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11 September 2020

Committee Secretary  
Senate Select Committee on Temporary Migration  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100 Canberra ACT 2600

### **Centre for Policy Development Submission: Select Committee on Temporary Migration**

The Centre for Policy Development (CPD) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Select Committee on Temporary Migration.

CPD has a track record of research and policy development on boosting economic and social participation of refugees and humanitarian entrants in Australia through our Cities and Settlement Initiative. Our long interest in these matters is reflected in the reports *Settling Better* (February 2017), *Seven Steps to SUCCESS* (April 2019) and *Putting Language in Place* (August 2020). These reports, related articles by CPD staff members, and further information about CPD's Cities and Settlement Initiative are available on our website.

This short submission draws on discussions and analysis produced through our Cities and Settlement Initiative and our work on place-based approaches to boosting economic and social outcomes of refugees and humanitarian migrants. We believe the policy and program settings that benefit these groups of permanent migrants could also benefit a broader set of migrants, particularly those in vulnerable positions, whether they are on temporary or permanent visas. We would be pleased to continue these conversations to expand on the recommendations below.

#### **Policy responses to challenges posed by temporary migration**

Australia has a successful history of helping refugees and migrants settle in Australia, however debate over migration often simplifies a complex and nuanced reality. Temporary migration has been rising as a share of total migration, and prior to the onset of COVID-19 there were over two million people living in Australia on temporary visas.<sup>1</sup> For many migrants, a temporary visa is a step towards permanent residency.<sup>2</sup> The social and economic benefits of all migrants being able to participate in Australia's economy and society to the fullest, now and into the future, are enormous.

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<sup>1</sup> Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs (4 April 2020) 'Media Release: Coronavirus and Temporary Visa Holders' <https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/davidcoleman/Pages/Coronavirus-and-Temporary-Visa-holders.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> A 2018 Treasury and Department of Home Affairs report estimated that "almost half of the individuals granted permanent residency are already in Australia on a temporary visa" Treasury and Department of Home Affairs (2018) 'Shaping a Nation: Population growth and immigration over time', p. 20.

As Minister Tudge emphasised in his speech to the National Press Club in August, “our social cohesion is remarkable given the size and diversity of our migrant intake.”<sup>3</sup> However, those on temporary visas are consistently found to be vulnerable to exploitation.<sup>4</sup> We need to ensure we support all migrants to engage fully in society: the social cohesion benefits to expanding existing successful settlement services to also service other groups of migrants would be significant.

Through CPD’s Cities and Settlement Initiative, which aims to boost refugee economic and social participation, we have found the following makes the difference to outcomes:

- Coherence in Canberra between employment, settlement and language policy and programming;
- Collaboration and coordinated investment between Commonwealth, state and local governments, as well as community and the private sector; and
- Place-based, locally tailored service coordination and strategic employer engagement.

Although the Cities and Settlement Initiative works with permanent migrants, including refugees and humanitarian migrants, we believe a number of the reforms developed by the initiative would also benefit other types of visa holders.

For example, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the labour market, CPD convened an expert roundtable in June 2020 on transitions to employment for vulnerable migrants and refugees. The roundtable identified significant interest in employing vulnerable migrants and refugees, but gaps in awareness of the composition of this cohort, where they are and how to build pathways for them to connect with employers. We believe that a number of the new and existing pathways being developed to support humanitarian migrants could equally benefit many on temporary visas. Harnessing the potential of everyone in Australia will help us to build back better post-COVID-19.

### ***Policy and program coherence***

In CPD’s submission to the Shergold Review into Settlement Outcomes of Refugees and Humanitarian Migrants in Australia, CPD laid out three recommendations for how to boost economic participation of refugees: reimagining governance, coordination and delivery of services in pivotal places, greater focus on the needs of women and families, and improving English language education and employer engagement.<sup>5</sup> These recommendations were largely endorsed by the resulting Shergold Review, which laid out a compelling blueprint for improving the settlement process in Australia.<sup>6</sup> Successful implementation of their final proposals would link the efforts of Commonwealth, state and local governments to industry and the community sector, reducing the wasteful fragmentation built into the current system. This approach could equally be used to support other migrants in vulnerable situations in Australia.

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<sup>3</sup> Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs (28 August 2020) ‘Address to the National Press Club: Keeping Australians Together at a Time of COVID’ <https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/alantudge/Pages/Adress-to-the-National-Press-Club---.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> See the 2019 report from the Migrant Worker Taskforce which found that “a significant proportion of temporary visa holders in Australia are being exploited.” Australian Government (March 2019) Report of the Migrant Workers’ Taskforce, [https://www.ag.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/mwt\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://www.ag.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/mwt_final_report.pdf), p. 33. While migrant workers made up 6% of the Australian workforce in 2017-18, they accounted for 20% of all formal disputes completed by the Fair Work Ombudsman: Fair Work Ombudsman, Annual Report 2017-18, <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/annual-reports/annual-report-2017-18/02-fwo-performance-report/proactive-activities/vulnerable-and-migrant-workers>.

<sup>5</sup> CPD (15 January 2019) ‘Submission: Review into integration, employment and settlement outcomes for refugees and humanitarian entrants’, <https://cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CPD-submission.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Shergold et al (February 2019) ‘Investing in refugees, investing in Australia: The findings of a Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia’ <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/files/review-integration-employment-settlement-outcomes-refugees-humanitarian-entrants.pdf>.

The Shergold Review's proposals for humanitarian migrants have been endorsed by the Government in its November 2019 response,<sup>7</sup> and promoted by Minister Alan Tudge in February 2020 and again in the changes announced to the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) in August 2020.<sup>8</sup> Many of the recommendations are already being implemented; for instance a centre of gravity has now been formed at the Department of Home Affairs, which now has carriage of Australia's immigration, settlement services and English-language programs. The appointment of a new Commonwealth coordinator-general for migrant services, and a new Refugee and Migrant Services Advisory Council, with members from civil society and the private sector, are also welcome developments in boosting the coherence of services and responses.

The recently announced AMEP reforms provide an opportunity to better integrate English language learning with other settlement priorities, such as employment and study. Expanding eligibility to accessing the AMEP, and relaxing the timeframe in which people can access this support, are good examples of the type of flexible, outcomes-driven policies which work to boost economic and social participation. These are positive developments which could be further strengthened by greater alignment with settlement and employment services, and greater tailoring of these services in place, to suit local labour market needs.

**Recommendation 1:** Continue to build greater coherence of policy and programming with regard to settlement, employment and language, including more flexible service provision, and consider extending settlement and other supports to migrants in vulnerable situations regardless of visa status.

### ***Collaboration between Commonwealth, state and local government on settlement including in locally tailored, place-based approaches***

CPD has long promoted locally tailored solutions as a way of addressing some of Australia's most pressing social and economic challenges. Locally connected, place-based approaches to delivering critical services have been endorsed by the Employment Services Expert Advisory Panel and the Prime Minister, and are already achieving good results.<sup>9</sup> These approaches use local networks to lift social and economic participation.

CPD, with colleagues across the sector, has developed the Regional and Community Job Deals model, which features holistic, tailored services wrapped around a family and individual, and strategic engagement of employers and local industry. By listening to and learning from communities, CPD and the partners like the Brotherhood of St Laurence, have been able to develop models for genuine partnership between government, business and community that allow a consortium of local actors to adapt programming locally to achieve concrete outcomes. The plan for Local Jobs and Skills Taskforces in 25 employment regions announced by Minister Cash in September 2020 is a positive step in investing in these types of locally and regionally tailored responses.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Australian Government (November 2019) 'Australian Government's Response to Recommendations in the Report: Investing in Refugees, Investing in Australia The Findings of a Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia' <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/files/review-integration-employment-settlement-outcomes-refugees-humanitarian-entrants-government-response.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs (7 February 2020) 'Address to the Menzies Research Centre, Melbourne' <https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/davidcoleman/Pages/address-menzies-research-centre-20200207.aspx>; Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs (28 August 2020) 'Address to the National Press Club - Keeping Australians together at a time of COVID' <https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/alantudge/Pages/Address-to-the-National-Press-Club---.aspx>.

<sup>9</sup> Scott Morrison (13 December 2019) 'Delivering for Australians - A world-class Australian public service' Media Release, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/delivering-australians-world-class-australian-public-service>; Expert Advisory Panel (14 December 2018) 'I Want to Work: Employment Services 2020' <https://www.employment.gov.au/newsroom/expert-advisory-panel-report-i-want-work-employment-services-2020>

<sup>10</sup> Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business (1 September 2020) 'Local taskforces to aid jobs recovery' Press Release, <https://ministers.dese.gov.au/cash/local-taskforces-aid-jobs-recovery>.

In Victoria, CPD has been working alongside Wyndham City Council to deliver a successful locally based employment trial, which is based on CPD's Community Deals model. Situated in the south-west of Melbourne, Wyndham is home to a diverse community, including refugees and other migrants. Wyndham City Council and its partners have been running the Wyndham Employment Trial to boost economic participation for young people and humanitarian migrants. Before COVID struck eighteen employers were recruiting, and close to one hundred humanitarian migrants have been placed in employment.

Working arrangements built during the trial are helping local organisations to respond in a coordinated way to the challenges of finding work for jobseekers in the wake of Covid-19. Over 30 positions have now been filled during the COVID lockdown by young people, humanitarian migrants and long-term unemployed through the collaboration. The success in Wyndham sheds light on how we can better support refugees and vulnerable migrants to participate in Australia's economy and society.

CPD welcomes the recently announced Local Jobs Program, which will mean that more initiatives like the Wyndham trial can be supported, boosting the social and economic participation of many more people facing disadvantage due to the effects of COVID-19. By creating, supporting and implementing locally tailored solutions to address the unprecedented challenges now being experienced by the nation's growing cohort of job seekers, we can build toward a more inclusive and sustainable recovery as Australia builds back from COVID-19.

**Recommendation 2:** Coordinated investment and joint partnerships between three levels of government in locally and regionally tailored approaches to support social and economic participation, with access for migrants in vulnerable situations.

### Dividends on offer

Temporary migrants make huge contributions to Australian community social life, paying tax and often working in areas with identified skills and labour gaps: accounting for over 5% of doctors, and almost 10% of nursing support and personal carers, as well as comprising large portions of essential sectors like logistics, agriculture and food production.<sup>11</sup> Temporary migrants also support some of our largest industries. The Victorian government estimates that just one group — the 250,000 international students who came to the state last year — contributed \$12.6 billion to state revenue.<sup>12</sup> Studies have found “no concrete evidence that the entry of migrants had a negative effect on the labour market outcomes of Australian born workers, or incumbent workers (migrants that had arrived in previous years).”<sup>13</sup>

CPD's 2019 report *Seven Steps to SUCCESS* found that refugees are Australia's most entrepreneurial migrants — they are nearly twice as likely as other Australian taxpayers to run businesses — and every 1000 new refugee businesses generates \$98 million in annual economic activity and taxes.<sup>14</sup>

It has been estimated that greater social and economic inclusion will yield serious economic benefits for Australia.<sup>15</sup> Queensland alone stands to gain \$250 million over ten years by making better use of

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<sup>11</sup> Henry Sherrell and Peter Mares (21 March 2020) 'Of Visas and Viruses' *Inside Story*, <https://insidestory.org.au/of-visas-and-viruses/>.

<sup>12</sup> Adam Carey (28 April 2020) 'Struggling international students to get state government lifeline' *The Age*, <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/struggling-international-students-to-get-state-government-lifeline-20200428-p54o15.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Gabriela D'Souza (2019) 'Migration and labour market outcomes' Committee for Economic Development of Australia, p. 1, drawing on Robert Breunig, Nathan Deutscher and Hang Thi Tho (2017) 'The relationship between immigration to Australia and the labour market outcomes of Australian-born workers' *Economic Record*, vol. 89, issue 301, pp. 255-276.

<sup>14</sup> CPD (April 2019) 'Seven steps to SUCCESS: Enabling refugee entrepreneurs to flourish' <https://cpd.org.au/2019/04/seven-steps-to-success-report/>.

<sup>15</sup> Deloitte Access Economics (August 2019) 'The economic benefits of improving social inclusion: A report commissioned by SBS' <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/my/Documents/risk/my-risk-sdg10-economic-benefits-of-improving-social-inclusion.pdf>.

the skills of migrants and refugees.<sup>16</sup> CPD research has found that reducing gaps in participation, employment and income by 25 per cent relative to the average Australian jobseeker for just one annual humanitarian intake could be worth \$180 million to the federal budget over ten years as well as \$484 million in income for those refugees and their families.<sup>17</sup>

## Conclusion

The pandemic has exposed Australia's disjointed approach to migrant support, but it has also inadvertently created a chance to do better — to enhance Australia's recovery and, at the same time, bed down the reforms we need to harness the full potential of Australia's migrant population. A lot of the recently announced reforms to employment, settlement and language services could benefit a broader range of migrants, including those on temporary visas. Now is the time to grasp the opportunity to scale up these initiatives and harness the potential of everyone in Australia in order to build back better post-COVID.

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<sup>16</sup> Deloitte Access Economics (November 2018) 'Seizing the opportunity: Making the most of the skills and experience of migrants and refugees' A research report for Multicultural Affairs Queensland, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/Economics/deloitte-au-economics-making-most-skills-experience-migrants-refugees-011118.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Shergold et al (February 2019) 'Investing in refugees, investing in Australia: The findings of a Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia' <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/files/review-integration-employment-settlement-outcomes-refugees-humanitarian-entrants.pdf>, p. 34.