

# **Government Employment Services Submission from MET (Migrant and Refugee Employment, Education and Training Action Group)**

## **Introduction**

MET is the Migrant and Refugee Employment, Education and Training Action Group; a group of community, local and state government workers working at the grassroots with migrants and refugees. MET's aim is to improve access to appropriate employment for migrants and refugees in NSW. MET does this by developing and advocating for policies and programs to address the employment needs of migrants and refugees and has contributed to several government papers and parliamentary inquiries.

MET has identified three target groups who are disadvantaged in relation to employment and require access to targeted employment services to enable them to be competitive in the Australian labour market. These are:

- skilled migrants
- family stream migrants
- humanitarian entrants

**Presently, only humanitarian entrants with permanent residency are eligible for Government funded employment services during their first two years in Australia.**

This submission provides some background information on the main issues and strategies which need to be considered when devising effective employment programs and outlines some of the key structural and individual barriers faced by migrants and refugees.

It addresses a number of the areas outlined in the Minister's letter inviting views on current employment services models and presents recommendations in relation to each.

MET has focused attention on the current Job Network model and recommends improvements to the existing model as well as consideration of both alternative and complementary programs.

In particular, MET emphasises the importance of specialist assistance, the need for coordinated and holistic approaches which recognise the complexity of issues and barriers and complementary supports required and which favour early intervention for migrants and refugees.

A summary of the recommendations are outlined on pages 11 - 12.

## ALP Social Inclusion Agenda

For migrants and refugees, their integration process is about being able to participate fully in Australian economic, social, political and cultural life. Being able to secure a job is crucial to that process and economic participation often leads to the ability to participate in other areas of Australian life. MET welcomes the Australian Labor Party's commitment to social inclusion for all Australians because for migrants and refugees, successful settlement is about social inclusion<sup>1</sup>.

Migrants and refugees are highly motivated to find work on arrival in Australia. However, these groups are often excluded from the job market due differing combinations of several barriers outlined below.

Migrants and refugees often end up working in low skill, low paid jobs, regardless of overseas skills. MET agrees with the ALP platform which states that employment services should enable jobseekers not only to get a job, but to develop a career. Early intervention to assist migrants and refugees to develop career pathways will prevent intergenerational disadvantage.

MET also welcomes the support in the ALP platform for additional assistance for migrants to access the labour market outlines in Chapter 8, Principle 68 and the provision of a diverse range of specialist employment services to ensure that those service can meet the needs of a diverse range of people.

MET takes the view that refugees and migrants have a lot to offer Australian industry in terms of skills, potential, diversity, adaptability, international ideas and networks and motivation. It in Australia's best interest to put mechanisms in place to ensure that we are able to harness our cultural diversity and overseas skills in the labour market.

## Barriers to Employment for Migrants and Refugees

Below is a description of the structural barriers as well as the individual barriers faced by migrants and refugees, which need to be taken into account when devising programs to assist them into sustainable employment outcomes.

### **Skilled Migrants**

Since 1996 the majority of migrants immigrating to Australia are those who have been selected for their qualifications, experience, age and English ability in order to fill skills shortages in Australia. During this period Government studies into migrant employment have pointed towards positive outcomes for skilled migrants. However, there has been a lack of independent research and the experience of many community organisations who work with newly arrived migrants is that skilled migrants, especially those from industrially developing countries, face significant structural and individual barriers to utilising their overseas skills in Australia. MET has identified several of these barriers particular to skilled migrants.

Structural barriers include:

- The requirement of many employers for "local experience" as criteria for employment to validate skills gained overseas.
- Employer discrimination on the grounds of appearance or culture and by employers viewing overseas qualifications and experience as inferior to Australian skills, despite full accreditation by Australian professional bodies.
- Recruitment practices which often require a high level of spoken and written communication skills, which is often higher than the level necessary to actually do the job, the use of recruitment agencies who do not practice EEO and neither psychometric tests nor interviews are controlled for cultural differences.
- Barriers to post-arrival recognition of overseas qualifications which include cost, lengthy processing times and negotiating the maze of accreditation bodies.

Individual barriers include:

- Lack of professional networks
- Lack of knowledge of the Australian job market and workplace culture
- Level(s) of English
- Unfamiliar communication styles and unfamiliarity with Australian culture

These barriers, coupled with a two year waiting period for unemployment benefits and access to employment services, lead to many skilled migrants working in low skilled, low paid casual jobs such as cleaning, retail, security, taxi driving, aged care and factory work. Consequently, these jobs can often be perceived as 'migrant jobs', despite the fact that most migrants are selected for their high levels of skill and experience to meet skills shortages and contribute their skills to the economy. ABS data show that 63% of cleaners in NSW from North East Asia had a post-school qualification in 1996, compared to 10% for Australia-born<sup>2</sup>. Skilled migrants' skills lose their currency and become out of date whilst they are working in unskilled jobs. However, although finding an entry point into their occupation in Australia is difficult, those skilled migrants who do find relevant work are able to validate their overseas skills and become valued.

### **Family Migrants**

Family stream migrants face some similar barriers such as:

Structural Barriers

- Employer discrimination
- Changes to the Australian labour market including a decrease in manufacturing jobs that do not

---

<sup>2</sup> ABS, 1996, cited in Ho, C & Alcorso, C, 2004, 'Migrants and employment: Challenging the success story', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 40, no. 3

require high levels of English

#### Individual barriers

- lack of knowledge of the Australian job market and workplace culture
- level of English
- communication styles and unfamiliarity with Australian culture

Many migrants with low levels of English who gained employment in the manufacturing sector are now losing their jobs and having difficulty regaining employment.

#### Humanitarian Entrants

Refugees are a diverse group from a wide variety of countries, socio-economic backgrounds, ages, gender, religions and occupations. Humanitarian entrants face the same issues as migrants in terms of unfamiliarity with the Australian job market and workplace culture, but also face some or all of the following additional barriers due to their pre-arrival experiences and settlement issues:

- The physical and psychological effects of torture and trauma
- Disruption to education and careers during long periods spent in refugee camps and in exile in neighbouring countries
- Livelihoods in country of origin and countries of first asylum dramatically different from Australia e.g. the informal economy
- Denied access to schooling and therefore some refugees have little experience of formal education and can be illiterate in their first language.
- High levels of poverty, poor health, overcrowded housing and cultural adjustment.
- Competing priorities such as the need to support relatives in refugee camps and bring them to Australia - and the pressure to accept any job, not being able to focus on long term sustainable employment.
- Low levels of literacy and English. Refugees with low levels of English can find themselves breached as they attempt to navigate the system and do not understand letters requiring them to attend appointments with Employment Service Providers or do not have sufficient English to fulfil fortnightly job search requirements. Even when agencies are prepared to use interpreters, they are difficult to access from many small and emerging community languages.
- Employer discrimination due to community misunderstanding such as anti-refugee sentiment or other prejudices e.g. Muslim refugees.
- Lack of documentation eg formal qualifications or institutions attended (if any).
- Women from refugee backgrounds face additional barriers such as family planning and childcare issues. Their husband's careers are often given priority and they may be less likely to have accessed education in their country of origin.

As a result, refugee communities have low participation rates, extremely high levels of unemployment, significant downward occupational mobility, labour market segmentation in low skill, low paid casual jobs and unfavourable working conditions. DIAC Community Information Summaries show high unemployment rates for overseas born communities with high proportions of refugees; 22.3% for Iraqi born, 28.5% for Sudan born and 17.7% for Afghanistan born<sup>3</sup>. Participation rates are as low as 40.7% and 40.3 % in the Iraq and Sudan born communities respectively, compare to 64% in the total Australian population<sup>4</sup>. That these communities are working in low paid jobs is borne out by their median incomes, which are less than half the national median, and just over half the median for all overseas born people<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008, *Community Information Summaries*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

## **Asylum Seekers**

Asylum seekers, depending upon their visa status may not even be allowed to work, let alone be assisted by the Job Network system. Many doctors, diplomats, journalists and academics have sought asylum in Australia and have been unable to gain assistance from the Job Network. As such these asylum seekers are the most desperate group and need assistance from Job Network providers to be able to gain assistance in finding work. Many asylum seekers have been forced to rely on charity or were destitute as a result of not being granted work visas.

## **Effective Employment Services for Migrants and Refugees**

Migrants and refugees require **specialist programs** given their recency of arrival in Australia, their unfamiliarity with the Australian work place and job market, and in the case of refugees because of their pre-arrival experiences of torture and trauma and long periods spent in refugee camps.

These programs should provide **early intervention** on arrival in Australia, a culturally appropriate effective service and assist people to utilise their overseas skills and to develop career pathways.

Effective strategies to assist migrants and refugees into employment include:

- **Casework** (including qualification recognition) - individual assistance with developing career pathways, job applications and advice on qualification recognition is crucial for recent arrivals who are unfamiliar with the Australian job market.
- **Work experience** - necessary for developing professional networks, learning industry jargon, gaining local referees and understanding Australian workplace culture.
- **Mentoring** - extremely useful for developing professional networks, accessing unadvertised job vacancies and a cost effective way of providing support for job searching.
- **Training** (including work rights & OHS info) / skills upgrade - recent arrivals require training on the Australian job market, OHS, and IR law. Training can also address skills gaps and formal qualifications for those with none. English courses can be combined with vocational education and employment.
- **Employer engagement** - employers need to be encouraged to support employment initiatives as many current recruitment practices such as the use of recruitment agencies, detailed written applications and psychometric tests disadvantage migrants and refugees. Refugees and migrants face significant discrimination in the Australian job market and any program to assist them needs to actively engage employers to address this issue

Community organisations that have expertise in working with migrants and refugees are also best placed to provide innovative, holistic and community-driven employment programs to assist them into employment.

### **Recommendations:**

- MET recommends that employment assistance for migrants is not tied to the receipt of welfare payments and that all migrants are able to access employment services in their first two years in Australia
- MET recommends that in line with the ALP Platform Chapter 8, Principles 57 & 68<sup>6</sup>, that specialist programs targeting migrants and refugees are developed and delivered by community organisations who have expertise in working with migrants and refugees towards their successful settlement in Australia

## Response to the points outlined in the letter from the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Employment Participation

The letter from the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Employment Participation, invited views on current employment services models from interested stakeholders. In the letter he outlined a number of points which we have addressed below. MET has focused attention on the current Job Network model as its role is to place people into jobs and it is the system that most people access.

### **Employment services are relevant to the circumstances and needs of the jobseekers and perspective employers and Jobseekers with higher levels of disadvantage receive intensive assistance.**

With low unemployment rates in Australia, those people who remain unemployed are those that experience high levels of disadvantage and often experience complex barriers to finding and maintaining employment. As outlined above, migrants and refugees are disadvantaged in the Australian labour market and require targeted programs that address these barriers.

MET believes that in addition to making improvements to the mainstream system, DEEWR should consider enabling community organisations who have expertise in working with migrants and refugees to deliver complementary or alternative programs which are often more successful and cost effective.

### **Humanitarian Entrants**

Humanitarian entrants require assistance with finding a job that recognises their pre-arrival experiences including long periods of disrupted education and careers, torture and trauma and also their current experience of settling in Australia. Many refugee families are experiencing issues with poor health, housing and difficulty learning English.

UNHCR, in its publication *Refugee Resettlement: An international handbook to guide reception and integration*, outlines elements of good practice in employment programs for refugees<sup>7</sup>. It states that refugees should feel that they have ownership over the job search process and emphasizes the need for service providers to develop trust and a relationship with refugees and to work with them to restore their confidence and self-esteem. Early intervention, with intensive on-arrival assistance and a long-term approach to establish a career pathway are also necessary, as is direct engagement with employers. Staff should be trained on the pre-arrival experiences of refugees and services and should employ bi-lingual and bi-cultural staff. Refugees should receive training on the local job market, taxation system and the industrial relations system. Employment is a crucial element of the settlement process and programs that address unemployment cannot be separated from on-arrival settlement assistance.

The current Job Network system does not encourage early intervention. For the first three months refugees receiving Newstart allowance are required to attend a Job Network office where they are given access to computers and newspapers and left to look for a job on their own. This is a waste of time when they do not know how the job market works, may not know how to use a computer and often have low levels of English and literacy. This, together with the compliance system, does not encourage the development of trust between refugees and their Employment Service Providers. The focus on moving people off Centrelink payments in the short-term does not enable refugees to access career advice to establish long-term career pathways nor address the importance of motivation connected to self-determined career goals or job choice.

The current system assumes that jobseekers have knowledge and experience of the Australian job market and workplace culture. There is no orientation provided for people coming from contexts that are radically different to Australia or training for Employment Service Provider staff on how to assist such people. The use of interpreters is discretionary and is paid for from the Job Seeker Account, which is money that could be spent on training or equipment.

**In brief, refugees require specialist assistance which is beyond the scope currently available under the programs delivered by DEEWR funded Employment Service Providers.**

In 2004 DEWR funded a pilot Refugee/Humanitarian Program under the Employment Innovation Fund. The eighty participants in eight agencies across Australia received five weeks training on the Australian labour market, assessment of their skills through a skills audit, additional short courses and a ten week work experience placement. The pilot recognised the need for additional assistance for refugees, but despite the fact that it achieved some success, the results and findings from the pilot were simply communicated to Employment Service Providers and community organisations. No additional resources were allocated to assist refugees into employment nor were many of the recommendations incorporated into the Job Network model.

In response to the need for specialist employment programs for refugees, a number of innovative programs have been developed by organisations working with refugees to facilitate their settlement in Australia. One such program is the Given the Chance refugee employment mentoring program run by the Ecumenical Migration Council in Melbourne and emulated by AMES Community, May Murray Neighbourhood Centre and Auburn MRC in Sydney. These organisations have expertise in working with refugees and have tailored a program, which includes case management, training on the Australian job market and workplace culture, mentoring and engaging employers. One year after the program commenced in Melbourne, 73% of participants in Given the Chance were in employment or education six months after participating in the program. These outcomes were delivered at a lower cost than Intensive Customised Assistance under the Job Network<sup>8</sup>.

#### **Recommendations:**

- MET recommends that a Refugee-specific Employment Network service similar to that provided under the Disability Employment Network (DEN) or Indigenous Employment Programme is formed. This would acknowledge the particular disadvantage experienced by refugees in the labour market and the need for specialist assistance to find and maintain employment. The model would be delivered by community based organisations with expertise in delivering services to refugees. The program model could be delivered nationally in areas of high refugee settlement such as Auburn, Blacktown, Fairfield and Liverpool in NSW.
- MET recommends that where employment services are delivered by mainstream Employment Service Providers that staff are required to undergo training on working with survivors of torture and trauma, that additional funding is provided for the use of interpreters and that Employment Service Providers are required to work collaboratively with community organisations and refugee communities.
- MET recommends that a more effective assessment of humanitarian entrants' levels of disadvantage is undertaken than is currently occurring through the Job Seekers Classification Instrument.

#### **Family Stream Migrants**

Family stream migrants are currently not eligible for Employment Services during their first two years in Australia other than Job Search Support under the Job Network system. Long term migrants who are losing their jobs in manufacturing and whose spouses are working, often in low paid work, are not eligible either. These groups are highly disadvantaged due to low levels of English and a lack of knowledge of the Australian labour market and education and training pathways.

Family stream migrants require early intervention on arrival in Australia or when they lose their manufacturing jobs to enable them to compete in the Australian job market.

---

<sup>8</sup> Kyle, L, Macdonald, F, Doughney, J & Pyke, J, 2004, *Refugees in the labour market: looking for cost-effective models of*

### **Recommendations:**

- MET recommends that assistance from Employment Service Providers is not tied to receipt of Newstart Allowance and that intensive assistance is available to newly arrived family stream migrants and long-term migrants with low levels of English who have lost their jobs in manufacturing in recognition of the disadvantage they face in the Australian job market.
- MET recommends that Bi-lingual Employment Support Workers are employed to assist migrants to understand and access the education and employment pathways and opportunities.

### **Skilled Migrants**

Skilled migrants are brought to Australia as their skills are in demand in Australian industry. However, due to the barriers discussed above, Australian businesses are missing out on the skills migrants bring to Australia. Given current skills shortages and future global competition for skilled workers it seems sensible to invest in mechanisms to integrate overseas skills into the Australian economy.

As the current Job Network system focuses on moving clients off welfare payments into any work, Job Network providers have not developed expertise in assisting migrants to navigate the complex qualification assessment system, develop career pathways and creative ways to transfer their skills and market overseas skills to employers.

### **Recommendations:**

- MET recommends that assistance from Employment Service Providers for skilled migrants is not tied to receipt of Newstart Allowance.
- MET recommends that an online pre and post migration mentoring program be established to link skilled migrants with people working locally in their occupation to provide them with occupation-specific information and advice on entering their field in Australia<sup>9</sup>. Post migration, this service could extend to face to face coaching of skilled migrants by local employed professionals. This service should be developed and implemented by community organisations who have developed expertise in assisting migrants with overseas skills.

### **Incentives for training which will improve the employability of jobseekers (Including Incentives for long term training and education to address labour market needs)**

Migrants and refugees do not require incentives to study as they are often highly motivated to pursue long-term career goals. However, the current system discourages jobseekers from studying in the following ways:

- Rent Assistance payments from Centrelink are not available to people studying full-time and receiving Austudy payments. This prevents people from undertaking long-term training towards diploma or degree qualifications.
- Permission to undertake short courses is at the discretion of Job Network members. To be employed in an occupation, jobseekers normally require at least a Certificate IV level qualification. However, this can take several years for someone who arrives in Australia with little English and no previous training. Job Network providers are under pressure to achieve employment outcomes and therefore may not give jobseekers permission to pursue their studies.
- Access to money under the Job Seeker Account is at the discretion of the Job Network member and is not available until the jobseeker is eligible for intensive support services after 3 months of registering.
- Refugees and migrants who have arrived recently in Australia may not be familiar with the

---

<sup>9</sup> The Joint Standing Committee on Migration, in its report *Negotiating the maze: Review of the arrangement for overseas skills recognition, upgrading and licensing*, recommended a scoping study on an online professional mentoring program

education and training system in Australia and how to access courses.

#### **Recommendations:**

- MET recommends that career advice and planning services are provided to migrants and refugees including information on career choices with good job prospects and how to get qualified to work in those occupations.
- MET recommends that disadvantaged jobseekers such as refugees and migrants are able to access Job Seeker Accounts early in the job seeking process with some level of accountability on how the money is spent.
- MET recommends that Rent Assistance payments are available to people receiving Austudy payments.

#### **Skilled Migrants**

Despite holding graduate and post-graduate qualifications assessed as equivalent to Australian qualifications and having extensive hands on experience in their occupation, skilled migrants often remove their qualifications from their resume and go to TAFE to obtain a certificate or diploma qualification in their occupation. They perceive that employers see them as overqualified for entry level positions, yet lacking in local experience necessary to win a more senior role in line with their qualifications and experience.

#### **Performance management principles (including star ratings and business reallocation) that supports sustainable outcomes and promote quality service delivery.**

In a highly competitive system that funds several companies to run the same service in a geographical area, the performance management principles are crucial and determine what assistance is provided to job seekers. Current performance management systems seem to encourage the placement of people who have been unemployed for a long time into any job, and therefore do not encourage sustainable outcomes or early intervention.

The performance measurement indicators of Employment Service Providers need to be explicit about the steps necessary to achieve sustainable employment outcomes. These include working in collaboration with other organisations and groups working towards the successful settlement of refugees and migrants and the provision of the services necessary to reach an outcome of sustainable employment.

For example, compare the role of DIAC funded settlement workers who are funded to work with mainstream service providers to ensure that their services are accessible to and meet the needs of humanitarian entrants. In comparison, Job Network members tend to work in isolation focusing solely on placement into any job rather than taking a more holistic approach. Refugees often turn to members of their own communities and community workers for help with finding a job. If the efforts of English language training providers, community settlement workers, vocational training providers, community leaders, local government and employment service providers were coordinated they could be much more effective.

Employment Service Providers should also be measured on how many disadvantaged job seekers they can assist to develop long-term career pathways, acknowledging, for example, that refugees may have to learn English and undertake training. Employment Service Providers should be measured in the services they provide that are necessary to reach an outcome of sustainable employment, such as career advice, provision of training and information on the Australian job market, workplace culture, industrial relations, occupational health and safety etc.

For recently arrived migrants and refugees, early intervention to assist them to navigate the Australian job market, training system and qualification recognition system is crucial. However, presently Job Network providers receive a higher payment for placing those who have been out of work the longest. Providers could instead receive a payment linked to the level of disadvantage faced by the jobseeker

Qualitative outcomes should be measured, including clients' rating of the Employment Service Provider's efforts to assist them with finding a job and the extent to which services provided are culturally appropriate.

Many migrants and refugees are unaware of the star rating system and the complaints mechanisms for Employment Service Providers. They are allocated an Employment Service Provider by Centrelink and are then unable to change provider. Migrants and refugees are reluctant to make a complaint as Job Network Providers can recommend that Centrelink breach their payments. Refugees, who may have experienced persecution by their government may be especially reluctant to make a complaint.

In 2006 the Federal Government changed the equity reporting system of Federal Government Agencies in relation to providing services to Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population. The new reporting system *Accessible Government Services For All* watered down the equity reporting benchmarks, even removing the word "equity" from the benchmarks<sup>10</sup>.

#### **Recommendations:**

- MET recommends that Employment Service Providers receive incentives to work with other government departments and community organisations working towards the successful settlement of migrants and refugees for a more effective and holistic approach.
- MET recommends that Employment Service Providers are measured on employment outcomes, but also on the delivery of the services that are necessary to receive sustainable employment outcomes. These include skills assessments, career advice, training on the Australian job market and workplace culture, employer engagement, work experience and mentoring support where appropriate.
- MET recommends that qualitative measures for Employment Service Providers are developed and that the service users also rate their performance.
- MET recommends that star ratings are promoted widely in the community and to community service organisations who can communicate them to migrants and refugees.
- MET recommends that DEEWR develops an in-person complaints mechanism and works with settlement workers to communicate this to migrants and refugees to address their fears of making a complaint.
- MET recommends that Employment Service Providers are required to report against clear benchmarks regarding the provision of services that are equitable and accessible to migrants and refugees.

#### **The minimisation of time and money spent on administration**

The Ecumenical Migration Centre in Melbourne has demonstrated that organisations with expertise in working with refugees; who understand their pre-arrival experiences, current settlement issues and complex barriers preventing them from accessing training or finding work, can provide more effective employment assistance than the Job Network system and can do it at a lower cost. Funding innovative specialist programs targeting migrants and refugees can increase employment outcomes and reduce costs. These organisations can also work with Employment Service Providers to build their capacity to work with migrants and refugees, who in the long term may access their services.

## Summary of Recommendations

### **Effective Employment Services for Migrants and Refugees**

1. MET recommends that employment assistance for migrants is not tied to the receipt of welfare payments and that all migrants are able to access employment services in their first two years in Australia.
2. MET recommends that in line with the ALP Platform Chapter 8, Principles 57 & 68<sup>11</sup>, that specialist programs targeting migrants and refugees are developed and delivered by community organisations who have expertise in working with migrants and refugees towards their successful settlement in Australia.

**Employment services are relevant to the circumstances and needs of the jobseekers and perspective employers and Jobseekers with higher levels of disadvantage receive intensive assistance.**

### **Humanitarian Entrants**

3. MET recommends that a Refugee-specific Employment Network service similar to that provided under the Disability Employment Network (DEN) or Indigenous Employment Programme is formed. This would acknowledge the particular disadvantage experienced by refugees in the labour market and the need for specialist assistance to find and maintain employment. The model would be delivered by community based organisations with expertise in delivering services to refugees. The program model could be delivered nationally in areas of high refugee settlement such as Auburn, Blacktown, Fairfield and Liverpool in NSW.
4. MET recommends that where employment services are delivered by mainstream Employment Service Providers that staff are required to undergo training on working with survivors of torture and trauma, that additional funding is provided for the use of interpreters and that Employment Service Providers are required to work collaboratively with community organisations and refugee communities.
5. MET recommends that a more effective assessment of humanitarian entrants' levels of disadvantage is undertaken than is currently occurring through the Job Seekers Classification Instrument.

### **Family Stream Migrants**

6. MET recommends that assistance from Employment Service Providers is not tied to receipt of Newstart Allowance and that intensive assistance is available to newly arrived family stream migrants and long-term migrants with low levels of English who have lost their jobs in manufacturing in recognition of the disadvantage they face in the Australian job market.
7. MET recommends that Bi-lingual Employment Support Workers are employed to assist migrants to understand and access the education and employment pathways and opportunities.

### **Skilled Migrants**

8. MET recommends that assistance from Employment Service Providers for skilled migrants is not tied to receipt of NewStart Allowance.

9. MET recommends that an online pre and post migration mentoring program be established to link skilled migrants with people working locally in their occupation to provide them with occupation-specific information and advice on entering their field in Australia<sup>12</sup>. Post migration, this service could extend to face to face coaching of skilled migrants by local employed professionals. This service should be developed and implemented by community organisations who have developed expertise in assisting migrants with overseas skills.

**Incentives for training which will improve the employability of jobseekers (including incentives for long term training and education to address labour market needs)**

10. MET recommends that career advice and planning services are provided to migrants and refugees including information on career choices with good job prospects and how to get qualified to work in those occupations.
11. MET recommends that disadvantaged jobseekers such as refugees and migrants are able to access Job Seeker Accounts early in the job seeking process with some level of accountability on how the money is spent.
12. MET recommends that Rent Assistance payments are available to people receiving Austudy payments.

**Performance management principles (including star ratings and business reallocation) that supports sustainable outcomes and promote quality service delivery.**

13. MET recommends that Employment Service Providers receive incentives to work with other government departments and community organisations working towards the successful settlement of migrants and refugees for a more effective and holistic approach.
14. MET recommends that Employment Service Providers are measured on employment outcomes, but also on the delivery of the services that are necessary to receive sustainable employment outcomes. These include skills assessments, career advice, training on the Australian job market and workplace culture, employer engagement, work experience and mentoring support where appropriate.
15. MET recommends that qualitative measures for Employment Service Providers are developed and that the service users also rate their performance.
16. MET recommends that star ratings are promoted widely in the community and to community service organisations who can communicate them to migrants and refugees.
17. MET recommends that DEEWR develops an in-person complaints mechanism and works with settlement workers to communicate this to migrants and refugees to address their fears of making a complaint.
18. MET recommends that Employment Service Providers are required to report against clear benchmarks regarding the provision of services that are equitable and accessible to migrants and refugees.

---

<sup>12</sup> The Joint Standing Committee on Migration, in its report *Negotiating the maze: Review of the arrangement for overseas skills recognition, upgrading and licensing*, recommended a scoping study on an online professional mentoring program

## Bibliography

Australian Labor Party, 2007, *An Australian social inclusion agenda*

Australian Labor Party, 2007, *National Platform and Constitution*

Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2006, *Accessible government services for all, Annual report*

MET Issues and Models Papers

Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008, *Community Information Summaries*

Ho, C & Alcorso, C, 2004, 'Migrants and employment: Challenging the success story', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 40, no. 3

Joint Standing Committee on Migration, 2007, *Negotiating the maze: Review of the arrangement for overseas skills recognition, upgrading and licensing*

Kyle, L, Macdonald, F, Doughney, J & Pyke, J, 2004, *Refugees in the labour market: looking for cost-effective models of assistance*, the Ecumenical Migration Centre, Brotherhood of St Laurence  
UNHCR, 2002c, *Refugee resettlement: An international handbook to guide reception and integration*