

BOOSTING HUMANITARIAN JOBS DELIVERS RESETTLEMENT WIN-WIN: NEW REPORT

EMBARGOED 6AM MONDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2017

A new report released today shows the scale of benefits for Australia if the Federal Government acts now to improve employment outcomes for humanitarian migrants. ‘*Settling Better: Reforming refugee employment and settlement services*,’ analyses Australia’s integration of refugees into the labour market, identifies participation barriers and suggests realistic solutions to improve outcomes.

The Centre for Policy Development report, written by Henry Sherrell and prepared with the support of the Boston Consulting Group, calls for a new approach to refugee employment and settlement services. It builds off a roundtable held in Melbourne last August with experts and policymakers from Australia, Germany, Canada and the United States.

“This report shows everybody wins when refugees are able to get jobs soon after resettlement,” said Travers McLeod, CEO of the Centre for Policy Development.

“This is the first time the best available data on employment outcomes for refugees has been publicly analysed. *Settling Better* reveals five key barriers: limited English, a lack of work experience, poor health, limited opportunities for women, and having only been in Australia a short period. These are exacerbated by a dislocated approach to securing jobs for humanitarian migrants and other disadvantaged jobseekers.”

“Getting more refugees into jobs more quickly would be a triple-win: it would benefit vulnerable people as they rebuild their lives, boost the budget and improve social cohesion.”

Settling Better reveals that if outcomes for just one year’s cohort improve by 25 per cent, those new arrivals would be \$466 million better off over the next decade and the Australian government would save \$176 million. Achieving this year on year would compound the benefits.

Terry Moran AC, CPD Chairperson, said “The refugees Australia has settled have proved to be among the most entrepreneurial and talented members of our society.”

“Australia’s relatively poor performance in getting recent arrivals into jobs is further evidence mainstream employment services are failing the very people who most need help. It’s time for a new approach.”

“The good news”, Mr McLeod said, “is that we can do better. We can invest in targeted employment assistance focused on the barriers we have identified. We can leverage overseas best practice – better skills recognition, better private employer and community sponsorship options, and microfinance programs, particularly for women. We can establish a centre of gravity for post-arrival settlement services in Canberra.”

“One government department must own the problem, invest in overcoming identified employment barriers and establish a more integrated approach to settlement services linked with local communities.”

“As our economy changes and demand for low skill labour drops it will only become harder for humanitarian migrants to secure work. We need to act now”, said Mr McLeod.

***Settling Better* will be available to download at: <http://cpd.org.au/2017/02/settlingbetter/>**

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This Report will form the basis for CPD’s submission to the Joint Standing Committee’s Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes.