

## Employment White Paper: 2022

Response to the Employment Taskforce in Treasury | November 2022

### Introduction

AMES Australia's (AMES) response to the Employment White Paper is focussed on the economic participation and capacity to contribute to labour productivity and growth of the more vulnerable members of our community, in particular migrants and refugees who have settled in Australia. It proposes that the Australian Government's employment programs, while focused on economic participation and development, need to be seen as part of a broader suite of human services. AMES extensive experience with recently arrived migrants, refugees and people and communities of culturally and linguistically diverse background (CALD) informs our response to the Paper. AMES believes employment services, in line with other portfolios in the social/human services category, need to focus on growing people's capacity to participate rather than sanctioning them for 'non-compliance', and:

- assume job seekers want to work
- apply a strength-based approach, not a deficit model
- acknowledge the impact of non-vocational issues and ensure job seekers are comprehensively assessed through appropriate tools and by skilled assessors to determine capacity for work and provide an appropriate level of job seeker assistance
- acknowledge that most people new to Australia will need time to acquire new skills and knowledge which may include any or all of the following: language; career, health, financial and cultural literacy; skills/qualifications recognition; local work experience; training/education pathways; networks; and an understanding of the Australian labour market
- recognise the diversity of job seekers, and assume work is a very distant concept for some with significant disadvantages, while also incorporating an expectation these individuals can develop and participate in programs to move them closer to work, or other forms of community participation, over time
- establish different outcomes expectations for job seekers with non-vocational and vocational needs, recognising that different job seekers will progress towards participation at different speeds
- work from the understanding that employment/unemployment affects whole families (and even communities) – not only the individual job seeker

In line with this more humanistic approach, performance and incentive systems should recognise broader social and economic participation progress, in addition to direct placement in employment. This is particularly relevant when working with vulnerable job seekers, for example refugees, who may have a longer and more complex pathway into the Australian workforce. Other elements of an ideal employment service could include:

- participation in community activities as an outcome (volunteering, contributing to 'working bees', etc.)
- service providers able to deliver a more flexible, tailored service and respond according to individual need
- Pathway Plans affording dignity and respect and including agreed milestones developed with job seekers and focused on building capacity to join the workforce
- Engaging employers as 'partners' in the service

In considering the role of employment services providers contracted by Government, AMES notes that:

- there is a potential contradiction within employment service delivery when the service provider is required to support job seekers with complex issues to secure work, while policing the requirements of their mutual obligations
- providers selected through the tender process should be trusted as sufficiently skilled and experienced to design and deliver specific in-house programs to achieve employment outcomes - with flexibility to adapt to a changing labour market

## Topic responses

### 1. Full employment and increasing labour productivity growth and incomes, including the approach to achieving these objectives.

Response	Rationale
<p>What is 'full employment'? We need a nuanced and transparent definition of what constitutes 'full employment' in today's economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Currently anyone working at least one hour a week is classified as 'employed'.</li> <li>▪ This masks the level of (i) under-employment and (ii) the number of people employed on an irregular and casual basis who want/need more hours of work.</li> <li>▪ On the other hand it is also important to acknowledge that 'full employment' should reflect different cohorts' capacity to work (eg: people living with disability; those with caring responsibilities who may have reduced capacity)</li> <li>▪ Taking a social services lens on 'full employment' - policy needs to recognise the reality that there are those who will <i>never</i> be employed and focus on different participation outcomes and a different approach to how these individuals could be supported make their contribution to society.</li> <li>▪ 'Full employment' also needs to consider participation rates: a reasonably high percentage of those in the labour force, ie are classified as job seekers, are not available for, or required to look for work for a variety of reasons (for example: exemptions/suspension due to health issues, absent overseas, in full time SEE/AMES or other short course training, child caring responsibilities)</li> </ul>
<p>Achieving 'full employment' in an open labour market is highly unlikely.</p> <p>If 'full employment' is the objective, government policy needs to create closed markets targeting disadvantaged cohorts who would not secure employment on merit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employers recruit for specific jobs, assess candidates on merit and employ 'the best' candidate/s. This excludes job seekers who are not fully 'job ready' - because of low levels of language/literacy and/or education, lack of local experience, lack of a work history, and unrecognised qualifications, for example.</li> <li>▪ Only government policy can create 'closed markets' that require business/industry to include a 'quota' of people identified as disadvantaged in the labour market in their workforce – similar to Indigenous Participation targets, for example.</li> <li>▪ Screen-in vs screen-out recruitment processes: job seekers from disadvantaged/marginalised cohorts (e.g. refugee, migrant, Indigenous, long-term unemployed job seekers) are often screened out before the interview/selection stage due to, for example, their names, work history or other cohort identifiers.</li> </ul>
<p>Increasing labour productivity growth: There is a need to reconsider what an 'incentive to work' looks like.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People need to be fairly rewarded for their work; rates of remuneration and conditions of work in some industries/sectors do not adequately reward employees either financially or in terms of job status.</li> <li>▪ 'Mutual obligation' (the 'stick') is not always the best incentive to work. Good conditions – including job security; fair pay; recognition of skills; equal opportunities and inclusion at work; training and visible pathways to better jobs can provide greater incentives to work than punitive measures.</li> </ul>

Response	Rationale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Benefits of working other than ‘the dollar value’ need to be promoted – for example: improved mental health, stronger connections to the community, benefit to families.</li> </ul>
<p>Increasing labour productivity growth: Government policies and programs need to recognise the importance of different ‘literacies’, their interconnectedness and inter-relationship with employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Additional essential skills identified as having the potential to facilitate social and economic participation for refugee, migrant and other disadvantaged job seeker cohorts include career literacy, health literacy, financial literacy and cultural literacy. People caught in, for example, a health or financial downward spiral, or people unable to understand/adapt to the ‘cultural norms’ of a workplace in Australia, are unlikely to secure and maintain work.</li> <li>▪ These additional literacies are critical for job seekers to achieve sustainable and long-term outcomes by equipping them with skills and knowledge beyond being merely ‘job ready’.</li> </ul>
<p>Build on current or previous programs and pilots that have proven successful at supporting migrants and refugees into full, productive and sustainable employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Programs like the Career Pathways Pilot (CPP) for Humanitarian Entrants, a federally funded initiative that focused on supporting skilled refugees gain formal recognition of their overseas skills or qualifications, successfully supported refugees to follow a career pathway that recognised the value of the skills and experience they bring to Australia.</li> <li>▪ AMES Skilled Professional Migrants Program is a further example of a program that has significant impact in supporting migrants and refugees into employment that uses their skills.</li> </ul>

## Approaches to achieving the objectives

**Approach/model for migrants and refugees** (especially those with overseas skills and qualifications)

### Careers Pathways Pilot (CPP)

Programs such as the previously (federally) funded CPP are an effective approach to supporting this cohort into productive work that uses their skills. Critical elements of this model include:

- Individualised support and mentoring
- Career pathway guidance
- Assistance (financial) with formal qualifications recognition
- Placement in local work experience

AMES delivered the CPP in Victoria between July 2017 – June 2019, supporting 361 refugee professionals on their pathway to gain formal recognition of their skills. At the end of the program, 102 participants had secured employment, with the majority securing work in their previous profession or a related role. A further 170 were engaged in further study. In total, 75% of CPP clients were progressing in their career pathway.

Since the pilot ended there has been no announcement from the Australian Government if funding will be reinstated for a CPP-type program, despite skilled refugees being a proportion of recent arrivals in Australia. Data from the Centre for Policy Development demonstrates the underutilisation of refugee skills in Australia – identifying that before arrival 60% of *previously employed refugees* held highly skilled jobs. Of refugees employed in Australia, only 26% are in highly skilled positions.

### Skilled Professional Migrants Program (SPMP)

Another effective model developed by AMES is the SPMP. This 3-week intensive program helps professionally qualified migrants with job search skills, resumé preparation, job applications, interview skills and networking. The program also develops participants' understanding of the Australian job market and workplace culture. Participants receive feedback from corporate volunteers, are offered mentoring by industry professionals after completing the course and join an SPMP alumni group that facilitates networking and information exchange.

Results of the latest SPMP survey (January – June 2021) indicated that 100% of participants were employed after completion of the course with 75% working in professional roles.

Making programs such as the SPMP more widely available through government funding would facilitate pathways to skilled professional employment for migrants and refugees, ensuring the Australian economy benefits from their skills.

### Case study: Refugee physician supported to re-qualify through the CPP and SPMP

Asseel worked as a surgeon during the conflict in Iraq saving hundreds of lives. On arrival in Australia in 2017, he initially struggled to find his way into practising medicine again due to the cost and the complex and arduous process of requalification. Determined to re-establish his medical career in Australia, he achieved the English test score required by APHRA to requalify at the first attempt. Rather than pursue requalification under the Australian Medical Council standard pathway for overseas medical practitioners, he chose to requalify under the specialist pathway. In October 2018, he successfully interviewed with the Australian Royal College of Physicians, which assessed his skills and suitability to work as a medical practitioner under supervision within the Australian hospital system. The CPP invested \$14,000 to assist him on his pathway including the provision of the Skilled Professional Migrant Program (SPMP) to prepare him for interviews, understand the cultural differences in work environments and to provide him with a mentor. It is through the mentor program at AMES that he was able to apply successfully for the position as Senior Health Registrar at a Victorian Hospital. He commenced work in January 2019 while he continues to train in his field under the guidelines of the Royal College of Physicians.

## 2. The future of work and labour market implications of structural change, with a focus on: 2.1 Building a sustainable care economy in the context of an ageing population and other drivers of demand for care services.

Response	Rationale
There is a widely recognised need to look at conditions (including levels of casualisation) and rates of pay across the care economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>My Aged Care offers a rewarding job for many and can provide flexibility for work life balance. However, it is seen as a low level job because of the rates of pay and therefore it can be difficult to attract suitable people to work in this sector of the care economy.</li></ul>
Support the supply of <b>skilled migrants and refugees</b> into the care sector through skills recognition when visas and labour agreements have a strong, legislated minimum wage and tough penalties for employer non-compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Within the next three decades the number of older CALD people in aged care is predicted to grow by 200% (from 40,000 now to 160,000). With this increase is the prevalence of dementia within this cohort. This has specific implications for the care of CALD in Residential Aged Care (RAC) with the common symptom of dementia being aphasia, or loss of language. So if English is a person's second (or third or fourth) language, English will be lost before the language learned as a child. <i>(Aged Care's Culture Gap – How to respond to the needs of a diverse and ageing population; February 2022; Scanlon Foundation Research Institute)</i></li></ul>
Support the supply of <b>low/un-skilled migrants and refugees into entry-level</b> positions in the care sector and provide pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Many migrants and refugees have entry-level skills to undertake the work. However, workplaces (and employment services providers) do not provide wrap around services, for example language support, to support</li></ul>

<p>to up-skilling and promotion to higher level positions or work in other health industries through flexible <b>workplace-based training</b> and mentoring, including language support.</p>	<p>these potential workers. Registered Training Organisations are generally not flexible enough to provide online training that allows people to learn on the job.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is ample evidence of the effectiveness of practical placement as part of a training program in increasing participants' chances of securing employment. This is especially true for migrants and refugees who do not have a history of work in Australia.</li> <li>▪ The practical placement component of vocational courses provides (i) a practical environment for language and skills learning on the job, (ii) opportunities for people to demonstrate competence, and (iii) opportunities for employers to meet and observe potential employees from refugee and migrant communities.</li> </ul>
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**Approaches to achieving the objective**

**Approach/model for migrants and refugees:** a model that delivers concurrent and complementary vocational training and LLND skills development combined with practical work experience in aged and other care contexts – contributes to building a sustainable care economy and to increasing labour productivity for migrants and refugees.

**CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support (Aging, Home and Community)**  
 The Certificate in Individual Support qualifies participants to work in aged care facilities, the community and supported residential services.  
 AMES delivers the Certificate III for migrants and refugees to prepare them for a job in the care industry. Dual qualified industry trainers with Teaching English as a Second Language qualifications deliver vocational units from the Certificate III with specialist English language support.

Delivery is through classroom-based learning, and/or online learning.  
 Courses run over 6 months and **include 150 hours of practical placement in an Aged Care Facility**. The course prepares participants to apply for jobs as:

- Community house worker
- Home care assistant
- Assistant in nursing
- Personal care assistant
- Residential care worker
- Community Access Coordinator
- Accommodation Support Worker
- Care Service Employee
- Family Support Worker
- School Support Officer (Disability)

**2.2 The energy transition and tackling climate change to achieve net zero.**

Response	Rationale
<p>Invest in the skills/experience of migrants and refugees who may have worked in similar industries prior to settling in Australia – and provide training specific to the energy transition industry so that they can safely enter the workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers may have the skills and experience required to support 'energy transition' projects.</li> <li>▪ The Victorian State Government 'Big Build', Engineering Pathways Industry Cadetship (EPIC) provides a tested model: the transport infrastructure industry recognising that recruiting people with the skills needed to build these projects is challenging has reached out to untapped pools of talent such as refugees and asylum</li> </ul>



	<p>seekers and offering paid cadetships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immersion in the workplace can be a highly effective way to learn occupation-specific English.</li> </ul>
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### Approaches to achieving the objective

#### Approach/model for migrants and refugees: Big Build: Engineering Pathways Industry Cadetship (EPIC)

The Victorian State Government is investing \$60 billion over the next decade in a program to recruit refugee and asylum seeker professionals to work on Victoria's major infrastructure projects, help industry recruit appropriately skilled labour and provide employment and career opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers.

The EPIC pilot program will see engineering cadets undertake paid employment and training over 18 months to receive a Graduate Certificate in infrastructure engineering, an accredited qualification customised to the requirements of transport infrastructure.

Recognising that recruiting people with the skills needed to build these projects will be a challenge, the transport infrastructure industry is reaching out to the untapped pools of talent to be found in refugee and asylum seeker communities. The program is supported by several government departments, engineering firms and migrant and refugee support agencies such as AMES Australia. To date 30 cadets have been accepted into the program.

#### Case Study

Two female engineers from Syria are among those who gained cadetships with the Engineering Pathways Industry Cadetship (EPIC) scheme through their association with AMES Career Pathway Pilot program which supports refugee professionals resume their careers in Australia.

Both were pleased and grateful to be part of the EPIC program. "This is giving us a chance to show that we can contribute and to show what we can do. And it is a great opportunity for all of us because if you have no local experience it is very hard to break into the job market in Australia," they said.

AMES Manager Client Experience and Innovation noted that the accredited qualification is customised to the requirements of transport infrastructure which will see \$60 billion spent on it over the next decade providing employment and career opportunities. And the industry recognises that recruiting people with the skills needed to build these projects will be a challenge so it is reaching out to untapped pools of talent such as refugees and asylum seekers.

AMES CEO said it was fantastic to see that industry was recognising talent, resilience and diligence that refugees and asylum seekers possess.

### 2.3 The transformation associated with digitalisation and emerging technologies.

Response	Rationale
<p>Digitalisation: Invest in digital skills development for sections of the community with low digital literacy; facilitate access to devices and data to support access to services and information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital literacy and access to the technology is essential not just for the work environment but for people to be able to function in society. Many government services and much critical information have been digitalised.</li> <li>Many refugees and migrants arrive in Australia with limited digital literacy and no or limited access to a device to facilitate access. And other less privileged cohorts in our communities are also less likely to be digitally literate and/or have access to quality devices. While increasingly recognised as a critical literacy, digital skills development is not yet fully embedded as a core component of initial settlement and other community support services.</li> </ul>

<p>Emerging technologies: As noted above (2.2) invest in the skills/experience of migrants and refugees who may have worked in ‘emerging technologies’ industries prior to settling in Australia – and provide training specific to the ‘emerging technologies’ industry so that they can safely enter the workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Australia needs skilled workers for new industries associated with building/using new technologies – solar; storage batteries; electric vehicles; other.</li> <li>▪ Internships – where participants are paid a proper wage appropriate to the work, are an effective approach to tapping in to the skills and experiences of migrants and refugees. See (2.2 above provides an example of this, as does the case study below).</li> </ul>
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### Approaches to achieving the objective

#### Traineeship approach/model for refugees and people seeking asylum: The Bread & Butter Project

Australia’s first social enterprise bakery invests 100% of profits into providing training and employment pathways for people seeking refuge and asylum, who aspire to become bakers. The program draws on people’s existing skills and aspirations to help increase trainees’ prospects of successful resettlement and employment while building a strong sense of belonging in the Australian community. There is also strong evidence that it has lasting intergenerational impact. Trainees undertake a 4-week pre-employment project and a 6 to 8 month paid traineeship, which includes:

- on-the-job-bakery training
- TAFE accreditation
- English language tutoring
- Job-readiness support.

After trainees graduate, the Bread & Butter Project supports them to secure employment with like-minded organisations who value a diverse workplace. Today, the majority of baker graduates are **sustainably employed** and have been **able to discontinue welfare support**.

Independent research in 2018 identified that **100% of children of graduates are in school, university or employed**, demonstrating positive intergenerational impact.

Bread & Butter is supported by corporate, philanthropic and employer partners and sponsors who provide financial support and pro-bono assistance across all areas of operations.

### 3. Job security, fair pay and conditions, including the role of workplace relations.

Response	Rationale
<p>Review the conditions of employment in industries and workplaces that provide ‘essential services’ – for example: child care, aged care, disability support services - but offer low rates of pay and often highly casualised work conditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The care economy is where many refugees and migrants find work when they first arrive in Australia, along with seasonal work and hard manual work in industries such as the meat industry.</li> <li>▪ Caring occupations, while essential to lives of some of the most vulnerable in our society, are not ‘valued’ in either levels of remuneration, security of tenure, or ‘prestige’ in the community. These are essential services and job security, pay and conditions should be reviewed to reflect this.</li> <li>▪ Similarly, as has become apparent over the past two years of COVID-19 lockdowns and a block on immigration, seasonal workers and people to keep food production meeting demand, are critical to the economy and should be rewarded and valued for their contributions.</li> </ul>

**4. Pay equity, including the gender pay gap, equal opportunities for women and the benefits of a more inclusive workforce.**

Response	Rationale
<p>Equal opportunity for women to work:            Programs that develop confidence, provide supported work placements, introduce women to actual employers combined with vocational and LLND skills development and access to free or affordable childcare have been proven effective in supporting women from migrant and refugee backgrounds get into work.</p>	<p>Many migrant and refugee women need targeted programs to assist address or mitigate against challenges specific to this cohort, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High levels of vulnerability of many women (especially refugees) who have experienced extreme trauma resulting in mental health issues; have lost family/husbands to war, etc; are left caring for children.</li> <li>▪ Impact of child care responsibilities on women wanting to return to the workforce – especially for single mothers.</li> <li>▪ High cost of childcare.</li> <li>▪ Lack of transport (including public transport in some areas) – and the number (and cost of) lessons needed before getting a driver’s licence is a real challenge for those without family to help.</li> <li>▪ Domestic violence is an issue for some women. This includes coercive control by male family members who do not want women to work.</li> <li>▪ Lack of confidence, as a result of a combination of some or all of the issues above, is something government programs (e.g. Workforce Australia) possibly do not consider.</li> </ul>

**Approaches to achieving the objective**

**Approach/model for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds: Settlement Language Pathway to Employment and Training (SLPET)**

The SLPET program, part of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), provides a strong example of an approach that assists women (as well as men) find work. The program offers:

- 140-160 hours of in-class learning
- 40-60 hours of work experience as part of the education/training program
- Industry-specific accredited training
- Resume writing
- Interview support

**Case study**

This case study shows the impact the opportunity to engage in real, practical work experience can have in assisting women to develop the confidence and skills to engage in vocational training leading to employment.

AMES Mildura engaged with a number of employers, including Woolworths who were able to provide volunteer positions/work placements (after COVID restrictions were relaxed) for two students and then took on a third. On completion of their work placements the students were offered employment at Woolworths. Another student completed the work placement; completed Cert III EAL; then enrolled in Cert III Child Care. Two other students in the program have identified a vocational pathway into Child Care; completed a work placement (in Child Care); completed Cert II EAL; are currently enrolled in EAL III on a further study pathway leading to a Certificate III in Childcare.



## 5. Labour force participation, labour supply and improving employment opportunities.

### 5.1 Reducing barriers and disincentives to work, including the role of childcare, social security settings and employment services.

Response	Rationale
Employment services: increase the (limited) number of Workforce Australia (WA) specialist Refugee and CALD Licences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nationally there are 10 CALD licences and 3 Refugee licences</li> <li>▪ 5 of the 10 CALD licences are in Victoria, as are all 3 of the Refugee licences.</li> </ul>
Employment services: review the lack of funding for skills and qualifications recognition through Workforce Australia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Australia is failing to capitalise on the vocational/trade, semi-professional and professional skills of migrants and refugees who cannot afford the (prohibitively expensive for most migrants and refugees) skills and qualification recognition process.</li> </ul>
Employment services: digital servicing should be an 'opt in' option for migrant and refugee job seekers, not a default setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Digital servicing is difficult to opt out of and change to face-to face penalising 'digitally challenged' migrants and refugees; digital servicing is not available in community languages; there is no federally funded digital skills training (except for Seniors).</li> </ul>
Childcare: as noted above in Topic 4 – women with caring responsibilities need access to free or affordable childcare if they are to take up work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Women, particularly in most migrant and refugee communities, are the primary care givers. Many of these women do not have extended family able to assist with child minding.</li> <li>▪ The cost of childcare can be prohibitive for women/families on lower incomes and some of the childcare provider models are not aligned to irregular hours or intermittent, casual work.</li> </ul>
Social security settings: allow job seekers who secure employment, especially in lower paid jobs, to retain other benefits and discounts for 6 to 12 months until they are well settled in secure work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The cost to job seekers of taking a low-paying and/or part-time/insecure work is greater than the loss of income support.</li> <li>▪ The loss of other benefits and discounts (medical, utilities, travel, child support, etc) can cause actual financial hardship and act as a barrier/disincentive to taking up employment.</li> </ul>

### 5.2 Improving labour market outcomes for those who face challenges in employment, including First Nations people, those who live in rural and remote areas, younger and older Australians, people with disability, and those who may experience discrimination.

Response	Rationale
Improve labour market outcomes for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing flexible funding for customised support and training in the workplace (including LLND skills for the job)</li> <li>• Facilitating recognition of overseas skills and qualification (including assistance to defray the cost of this)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research demonstrates that migrants and refugees (in particular) face multiple barriers to gaining secure employment appropriate to their skills. These can include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low levels of English on arrival</li> <li>- Lack of 'Australian' work experience</li> <li>- Lack of employer recognition of overseas skills</li> <li>- Lack of employer ability/readiness to customise work/workplace conditions</li> <li>- Cost of overseas qualification recognition.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Employment services need to include strategies and incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employers can lack resources and/or be reluctant to invest in assisting migrants and refugees develop</li> </ul>

to engage employers in modifying systems and processes (especially recruitment processes) to accommodate people from different language/cultural backgrounds.	language and work skills on the job; or to support them to up-skills to take on higher level duties
Government needs to consider introducing programs that assist employers to reach and tap into migrant/refugee/asylum seeker communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many employers also lack contacts and knowledge of how to link to new migrant and refugee populations where they could recruit willing and capable labour.</li> </ul>

### 5.3 Skills, education and training, upskilling and reskilling, including in transitioning sectors and regions

Response	Rationale
Government is supporting social procurement in big infrastructure projects – and should be exploring how to support further training and up-skilling so that these employees can look beyond entry-level work to realising higher aspirations. What levers/supports are needed for employers to do this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many government contracts include requirements to meet quotas for employing ‘disadvantaged’ cohorts – Indigenous, women, CALD, for example. These requirements involve penalties for non-compliance (e.g. exclusion from being award future contracts).</li> <li>Incentives – ‘points’ towards future contracts – could be offered for social responsibility that includes supporting disadvantaged cohorts through, for example, staff volunteering as mentors, opportunities for ‘shadowing’ and training in the workplace to assist people advance their careers.</li> </ul>

### 5.4 Migration settings as a complement to the domestic workforce.

Response	Rationale
Temporary visas: there is an urgent need for review of conditions for the 31,000 temporary visa holders who have been living in Australia for at least 10 years on Temporary Protection Visas (TPV), Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEV) or a Bridging Visa E (BVE). <i>(This response notes comments by the Minister for Home Affairs confirming the Australian Government’s commitment to removing temporary protection visas (albeit with no timeframe) and to a review into the migration system.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some temporary visa holders have work rights, but many have no right to work at all, nor access to social security payments. This group is highly reliant on charitable organisations for shelter and food. If this cohort had work rights, they would be (i) helping ameliorate the current labour shortage and (ii) adding to the economy.</li> <li>Research shows that 90% of TPV, SHEV and BVE holders are at ‘peak earning ages’ (under 45) where taxable income is highest. Many have good English language skills. <small>(Source: <a href="https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/give-asylum-seekers-safe-haven-help-fix-labour-shortages?mc_cid=0019f48893&amp;mc_eid=b948b051af">https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/give-asylum-seekers-safe-haven-help-fix-labour-shortages?mc_cid=0019f48893&amp;mc_eid=b948b051af</a>)</small></li> </ul>

**6. The role of collaborative partnerships between governments, industry, unions, civil society groups and communities, including place-based approaches.**

Response	Rationale
<p>The Australian Government could facilitate dialogue across all players – state and local government, industry/employers, the settlement sector, employment services providers, training providers – to explore ways to resolve barriers to employment, and issues with Workforce Australia, impacting migrants and refugees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are a number of state and local government initiatives that could provide good models for employment services nationally, for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Victorian State Government: Jobs Victoria Employment Services (JVES); Big Build (Victoria)</li> <li>▪ Local government: Opportunity Wyndham; Changing Perceptions in Employment (project led by DJPR), place-based project in City of Casey, Victoria</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Value local knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When the Australian Government invests funding (e.g Innovation Funds) in place-based projects/initiatives the relevant departments need to trust the local providers to take projects forward and let them evolve locally and ‘in place’. (<i>Opportunity Wyndham provides a strong example – see below</i>)</li> </ul>
<p>Consider how best to incentivise Workforce Australia to work with settlement and AMEP providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refugees and humanitarian entrants arriving under the Humanitarian Program are provided settlement support through the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP).</li> <li>▪ Migrants and refugees/humanitarian entrants are also entitled to free English language tuition and LLND skills development through the AMEP.</li> <li>▪ In some cases, it appears that a Workforce Australia (WA) provider does not fully understand how the WA, HSP and AMEP contracts interact, neither do they fully understand what settlement services and the AMEP can offer in terms of support for jobseekers. In the past this has resulted in some jobseekers leaving, or not enrolling in, AMEP classes.</li> </ul>

**Approaches to achieving the objective**

**Jobs Victoria Employment Services (JVES)**

The JVES CALD specialist contract allows providers to work with **all** refugees and migrants who have visas with work rights and provides a good model which addresses a gap in current employment models and allows for these cohorts to receive assistance and support into employment.

**Opportunity Wyndham**

Opportunity Wyndham provides local businesses with free tools, resources and access to recruitment services and local talent to build stronger, more inclusive workplaces. The initiative brings together Wyndham City Council, local employment partners and businesses to build local pathways to employment, with support from the Victoria State Government.

Opportunity Wyndham connects Wyndham businesses with local talent from employment and education service providers. This initiative will benefit Wyndham businesses by saving time and money on recruitment and keeps jobs local.

**Wyndham businesses sign up to be part of the program, with commitments to:**

- Encourage inclusive recruitment and culturally safe workplaces
- Share employment opportunities locally via local employment services

- Collaboratively develop/participate in practical training and programs to support local jobseekers and identify any business specific opportunities such as work experience to assist with career pathways.
- Provide work trial and/or employment opportunities for locals seeking jobs that complete these training/support programs.
- Participate in Wyndham City's free industry insights sessions for locals seeking jobs

**Role of Local Employment Partners**

- Connect local businesses with locals seeking jobs, with local providers able to provide additional assistance with pre-employment training or internship opportunities to ensure candidates are ready and confident for their new role.

**Role of Wyndham City Council**

- Works with businesses and local jobseekers to support and develop training programs to up-skill residents and expand their capabilities to be employment ready and develop the skills of businesses to be practical inclusive workplaces.

**For more information, please contact Catherine Scarth, AMES Australia Chief Executive Officer on [scarthc@ames.net.au](mailto:scarthc@ames.net.au)**