and are receiving welfare benefits are referred to an experienced and trained AWO employment adviser for a tailored assessment on their language, educational and work skills and who refers them to appropriate training services, language courses or job vacancies (Mestan 2008; ECRE 1999). Employment advisers who speak the refugee’s language may be available to assist in the assessment. AWO works closely with the national employment service and receives referrals from them (ECRE 1999:18).

The partnership is complimentary to the national employment service as it fills a gap that the mainstream service does not provide – the expertise and time to provide appropriate services to...
refugee clients, proving beneficial to all partners involved (ECRE 1999).

ECRE (1999:18) states the considerable success of the partnership has been evident early on. After 18 months, 160 refugees had secured full-time or part-time employment through the program, while 350 were now involved with re-qualification, vocational training or state-subsidised work placements.

5.1.2 Work experience placements

"If [Given the Chance] hadn't sent me [here] for work placement, I wouldn't have this job. I wouldn't even have had the confidence to go there."

- Employee, Burkinabè, Community organisation (VIC)

"With regards to running work experience programs, there need to be work positions [at the end]. You need to stand on your own feet; you need a job. Participating in a program and then getting a certificate means nothing. If you are left alone after participating in a program, it has made no difference."

- Employee, Eritrean, Health services (ACT)

As highlighted in the barriers section of this report, a lack of Australian work experience and professional referees is a major barrier to refugee and humanitarian entrants securing their first job in Australia, regardless of how extensive their overseas work experience has been. Employment services that provide opportunities for refugee entrants to gain work experience in a relevant field were seen by interviewees as essential to successful employment outcomes.

Humanitarian/Refugee Entrant Job Seeker Pilot Project (Western Australia)

In 2004, Communicare Inc in Western Australia designed a pilot project for humanitarian and refugee entrant jobseekers. The pilot was funded through the Federal Government’s Employment Innovation Fund (EIF) as a component of Our Job Network program. EIF was discretionary funding designed to provide seed funding to organisations to develop innovative approaches to resolve specific labour market problems and open up employment opportunities.

The aims of the pilot project were to:

- Improve the employment prospects of each participant (total of ten participants from non-English speaking background with a minimal level of English and no prior work experience in Australia) within a 15 week period;
- Pilot whether participants’ employment prospects improved through an increased understanding of the Australian workplace and labour market; and
- Investigate how participants’ current level of skills/qualifications could be used in the Australian labour market.

The ten humanitarian and refugee entrants in the pilot:

- Participated in skills, education and social audits;
- Received training on the labour market and workplaces (e.g. legal rights and responsibilities, OH&S, Industrial Relations);
- Received training to address any skills deficits (e.g. workplace English, organisational techniques, driver’s licence, etc); and
- Commenced a 10-week work experience placement, with ongoing support from Communicare for both the participant and for the employer.

The Humanitarian/Refugee Entrant Job Seeker Pilot Project involved one-on-one case management and tracking by a Communicare staff member and resulted in a 90%
supporting placements. For example, work experience initiatives mentioned in interviews ranged from year-long paid traineeships through to one or two days of unpaid work experience. Other models encouraged jobseekers to volunteer their time, although one service provider in Western Australia advised clients not to do more than two weeks of placement to avoid exploitation of unpaid work by employers.

Perhaps an ideal model in terms of employment outcomes is where work experience placements provide an opportunity for jobseekers to demonstrate their aptitude within a workplace with a clear pathway (or possibility) of transitioning into an ongoing position at the end of the placement (see Given the Chance case study, above).

Ensuring there are clear pathways into ongoing employment relies on services developing good relationships with employers who have positions to fill; ensuring all parties (jobseeker, employer and employment service) have clear and realistic expectations of what a person on placement needs to demonstrate in order to be considered suitable for an ongoing position; and, having the appropriate supports both within and outside of the workplace to address any potential misunderstandings. Given the Chance’s community of care model is exceptional in this regard (see Section 5.2.3).

5.1.3 Applying for work: Job search, applications and interview skills

For refugee and humanitarian entrants who come from countries where employment systems and workplace cultures are very different to those in Australia, having the support of services that can provide targeted assistance about where and how to look for work, how to write a successful job application and résumé, and how to present well at job interviews, was seen as essential in successful employment transitions. In terms of equipping refugee and humanitarian entrants to look for work, particularly those with limited English proficiency or who have had minimal exposure to information technology due to their migration experience, simply providing access to computers and the internet for job-search purposes is unlikely to be a successful strategy.

Through consultations, a number of examples of successful initiatives where job searching and job-search skills are key components were highlighted. These included: basic computer training programs that assist participants to learn how to use computers to navigate job search websites; individualised support from caseworkers to develop job-search skills; and, courses that orientate refugee entrants and other migrants to the different ways in which jobs are advertised in Australia. As one settlement service provider in South Australia describes:

“We have ten computers with internet at the Centre, with free access for SGP clients. These are well utilised, through mostly self-directed searches. We found that computer use is a big barrier for clients, and we have applied for funding and have run computer training courses.”

- Service provider, Murray Bridge New Settler Services, Lutheran Community Care (SA)

Writing a successful job application also requires a nuanced understanding of Australian recruitment practices that cannot be assumed. For example, it requires an understanding of how résumés are expected to be structured, how a jobseeker can appropriately highlight their skills, qualifications and experience, and how to address key selection criteria. Again, this requires someone being able to take the time to explain Australian employment systems and processes to new arrivals, and provide support in applying them:

“This is very important and often requires intensive support. We’ve seen lots of participants come in with résumés that someone has helped them with, and there are massive gaps. And when you ask them: ‘What were you doing for those five years?’ They’ll say they were driving a taxi and were advised not to include this, even though it’s exactly what employers want to see (five years of Australian work experience!). So we have to work with the participants one-on-one and really explore their strengths and

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experiences. This requires trust. For example, one man had done some work in a
town going from door-to-door collecting survey data for an NGO on HIV/AIDS.
He had moved from one country to another and navigated different languages and
systems. So by virtue of his experiences, he had developed great communication skills.”

- Service provider, Given the Chance, EMC-Brotherhood of St Laurence (VIC)

Developing interview skills is another area where first-time jobseekers benefited from targeted support. Going for a job interview can be daunting for any jobseeker, and those from different cultural backgrounds can fall down at the interview stage even where they are well suited to a position. This can be related to factors such as a disjuncture in communication styles and cultural expectations. For example, in some cultures talking about yourself (or selling yourself) may be seen as inappropriate and a sign of arrogance (one interviewee spoke about an adage in her culture that: ‘Only empty bottles make noise’), and looking directly into the eyes of someone in a position of authority (e.g. an interviewer or potential employer) when speaking to them may be seen as disrespectful. However, in an Australian job interview context, not looking someone in the eye and not talking about your strengths may be misinterpreted and make the difference between a person getting a job or not.

Employment services providing individualised or group support on interview skills were mentioned in consultations as very important in facilitating employment transitions for refugee and humanitarian entrants. For example, one employee spoke positively about how a caseworker from an employment service had provided what she saw as essential support prior to her attending a job interview. The caseworker advised her on the sorts of questions she could be asked and how she could present her overseas work experience in a way that would demonstrate her aptitude. She was successful in this interview and has now been working in the same position for over two years. As another interviewee explained:

“When I arrived here, I've never had an interview before. Because where I come from,
there's no interview. If you want a job, there's your computer, sit and start working... it
would be a very good idea if there was workshops of how, when you go to an interview,
what you can expect... interview techniques. If you are more familiar with interview
techniques you will be more confident when you go for an interview and they might offer
you a job.”

- Employee, Ethiopian, Financial services (VIC)

5.1.4 Advocating and liaising with employers

“A fundamental difference is made by workers who have links with industry, whether it's
in hospitality or childcare or disability. Once you have those links as a caseworker, you're
so much more effective because you can understand what the employers are wanting.
You can talk to them about the person who is being sent for the interview. If you don't
have those relationships, employers don't have an ear for it.”

- Service provider, RAMSS/CRS, Anglicare NT (NT)

As newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants are unlikely to have the established networks or social capital that are key facilitators in pathways to employment, a number of interviewees identified the vital role played by employment services who can act as liaison or advocate between jobseekers and potential employers. A number of service providers consulted spoke about the importance of developing strong relationships with employers and industry representatives and being able to formally or informally advocate on behalf of clients. In terms of how this is done, one service provider in South Australia considered direct advocacy to be less effective because community services and businesses “speak different languages”, and felt that the most effective way of encouraging employers to take on jobseekers from refugee backgrounds was through developing casual relationships with key human resource staff. Or in the words of another service provider:
“Our staff will advocate individually for clients. I knew the HR staff at [retail employers], so I could personally recommend and advocate for a young person, and a lot of them got jobs that way. I'd call up and say: ‘I have this fantastic young person who would be suitable for...’ It is better if you ring them up and say: ‘This young man is great. If they go there themselves, they may be less likely to get the job.’”

- Service provider, Multicultural Youth Services (ACT)

A number of employment services noted the use of reverse marketing to advocate on behalf of either an individual client or for clients from refugee backgrounds more broadly. Reverse marketing is a recruitment strategy whereby the service provider contacts employers and promotes the merits of an individual or client group to the employer. The reverse marketing approach to recruitment often started incidentally or informally with contacts that caseworkers or volunteers had with employers, but has now become an effective strategy for employment services, both for finding work placements for their clients as well as for building long-term relationships with enthusiastic employers. As one service provider explains:

“We have a Reverse Marketing Unit that contacts employers on behalf of our clients. We have built a reputation among these employers on how well we treat them through ongoing support and through considered skills match. They trust us. These lasting relationships mean that employers now approach us to find employees and work placement participants.”

- Service provider, Employment Program, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (VIC)

Providing a bridge between employers and refugee and humanitarian entrants was not just seen as important in someone getting a foot in the door, but also in sustainable employment outcomes. Having a ‘go to’ person in an employment service who is trusted by both the employee and the employer was talked about as instrumental in ironing out some of the difficulties that both can face when a worker is starting out in a new position, particularly where expectations are unclear and there is some disjuncture in cultural expectations or communication styles. The Given the Chance model, for example, provides a strong liaison and advocacy role in both building relationships with employers and by providing extensive support to program participants and key staff within the participating workplaces (See also Section 5.1.8 – Post-employment support).

5.1.5 Australian work culture and systems

Initiatives that provide support or orientation on Australian workplace culture and systems were also talked about as important in successful and sustainable employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants. Work culture and systems refer to things such as job application processes (see Section 5.1.3), workplace communication, expectations of workplace relationships (e.g. the informal style of many bosses), occupational health and safety requirements, and other workplace practices which employees born in Australia may not see as culturally-bound. As one manager who works in a Victorian organisation with a majority of employees from refugee and migrant backgrounds describes:

“Staff generally know that they don’t know Australian workplace culture. One thing I think I’ve found about most migrants and refugees… they know they’re in Australia, and they know they have to do it the Australian way, they just don’t know what the Australian way is. But if you tell them, they pretty much go: ‘Okay, so now I know’.”

In terms of how a person learns about Australian work culture and systems, one interviewee who arrived from Vietnam more than 15 years ago talked about a practical workbook on Australian workplace culture that he found particularly useful in understanding workplace communication in Australia. The workbook, which was used at the English language centre where he was enrolled after first arriving, included examples of model telephone conversations. Prior to coming across this resource, the former university professor had struggled to understand why telephone conversations were not leading to the expected outcomes. Another service provider reiterated this point, highlighting the importance of on-arrival English programs (particularly the Adult Migrant English
Program\textsuperscript{21} in providing orientation around employment cultures and systems alongside teaching English. A contemporary resource identified through consultations that provides practical tips, explanations and exercises about Australian workplace culture for new migrants and was developed by the Department of Education and Training in Western Australia is titled \textit{Employability skills and workplace culture in Australia} (2008) (see case study).

Other successful strategies identified by interviewees for providing orientation on Australian workplace culture and systems included: employers providing comprehensive inductions to new staff that include opportunities for exploring cultural expectations within the workplace (refer to Section 5.2.2), and mentoring (Section 5.1.7).

\begin{center}
\textbf{Employability skills and workplace culture in Australia: A guide for new migrants to Western Australia planning to enter the workforce}
\end{center}

This guide was developed with the assistance of a panel of people with extensive experience in helping migrants to settle in Western Australia, and through extensive consultation with migrant and refugee communities.

The purpose of the guide is to explain how key employability skills – communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management, learning and technology – are applied in many Australian workplaces.

“It describes, for instance, how people generally communicate and interact in Australian workplaces, how teamwork operates, and how relationships are defined in the workplace. It also describes the predominant management styles and how these impact upon the expectations of the workplace” (Commonwealth of Australia 2008:1).

\subsection*{5.1.6 Career advice, guidance and planning}

“We [provide career guidance] one-on-one through our initial assessment process. This is often when we hear about career aspirations, and we realise how unreliable information sources can be. For example, one girl came in wanted to work in IT because an elder in her community said there were lots of jobs in IT. However, she had no interest in computers and it's a competitive industry to get into to. Somehow she ended up enrolling in a graphic design course, and she was not doing very well. So it's through this initial assessment that we often provide career advice and guidance. Sometimes this is all participants need, and they don't continue with the program at all. They just need to discuss their concerns with someone.”

- Service provider, Given the Chance, EMC-Brotherhood of St Laurence (VIC)

Services that can provide tailored advice and guidance to refugee and humanitarian entrants about career pathways in Australia was mentioned as important by both employment services and employees from refugee backgrounds. Individualised support by a trusted worker or mentor who can explain the different steps needed to find work in a chosen field is particularly valued. As one interviewee originally from Eritrea describes:

“You need people who can give you advice about careers and who can find out what you want to do, and tell you: 'You need to do this or that course, or there are these opportunities'.

Calvary Hospital’s Refugee Mentoring Program (ACT)\(^2\) is an example cited of an initiative that has incorporated individualised career guidance and planning as a core part of its model. Through soliciting the expertise of career counsellors, the Refugee Mentoring Program provides opportunities for participants to identify career goals, develop an individualised pathway plan, and identify the steps needed to have overseas qualifications and skills recognised. Careers counsellors work individually with participants at the outset of their work experience placement, as well as upon completion.

5.1.7 Mentoring

“Having a work placement and mentor who is in the workplace [is key]; someone who is committed to help you [navigate] that workplace. Because most migrants are very shy. We don’t have confidence in ourselves. We don’t want to ask, because maybe that means they don’t know, and if they don’t know, they think they’re not fit for the job and they’re scared to lose their job. And in the end, you end up losing your job [anyway] because you didn’t ask questions.”

- Employee, Burkinabè, Community organisation (VIC)

The potential for mentoring to be used as a tool for facilitating successful employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants is well documented in literature (Carr 2005; RCOA 2009; OECD-LEED 2005) and was confirmed through consultations. Again, the EMC-BSL Given the Chance model was described as a particularly effective approach that incorporates mentoring (see case study in Section 5.1). The potential benefits of mentoring approaches described by interviewees included:

- Expanding the social networks of refugee and humanitarian entrants to create opportunities for more informal recruitment processes;
- Enhancing the understanding of refugee and humanitarian entrants of employment pathways in Australia;
- Facilitating relationships whereby jobseekers can include mentors as referees on job applications;
- Providing opportunities for refugee and humanitarian entrants to explore and expand their understanding of Australian work cultures and systems; and
- Providing alternative (and potentially cost-effective) ways of providing individualised career support and advice by a trusted person.

While there are clearly many potential benefits in engaging mentors to support refugee and humanitarian entrants in employment, a number of service providers consulted talked about the challenge of ensuring there is an appropriate level of funding to recruit, train and sustain the meaningful involvement of volunteer mentors. The Emplooi model in the Netherlands offers an innovative approach in this regard by tapping into the networks, expertise and interest of retired executives as part of a targeted refugee employment program (see case study below).

Emplooi (Netherlands)

Since 1989, Netherlands-based Emplooi, a non-government organisation which uses retired executives as volunteer mentors/coaches based in the Public Service Employment Service Job Centres, has helped refugees who are job ready to find suitable employment (Carr 2005; Phillimore et al 2006).

Carr (2005:9) visited the Emplooi program on a Churchill scholarship and found that, as of 2005, the program had a mentor base of 100 retired executives who work with 10 to 25 refugees at a time and on average generate up to 600 jobs each year. Phillimore et al (2006:68) also describes the high success rate of the program, with some 50% of the refugees assisted by Emplooi successfully finding work as a result of their intervention, taking into


consideration the downturn in the Dutch economy and the majority of participants are long-term unemployed.

The success of the Emplooi model (Carr 2005; ECRE 1999; Phillimore et al 2006) has been attributed to factors such as:

- The close working partnership between the Job Centre and Emplooi, with mentors based in and working closely with staff from the Job Centres;
- Targeting retired mentors who are able to commit to the project two or more days a week;
- Mentors providing intensive and long-term support, such as accompanying refugees to job interviews, helping with application letters, providing career advice, assisting with qualification recognition, and organising work experience placements;
- The program being decentralised, enabling the use of the mentor's local networks and ability to pitch to local employers; and
- Incentives for employers is another successful aspect of the project, with the Dutch government providing subsidies to employers of 60% of the basic wage for taking on registered job-seekers for up to 12 months.

The cost to support one coach is about 50 euros (A$100) per month (Carr, 2005) making it a relatively cost-effective service. Rates of commitment by mentors to the program is high, with three quarters of those who volunteer to mentor and who complete the compulsory three-day initial training remaining for an average of four to five years (Carr 2005).

5.1.8 Post-employment support

“Post-employment support is vital because it provides stability for people who have experienced significant instability – having the same person supporting them through a process.”

- Service provider, Given the Chance, EMC-Brotherhood of St Laurence (VIC)

“When you finish, you can still go back to them if you have any issues. For example, last year both my manager and my manager's manager resigned of the same day. I had almost six months without anyone in the job. ...I remember going to EMC, and [the workers] were there, and I was saying: 'I don't know if my contract is going to be renewed'... and they said ‘Don't worry’ and [gave me advice] about talking to my supervisor. That was so helpful.”

- Employee, Burkinabè, Community organisation (VIC)

For both employers and employees, having a ‘go to’ person who can act as a bridge was talked about in consultations as valuable with regards to sustainable employment outcomes. Indeed, one service provider in Canberra described her frustration at not having the resources to provide adequate post-employment support, with many clients returning to the service after lasting only a short time in a job due to simple workplace misunderstandings not being appropriately addressed.

The types of post-employment support that were seen as most valuable included: clients being able to return to an employment service to ask a trusted worker for advice or support concerning things like completing work-related forms and discussing workplace culture and systems; and, employment services providing follow-up visits and phone calls to check in with clients and their supervisors while they are settling into a new workplace. For some of the employers consulted, having someone in an employment service they could approach to gain insight into whether a new employee's behaviour had any particular significance was mentioned on a number of occasions, and, in industries where employees had limited English, bicultural/bilingual workers in employment services who can bridge the language divide in particular situations were highly valued (see Section 5.1.10).

An example provided by one interviewee that demonstrated the value of post-employment support was in the case of a woman who was seeking work as a cleaner with a large employer. The woman had been a participant in a work experience program and was given the opportunity to apply for
ongoing work in the business where she was on placement. In order to transition from the work experience role into ongoing employment, the woman was required to undergo a simple test to demonstrate her competency; something which she was expected to excel at as she had been successfully managing the role for a number of weeks. However, on the day of the test she appeared weak and struggled to complete the required tasks. It transpired that the woman had been fasting since the day before, as in her culture this was one way in which she could give thanks for the opportunity she had been given. In this case, the caseworker from the employment service was trusted by the woman enough to explore what the issue had been, and was able to advocate for her to be given a chance to re-take the competency test. The caseworker could also talk with the woman about the expectations of the workplace and how she could meet these in conjunction with observing her cultural beliefs. The woman was successful in her second competency test and secured ongoing work.

5.1.9 Employment services for asylum seekers

“Passionate staff is key to the success of our program. We have overcome the problem of local job experience through education and through job placement. We focus on both assuming that people will be here for the long term, and also finding out what people are good at and trying to find related jobs while still being realistic. It’s individuals just trying to help individuals.”

- Service provider, Employment Program, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (VIC)

Both generalist employment services and other support services for refugee entrants are seldom available to asylum seekers in Australia. Employment support services for asylum seekers are most often provided through charitable organisations and individuals in the community on an informal, ad hoc basis. Assistance finding and securing jobs often occurs through informal networks, e.g. through friends and through leads and advice from service providers going beyond their paid responsibilities. Charitable organisations working for asylum seekers and others working with vulnerable, disadvantaged groups provide a part of the necessary support for employment or employment transitions for asylum seekers. These organisations – often through volunteers – make arrangements for training opportunities, assist with the preparation of resumes or provide work-appropriate clothing. Comprehensive and holistic employment and employment pathway support for asylum seekers, however, is limited.

While a number of agencies working with asylum seekers are actively developing project proposals for targeted employment services, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) in Victoria has an employment program already underway (see case study below). The ASRC Employment Program’s comprehensive approach empowers clients to make transitions into sustainable employment. The wide-ranging program includes: support with interviewing skills, resume writing skills, interview clothes, ESL classes, work experience, Australian work culture training, assistance in having overseas qualifications recognised, support provided for both employees and employers during work experience, provision of free training (both in-house and through registered training providers) and a micro-credit scheme for training purposes. Training (including on Australian workplace culture) is paired with work experience so that clients have the opportunity to practically apply what they learn.

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Employment Program (Victoria)

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) in Melbourne is the largest provider of aid, advocacy and health services for asylum seekers in Australia. The ASRC Employment Program began in 2004 as a response to the gap in employment service provision for people living in the community and awaiting the processing of their protection claims.

The ASRC employment program, Asylum Seeker Service for Employment and Training (ASSET), provides a wide range of support with “an aim to help clients to be empowered and to be able to [find and secure a job] themselves”.

A vital component of the program is the intensive individual casework, with an emphasis on
having one consistent caseworker or point of contact for the client. The various people assisting a client (e.g. lawyers, psychologists, housing support officers) all communicate with the case manager to ensure a consistent, integrated and holistic approach to fulfilling client needs.

The program also focuses on providing employment that the client actually wants, while still being realistic as to the types of jobs that are available: “We look at the best ways to spend [our clients’] energy for the best results.”

The ASSET Program assists asylum seekers living in the community to look for factory, warehouse, administrative, ICT, and child and aged care work. ASSET provides vocational development for asylum seekers through work experience, volunteering opportunities, training and employment pathways. Through training and practical experience in a range of occupations, including food handling, administration and customer service, the ASSET enables asylum seekers to gain valuable skills and experience and to increase their chances of finding employment, to participate fully in their community and to become self sufficient. Participants in ASSET not only are mentored by ASRC staff, volunteers and former asylum seekers but also have the opportunity to contribute to the operation and strategic direction of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

Training includes modules with ASRC Catering. Through ASRC Catering – a fully functional catering business – asylum seeker clients participate in training (Food Handling Certification), work placement (preparing and serving food with qualified chefs) and employment (food preparation and service at catered events).

Recognising the slowing labour market in recent months due to the global economic downturn and the varying job readiness of clients, the ASRC employment program ensures other opportunities are available to clients to continue learning and building skills:

“Instead of people sitting around waiting, we find other education or training opportunities. When people are unemployed for long periods of time, their skills-set goes down, their emotional state goes down, their confidence goes down. They are not using their hands or their brains in the same way, so education and training opportunities are so important.”

- Service provider, ASSET, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (VIC)

5.1.10 Employing bilingual/bicultural workers

“There should be employment services within communities where they employ people from within the community to work with the community.”

- Employee, Sudanese, Childcare service (VIC)

“Having a caseworker from a culturally diverse background has been absolutely vital to the success of the program. She has a unique approach and can communicate with participants in ways that others can’t because she comes from a similar experience background. It is also about capacity building. It’d be great to see more people from refugee backgrounds involved in or running their own employment programs.”

- Service provider, Given the Chance, EMC-Brotherhood of St Laurence (VIC)

Within targeted employment services, employing workers who have themselves come from refugee backgrounds was identified by a number of interviewees as crucial to facilitating successful employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants. For example, AMES’ Market Garden initiative in Melbourne’s outer-west employed a full-time Karen bilingual/bicultural worker who was described as “the lynch-pin of the whole project”. The worker acted as a bridge between the employers (market gardeners), employment service (Job Network provider) and employees (the majority of who were newly-settled refugee entrants from the Thai-Burma border with limited English). The bilingual/bicultural worker explained employment processes in first language to the employees and provided intensive support to enable them to navigate the complex employment systems they needed to adhere to. For example, the bilingual/bicultural worker provided support in liaising and filling out Centrelink forms, filling in timesheets, explaining how the casual, seasonal
agricultural work would impact on taxation and their Centrelink payments, and providing occupational health and safety training in first language.

Two other examples of international models demonstrating the value of employing former refugees as service providers are Germany’s Arbeiterwohlfahrt Profession-Job-Future Program (see case study in Section 5.1.1) and the Trellis Project in the United Kingdom (see case study below).

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**The Trellis Project (United Kingdom)**

The *Trellis Project* in Birmingham, UK was established in 2005 by the Employability Forum to assist refugees in the local area to find sustainable employment matching their skills. It is funded by the UK Treasury through the Invest to Save Budget and Birmingham City Council’s Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, and is run in partnership with local organisations and agencies.

As part of the *Trellis Project*, Link Officers are placed in job centres in Birmingham to provide information, advice and guidance, and to work individually with refugees. Link Officers are fully-trained former refugees who have expert knowledge of the labour market in Birmingham. As the Link Officers have first-hand experience of the barriers faced by refugees, they are able to provide a culturally-sensitive service creating a bridge between refugee jobseekers and mainstream services.

Support provided by Link Officers includes:

- **Job seeking support:** CV preparation, interview skills, assistance to complete application forms;
- **Referral to appropriate services:** English support, training courses or work placement schemes;
- **Working with employers and trade unions to raise awareness of employing refugees, as well as promoting good practice in the recruitment of refugees.**

*(Cangiano 2008; Employability Forum & TimeBank 2007)*

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### 5.1.11 Addressing racism and discrimination in employment

Although this is a much bigger issue to tackle, a number of service providers and employees interviewed talked about the role that employment services can play in raising awareness within the broader community about the wealth of skills and experiences that refugee and humanitarian entrants bring to Australia. As discrimination has been shown to play a significant role in the employment outcomes of many jobseekers from refugee backgrounds (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2007), strategies that address racism at a local level can have a positive impact on employment outcomes. An example of a local-level community awareness initiative from the Northern Territory identified in consultations was the *Australians Working Together* poster (see case study below).

The Victorian Multicultural Commission and Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission have also published a comprehensive report – *Harnessing diversity* – with a series of recommendations for addressing racial and religious discrimination in employment (see Berman et al 2008). This includes recommendations that “the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other employer bodies allocate resources and work together to:

- Implement a social marketing campaign to encourage employers to adopt culturally inclusive workplace policies;
- Promote best practice in the area (potentially building up a library of case studies based on the Victorian Multicultural Commission’s Business Corporate Awards); and
- Establish a voluntary benchmarking program for organisations to assess their diversity practices.” *(Berman et al 2008:vii)*
5.2 Employers who value and are committed to workforce diversity

While having targeted services that are able to support the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants was seen as imperative, there was a general consensus among those interviewed that employment services can only do so much. In order for refugee and humanitarian entrants to be able to find meaningful, sustainable employment in Australia, employers also need to see the value of workforce diversity and be willing to give people the chance to apply their strengths, skills and experience in an Australian workplace.

With regards to how interviewees reflected on the most effective ways in which employers can benefit from, and demonstrate their commitment to, workforce diversity, successful approaches included:

- Utilising alternative recruitment strategies and giving people the chance;
- Providing comprehensive orientation/induction to new employees;
- Creating supportive team environments;
- Providing diversity training for all staff and supervisors;
- Seeing advantage in workplace diversity;
- Operating flexibly; and
- Treating workers equitably and fairly.

These strategies are explored in more detail below.

5.2.1 Alternative recruitment strategies and being given the chance

“I think possibly having a very well intentioned interviewer who was willing to be patient [was instrumental in me securing this position]. I don’t want to say they took the risk, but giving me the benefit of the doubt rather than looking for someone who is exactly fitting the bill.”

- Employee, Eritrean, Community organisation (VIC)

Employees from refugee backgrounds interviewed talked about employers “willing to give you a chance” as pivotal in successful employment outcomes. Whether this chance is provided by
employers through participation in a supported transition initiative (e.g. work experience programs or traineeships), or through employers being sensitive to cultural diversity and flexible in their recruitment processes, interviewees felt that being given an opportunity to initially prove themselves was essential in securing ongoing work. A number of employees from refugee backgrounds interviewed indicated that they were even willing to accept transitional roles (e.g. short-term traineeships or casual positions) if it meant they could get their foot in the door and there was a possibility of securing ongoing work. Further, they did not want preferential treatment and felt that, if someone was given a chance and did not meet the expectations of the role, employers were not obliged to keep that person on. In the words of two interviewees:

"I gave everything I've got to those first people I worked for and showed them, I can do it. And it's not about my Certificate, it's about me. [...] That's what I want to say: If I'm the director, I'll give people the chance. If this person came to me, and even if they struggle with the language, but that person says that can do this work, maybe I'm not going to give them a full-time job on the first day, but maybe I will say: 'I will offer you a casual job for the first month and I will see how you work with the children. I want to try you. And if you prove it to me, I might give you a full-time job'."

- Employee, Sudanese, Childcare service (VIC)

“[I] believe opportunity is important. Self-help, hard work, that of course goes without saying. You have to try hard. But you have to also be given that half chance.”

- Employee, Eritrean, Community organisation (VIC)

Another way that employers talked about “giving someone a chance” was through utilising alternative recruitment strategies. The AMES Werribee Market Garden initiative represents this kind of model, as the employers (market gardeners) were able to liaise with a middle party (i.e. AMES Employment and a Karen bilingual/bicultural worker) who could provide support to employees and guarantee the employer the workers they were after. After demonstrating their aptitude for the work, a number of the participants in the initiative went on to work directly for the market gardeners without the involvement of AMES. This is similar to the approach taken by a number of other employers affiliated with EMC-Brotherhood of St Laurence’s Given the Chance program (see case study of ANZ and Given the Chance below).

ANZ and Given the Chance (Victoria)

ANZ in Melbourne have been involved in the Given the Chance Program, coordinated by EMC-Brotherhood of St Laurence, over a number of years. Ten participants from Given the Chance have secured ongoing permanent positions with ANZ as a result of this partnership. Participants undertake initial (paid) work experience placements for eight or 12 weeks, with the view to being linked into permanent positions after completion.

"I think corporations have high expectations... and these workers have proven that they're high performers. But when they first come in, they don't fit the expectations [e.g. how you present at interviews, how you present your CV]."

ANZ’s involvement in Given the Chance represents an alternative recruitment strategy:

"I don't think [if these workers had applied directly to ANZ they would necessarily have got the job]. I just don't think they would have had the confidence. They come in and they are really worried that they won't be able to do the job and it's not going to happen for them. [...] I think without [the support provided by Given the Chance], I don't think they would have survived. And if they did get the job, there are potential communication issues, without people being aware of them... because it's not just the people coming in the door, it's the people around them understanding that there are some differences. And if there was a normal recruitment process, there'd be no time given to any of that."

In terms of the benefits of ANZ’s involvement in Given the Chance:

"The participants have generally been high performers, because they just have this resilience and this drive that is lacking in a lot of other employees. That is kind of self-perpetuating. Then the team leaders want more participants because they’re the best performers in their..."
5.2.2 Providing comprehensive induction and orientation to new employees

"A really good, slow induction program [is critical]. Because what they're actually doing is negotiating between two cultures every time they get to work, and that must be so exhausting, particularly in the beginning. One of the best ways to do this is getting them speaking to people at the beginning and developing relationships and their own support mechanisms."

- Employer, Community health organisation (VIC)

A number of interviewees talked about the importance of employers providing comprehensive induction and orientation to new employees in order for there to be a clearly communicated understanding of the processes and expectations of a required position from the outset. This is particularly relevant where someone is starting out in an Australian workplace for the first time. For example, a number of employers interviewed talked about needing to provide thorough orientation on matters such as checking emails and scheduling appointments, as making assumptions about a new employee’s understanding of these (culturally-bound) work practices can lead to later misunderstandings and frustration on both parts. As one aged care employer in NSW describes:

"They need a lot of support in the beginning... [But] they are very hard working. They tend to stay longer. They have a lot of loyalty."

Elements of good practice in the provision of orientation or induction to employees from refugee backgrounds included:

- Providing opportunities for mentoring/buddying within a workplace to enable peer support and learning (see section 5.2.3);
- Providing a space for a new employee, their supervisor, team leader and mentor/buddy to develop a goal-setting framework where key requirements of the role are mapped out (see Given the Chance case study in section 5.1); and
- Employers working with employment services to develop induction programs that are workplace-specific and explore some of the work practices that may need to be extrapolated for someone who is both new to the job and unfamiliar with Australian workplace culture.

5.2.3 Creating supportive team environments

It was acknowledged by a number of interviewees that providing a good induction to new staff is further enhanced when there are opportunities for ongoing peer support and mentoring within the workplace. As many new employees will be reluctant to continually approach their supervisor while they are learning the ropes and induction may take longer, providing alternative ways for new employees to learn about the practices of a particular workplace is essential. This is particularly relevant for employees from cultural backgrounds where respect for authority is highly regarded and who may be reluctant to raise issues directly with their manager or supervisor. Ensuring there are informal ways for issues to be explored – such as through building a strong team environment – was discussed as a good strategy for supporting new employees. As two managers describe:

"Making sure there are supportive teams. Because there's only so many times you're going to go to your manager. But other times you're going to go to your colleagues and they will support you. So generally it's team solutions. One way we do this is by leaving space for staff to have discussion and to learn about each other. So the lunch room is a vital place... We also facilitate group lunches and group activities throughout the year."
We're creating a space for some of that informal dialogue and for staff to learn from each other.”

- Employer, Community health organisation (VIC)

“We have social events like lunches to get everyone involved and have fun. The workers start to feel more confident and it is good to encourage communication and social skills.”

- Employer, Aged care service (NSW)

Other employers interviewed had trialled more structured approaches to creating supportive team environments, such as introducing mentoring programs within the workplace. For example, *Given the Chance* have developed a community of support model where participants are linked to a workplace mentor who sits outside their work team as well as a buddy who is within the same team (Figure 5.2.3). Each of the colleagues in a participant’s Community of Support undertakes training on cross cultural communication and the refugee experience. Even after participants have transitioned into an ongoing role within a business or organisation, this mentoring relationship often continues informally and was mentioned by former participants as vital to their ongoing learning and navigation of the workplace.

**Figure 5.2.3 Given the Chance Community of Support model**

![Community of Support model diagram](Source: Given the Chance presentation, Brotherhood of St Laurence-EMC)

For workplaces with large numbers of workers from a particular cultural or linguistic background, having a team leader or liaison person within the workplace that is from a similar background was also mentioned as a useful strategy for enabling peer learning. As one settlement service provider in South Australia describes:

“Having a ‘go to’ person within a business that can provide support, information, advice and referral is a model that could work. For example, the Chinese 457 Visa workers at the meatworks have a Chinese interpreter working there. The Sudanese workers have requested similar support, even though language is not such an issue, as they see this person as a support worker.”

- Service provider, Murray Bridge New Settler Services, Lutheran Community Care (SA)

### 5.2.4 Diversity training for staff and supervisors

Diversity training for all staff on communicating cross-culturally, exploring a workplace’s culture and expectations and understanding the refugee experience was described by a number of interviewees as vital to ensuring that all employees are cognisant of diversity and are able to negotiate differences as they arise. As one manager describes:

“Cross-cultural training is mandatory for our staff. I think it just creates a sensitivity to their situation and highlights key cultural differences. For example: looking people in the eye and what that means in different cultures; what respect looks like; the importance of
Diversity training is particularly important for ensuring managers and supervisors have the skills, knowledge and sensitivity to provide adequate support to a diverse workforce (not just employees from refugee backgrounds). A number of interviewees cited culturally-sensitive supervisors as a key factor in successful and sustainable employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants. Supervisors who were able to negotiate and work with diversity were also seen as more effective in bringing out the best in employees and drawing on their strengths. As one manager describes:

"Every staff member has regular supervision – once a month at minimum – and that's where lots of the cultural lumps and bumps will get negotiated. [...] A lot of staff will tell you what you want to hear. These staff will really tell you what you want to hear, and you've got to be a lot more intuitive… Not waiting for things to fall apart. Doing informal check-ups, so that supervision is not just that one hour. I think this is critical."

- Employer, Community health organisation (VIC)

Again, EMC-Brotherhood of St Laurence’s Given the Chance program has developed a comprehensive diversity training program for staff and supervisors in participating workplaces called Building Bridges. One employer who had taken part in this program described the Building Bridges training program as instrumental in successful outcomes of participants and teams, and talked about it being mandatory for supervisors (in particular) to undertake this training in order to adequately support new employees.

5.2.5 Seeing advantage in workplace diversity

“Of our 22 workers, only one was not born overseas or had parents born overseas. And [having a diverse workforce] is not an issue… That's why I'm struggling to give you long answers. It's our base premise: that there is diversity."

- Employer, Community health organisation (VIC)

In addition to giving someone a chance, employers who see advantage in workplace diversity and provide opportunities for employees from refugee backgrounds to utilise their skills and experience was mentioned by interviewees as important for meaningful and sustainable employment outcomes. Clearly, this is a sentiment that is not unique to workers from refugee backgrounds, but to workers in general. However, as employees from refugee backgrounds often have a breadth of international experience and cultural perspectives that can strengthen and add value to a workplace, employers that acknowledge and value this diversity are more likely to benefit from hard-working, loyal and committed staff (see Lentil as Anything case study below). This is particularly the case with regards to employers wishing to engage Australia’s culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

**Lentil As Anything (Victoria)**

Melbourne-based restaurant Lentil as Anything is a unique vegetarian restaurant that is run as a not-for-profit community organisation. It is largely staffed by volunteers, new migrants and refugees. Lentil As Anything started in 2000 and now has two restaurants. At least 90% of workers are from refugee backgrounds.

"To maximise the effectiveness of the workplace, it is very important for us to be flexible, to identify what are the contributory characteristics of an individual and earnestly try and make room to accommodate that."

For example, the restaurant had an 18-year-old woman from Ethiopia who wanted to work on the floor but who was not good at reading customers. She struggled to make coffees on the coffee machine. “We realised that Ethiopia has the oldest coffee-making ceremony in the world,
so we asked her to perform Ethiopian coffee-making ceremonies at the restaurant for customers. People love it."

"Not highlighting what [workers] don't have, highlighting what [workers] have."

- Founder, Lentil As Anything

It goes without saying that people who come to Australia under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program bring with them extensive skills and international experience. A theme that emerged from a number of interviews was the benefits to both employees and employers when there are opportunities for career advancement within a business or organisation. Conversely, many employees from refugee backgrounds expressed frustration when they felt pigeon-holed in low paid/skilled positions with limited opportunity for advancement. As one employer in South Australia describes:

“You've got to have a position that suits them. Often, that's going to be a repetitious job, especially if their English isn't good. [...] Refugees will jump at the opportunity to do those jobs. And they will do them with pride, and will do them really well. That's the plus side. The negative side is they are smart, they do develop skills, and they're looking for more than just the basic labouring job, so if you take this in mind when you make the decision to employ, you will do really well. And if your business is big enough so they can develop within the business, I think you'd keep them.”

- Employer, Manufacturing industry (SA)

5.2.6 Operating flexibly

Any employee, regardless of their cultural background or life experience, is likely to have times when personal issues will impact on their work life. Employers who are able to operate flexibly are more likely to retain staff and elicit employee engagement and loyalty. This is no less the case when employing people from refugee backgrounds. Perhaps an additional consideration for refugee and humanitarian entrants who are more recently arrived is that they are more likely to be negotiating many complex settlement issues alongside meeting the requirements of their work. For example, employees from refugee backgrounds may be providing settlement support to family members not eligible for other services and may not have the extended family and social networks that other employees have to draw upon when things go wrong (for example, when children are sick and have to stay home from school).

Many examples of employer flexibility were brought up in interviews as essential to the sustainable employment outcomes of employees from refugee backgrounds:

“One [of our employee’s] daughter got married, and in her culture that meant three weeks of cooking. So we negotiated so she could work up her hours and then take the time off she needed. So she didn't have to take annual leave, because we knew that those three weeks sure aren't annual leave when you're cooking [the whole time]!”

- Employer, Community health organisation (VIC)

One of our workers was not performing well in food services. We addressed this and decided that, for the program to work, it needed to be flexible at times. That employee is working in cleaning for their one year traineeship instead of doing six months in the different areas.

- Employer, Health service (NSW)

5.2.7 Treating all employees equitably and fairly

“I think the benefits are like having any other staff... In the end, they're not a refugee, they're a worker. And if they're not meeting what you need them to do, they go on a warning. And if they're doing it and they're not doing it quite right, find out what the problem is. Basically, if you treat them like refugees, it's going to be a disaster.”
Despite a general theme that emerged from interviews that employers need to be committed and sensitive to diversity in order for refugee and humanitarian entrants to find sustainable employment in Australia, many of the interviewees were also adamant that these employees do not want to be treated differently. In essence, employers who use strategies such as those outlined above – i.e. giving people a chance, creating supportive team environments, ensuring comprehensive induction for new employees, providing appropriate training to all staff and supervisors, seeing advantage in workplace diversity, and operating flexibility – are just as likely to reap the benefits across their entire workforce, regardless of the cultural backgrounds and life experiences of their employees.

Being treated equitably and fairly, however, does require recognition that there is not a level playing field for all jobseekers, and that refugee and humanitarian entrants experience significant barriers to finding sustainable, meaningful employment. However, if supported in their transition to employment, refugee and humanitarian entrants have demonstrated over many decades the enormous wealth of skills, experience and determination that they bring to the Australian labour force. As one supervisor so aptly put it:

“Just give them a chance. If they’re good, keep them. If they’re not, let them go. That’s what we do. We accept anybody. And those who are not good, we say: ‘Sorry, we can’t keep you, because you’ve been trained and you’ve been working for a year, and you can’t understand. You need to find another job’. And I really beg other companies to give a chance to all people; otherwise many really skilled people will be out of the workforce.”

- Employer, Cleaning social enterprise (VIC)

5.3 Coordination and collaboration among refugee entrants and their communities, employment services, education and training providers and employers

“There are employers out there who are looking for people with the types of skills that refugees have. But services (Job Network etc), client groups (e.g. refugee communities), recruitment agencies, and employers are not effective at working with each other. They each have different cultures and ways of operating. What is needed is someone to bring all of the parties together – to find out what exactly the employer needs, to find the right people from communities, to work with services to ensure those people are supported (both pre-work training and orientation, and post-employment support), and that employers are also supported.”

- Service provider, Diversity@Work (VIC)

For refugee and humanitarian entrants recently arrived in Australia, navigating complex and unfamiliar service systems can be enormously challenging. The settlement issues that new arrivals can be juggling range from learning English and finding a job, to supporting the reunification of families, finding somewhere to live, enrolling children in schools, obtaining a driver’s licence and seeking treatment for medical conditions. A theme to emerge from interviews was the need for stronger coordination and collaboration among service providers, employers and industry and refugee entrants and their communities in facilitating sustainable employment outcomes. In particular, many interviewees talked about the positive flow-on effect of there being strong links between settlement and employment services, education and training providers, industry or employer groups and refugee entrants and their communities.

The following approaches, discussed in more detail in the following section, were highlighted as beneficial in developing a collaborative and coordinated service environment which facilitates sustainable employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants:

- Intermediate Labour Market programs;
- Partnerships between employers, employment services and communities;
- Opportunities to learn sufficient English on arrival to enable long-term, meaningful engagement in the Australian labour market;
- English courses linked with vocational pathways;
- Recognition of overseas skills and qualification;
- Industry-linked and -recognised training; and
- Regional or rural settlement driven by employment.

5.3.1 Intermediate Labour Market programs

Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) programs targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants represent an example of employers, education and training providers and employment services working together for the benefit of disadvantaged jobseekers. According to AMES’ Research and Policy Unit (2009:4):

“Conventional ILM programs give those who are most removed from the labour market a bridge back to the world of work by lifting their employability. Their core feature is paid work on a temporary contract – up to 12 months if possible, combined with personal development, vocational training and job search.”

Key characteristics of successful ILMs identified in research\(^{23}\) include:

- Defining the target group amongst the disadvantaged, either through a place-based approach or by targeting specific populations;
- Establishing clear objectives: the primary purpose is progression into jobs;
- Making participation voluntary to avoid stigmatisation and encourage genuine commitment;
- Replicating the conventional employment market in terms of application process, wages, workplace protocols, normal workplace disciplines and employee rights;
- Creating individual pathways encouraging practical work experience as early as possible;
- Setting up intensive case management, including workplace supervision and support, with low participant-to-staff ratios (generally 25:1) and at least weekly contact and periodic progress reviews to deal with actual and potential problems;
- Offering a program lasting between nine and 15 months, with a specified time-limit to reinforce its role as a transition into the conventional labour force;
- Being flexible about the training on offer and major on transferable skills;
- Covering job search assistance, help with job applications and job search as integral parts of the process and possibly create an arrangement with an external employer to provide ongoing employment, in order to ensure a transition to employment after the ILM;
- Putting measurable performance criteria in place for participants’ contracts; and being clear about when reviews will take place, how and when the program will be judged and what outcomes are expected; and
- Being administered by a strong organisation that is embedded in local community networks and prepared to take the financial risk.

Examples of ILM-type initiatives that were identified by interviewees as having positive or potentially-positive outcomes for both employers and refugee and humanitarian entrants included: AMES’ Community Guides (see case study below) and ILM Program initiatives (see case study in Section 5.3.6), the Given the Chance and ANZ program (see case study in Section 5.2.1) and the ACT Government’s Work Experience and Support Program (WESP).\(^{24}\)

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each of these programs is that they are designed to benefit not only the jobseeker (in terms of longer-term employment pathways) but also the employer (in terms of impacts on service delivery and quality), and that there are appropriate transitionary supports in place.

**AMES Community Guides Program (Victoria)**

Since 2005, Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) in Victoria has trained and employed over 380 Community Guides as part of its delivery of on-arrival settlement services through the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS).

Community guides are bilingual men and women who share the recent refugee experience and assist refugees to find their way around their local community. The guides provide cultural orientation and reference points to families resettling under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) program.

The objectives of the initiative are:

- To provide settlement services to newly arrived refugees in an appropriate way, culturally and linguistically, by ensuring refugee ‘voices’ continually shape how services are delivered;
- To provide employment opportunities as a first step to more substantial employment and additional employment for under-employed people from refugee and settler communities; and
- To provide training and development to ensure greater depth in leadership and mentoring skills within new and emerging communities.

As AMES’ Settlement Partnership Manager describes, the flow on to employment for other refugees, is in “using the unique skills, knowledge and networks of community guides to develop and support work opportunities”.

In an evaluation of the AMES Community Guides Program undertaken by the University of NSW (Doney et al. 2009:16-19), some of the impacts of the Community Guide role for Community Guides included:

- Personal benefits – training, knowledge and confidence gained has helped to improve Guides’ own settlement;
- Knowledge of the Australian system – Community Guides discussed how working with clients to access services increased their own knowledge of how Australian systems operate;
- Community Guides as facilitators of increased community knowledge – Guides could pass on their knowledge, experience and training in a way that strengthens and expands the capacity of community members to settle;
- Acquiring new work skills and local work experience – e.g. office and computer skills, time management, case management, communication and negotiation skills, problem solving and assertiveness; and
- Pathways into education and employment – including positions being developed within AMES Settlement which utilise the skills of experienced Guides and provide Guides with additional training and experience, while also employing them on a contract rather than casual basis.

The impact of the Program on AMES’ service provision to clients was also identified through the evaluation, which found that: “The Community Guides program is innovative in moving beyond [the] provider-recipient paradigm. The Community Guides program engages members of refugee communities as active participants in and providers of settlement support, rather than passive recipients of services. It recognises, employs and develops capacity within individuals and within communities; it facilitates positive settlement outcomes at several different levels, including engaging elements of community development.” (p.7)

### 5.3.2 Partnerships between employers, employment services and communities

“The best thing that [Australian Refugee Association] do is they actually come out to the workplace, and he assesses your needs. And where people might need welding skills, he gets them down and gets them on a welding course. So once [ARA] becomes
associated with your business, you can have reasonable confidence that the people that
he's going to introduce to you will fit your business.”

- Employer, Manufacturing industry (SA)

In terms of how coordination can be strengthened between employment services, employers and communities, building partnerships was central to the successful outcomes of a number of employment initiatives. For example, in the ACT, Calvary Hospital’s Refugee Mentoring Program\(^{25}\) has been developed as a partnership project between the hospital (as employer) and Canberra Refugee Support (community partner). A steering group guides the direction and development of the program and brings together people with different expertise. Another excellent example of collaboration between different services and interest groups is LHMU’s Service Stars initiative (see case study below).

### LHMU Service Stars (Victoria)

The Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU) Service Stars initiative represents an innovative partnership between refugee communities, employment and community services, and employers.

The initiative provides pre-employment training in hospitality and cleaning to jobseekers predominantly from the Horn of Africa, with guaranteed paid employment at the completion of a 1-3 week course. Training is offered in such areas as: hygiene, workplace expectations, negotiating conflict, customer service and communicating with supervisors.

A steering committee oversees the project, which includes representatives from LHMU, Victorian Police, community services, ethnic communities and employer partners. Community leaders from different ethnic communities are on the steering committee and refer participants to the program.

Employer partners are engaged at the outset to identify what they are looking for in a job-ready participant. LHMU works with the employer to ensure there are jobs at the end to place participants in, and provides support with cultural awareness and negotiation.

LHMU provides 12 months of post-employment follow-up. This includes talking to participants about career pathways and any issues regarding employment conditions.

### 5.3.3 English and employment

“You need to give people the chance to go to university and do higher education. More hours, more time to learn this language... You didn't give them that chance. You gave them 510 hours to do cleaning jobs, not to work in Centrelink, not to work as a doctor.”

- Employee, Sudanese, Childcare worker (VIC)

The strong relationship between English proficiency and employment outcomes has been well documented through research (see AMES 2008; Junankar & Mahuteau 2004; RCOA 2009; RCOA 2010a; Stevens 1998) and was a theme that was highlighted by many interviewees. As one employee from a refugee background explains:

“When new arrivals come here, because they come from a different culture, different society, different system ... we need to get them to understand the system first. ...If you don’t understand English, how can you understand the system, how can you understand the culture, how can you communicate? So English is always the most important thing to do first.”

- Employee, Vietnamese, Community health organisation (VIC)

With regards to what works in ensuring that refugee and humanitarian entrants can attain the English that will enable them to attain meaningful employment, suggestions from consultations included:

- Increasing the number of hours available to jobseekers under the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)\(^26\); and
- Increasing the flexibility of the AMEP so that people who do not complete their 510 hours because they find work soon after arrival are able to go back and access their remaining hours at a later stage.\(^27\)

A key recommendation of service providers and employees was the need to minimise the adverse impact of Job Network (now Job Services Australia) requirements on refugee and humanitarian entrants’ ability to attend English classes. Because compliance with Job Services Australia requirements is a condition of receiving Centrelink support but attendance at AMEP is voluntary, many refugee and humanitarian entrants feel that they have no choice but to meet the demands of their Job Services Australia provider, even if doing so may compromise their longer term settlement outcomes. A number of interviewees talked about newly arrived refugee entrants having to leave AMEP classes in order to attend job interviews or meet participation requirements. Hence, greater coordination and collaboration between AMEP providers and employment services (particularly those linked to Centrelink) was seen as essential.

Beyond the AMEP, some suggestions have been made that there is a need for former refugees to have access to longer term opportunities to learn English in community-based settings, particularly if this allows refugee entrants to combine work and learn English at the same time. As one participant from the Afghan community in Adelaide described in RCOA’s 2009 national community consultations (RCOA 2010a:80):

> “Many Afghan people cannot read or write. After six or seven years, they are still struggling to learn English. They are worrying about family members in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It would be better if people could work and learn at the same time as, after seven years, many have not learned English.”

### 5.3.4 English courses linked with vocational pathways

**Preparatory Course – Victoria Police entrance exam at TAFE (Victoria)**

For a number of years an 11-week course aimed at recruiting people from culturally diverse backgrounds into the police force has been offered in Victoria through a joint initiative between Victoria Police and the Adult Multicultural Education Service (AMES).

The course is designed to assist students to:

- Improve English language and numeracy skills;
- Understand the requirements for police entry;
- Complete the Preparatory Course; and
- Prepare for the Victoria Police Entrance Exam at TAFE.

The course is delivered by AMES and funded by Victoria Police.

- Service Provider, AMES Education

Across Australia, there are a significant number of AMEP and adult education providers who have developed innovative ways of providing English classes alongside vocational education and training. One example highlighted through interviews is the Victorian Co-operative for Children’s

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\(^{26}\) Currently those settling under the humanitarian program are eligible to access 510 hours of English tuition through AMEP. Additional hours are available to humanitarian entrants who meet specific eligibility criteria (e.g. age) and through programs such as the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP).

\(^{27}\) It should be noted that an extensive review of AMEP model was undertaken in 2008 and significant changes will be introduced in 2010. This includes the development of a stronger emphasis on ‘English for employment’ through streaming.
Services for Ethnic Groups’ (VICSEG) *New Futures Training* initiative. The New Futures Training offers Certificate III in Children’s Services with a focus on women from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The initiative, which has been running for a number of years, recognises and supports students’ English language learning through a supportive peer environment while also enabling participants to gain an accredited qualification that will enable them to work in the childcare industry (see also case study below on AMES’ Preparatory Course into the Victoria Police entrance exam at TAFE).

A key theme in terms of these kinds of vocational courses with English components leading to successful employment outcomes described in interviews is ensuring that the courses are in skills shortage areas where there are local jobs available and where courses are well linked with employers (see also Section 5.3.3).

### 5.3.5 Overseas skills and qualification recognition

> “Job Network should provide special programs to target refugees and more recognition of overseas qualifications.”

- Service provider, Metro MRC (NSW)

Although there are Federal and State government initiatives designed to assist in the recognition of overseas skills and qualifications (for example: Skills Stores in Victoria[^28], and the Federal Government’s Overseas Qualification Unit[^29]), there have been a number of studies that have highlighted the challenges for refugee and humanitarian entrants in accessing these processes and services (see Constable et al (2004) *Doctors become taxi drivers: Recognising skills – not as easy as it sounds*). For example, refugee and humanitarian entrants may not have access to the same financial resources as other migrants to pay for skills/qualification recognition processes; evidence of qualifications may have been lost due to a person’s migration experience (i.e. fleeing war, losing all possessions); and the time and resources required to go through re-qualification may be prohibitive for refugee entrants who are starting anew in Australia and are under enormous pressure to find work quickly.

In terms of what works, interviewees talked about the important role played by services that can facilitate this process as smoothly as possible, and that specialist employment services (such as those outlined in Section 5.1) can provide referral, support and advice to refugee and humanitarian entrants wanting to have their overseas skills/qualifications assessed. Mentoring programs which link mentors with mentees from the same professional background were also mentioned as having a positive impact in the process of skills/qualification recognition. For example, the RETAS initiative in the United Kingdom provides an international model focused on re-qualification of overseas-trained health professionals (see case study below).

#### RETAS (United Kingdom)

Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service (RETAS) was founded by London-based charity Education Action and provides refugees and asylum seekers with advice and support, employment training, mentoring and work experience in the community sector. A specific focus is on health professionals and consists of a mentoring program, based on the Dutch Emplooi model, to assist refugee doctors preparing for re-qualification.

Mentors targeted were UK-registered doctors who could provide specialist advice on the UK health profession. The British Medical Association also supported the initiative. The two-week job skills and orientation training covered: assessment, information on the UK labour market, CV preparation and work placement support.

(Cangiano 2008; Carr 2004; Mestan 2008)


5.3.6 Industry-linked and -recognised training

“Most of the participants who come through Given the Chance say they are sick of courses. Some of them come to us with four or five certificates and they're all unrelated, because they've been told that they need lots of qualifications to be able to get a job.”

- Service provider, Given the Chance, EMC-Brotherhood of St Laurence (VIC)

The importance of vocational education and training (VET) providers developing strong links with employers and industry was also talked about as vital to successful employment transitions. Many interviewees spoke about the frustration of refugee and humanitarian entrants who had completed certificate-level courses but who felt there were no clear pathways into relevant industries. Particularly frustrated were those who had acquired certificates that they felt were not recognised within the industry in which they wished to work. Although these were accredited training certificates, the perceived lack of recognition could be due to the large number of small registered training organisations (RTOs) offering courses that employers are unfamiliar with, and the variation in the quality of RTOs. As one interviewee describes:

“After I finished that course [Certificate III] it was hard because a lot of childcare centres didn’t recognise [it]. If I’d been told before ‘When you finish your course, after nine months, you are not going to get a job with that certificate’, I’m not going to do it! I’m not going to waste my time.”

- Employee, Sudanese, Childcare worker (VIC)

One suggestion for how to ensure VET qualifications translate into employment outcomes for refugee entrants is for the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) ensure that Job Services Australia (JSA) providers are more accountable for referring clients to particular VET courses. For example, one settlement worker at RCOA’s national community consultations (RCOA 2010a:83) described the case of a local JSA provider referring many of their refugee entrant clients to a particular aged care course that was being offered by a different arm within the same organisation (the organisation was both a JSA contract holder and a Registered Training Organisation). The organisation therefore benefited financially from referring both the JSA client into an accredited training course and through being the provider of that same training, regardless of the employment outcome for the client.

In terms of what works, the most successful training initiatives described by interviewees were those where there are already clear and established links between the VET provider and a particular industry. Even more successful are initiatives that provide opportunities for paid work experience in the industry as part of the accredited training (see AMES Intermediate Labour Market Program case study below).

AMES Intermediate Labour Market Program (Victoria)

In 2008 AMES used its own capacity as an employer to run an intermediate labour program for clients specifically to address their barriers to employment. Participants from a range of programs were appointed to positions in AMES.

Specific objectives of the AMES Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) Program were to:

- Create opportunities within AMES for newly arrived migrants and refugees to get a first opportunity in an Australian workplace via traineeships, work experience and other paid employment;
- Skill participants for post-AMES positions;
- Use the ILM program as a transition to mainstream employment; and
- Demonstrate that migrants and refugees without prior experience of Australian workplaces make a contribution to workplaces.

In addition to job experience in AMES, participants received access to other supports, including an intensive job search program focussing on preferred employment destinations, additional
assistance with English if needed, and on the job accredited training.

Through the ILM Program, 81 participants worked as Settlement Information Officers, Employment Consultants, Education Assistants, Customer Service/Administration Officers, and in Corporate Services positions in Finance, Human Resources, Marketing, Risk and Corporate Governance, Information Systems and Facilities. A number undertook work based traineeships in AMES Hospitality and Cleaning Social Enterprises.

Participants and qualifications included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Concurrent Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Information Officers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12 mth AMES traineeship</td>
<td>Certificate III in Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Officers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12 mth AMES traineeship</td>
<td>Certificate III in Employment Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Assistants</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12 mth AQTF traineeship</td>
<td>Certificate III in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistants (Traineeships)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12 mth AQTF traineeship</td>
<td>Certificate III in Office Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Enterprises</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12 mth AQTF traineeship</td>
<td>Certificate III in Hospitality Certificate II/III in Asset Maintenance (Cleaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service/Administration Officers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3 mth contract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Support positions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3 mth contract</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes of the ILM program included:

- In 2009, six Settlement Information Officers, four Employment Officers, five enterprise workers, 11 of those in corporate support positions, three who worked in AMES Administration and Customer Service positions, and two education assistants had secured mainstream employment;
- A small number of the ILM participants have gone on to further study.
- Participants identified increased knowledge and experience of Australian workplace cultures and transferable skills such as IT.

(AMES Research and Policy Division 2009)

5.3.7 Regional and rural settlement driven by employment

Interviewed services located in regional or rural areas spoke about successful employment outcomes being strongly linked to local labour shortages. For example, one interviewee in Murray Bridge in South Australia spoke about the very high employment rates of Sudanese migrants in the area, and that these outcomes were supported through planned settlement, strong local community structures and industry demand for labour.

In terms of a planned local response to ensure greater labour market integration, Flanagan (2007) argues that the settlement of refugee and humanitarian entrants in regional areas requires policies that support long-term settlement, including the development of vigorous regional economies to ensure pathways into employment. Taylor & Stanovic (2005:57) likewise argue that a key goal for refugee settlement should be to both promote informed choice for refugee and humanitarian entrants and to ensure advance planning and capacity building in areas of resettlement, in consultation with appropriate refugee groups and local communities.
5.4 Initiatives tapping into entrepreneurial spirit through social enterprise and small business development

In 2002, an assessment of the Federal Government’s New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS)\(^{30}\) indicated that this scheme has been relatively effective in promoting self-employment among non-English-speaking migrants, with survival rates (i.e. enterprises still running two years after the program) being significantly higher than among the Australian-born and migrants from English-speaking countries (Kelly et al. 2002 cited in Liebig 2006:41). Liebig (2006) contends that schemes such as NEIS may be particularly effective in fostering migrant self-employment, and that there is some value in enabling and assisting migrants from new and emerging communities to establish their own businesses because this can and will contribute to creating employment opportunities for more recent arrivals, although the benefits of such initiatives are only likely to be seen in the longer term.

Stevens (1998) outlines factors that may account for the comparatively higher rates of self-employment within communities formed by refugee and humanitarian entrants, such as there being greater entrepreneurial behaviour among people who have been through a refugee experience compared with other groups, cultural factors and predispositions, as well as niches of demand. On the other hand, Stevens also cites exclusionary processes and constraints on employment opportunities in mainstream enterprises as another less positive influence on the tendency to self-employment.

Through interviewing employment services involved in supporting small business development, as well as employees and supervisors involved in social enterprise initiatives, the following strategies were highlighted as influential in enabling entrepreneurs from refugee backgrounds to start and sustain their own businesses as a pathway into the Australian labour market:

- Small business training and support;
- Enterprise facilitation; and
- Social enterprise.

5.4.1 Small business training and support

“What I find is, information is not easy to get... we’re starting like blind. We don’t know on which door to knock. This will stop a lot of small entrepreneurs who want to do this or do that. Information is a key thing, and it’s not really easily accessible... particularly for women from Africa who are computer illiterate. How do they get access to [the necessary] information online?”

- Employer, Retail small business and social enterprise (NSW)

Providing appropriate information, training and support on starting and sustaining a small business was seen as key to supporting entrepreneurship among refugee and humanitarian entrants. While programs like NEIS do exist, interviewees talked about the lack of accessibility of NEIS to refugee entrants who may have more limited English language and literacy skills. Providing training and support that is targeted and accessible to communities from diverse backgrounds was seen as key, with suggested avenues including: mentoring programs, enterprise facilitation (see Section 5.4.2), small business training courses targeting migrant communities, and developing financial literacy and business practice resources in different languages.

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\(^{30}\) NEIS helps eligible unemployed people to start and run their new, viable small business. NEIS provides training in small business management and business skills, and business plan development. NEIS does not provide start-up funds such as loans or grants. At the end of training (up to three months) a participant’s business plan needs to be approved before being able to start a business with NEIS assistance. If a business plan is approved, the participant will receive business advice and mentoring support during the first year of business operation. Participants who are on income support allowance may also be eligible to receive: NEIS Allowance for up to 52 weeks, and NEIS Rental Assistance for up to 26 weeks. (Commonwealth of Australia; [www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au) accessed 23/6/09)
With regards to targeted models that have been trialled, the *Enterprising Women* initiative – a collaborative project initiated by Women's Health in the North and Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre in Melbourne – provides an example of how targeted training and mentoring has been used to support small business development among women from refugee and migrant backgrounds. As one service provider describes:

“For one program (in Lalor), one-on-one mentoring was provided to women. For other programs run in different areas, a group mentoring model was used. This was considered highly successful and important in terms of outcomes. The recommendation from the evaluation is to have mentoring as a key component.”

- Service provider, Enterprising Women, Spectrum MRC (VIC)

In terms of targeted resources, the *Enterprising Women* initiative developed a number of multilingual resources for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including a Financial Literacy Activity Book in English, Arabic and Turkish, and a Business Education Workbook in English and Arabic. The *Enterprising Women* initiative also provided participants with group training and offered interest-free loans. (See also Communicare Family Day Care case study).

### Communicare Family Day Care (Western Australia)

A group of Somali women approached Communicare in Perth regarding family day care. The women wanted to have a safe, culturally-sensitive and appropriate childcare facility. A few Somali women were interested in establishing family day care (childcare facilities within their home) to fulfil this need. Unfortunately, as the women were in the private rental market and the government has strict infrastructure criteria in order to become certified, the women were not able to make the costly alterations to their homes.

Communicare established a Family Day Care certification and built ten "family day care-appropriate homes". The homes provide accommodation for the women and their families while they learn (become certified) and establish their business (the lease runs for two years). The women are then provided support to move to the rental market and continue their business.

One interesting theme to emerge from interviews was the role that employment services (in particular, Job Network providers) played in either enabling or hindering the establishment of small businesses. As one interviewee describes:

“When we started the business, and it was just the four of us, we didn't have big contracts. We only had three places... And whatever we get, we divide by four of us. And it wasn’t big enough. Maybe $300-400 a fortnight, and then we get a bit from Centrelink. And you know what the Job Network said? They said: 'Why don't you stop what you're doing and come and search for full-time work?' And I said: 'Did I stop? I'm searching, searching, but there's nothing available. But I love to do this business. If you have anything to help me, if you can recommend us to any businesses, we can start to do it here if you want. Who does the cleaning here?' and they said: 'We don't know.' So they didn't help to find contracts to get us out of the Centrelink.”

- Employer, Cleaning social enterprise (VIC)

In this example, the small cleaning business ended up becoming a viable social enterprise and is now employing more than eight people (including seven trainees). However, as the business was not developed through the assistance of NEIS, the founders received little support from their Job Network provider and had to advocate strongly and on an individual basis to demonstrate that they were meeting participation requirements in order to continue receiving Centrelink payments while the business was in its infancy.

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5.4.2 Enterprise facilitation

“There are [African] women who have skills, but they don't know how to market them at a professional level. Like there’s this one woman who is very good at making salted fish, but she’s not very good at marketing herself. What she finds is it's difficult to get the right tools, set up as a business, [know] the rules and regulations, those kinds of things. What we try to do is match them to the right people.”

- Employer, Retail small business and social enterprise (NSW)

Refugee and humanitarian entrants, like other migrants, often do not have the established networks that enable small businesses to overcome initial start-up challenges, such as being able to draw on people with knowledge of local markets and how to navigate the complex regulations and systems that govern small businesses in Australia. Enterprise facilitation is about linking people who have an entrepreneurial spirit and an idea with the skills, expertise and networks needed to make that business successful. STARTTS in NSW is an example of one service targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants that has initiated enterprise facilitation as part of its commitment to social justice, human rights and the personal empowerment of torture and trauma survivors (See case study of the STARTTS approach). As the STARTTS Enterprise Facilitator describes:

“While it's not our core business to work in this area [small business enterprise], we find that in helping people to rebuild their lives, we're helping towards the healing process. And economic independence is very, very important as part of the healing process.”

- Service provider, Enterprise Facilitation, STARTTS (NSW)

In terms of identifying good practice in enterprise facilitation, there are few examples other than the STARTTS initiative that were identified through RCOA’s mapping exercise and consultations. Comments from those consulted regarding what is needed for enterprise facilitation to effectively support entrepreneurs from refugee backgrounds included:

- Ensuring there are bottom-up approaches where facilitators have strong links with refugee entrants and their communities and are able to establish trust;
- Ensuring enterprise facilitators are appropriately trained and supported (e.g. the Sirolli Institute32 has established a network of facilitators around the world and set up mentoring relationships); and
- Employing enterprise facilitators on the basis of their capacity to be good networkers who can effectively set up a resource board that will assist entrepreneurs to expand their own networks.

STARTTS Enterprise Facilitation (New South Wales)

The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) has developed an Enterprise Facilitation initiative. According to STARTTS, the service aims “to promote local economic growth in Western and South Western Sydney by providing support to local entrepreneurs with refugee and refugee-like backgrounds wishing to start or expand existing small business”.

“It is a model of development that supports the creation of wealth from within a community by nurturing the resourcefulness of its people. It is also extremely cost effective, with the average cost per new job created at $3,800.

“Refugees and other migrants have many skills and talents that can contribute to the Australian economy and community. They are keen to work and are passionate about their business ideas, but often lack knowledge of Australian business and financial systems.

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32 The Sirolli Institute is an international not-for-profit institution that works with communities to establish sustainable, grassroots enterprise projects.
Enterprise Facilitation uses the Sirolli methodology to help would-be entrepreneurs transform their ideas into viable enterprises. Using this method, Enterprise Facilitators provide a free, confidential and accessible service to would-be entrepreneurs backed by a network of experienced professionals, business and support people some of whom make up the official Resource Board. The Enterprise Facilitator connects refugees with sound business ideas with this network, who provide the support and advice they need to create a successful business.

Although very much in its infancy, the Enterprise Facilitation team is assisting a growing number of refugees to establish or expand their businesses. These include:

- a group of Hazara Afghan women creating unique embroidery for Australian fashion designers;
- a woman from Zimbabwe who markets locally grown maize (corn), in demand by Australia’s growing African population; and
- a group of Somalis exporting camel milk in partnership with indigenous Australians.

- STARTTS website

5.4.3 Social enterprise

“Some women – particularly those who are most marginalised – may benefit from a social enterprise model of business development, rather than an independent microenterprise model. Women who face several barriers to starting a business may be more successful if they could team up with other women – either from their cultural community, or via a mixed group – to support each other around getting a business going. Under this model, women would benefit from having ongoing guidance and support from an auspicing agency and/or worker, to guide them through the technicalities of starting and running an enterprise.”

- Women’s Health in the North 2008: 44

In identifying what works in supporting the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants, a number of interviewees referred to the important role played by social enterprises. Across a broad range of industries – including hospitality, retail, catering, cleaning and agricultural – and using a wide range of models, organisations have been working with refugee and humanitarian entrants to develop businesses that re-invest and provide opportunities for the employment of disadvantaged jobseekers. In terms of what constitutes a social enterprise, there has been much discussion and debate (see UTS Business; BSL 2007). The UK-based Social Enterprise Coalition define social enterprises as:

“Businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.”

With regards to how social enterprises may facilitate the employment transitions of refugee and humanitarian entrants, the Social Enterprise Hub argues that:

“Many individuals find themselves excluded from mainstream life and employment due to disability, illness or other disadvantage. Businesses that operate for the primary purpose of employing such individuals are known as social enterprises. These enterprises play an important role in overcoming social exclusion and providing real jobs to marginalised Australians.”

The most successful models of social enterprise highlighted through interviews are those where communities and auspicing agencies have developed strong collaborative partnerships. In particular, models where participants are able to drive the enterprise and the auspicing agency can

34 www.business.uts.edu.au/cacom/articles/commentaries/social_enterprise.html
35 www.socialenterprise.org.uk/pages/about-social-enterprise.html
36 www.socialenterprisehub.org
provide support with participants’ skill-development and building the infrastructure of the enterprise, were talked about as particularly successful. Often, the focus of these enterprises is not on providing long-term employment but as a stepping stone through which refugee and humanitarian entrants can develop skills and gain paid work experience in Australia (see Magic Green Clean social enterprise case study below and discussion of Intermediate Labour Market Program in Section 5.3.3).

**Magic Green Clean Social Enterprise (Victoria)**

The Magic Green Clean Social Enterprise is an initiative of AMES and members of the Sudanese community in Melbourne. The initiative, which started in 2005, provides training and work experience to jobseekers who wish to find employment in the cleaning industry. As Magic Green Clean’s supervisor describes:

“We target unemployed Sudanese and other communities to get some skills. If they're happy to work as cleaners, they can work as cleaners… The majority of our staff have been in Australia less than five years. All of them haven't worked before [in Australia].”

"After our trainees complete their course, we keep them on for one year as casual …and then AMES [Employment] provide job search activities for the ones who have finished their training and have done some casual work with us."

The trainees are paid as casual staff and also complete a Certificate III in Asset Maintenance. 70% of trainees have gone on to secure employment or undertake further training.

“The aim is not to provide long-term employment, but a transition pathway.”

5.5 Building awareness within communities about career pathways in Australia

The final theme that emerged from interviews relating to factors of success in supporting the transition to employment of refugee and humanitarian entrants was the need to build realistic expectations and awareness within newly arrived communities about career pathways in Australia. While this may be part of the role of specialist employment services (see section 5.1), interviewees talked about this community education needing to happen through a variety of different avenues and at different stages of settlement. In particular, strategies for how to build community awareness included:

- Creating awareness of career pathways through pre-embarkation and on-arrival orientation;
- Developing programs that promote possibilities to young people; and
- Initiatives that build social capital.

5.5.1 Creating awareness of career pathways through pre-embarkation and on-arrival settlement education

A number of interviewees talked about the challenges related to refugee and humanitarian entrants having unrealistic expectations about career pathways in Australia, and how the disjuncture between expectations and actual settlement experiences can be partly ameliorated with good pre-embarkation orientation as well as targeted information provision provided through on-arrival settlement services.

While it was acknowledged that it would be extremely difficult to provide comprehensive orientation to the Australia labour market prior to resettlement, one interviewee believed that more could be done to foster realistic expectations within refugee communities before they arrive in Australia:

“These people were misinformed. They thought they're going to get to Australia and everything is going to be okay. They're going to find a big house; a big job; they give you
money to live on. And then when people get here, it's not working. ...and Centrelink is always on their back to go and get a job. But how do you expect someone who has never had a job all their lives, and then all of a sudden you tell them to go and find a job?! They don't even know how to fill in an application form. They don't know even how to be in the workplace. They've never operated any tools or equipment in their life except for the stick they've used to cook with.”

- Employer, Retail small business and social enterprise (NSW)

RCOA has been working for several years to build more effective communication between the pre-departure Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) program for refugee and humanitarian entrants and services involved in post-arrival support. Since 2008, RCOA has coordinated the AUSCO Exchange Program (previously known as the Visiting Settlement Adviser program), bringing Australian-based settlement service staff face-to-face with overseas-based AUSCO trainers, to discuss how information for refugee and humanitarian entrants preparing for settlement in Australia can be refined. The question of managing expectations of new arrivals has been much discussed as part of this exchange.

Much of the orientation on employment matters must, realistically, happen after a refugee or humanitarian entrant arrives in Australia. The post-arrival refugee settlement support program, to be known as Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) from the beginning of the new five-year contract which starts in late 2010, is placing greater emphasis on post-arrival orientation, with employment being one of the most important issues on which new arrivals must be briefed. The AMEP is another national program that has been identified as having the potential to provide a much greater and more structured settlement education role, including providing information to new arrivals about employment (RCOA 2010a). The AMES Community Guides initiative in Victoria has also been cited as an example of an effective model of information provision and orientation that draws on the experiences and expertise of former refugees themselves, and also builds the leadership capacity within communities (see case study in Section 5.3.1). Another interviewee talked more generally about the effectiveness of providing career advice, guidance and planning as part of settlement services:

“Providing career advice, guidance and planning] is essential. We invite the Career Development Centre to our New Settler Retreat to set up shop and outreach to our client group. Many of our clients are extremely motivated to get further education and have high aspirations in terms of careers, but are not always realistic about career pathways and what you need to do to navigate the education system in Australia.”

- Service provider, Murray Bridge New Settler Services, Lutheran Community Care (SA)

5.5.2 Promoting possibilities to young people

Unemployment and underemployment among refugee and humanitarian entrants and their communities can have a particular impact on young people. As two interviewees describe:

“The issue of unemployment is really demoralising for young people from refugee backgrounds because they say: ‘If you have got a Doctorate or a Masters degree and you’re not working, then what is the use of putting effort into study?’ So it undermines the use of education and is creating a generation of hopelessness.”

- Employer, Settlement Partnerships, AMES (VIC)

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37 AUSCO is the Australian Cultural Orientation program funded through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) as part of its Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program. AUSCO is conducted for new entrants prior to their arrival in Australia. Each year approximately 300 classes are organised by the International Organization for Migration for refugees at various locations in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and other areas as required. AUSCO sessions are held in refugee camps and urban centres over a five-day period. Skilled trainers are locally recruited by IOM and they teach the course based on a DIAC-approved curriculum.

38 It was previously known as the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS).
“That's what a lot of refugees are going through at the moment, especially the young ones. They don't want to work, they don't want to study, they just want to stay home. Not because they're not good enough, but because they've got this expectation of rejection... from work, from the media, from other stuff... They've found rejection from government, from employment, and from families as well.”

- Employee, Sudanese, Childcare service (VIC)

A number of interviewees from refugee backgrounds talked about the importance of promoting career pathways and possibilities to young people in particular in order to create a sense of possibility and incentives for them to remain engaged in education and training. Again, this may be the role of targeted employment services (Section 5.1). However, other suggestions for how this has been or could be done included:

- Promoting role models from refugee backgrounds who are working in different industries (i.e. as mentors, through media exposure or as guest speakers in youth-specific programs);
- Developing youth-specific employment programs (see Multicultural Youth Volunteer Project case study); and
- Providing career information expos targeting young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

**Multicultural Youth Volunteer Project (South Australia)**

The Multicultural Youth Volunteer Project (MYVP) is run by Multicultural Youth South Australia (MYSA) and funded by the South Australian Government’s Office for Youth through its Youth Engagement Grants program.

The Project consists of:

- A reference group of five young people who will meet quarterly to contribute to the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of the project;
- Consultations with 25 young people to inform the project design;
- An Information Expo;
- Workshops – two series of 10 interactive workshops (20 in total) with a minimum of 15 participants in each targeting a total of 300 young refugees over the three-year funding period;
- An intensive support for 50 young refugees per annum (total of 150) to prepare them for volunteer placements and employment;
- 30 volunteer placements; and
- Resource development – a handbook providing information and practical pointers on how to attract and retain young refugee volunteers.

The workshops involve learning about career advice, guidance, and planning; resume writing; interview skills; and other capacity building skills. Volunteer placements are made available through government agencies as well as non-government community services. These placements are often the first work environment experience that the participants have had.

**5.5.3 Building social capital**

Initiatives that provide opportunities for refugee and humanitarian entrants to build *bridging social capital* were mentioned by a number of interviewees as being instrumental in successful employment outcomes. Opportunities to build social networks are often not related to employment programs or funded services, but happen organically through friendships between people from

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39 In his pioneering study, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2001), Robert Putnam writes about two main components to the concept of social capital: *bonding social capital* and *bridging social capital*. The former refers to the value assigned to social networks between homogeneous groups of people, and the latter to social networks between socially heterogeneous groups of a variety of ages, cultures and life experiences. Criminal gangs, for example, can be thought of as creating bonding social capital (linking people with similar values and social make up), while bowling clubs tend to create bridging social capital. Bridging social capital is argued to have a host of other benefits for societies, governments, individuals and communities.
diverse backgrounds. For example, one interviewee spoke about the role an Australian-born friend played in getting his first job in Australia. As a fellow student, the friend organised casual employment for both of them as fruit pickers in Western Australia during the university holidays. The friend found them the jobs and arranged accommodation and travel to the rural area for the fruit-picking season. Similarly, the following quote illustrates the value for refugee entrants of being able to build relationships with volunteers from the local community who understood the language and the system:

“The first thing that helped me was my tutor [at the Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL) Program]. Every Saturday I've been going to SAIL. And I think SAIL help a lot of people. I mean, I could ask the tutors here: 'I want to do that course; do you think I can do it?' Because I wasn't 100% sure myself. But for someone who knows the language and knows the system, and is testing me all the time in English... that person can give me advice, and can say: 'You can do it' or 'You need to do this’.”

- Employee, Sudanese, Childcare service (VIC)

Examples of non-employment-related initiatives that were mentioned in interviews that build social capital and potentially have a positive flow-on effect on employment outcomes include:

- Community sport and recreation programs;
- Volunteer English language programs; and,
- Local community initiatives promoting cross-cultural friendships.
6. CASE STUDIES: INDIVIDUAL JOURNEYS INTO EMPLOYMENT

The following case studies highlight the very different experiences of four individuals who have made a successful transition to employment in Australia and their reflections on what helped them along the way. All names and some details have been changed.

6.1 Sahar

Back in my country, I was a professional gymnast and I did coaching as well. For me, it’s not like your kind of employment; there’s no paperwork or anything. It’s just like working in the club. Normally, I trained five days a week and I trained the children three days a week. In terms of education, I completed my Year 12 in Sudan. And after that I started studying Journalism, but I didn’t finish it for a number of reasons.

When I came to Australia, I started by going to AMEP and studying the 510 hours of English class. After I finished, I’ve been told to find a job [by Centrelink]...I was looking for a job for almost six months. The only thing I found was housekeeping. I did it for six months at Hilton Hotel. After that, I decided to go back to school and do my Certificate III in Children’s Services.

I found out about this course when I met my friend in Footscray and she told me about it. She said: ‘Sahar, you’re going to be really good at it!’ The course wasn’t that hard because most of the students have English as a second language. The teachers all helped us. If we couldn't understand something in English, someone would try to help us and explain it in Arabic. But after I finished that course I couldn't find any job. I wanted to work in childcare. I don't want to do cleaning any more.

The first thing that helped me was my tutor [at the volunteer-run Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL) Program40]... I think SAIL helps a lot of people. I mean, without asking a lot of the tutors here, ‘I want to do that course; do you think I can do it?’ I wasn't 100% sure myself. But for someone who knows the language and knows the system, and is testing me all the time in English, that person can give me advice. They can say: ‘You can do it’ or ‘You need to do this’.

I applied for hundreds of jobs. I had been giving my resume to different childcare centres but no one replied back to me. No one said anything to me. Anyway, in the local newspaper I found there is an agency. I called them and said, ‘Look, I have Certificate III in Children’s Services and I'm really looking for a job.’ They said: ‘At the moment we are very quiet and we don't have anything’. They told me to leave my phone number and send in my Certificate and, if they have anything, they'll give me a call.

Three weeks later they still hadn't given me a call. So I called them again and said: ‘Have you got anything for me?’ And the next week the lady called me and she said: ‘We've got a job for you’. And that's my first job. I think, for any employer in Australia, they want you to nag them a bit. With [the agency], I didn't call them after that first day for a month, because I'm thinking they're going to call me. But they didn’t. So when I called again, I think the lady who answered was a very kind person. I mean, I didn't cry over the phone, but I almost... (laughs) ...maybe that person is from a different background, and maybe she went through the language barriers, maybe she knows friends who have... and she was trying to help.

The first day I went [to the agency job] the girls were very friendly and nice. They asked if I wanted to work with them the next week as well. I was really lucky, because they booked me for the whole next week. And since then, the agency has been calling me every morning or every week just to give me a job.

40 www.sailprogram.org.au
[Through the agency], I got a job with a childcare centre for six months as an ongoing job. After finishing the six months [as agency staff], they offered me a full-time position. And of course I'm going to take it, because this is the only full-time job I've been offered. I took the job, and I've been working there now for three years.

The Centre took me on as Certificate III level, and then I decided to do more study. I decided to do my Diploma in Children's Services. I took the course at Vic Uni. I've been working full time and studying part-time, doing night classes. And now I have finished my diploma! For two years I struggled, but I completed it. And now I'm a qualified childcare worker with my diploma from Vic Uni, and I'm a Team Leader in the childcare centre.

6.2 Ali

While I was studying at Uni, I was also driving a taxi part-time just to help me with books and stuff. After I finished Uni [Bachelor of Business and Financial Risk Management], I spent two years trying to look for work. I tried, but I didn't get jobs. I was mainly looking for banking and finance jobs. I was getting interviews, but I never got anything. I was also registered with [a Job Network provider], but it was really hard. A lot of the work they get is just like factory. It wasn't related to my field of study. You know, I've been studying for four years and I don't want to work in a factory. Otherwise, there's no point in me studying.

One of my friends told me about Given the Chance. So I got involved, and that's how I ended up working with [this financial institution]. It's a good program, especially as they have a lot of links with employers; especially the big employers. After the two months 'try before you buy' period, I got a job. I didn't have to go through the interview process because I did so well.

That program [Given the Chance] helped me a lot. They were visiting me, asking how I'm going, and at the same time asking my managers, and just seeing how I'm tracking. So they ask both ways.

With Given the Chance, even if they don't find a job for you, at least you will know how to apply and will get enough training of how to look for work. The program is specially tailored for migrants who have professional experience but who don't know the right directions. The mainstream agencies tell you: 'There's a computer over there, look for work.' That's just a waste of time.

I think having a mentor is very, very important. They can lead you in the right direction. When I started the two month placement, I got a lot of support. I had a mentor; a person who worked for [the financial institution]. We used to catch up once a month, and I could raise any issues that I had. She helped me go through the right direction. When you start, you don't want to ask your manager, because you don't know what they're thinking, and you're afraid if you say something that you don't like, they might just fire you. The mentors help you because they know a lot of stuff about what is happening in the workplace, and they're not in your team.

I had [previously] applied for a job with [this financial institution], but never got an interview! I guess I didn't know the right directions, and I didn't go through any employment agency. I was just applying through the internet, through seek.com and through their website. I also tried through recruitment agencies, but I didn't get anything.

I've been working for [this financial institution] for 2½ years now. I started off as a merchant support officer, where I worked for one year. Then I got another role, and now I'm working in my current role in direct sales. I'm in the right direction now. I know where I'm heading. I'm half way.
6.3 Mary

Before leaving my country I did a degree in Public Law. Then I went to Switzerland, where I did my Masters Degree in Political Sciences. Then I moved to Sri Lanka, where my partner was working. I worked for a Swiss NGO in micro-finance and for the International Red Cross. And then we moved here, and that's another story.

My first year and a half in Australia was very depressing and difficult because I couldn't get any job. I would keep sending my resume everywhere. I was applying for research and evaluation positions. At first I targeted my field – social policy research – but after I thought I would apply for anything. I didn't even get any answer. I'm thinking: 'What is happening? I don't even get any feedback!'

So I ended up doing a Certificate III in Aged Care, because everyone told me it's the best way for migrants to get a job. So I did that and I couldn't even get a job! After I got my certificate I applied for jobs in Aged Care and they said: 'No, you have to have six months work experience!' The problem is that you get this mixed information and you don't know where to go.

My friend told me about this program, Given the Chance, and I say: 'No, nobody is able to help me'. But she convinced me to come. And the first time I entered the place [EMC], I feel like I'm in my village. People are so available and were listening to me for the first time, and trying to help me. I thought: Why didn't I find them from the beginning? Just to be able to talk to someone who can understand how you are feeling and what to do, directing you; and I discovered that I was doing everything wrong in Australia! My resume was not in the right format. I had no idea how to apply for a job – selection criteria, interview skills – all this was new for me and I had no idea.

The problem with migrants here is that they hear that you can get job in Aged Care so they all go and do Aged Care. And then they hear you can get a job in Accounting, and they all do Accounting. They don't look at what they want to do and stay focused, even if it takes a really long time. That's the difference with EMC. They don't put you in just any job. They really work on what you want to do, see if there is any possibility. If not, how you can get there. So they do some of that career advice.

I started off through Given the Chance doing work experience at [this community organisation]. I was making tea for focus groups, setting up the room. I said: 'Okay, I don't mind. I just want to go outside my house and do something, even if it's not paid, I don't care.' The person who I started doing my placement with, she is wonderful. She said: 'Mary, you can do it. Send me your resume'. I didn't think I was ready, but she pushed me to put my resume in [for an advertised job]. And I did. And after three weeks they called me up for an interview.

I've been working as a research officer for over two years. My role involves research design methodology, designing questionnaires, recruiting participants, interviewing people, entering data, analysing data, writing reports, organising meetings with stakeholders. Everything.

I'm so glad I have this job. [With] all these people [from Given the Chance] helping me, I cannot let them down because they invest in me. That is what keeps me going and working hard.

6.4 John

Before I came to Australia I did so many jobs. I am not a young person. I used to run my father's business when I was a student. I studied mechanical engineering and I worked in the mechanical field for six months. Then my father died and I took over his [importing and exporting] business. We imported things from China and from all over the world... I also opened a restaurant for a year before leaving Sudan.
In my first two months in Australia I did some English courses. My English level was a bit higher [than AMEP], so I went to TAFE and did Certificate IV in English. After I finished that English course, I was planning next what I can do. I needed to find some work. But it's hard to find work without experience in Australia. So I said: 'I need to do something to get that experience.' So I went to study Hospitality at Moorabbin TAFE.

I did Hospitality [Certificate III] for one and half years, and then I wanted to establish my own [restaurant] business here, but I find it so hard. So after I finished my certificate I went to hunt for a job. But I also find it so difficult, because I didn't work before in Australia. I applied to over 50 places for a job, and no reply. For six months I was with [a Job Network provider] but I didn't have any chance to find a job and they didn't find anything for me.

So, a friend of mine works in [this community organisation], and that's how I came to be a part of [the organisation]. We heard that [this community organisation] were doing a project and they wanted to establish some enterprises, and they needed some communities to join, and so we applied. We wrote a letter to [the organisation] and we said we wanted to establish a cleaning business, and they agreed. They had some grant. So again, I had to study. Four of us from the Sudanese community started this business.

When we started the business, and it was just the four of us, we didn't have big contracts. We only had three places and whatever we got, we divided by four. And it wasn't big enough. Maybe $300-400 a fortnight, and then we got a bit from Centrelink. And you know what the Job Network said? They said: 'Why don't you stop what you're doing and come and search for full-time work? And I said: 'Did I stop? I'm searching, searching, but there's nothing available. But I love to do this business. If you have anything to help me, if you can recommend us to any businesses, we can start to do it here if you want. Who does the cleaning here?' And they said: 'We don't know'. So they didn't help to find contracts to get us out of the Centrelink. And the big challenge for new companies is to find more contracts. Without contracts, small businesses will collapse because of expenses. What helped us is [a community partner organisation] recommending us to other businesses. Now we have contracts to clean seven libraries and we're employing people. Now times are changing, because Job Network are coming to us and looking for our business!

I'm currently supervisor here, supervising all the cleaning issues and the social enterprise. I am currently supervising seven trainees.

So I want to say [to other businesses]: Just give them a chance. If they're good, keep them. If they're not, let them go. That's what we do. We accept anybody. And those who are not good, we say: 'Sorry, we can't keep you, because you've been trained and you've been working for a year, and you can't understand. You need to find another job'. And I really beg other companies to give a chance to all people; otherwise many really skilled people will be out of the workforce.
7. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from this research have highlighted the particular challenges that refugee and humanitarian entrants face in making the transition to employment in Australia (Chapter 4), the enormous range of initiatives that have been trialled to support the needs of this diverse group of jobseekers (Chapter 5) and the complex and varied experiences of former refugees who have navigated the difficult path into the Australian labour market (Chapter 6).

Some themes that emerged from interviews with employees, employers and employment services suggest that there are a number of key factors for success that contribute to refugee and humanitarian entrants being able to make use of their skills to find meaningful, sustainable work in Australia. These include having access to targeted employment services; having employers who value and are committed to workforce diversity; there being coordination and collaboration between service systems, employers and communities; initiatives tapping into the entrepreneurial spirit of former refugees; and, awareness-building within refugee background communities about career pathways in Australia. While the scope of this research did not allow for a thorough evaluation of the comparative effectiveness of the different approaches identified under each of these themes, it has highlighted the areas where there are potentially gaps in national policy, funding and strategies.

In terms of recommendations for responding to such a complex area as employment transitions and refugee resettlement, then, the following recommendations point to areas where the findings documented in this report could be further elaborated to inform local and national approaches. Key recommendations include:

- Developing a national refugee employment strategy;
- Ensuring employment services effectively meet the needs of refugee and humanitarian entrants;
- Investing in intermediate labour market initiatives targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants; and
- Recognising employers who value and are committed to workforce diversity.

7.1 Developing a national refugee employment strategy

Findings from this research have highlighted the enormous wealth of skills, experience and motivation that refugee and humanitarian entrants bring to Australia, as well as the multiple barriers and frustrations they face in being able to apply these within the Australian labour market. Addressing employment barriers that are associated with the forced migration experience of refugees requires a considered approach by government and services, particularly in the early stages of settlement. A considered approach means acknowledging the diverse backgrounds, skills and aspirations of refugee and humanitarian entrants and that a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to meet the needs of such a diverse group. It requires planning and strengthening pathways from on-arrival settlement services through to targeted employment and training services supporting transitions for disadvantaged jobseekers, and intermediate labour market initiatives for those for whom a bridge into employment is necessary.

Developing a national refugee employment strategy requires collaboration between the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to map out settlement pathways and supports leading to more sustainable and meaningful employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants. This includes ensuring that employment initiatives are accessible, accountable and effective in meeting the needs of this group of jobseekers, and that settlement services are equipped to provide thorough orientation and referral so that refugee and humanitarian entrants can make a smooth transition into work or to access employment services, education and training opportunities and transition supports.
**Recommendation 1**

RCOA recommends that DIAC and DEEWR develop a national refugee employment strategy to map out settlement pathways and supports that will lead to more sustainable employment outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants.

**7.2 Ensuring employment services meet the needs of refugee and humanitarian entrants**

“We need more employment services targeted at disadvantaged jobseekers (e.g. refugees), with a recognition of the resources required to do a good job. It is not one-size-fits-all and resources should be allocated as such. At the same time, targeted employment services can also represent value for money.”

- Service provider, Australian Refugee Association (SA)

This research has highlighted the varied and innovative ways in which specialist employment services have addressed some of the employment barriers faced by refugee and humanitarian entrants. Case studies and interviews highlighted the different approaches needed as well as some of the shortcomings of generalist employment service models that do not address the particular barriers to employment faced by refugee and humanitarian entrants. As outlined in Section 4.3, provisions for this sub-group of jobseekers within the national Job Services Australia (JSA) network are through generalist JSA providers and a limited number of specialist JSA services targeting people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. However, there are fewer service providers claiming particular expertise in working with people from refugee backgrounds funded under the JSA than the previous Job Network, and these services are required to provide the same suite of services as other JSA providers and with the same levels of funding and framework of accountability.

There is much potential for JSA to better meet the needs of refugee and humanitarian entrants, but this requires a strategic utilisation of specialist CALD services and a monitoring and funding framework to ensure that all JSA providers (both generalist and specialist) are effectively able to meet the needs of this group of jobseekers. For example, refugee and humanitarian entrants may require more frequent and longer contact with providers where there are language or other problems that make communication more difficult, and this needs to be properly reflected in contracts. The additional barriers confronting refugee and humanitarian entrants in entering the labour market also need to be properly recognised in the initial streaming decision, with provision for flexible processes for moving between streams. Moreover, providers will need to be innovative and flexible in meeting the particular needs of refugee entrants and to focus on achieving individually appropriate outcomes. This will need to be closely monitored in practice.

While there is potential for strengthening JSA frameworks to improve outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants, it is unlikely that all JSA generalist providers are going to meet the needs of small numbers of refugee and humanitarian entrants, and so there is a role for specialist programs such as those outlined in Section 5.1. For example, in cases where skills shortages in regional labour markets and settlement trends create an opportunity for communities, industry and employment and settlement services to develop innovative partnerships, opportunities to seek funding for targeted initiatives will be imperative. The re-introduction of the $41 million Innovation Fund within JSA provides just such an opportunity, as JSA providers and other specialist employment and settlement organisations have the opportunity to work in partnership (and to be funded) to implement projects that address particular barriers to employment for highly disadvantaged jobseekers (including refugee and humanitarian entrants).

**Recommendation 2**

RCOA recommends that DEEWR, as part of its monitoring and evaluation of the new Job Services Australia (JSA) model, review its effectiveness in meeting the needs of refugee and humanitarian entrants, including evaluating how JSA providers are working with local employment initiatives targeting refugee entrants and how to better utilise the expertise of specialist JSA providers.
**Recommendation 3**
RCOA welcomes the re-introduction of the Innovation Fund as part of Job Services Australia model, and calls on the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to ensure that the Innovation Fund Panel includes sufficient representation of organisations with specialist expertise in assisting refugee and humanitarian entrants.

7.3 Investing in intermediate labour market programs targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants

“When you’ve got a program like Given the Chance that has been developed and is structured, you just have to pick it up and plug it in. You’re not starting from scratch. You just need to make sure there are more resources for community partners [like BSL] to be able to resource and support these programs.”

- Employer, Financial Services (VIC)

As outlined in Section 5.3.1, Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) programs targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants have the potential to provide those who are most removed from the labour market a bridge back to the world of work by lifting their employability. Their core feature is paid work on a temporary contract – up to 12 months if possible, combined with personal development, vocational training and job search. ILM programs targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants that have been trialled have used different models, with key defining features being that they are designed to benefit both the jobseeker (providing valuable Australian work experience facilitating longer-term employment outcomes) and also the employer (in terms of impacts on service delivery and quality), and that there are appropriate transitional supports in place. For example, models that offer potential for replication in different regions and across different industries include the highly successful BSL-EMC *Given the Chance* initiative and the AMES Community Guides and ILM Programs.

Ensuring there are transitional supports and pathways planning within ILM programs does, however, require an appropriate allocation of resources. However there are multiple avenues whereby ILM programs could be resourced, particularly if considered as part of a broader national refugee employment strategy. These include through:

- Larger employers allocating their own resources to ILM initiatives by viewing them as alternative recruitment strategies and a good way of recruiting and training up a skilled and diverse workforce (e.g. AMES’ Community Guides and ILM Programs);
- Government-funded traineeships and apprenticeships (e.g. channelling funds already allocated to traineeships and apprenticeships and ensuring these are accessible to refugee and humanitarian entrants and there are effective supports in place);
- Philanthropic (or government) funding of targeted employment services that use ILM approach and can develop relationships with a range of employers (e.g. Given the Chance); and
- Partially self-funding social enterprise (e.g. AMES Magic Green Clean Social Enterprise).

**Recommendation 4**
RCOA recommends a greater investment by both private and public funding sources of Intermediate Labour Market programs that provide a bridge for refugee and humanitarian entrants into longer term employment.

**Recommendation 5**
RCOA recommends greater investment in social enterprise initiatives that bring together services and refugee and humanitarian entrants and their communities and have a focus on employment outcomes.
Recommendation 6
RCOA recommends DEEWR establishing an incentive scheme to encourage and support employers to provide traineeships and apprenticeships for refugee and humanitarian entrants, including and particularly through the Federal and State public service.

7.4 Recognising employers who value and are committed to workforce diversity

It is no coincidence that the program identified through this research with some of the best outcomes for participants and for employers is aptly named *Given the Chance*. Employees from refugee backgrounds identified being given a chance by employers as critical to making the successful transition to employment in Australia. That is, while the onus is often placed on individuals to prepare for and find a job, employers must also take on responsibility to encourage workforce diversity. This includes utilising alternative recruitment strategies, providing comprehensive inductions to new employees, creating supportive team environments, operating flexibly and treating all workers equitably and fairly.

There are many cases of employers who have demonstrated that they value and are committed to workforce diversity and have benefited enormously as a result, both in terms of recruiting skilled and dedicated workers and in being able to provide better quality services to Australia’s culturally and linguistically diverse community. However, there is much that could still be done to promote the business benefits of cultural diversity to encourage more employers across all industries to see refugee and humanitarian entrants for the diverse wealth of skills and experience that they bring.

Recommendation 7
RCOA recommends a proactive communications campaign promoting the business benefits of cultural diversity.

Recommendation 8
RCOA recommends the further promotion of national Diversity Awards that help recognise employers who take initiative.
8. REFERENCES


## 9. APPENDICES

### 9.1 List of organisations and employers consulted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation or employer</th>
<th>Program name</th>
<th>State</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT Government</td>
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<td>AMEP Tasmania</td>
<td>Work it Out</td>
<td>Tas</td>
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<td>AMES</td>
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<td>Employment services</td>
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<td>Blades Australia</td>
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<td>Calvary Hospital</td>
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<td>Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health</td>
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<td>Coorparoo Secondary College</td>
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<td>Diversity@Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecumenical Migration Centre, Brotherhood of St Laurence</td>
<td>Given the Chance</td>
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<td>Lentil As Anything</td>
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<td>Liquor, Hospitality and Misc. Union (LHMU)</td>
<td>Service Stars</td>
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<td>Lutheran Community Care</td>
<td>Murray Bridge New Settler Services</td>
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<td>Employer Cultural Awareness Project</td>
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<td>Melbourne City Mission</td>
<td>Heathdale Neighbourhood Renewal</td>
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<td>Metro MRC (formerly Canterbury-Bankstown MRC)</td>
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<td>Multicultural Youth Services</td>
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<td>Enterprise Facilitation Project</td>
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<td>St Vincent Mater Health</td>
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<td>Umoja African Shop</td>
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<td>Victoria University</td>
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<td>Werribee Community Centre</td>
<td>Preparing for Employment</td>
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<td>Western Local Community Partnership</td>
<td>YTSI and LCP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyndham Humanitarian Network</td>
<td>Employment Working Group</td>
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</table>
9.2 Interview schedules

SUPPORTING REFUGEE COMMUNITIES: SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

QUESTIONNAIRE – EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

ABOUT YOUR SERVICE

1. What is the main focus of the organisation that you are part of? (tick all relevant)

- Employment service provider
- Settlement service provider (i.e. IHSS or SGP-funded service)
- Ethno-specific or multicultural service provider
- Education or training provider
- Generalist welfare/community organisation (i.e. works with all members of local community)
- Ethnic community organisation
- Other…. (please describe)

2. What type of employment support service do you provide? What does it involve? What are its aims? (please provide any project/service outline information)

3. What geographical area does the program or service cover (e.g. metro, regional, state-wide)?

4. How long has the employment program/service been in operation?

5. Is this program/service likely to be ongoing?

FUNDING

6. How is the program/service funded? (e.g. state government, federal government, philanthropic, other)

7. RCOA is hoping to undertake a cost/benefit analysis of providing specialist or targeted employment services to refugees vis-à-vis generalist employment services. Would your program/service be willing to provide details regarding its operating budget? This information will be kept confidential and services de-identified in the presentation of findings. If you are happy to provide more information, what is the annual operating budget for this program/service?

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHIC

8. How many participants are involved in the program/service?
9. From which cultural/linguistic communities are participants primarily from?

10. How would you describe the main characteristics of the client group using your program/service?

Approximately _____ % of our clients are male
Approximately _____ % of our clients are female

Approximately _____ % of our clients are aged 16-25
Approximately _____ % of our clients are aged 26-40
Approximately _____ % of our clients are aged 40+

Approximately _____ % of our clients came to Australia under the humanitarian program
Approximately _____ % of our clients came to Australia as skilled or family stream migrants

Approximately _____ % of our clients arrived in Australia within the last 6 months
Approximately _____ % of our clients have been in Australia between 6 months and 2 years
Approximately _____ % of our clients have been in Australia between 2 and 5 years
Approximately _____ % of our clients have been in Australia over 5 years
Approximately _____ % of our clients were born in Australia

Approximately _____ % of our clients have had Australian work experience
Approximately _____ % of our clients have had overseas work experience
Approximately _____ % of our clients have had no work experience either in Australia or overseas

Approximately _____ % of our clients have an overseas post-secondary school qualification
Approximately _____ % of our clients have an Australian post-secondary school qualification (TAFE Certificate III or above, University)

Approximately _____ % of our clients I would describe as professionals or skilled workers
Approximately _____ % of our clients I would describe as unskilled workers

Approximately _____ % of our clients speak English poorly or not at all
Approximately _____ % of our clients speak English well but have low literacy
ELEMENTS OF GOOD PRACTICE

11. RCOA is exploring which elements of employment services are the most effective in supporting refugees to find work. Which of the following elements does your program/service provide, and provide details where applicable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Type of support</th>
<th>If yes...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual casework</td>
<td>What is the average caseload per full-time worker?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Referral to other services</td>
<td>What are the main types of services that you refer clients to? (e.g. housing, health, youth support)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career advice, guidance and planning</td>
<td>Do you provide this on a one-to-one or group basis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brokerage $ to support employment transitions</td>
<td>How much brokerage $ do you have available per client? What sort of goods and services do you use this brokerage $ for?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support with job search</td>
<td>How do you help clients look for jobs? (e.g. internet search, other)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resume writing</td>
<td>Do you provide this on an individual or group basis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>What is your mentoring model – group or individual? How often do participants meet their mentors? How are participants matched with mentors (by profession, gender, age)?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organising work experience placements</td>
<td>Is this paid work experience? In what jobs/industries do you place people? How long are work experience placements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liaising with employers and advocating for clients</td>
<td>Do you work with employers or employer groups? What role do you play in advocating for clients?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supporting clients to have qualifications/skills recognised</td>
<td>How do you support clients to get their qualifications/skills recognised?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support with interview skills</td>
<td>Do you provide this on an individual or group basis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training on work culture and systems in Australia</td>
<td>What topics do you cover? Have you developed your own curriculum for this, or do you use an existing model? How do you deliver this training?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industry-related training</td>
<td>Specify which courses/trades? What level (e.g. Certificate III)?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other training</td>
<td>What other kind of training do you provide?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Post-employment support</td>
<td>For how long after a client finds work do you provide support? How often do you contact the client? Do you visit them at their place of employment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bi-lingual or bi-cultural workers</td>
<td>Do you recruit bi-cultural or bi-lingual workers from refugee communities to deliver aspects of this program/service? What role(s) do they play?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistance with transport and childcare</td>
<td>How did your project/service take into consideration transport barriers and childcare needs? (e.g. providing childcare, organising buses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>What other types of support or components does your program/service provide?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 12. How would you rate the following service components in terms of their impact on successful employment outcomes for refugees? *(circle importance)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Component</th>
<th>Is not important</th>
<th>Has some impact</th>
<th>Is important</th>
<th>Is essential</th>
<th>Is not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual casework</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Referral to other services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career advice, guidance and planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brokerage $ to support employment transitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support with job search</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resume writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work experience placements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaising with employers and advocating for clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting clients to have overseas qualifications/skills recognised</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support with interview skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training on work culture and systems in Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry-related training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other training (detailed in Q.11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-employment support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bi-lingual or bi-cultural workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport and/or childcare assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (detailed in Q.11)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RCOA (2010) *What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants* - 82 -
**CHALLENGES**

13. What do you think are the main barriers or challenges refugees face in making the transition into sustainable employment? (circle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Is not important</th>
<th>Has some impact</th>
<th>Is a significant barrier</th>
<th>Is not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of English</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunities to learn English while working</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Australian work experience</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of qualifications</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties having overseas qualifications/skills recognised</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of jobs in local area matching skills</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism or discrimination by employers</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor understanding of Australian work culture and systems</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health problems</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family obligations limiting work opportunities</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of networks to help in finding work</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Australian referees</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of drivers licence or access to car</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor access to public transport</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrelink/Job Network requirements</td>
<td>Is not important</td>
<td>Has some impact</td>
<td>Is a significant barrier</td>
<td>Is not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify): _____________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

RCOA (2010) What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants - 83 -
SUCCESSES

14. How do you measure/evaluate success? Do you have a copy of any evaluations undertaken on your program/service that you could provide to RCOA?

15. What are some of the outcomes of your program? (e.g., proportion of clients who find sustainable work or are undertaking further training, number of clients attaining Australian trade qualification, etc)

RECOMMENDATIONS

16. What do you recommend needs to happen for services to be more effective in meeting needs of refugee jobseekers? (e.g., what do we need more of? What sort of programs/funding?)

17. Are you aware of any other good programs or services targeting employment needs of refugees that RCOA should contact?

18. Can you recommend anyone (humanitarian entrant) who has been through your program who we could speak to about their experiences of finding work?

19. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?
SUPPORTING REFUGEE COMMUNITIES: SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - EMPLOYERS

Please note, in order that confidentiality is not breached, I just wanted to remind you to avoid using full names when talking about individuals within your workplace or about how an individual is performing. We will try to focus on general strategies, benefits and challenges of having a diverse workforce. If you do want to use an example to illustrate a point, you may want to refer to a worker.

1. What does your business do?

2. How many employees do you have?

3. What is your experience of employing workers from refugee backgrounds? (i.e. Where are your workers from? What percentage of your workforce is from non-English speaking backgrounds? What types of jobs are they doing?)

4. Were any other services involved in recommending these workers to you (e.g. recruitment agencies, community organisations, Job Network providers)? If so, which service(s) and what did they do?

5. What do you think are the benefits of employing workers from refugee backgrounds in your business?

6. What have been some of the challenges (e.g. language barriers, integration into the workplace, understanding of work systems and expectations)?

7. What strategies have you used to try to overcome these challenges?

8. Why do you think your business has been so successful in recruiting and retaining staff from refugee backgrounds? What are you doing well?

9. What do you recommend needs to happen for other businesses to be able to take advantage of the skills of refugees? (e.g. what sort of support or incentives do you think employers want?)

10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?
SUPPORTING REFUGEE COMMUNITIES:
SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - EMPLOYEES

Start by talking about confidentiality and that RCOA will not identify individuals, employment services and employers unless you would like us to.

1. Who is your current employer? What do they do?

2. How long have you been working there?

3. What is your current position? What does it involve?

4. Before coming to Australia, did you have any work experience? What sort of work or training did you do?

5. Since coming to Australia, what sort of work and training have you done? (work history)

6. What was the hardest thing about finding a job in Australia? What made getting a job difficult?

7. What or who helped you to find your first job in Australia? Were any employment/community services involved in linking you into employment? What did they do?

8. What do you recommend needs to happen for refugees coming to Australia to be able to find sustainable work? What would have helped you?

9. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

RCOA (2010) What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants - 86 -
9.3 Mapping of employment services and programs targeting refugee and humanitarian entrants

This mapping exercise was undertaken in 2008 and is unlikely to be a comprehensive current listing of all employment services and programs targeting refugees due to the short-term nature of many initiatives. The aim of this mapping exercise is, however, to highlight the scope and diversity of service providers, funding sources and approaches that sit outside of the Job Services Australia (formerly Job Network) model\(^{41}\). It should be noted that some of these are not refugee-specific, but are more broadly targeting migrants. Many have other specific eligibility criteria, such as: age, gender, English proficiency, long-term unemployment status, local government area of residence, and cultural background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider – Project/s</th>
<th>Funding source(^{42})</th>
<th>Main program / service focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory (ACT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary Health Care ACT &amp; Canberra Refugee Support – Refugee Mentoring Program</td>
<td>Corporate / Community</td>
<td>Individual case management / referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRC of Canberra and Queanbeyan – Community Development Program</td>
<td>Federal / State</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Youth Service – CareerStart (no longer funded)</td>
<td>Federal / State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Multicultural Affairs – Work Experience and Support Program (WESP)</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New South Wales (NSW)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult and Community Education (ACE) - EmployME! Skilled Migrant Mentoring Program</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) – Skillmax</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) – Linked Skills Courses</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{41}\) Services that are funded through DEEWR’s Job Services Australia (previously Job Network) have been excluded from this list, even where these may be provided by a multicultural service provider (e.g. MRCs). Refer to Section 4.2.7 for a discussion of the limitations of the Job Network model.

\(^{42}\) Funding sources are broad categories for how initiatives are funded. These include: Community (Community organisations funding projects through donations/fundraising or by using global budgets); Corporate (Direct business contributions in-kind or to program costs); Philanthropic (Funds distributed by trusts); Local, State or Federal (Government funding streams from different departments and levels of government); Unfunded (Reliant on in-kind and volunteer support, with no budget for project); Self-funded (Social enterprise with profits going back into sustaining ongoing activities)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Funding source</th>
<th>Main program / service focus</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) – Saha Catering</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Individual case management, referral, Mentoring, Info/training on Aus. work culture &amp; systems</td>
<td>Developing capacity of community leaders and providing role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn Migrant Resource Centre – Refugee Employment Mentoring Program</td>
<td>Federal/Local/Community/Philanthropic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Auburn Youth Centre – Newly Arrived Pathways (NAP)</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CatholicCare - Refugee Employment Program</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Illawarra Multicultural Services – Community Capacity Building Project</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 day industrial workplace visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JobQuest – Community Connections</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local businesses mentoring students for work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May Murray Neighbourhood Centre – Professional Links (no longer funded)</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metro MRC – Generalist Settlement Grants Program</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Community Assistance to Refugee Families (SCARF) - CONNECT</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCARF &amp; Illawarra ECC – CONNECT Community Enterprise</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
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<tr>
<td>STARTTS – Enterprise facilitator</td>
<td>State / Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>St George Migrant Resource Centre - Caseworker - Employment</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>SydWest Multicultural Services – Women’s Project &amp; Sudanese Men &amp; Families Project</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SydWest Multicultural Services – Women’s Project, Sudanese Men and Families Project</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Hills Holroyd Parramatta MRC – Job Club / Open Access Program</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>Computer access, photocopying/printing facilities, phone/fax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglicare Top End – Refugee and Migrant Settlement Service</td>
<td>Federal / State</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Provider - Project/s</td>
<td>Funding source</td>
<td>Main program / service focus</td>
<td>Othersupport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anglicare Top End &amp; Myriad Group Training – Workbridge Program</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Individual case management/referral, Mentoring, Info/training on Aus.work culture &amp; systems, Work experience placement, Industry-related training, Career advice, planning, job search</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International College of Advanced Education &amp; Myriad Group Training – Steps to Work</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Melaleuca Refugee – Employer Cultural Awareness Project</td>
<td>Philanthropic</td>
<td>Cultural awareness with businesses through Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory - Multicultural Solutions Project</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Queensland (QLD)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCES Services - Together Atutu Project (TAP) Woodridge</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Community development project – employment not main focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCES Services - South West Corridor Project</td>
<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCES Services – Logan Central Project</td>
<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCES Services – Griffith University Community Garden Project</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anglicare Refugee &amp; Migrant Services - Skilling Migrants and Indigenous Participants in Lifeskills and Employment</td>
<td>State / Corporate / Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annerley Community Centre - Migrant Employment Access Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Red Cross - Refugee Employment Services (Bowen Hills) (no longer operating)</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Baptist Union of Queensland - Helping Out-of-Work Parents into Employment (HOPE)</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridgeworks Personnel – HEAT South West (Ipswich)</td>
<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brisbane City Council – Refugee Employment Assistance Program</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Post placement support if unsuccessful in securing ongoing employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brisbane City Council – Diversity at Work; Admin Community Jobs; Concreters Project</td>
<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Employment Australia - Africans Job Preparation</td>
<td>State</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider – Project/s</th>
<th>Funding source</th>
<th>Main program / service focus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Employment Australia – Job Pledge Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centacare Cairns – Migrant Settlement Services and Centacare Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction Training Centre - Refugees Ready for Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coorparoo Secondary College - African Refugee Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporation of the Synod of The Diocese of Brisbane (Jobcare) - LLNP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Education, Training and the Arts – Migrant Work Experience Program</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Day Care Association of Qld</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ipswich City Council – Migrant Employment Program (no longer funded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life and Career Centre (Leading Australia Foundation) – Jobs Ramp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maroochydore Neighbourhood Centre – EMERGE, JPP, WPP</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Migrant Centre Organisation – Migrant Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre – Townsville Thuringowa - Job Track Program (Townsville)</td>
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<td>Drivers licence support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant Workers Resource Centre – MVRC Enterprises</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multicultural Community Centre (Fortitude Valley) - One Stop Shop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multicultural Community Centre (Fortitude Valley) – Pathways to Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multicultural Development Association - Job Preparation Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>Visits to workplaces; Computer Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Development Association – Work Placement Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Department of Health – Workforce Partnerships Initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Advocacy to mainstream employment agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redcliffe Community Association - Redcliffe Community Literacy Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>Resource mapping pathways for health qual/skills recognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Funding source</th>
<th>Main program / service focus</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugee Claimants Support Centre (Windsor)</td>
<td>Community / Local / State</td>
<td>Internet and computer training; interest free loans for employment purposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma Regional Council - Hospitality Plus Program</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Qld Institute of TAFE – Employment Pathways Program</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiral Community Hub Cooperative - Mu’ooz Eritrean Women’s Cooperative / Restaurant</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville Multicultural Support Group - Securing a Place for Migrants and Refugees</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE SA – English Language Services – Job and Settlement Help Unit</td>
<td>Federal / State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglicare SA - Employment Assistance Program</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Refugee Association - New Arrivals Employment Assistance Program</td>
<td>State / Philanthropic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Refugee Association – Job-Ready Set Go</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Refugee Association – African Women’s Federation Workers</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Driver safety classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Refugee Association – Sudanese Community Association Workers</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Driver safety classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist Community Services - Fuse Mentoring Program</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Office supplies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Community Care - Murray Bridge Refugee Support Program</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Volunteer support program; Capacity building of local services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia - Employment, Advocacy and Training Service</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRCSA – Supporting Refugee Families to Independence Project</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Recruit and train volunteers from refugee backgrounds to support families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multicultural Youth South Australia – Multicultural Youth Volunteer Project</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Info expo; Leadership training for young people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murray Mallee Community Education Network</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Computer training; Purchase of office equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Provider – Project/s</td>
<td>Funding source</td>
<td>Main program / service focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youthjet – New Arrivals Early Settlement Program</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Individual case management/ referral</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Premier and Cabinet – Tas. Government Work Placement Program</td>
<td>Unfunded</td>
<td>Cross-cultural awareness training with placement supervisors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre Southern Tasmania - Families in Cultural Transition</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Bicultural workers mentor participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEPS Employment and Training Solutions - Employing Refugees Video</td>
<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE Tasmania – Adult Migrant English Service – Work It Out</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE Tasmania – Adult Migrant English Service – Workplace Mentor Scheme</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMES &amp; SCAAB – Magic Green Clean Enterprise</td>
<td>State / Self-funded</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMES – Smart Cuisine @ Westall – Working Mothers and Healthier Kids</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Casual employment provided after training completed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMES – Community Guides</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMES – Werribee Market Garden Project</td>
<td>Community / Self-funded</td>
<td>Labour hire, transport; bilingual-bicultural employer liaison</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) – Employment Assistance Program</td>
<td>Federal / Community / Philanthropic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia Post – Building Independence Refugee Employment Support Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brotherhood of St.Laurence – Given the Chance</td>
<td>State / Community / Philanthropic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centacare Melbourne – Building Independence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversitat – Migrant Employment Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Provider – Project/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity@Work</td>
<td>Corporate / Self-funded</td>
<td>Community-driven employment initiatives involving coordination of services and employers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goulburn Valley Integrated Settlement Planning Committee / Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District – Congolese Pilot Project</td>
<td>Local / Community</td>
<td>Crisis accommodation, English tutoring, homework assistance, driving lessons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lentil as Anything – Food Culture Community</td>
<td>Self-Funded</td>
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<td>LHMU – Service Stars: Community Jobs Alliance</td>
<td>Community / State</td>
<td>Pre-Certificate level training in hospitality</td>
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<td>Melbourne City Mission – Heathdale Neighbourhood Renewal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) - Workforce Participation Program (no longer funded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) – Refugee Youth Pathways Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRC North West – Want to know... about employment</td>
<td>State / Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRC North West – African Women Employment Forum</td>
<td>Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murray Mallee Training Company - Swan Hill and Warrnambool Relocation Projects</td>
<td>State / Local / Philanthropic</td>
<td>Relocation packages planned in collaboration with services, employers, council to address local skills shortages</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Hope Foundation - Western African Communities Employment Assistance Program</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Bilingual support with induction and training</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Melbourne Institute of TAFE – Employment Pathways Program</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Melbourne Institute of TAFE – Young Adult Migrant Education Course (YAMEC)</td>
<td>State</td>
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<td>South East Region MRC – Dandenong Communities for Children</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>South East Region MRC – Employment Program (no longer funded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>South East Region MRC – South East Skills Development and Employment Project (no longer funded)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>South East Region MRC – Sudanese Skills Development and Employment Project (no longer funded)</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Individual case management/referral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre – Spectrum Employment Services (Skillfill)</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spectrum MRC/Women’s Health in the North – Enterprise Women (no longer funded)</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Info/training on Aus. work culture &amp; systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Springvale Community Aid &amp; Advice Bureau - Volunteering Gateways to Inclusion…</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Industry-related training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victorian Co-Operative for Children’s Services for Ethnic Groups – New Futures Training</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Career advice, planning, job search</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wembie Community Centre – ACE/LLNP</td>
<td>State/Federal</td>
<td>Social enterprise/support for small business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyndham Humanitarian Network – Employment Working Group</td>
<td>Unfunded</td>
<td>Employer advocacy/liaison</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Western Australia (WA)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Sky Community Group - Women’s Information Group for Families of Migrants</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>English for employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centrecare – Employment Directions Network</td>
<td>Federal/State/Philanthropic</td>
<td>Computer skills training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centrecare – Catholic Migrant Training Centre (CMTC)</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>No-interest small loans for business start-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centrecare – Refugee and New Migrant Youth Program</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Parenting workshops and education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicare – Registered Training Organisation (RTO)</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Volunteer reference group; bilingual worker policy development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edmund Rice Centre, Mirrabooka – First Click &amp; Second Click Programs</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Computer classes; Personal development (job-oriented); Employment support groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fremantle Multicultural Centre - Employment Directions Network</td>
<td>Federal/State</td>
<td>Access to computers, internet, phone, newspapers, fax; Computer training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multicultural Services Centre of WA – Employment Directions Network</td>
<td>Federal/State</td>
<td>Computer training; Volunteering opportunities</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>