

**Queensland Strategic Settlement Committee (QSSC)
Meeting Communiqué #4
26 July 2023**

The Queensland Strategic Settlement Committee (QSSC) met on Wednesday, 26 July 2023.

Members in attendance:

- Christine Castley (Multicultural Australia)
- Rose Dash (Multicultural Australia)
- Wayne Briscoe (Multicultural Affairs Queensland)
- Craig Shield (Multicultural Affairs Queensland)
- Lisa Ward (ECCQ)
- Anita Veivers (Centacare FNQ)
- Andrea Obeyesekere (Centacare FNQ)
- Elizabeth Gordon (QPASTT)
- Dr Rachael Claydon (Refugee Health Network Queensland)
- David Arnold (Department of Home Affairs)
- Dr Tariro Mutongwizo (QCOSS)
- Madina Mohmood (Lived Experience Representative)

Guest speakers:

- Mohamed Abdalkareem (Community Representative/ Multicultural Australia)
- Daniel Segura (Thrive Enterprise)
- Carlos Estrada-Grajales (Multicultural Australia)

Summary of Outcomes from the QSSC Meeting – 26 July 2023

Stories from the Ground: QSSC members heard from Sudanese community representative Mohammed Abdalkareem, on the ongoing crisis in Sudan, and impact on Australian Sudanese community.

- The conflict has exacerbated many existing challenges for Sudan (extreme shortages of food, water, medicine, and fuel).
- The impact of the conflict is ongoing and widespread – flowing onto families and communities in Australia.
- A specific information package for the Sudanese community, provides information on mental health supports, cost of living measures, available visa categories for family/community members overseas etc. However, this information package is not fully accessible to community members.
- Community support requirements include understanding support options domestically and for families overseas. Concerns noted that community members in Australia are not seeking appropriate mental health supports, through this period.
- QSSC expressed concern over the serious humanitarian crisis and ongoing conflict - displacing over 3.3 million people (including IDPs, refugees and people seeking asylum).
- QSSC stakeholders noted their broad support for the Sudanese community – assuring that community message is being heard and ongoing efforts to support community.

Sector discussions:

- Humanitarian Program for 2023-24: anticipated program increase, issues impacting current arrivals (for example, introduction of new regulations, exit fees and permits in Pakistan delaying departures), and consideration of new humanitarian settlement locations in Australia (considering ongoing housing issues nationally).
- Multicultural Framework Review - to ensure the Government's multicultural policy settings and institutional arrangements are fit for purpose to further advance Australia's multicultural society and help ensure a government that works for multicultural Australia.

QSSC Substantive discussions: Employment Focus

- QSSC has identified the need to progress discussion on employment issues and options for support for migrant and refugee community members. Key updates at the meeting included:
 - Wayne Briscoe, Multicultural Affairs Queensland – Strategic Settlement Partnerships Team’s efforts under the *Good jobs. Good people: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032* – to advocate and improve workforce outcomes for skilled migrants, those on spousal visas, seasonal workers, international students as well as humanitarian entrants. The team is partnering with industry, community and government stakeholders to facilitate access to opportunities in industries with workforce shortages and to improve workforce engagement and participation. The team is not a settlement service provider, does not support individuals directly or individual job matching. The team aims to develop connections and linkages between agencies, industries, organisations and communities at a strategic level. By focusing on these priorities, the team supports equality of opportunity for all Queenslanders and harness the remarkable benefits cultural diversity offers to our economy and our community.
 - Daniel Segura, Thrive Enterprise – supporting humanitarian entrants towards financial independence through their small business. Noted significant unemployment and underemployment of highly skilled clients (even in a low unemployment environment). Looking at solutions and work with the broader sector. Thrive can provide support (knowledge, information, capital) to assist new arrivals to start their own business. Shared examples of success in community through small businesses (those self-employed, working as tilers, painters etc.)
 - Donna-Maree Long, Queensland Rail – update on their experience building a diverse and inclusive workforce at Queensland Rail (QR). A small Diversity and Inclusion team has received good traction across QR, through support from the Executive Leadership Team. A Diversity Council leads several inclusion communities across QR (disability, young professionals, LGBTIQ+, multicultural etc.) QR has partnered with Multicultural Australia since 2016 (through the Work and Welcome) program – with significant employment outcomes. QR approach to employ new arrivals is flexible, recognising barriers to engagement, the need to modify their (HR) processes, and supporting people in learning on the job. Wide-spread recognition of the benefits of Diversity and

- Inclusion across QR – with feedback from employees suggesting pride in supporting new arrivals and supporting their new careers in Australia.
- Andrea Obeyesekere, Centacare FNQ – regional perspective providing employment support to migrants and humanitarian entrants. COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to address transfer of migrant skills and talents to major cities and metro regions. Applying a whole-of organisation approach, they have supported people into employment and training – thus, settling in the regions long-term. Critical strategies to their work include – relationships, advocacy, and capacity building.
 - Carlos Estrada-Gralajes – Multicultural Australia – update on the Migrant Workers Rights Education project funded through Queensland Government. The first year of the project has conducted an impact study (extensive desktop research and analysis of information on community experiences of workplace issues and/or exploitation). Project has included community listening exercises that identified workplace discrimination – by age, visa type, ethnic origin; WH&S issues; and identified difficulty in accessing information and support already existing in this space. Ongoing phases of the project will build on issues and learnings from the first year – redesign existing support information and produce new educational content and resources with a stronger focus on collective action and tailored collaboration with supporting partners (prioritising regional agencies and communities).

QSSC watching brief: watching brief on housing and health issues for CALD communities:

- Health access issues – especially with interpreter access for new and emerging communities in Queensland. QSSC discussions noted broader issues in the industry – pay and conditions, retiring interpreters and training new interpreters (identifying an ongoing national issue).
- Housing discussions note ongoing concerns - housing supply as well as housing stability concerns remain equally significant in Queensland.

QSSC consideration and action for 2023-2024:

- Maintain watching brief on health and housing issues.
- Consider employment issues further (possibly documenting Queensland experience for highlighting at appropriate national levels).
- Better understanding of data: identifying and understanding settled populations in Queensland (primary and secondary movement) – and understanding secondary settlement issues.
- Other themes to consider – disability, DFV and education (including parent/carer engagement with education/schooling).