

**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

THE RELOCATION OF REFUGEES FROM MELBOURNE TO REGIONAL VICTORIA

**A COMPARATIVE
EVALUATION IN SWAN HILL
AND WARRNAMBOOL**

**A REPORT BY:
INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY, ETHNICITY AND
POLICY ALTERNATIVES (ICEPA)**

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The evaluation of refugee relocation in Warrnambool and Swan Hill was a two year research project undertaken to increase a shared understanding of the refugee relocation experience in Australia. Throughout the duration of the project, there was a real willingness from all participants to share their experiences and to examine every part of their stories. This included those whose participation required them to discuss the very personal details of their journeys. The research team would like to acknowledge the courage of all project participants.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AMES	Adult Multicultural Education Service
GGTACC	Greater Green Triangle Area Consultative Committee
HACN	Horn of Africa Communities Network
LSIA	Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia
MLO	Migrant Liaison Officer
MVCC	Moonee Valley City Council
MMTC	Murray Mallee Training Company
PTSD	Post-traumatic Stress Disorders
SWARS	South Western Association for Refugee Support
TPV	Temporary Protection Visa Holders
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UWC	United Wood Cooperative
VU	Victoria University
WCC	Warrnambool City Council
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Indigenous Affairs
CRISP	Community Regional Industry Skills Program
SWAR	South West Action for Refugees

Executive Summary

Background

From January 2003 to December 2005, the Institute for Community Engagement and Policy Alternatives (ICEPA) evaluated the process and outcomes of the relocation of Horn of Africa refugees in Melbourne to the Victorian regional centres of Swan Hill and Warrnambool. The evaluation was funded by VicHealth, and was guided by the VicHealth Mental Health Promotion Framework. In line with this, key determinants of health were understood as freedom from discrimination and violence, social inclusion and economic participation.

The evaluation had two main aims:

(i) To contribute to the knowledge base on practices in regional migrant and refugee relocation that improve access to economic resources, facilitate social inclusion and address discrimination and violence, thereby promoting the mental health and well-being of migrants and refugees and regional communities.

This was achieved through identifying and documenting key stages and characteristics of the relocation programs and disseminating the findings through this report.

(ii) To support and engage refugee, migrant and regional communities in the planning and evaluation of pilot regional resettlement projects in Swan-Hill and Warrnambool.

To meet this aim, reference and focus groups were established to ensure that key stakeholders, in particular refugee and migrant communities, contributed to the evaluation process and outcomes. In addition, the design of the evaluation included feedback loops to support and inform project stakeholders in a cycle of planning and reflection, giving particular consideration to the mental health impacts of the projects.

Literature

The literature review identified refugee resettlement models, stages of adjustment for the refugee migrating community members and positive settlement strategies that

can assist in the construction of a sustainable relocation program. An important theme of the literature was the need to consider the refugee context within relocation frameworks. A major emphasis was also on the need for planning, implementation and evaluation stages as essential in the implementation of a culturally sensitive approach to refugee settlement in rural and regional areas of Victoria.

Methodology

The evaluation employed a participatory action research methodology to collaboratively and authentically understand the refugee relocation experience. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were employed. Qualitative methodologies included interviews, participant observation and focus group sessions providing insight into the ontological realm of the relocation journey. For this reason qualitative research tools were emphasised because they were able to authentically capture a rich analysis of people's feelings and emotions.

The Swan Hill and Warrnambool Relocation Programs

In 2003, the Murray Mallee Training Company, based in Swan Hill, developed a relocation program in partnership with the Melbourne based Horn of African Community Network (HACN) and Victoria University TAFE Division. The Warrnambool City Council (WCC) Authority (WLGA) also developed a program in 2003, funded initially by a philanthropic consortium, to attract refugees (predominantly from the Horn of Africa) to settle there.

Both the Swan Hill and Warrnambool programs originally arose as a response to static or very slow population growth and skill/labour shortages (in the host cities) and as a response to unemployment amongst Horn of Africa and other refugee community members living in Melbourne. They were designed as projects of mutual benefit and not as a solution to resettlement issues faced by urban and refugee communities. These were local solutions by local communities that believed their community had something unique to offer people who may want to relocate.

The main difference between the two programs was that the Warrnambool initiative offered a relocation package of \$10,000 (which proved to be crucial when comparing the outcomes of the two programs) and specifically sought families. Additionally, the difference in population size between the two host communities (Swan Hill has a

population of 10,000 people compared to 29,000 at Warrnambool) created a difference in services and resources available to the projects.

During the two years of this study 67 people moved to Swan Hill and 68 moved to Warrnambool. They were employed in 20 different places of employment in Swan Hill and 5 in Warrnambool. By the end of 2005, 10 refugees remained in employment and residence in Swan Hill and 55 in Warrnambool. Extended members of these families have also subsequently moved to Warrnambool either relocating from Melbourne or resettling directly to Warrnambool as a result of family sponsorship. At the completion of the evaluation, all those relocated refugees who remained in Swan Hill were in employment, while in Warrnambool there were some members of the refugee community who could not find permanent work. This remains one of the threats to the sustainability of the Warrnambool project.

Swan Hill had a wide range of employers that were willing to engage with the project and the local government also had a well-developed economic plan, which centred on the agricultural industry. In Warrnambool, economic planning was a work in progress and consequently there were still members of the refugee community who could not find permanent employment. Those that had left the Warrnambool project did so as a direct consequence of the lack of employment options and support available. While there has been considerable movement away from Swan Hill, many of the refugees who relocated back to Melbourne were able to find employment as a result of the training and work experience undertaken as part of their initial relocation. In both host communities, employment outcomes have been fragile – a problem that still needs to be addressed.

Engagement in education at Warrnambool was a clear strength of the refugee community's experience. This was supported by the relatively easy access to education that is available as Warrnambool is the home of the major campus of South West TAFE. This was not the case at Swan Hill, reflecting the lack of education options in the smaller community of Swan Hill.

FINDINGS AND THE COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL RELOCATION

A partnership between host communities, the refugee community and their advocates is fundamental.

Partnership with the refugee community is an essential step in relocation projects. Without this communication vehicle the host community will never really know the challenges that are being faced by the refugee community. They may not reveal to the host community their real experience and are more likely to “vote with their feet”, leaving the host community long before there is any knowledge of problems encountered.

Fund refugee advocacy groups

Community capacity building, supported through the allocation of resources for the volunteer advocates, is vital. Refugee advocates cannot work for free (though they continue to do so) as there is risk of “burning out” and an inevitable loss of skills and knowledge to their community. Resources are required for the advisors, the advocates and what is effectively the voice of the refugee community who are consistently called upon for their expertise and their skills as HACN did in Swan Hill and the Sudanese community group did in Warrnambool.

Local governments as the drivers of relocation

Relocating refugee communities require employment and support across many areas and local governments are best placed to take on this responsibility.

Relocation program must be guided by community development principles

A community development framework of practice that builds human and social capital must drive a refugee relocation program.

A critical mass of refugees

The Warrnambool experience suggests that relocation projects should include a critical mass from each of the countries from the Horn of Africa to enable sustained support and social connection.

Planning for housing demand and provide diversity of housing options

Both host communities (Swan Hill and Warrnambool) expected the refugee community to rent existing private housing stock. For most, this meant giving up their

public housing in Melbourne, something most people were unwilling to do. This was significant problem for Swan Hill which was compounded by the absence of funds to assist in the expensive transition to private rental.

Building rural communities requires having affordable housing options. Private rental is expensive, often not of an adequate standard and not always central to schools and transport. The payment of rent on the private rental market limits the refugee community's ability to develop employment pathways, particularly if they wanted to undertake further training. This is a policy issue that crosses every level of government and requires further coordination. One potentially effective response is the provision of low-cost modular housing. This has already commenced in Warrnambool and could be considered as a national project to assist with the availability of quality housing in rural communities.

Community planning must happen previous to, at the beginning of, and concurrent to, the implementation of a refugee relocation program

The implementation of a systematic strategy is essential to relocation projects. Planning must be a fluid process that engages the community in the vision, aims to engender ownership, develops skills, identifies necessary service gaps and resources and works with all of the community to provide solutions. It is imperative that it begins before people arrive.

All sections of the community require some induction, resources and support to develop long term planning strategies many of which entail understanding cultural change. This is necessary to avoid "bushfire management" which happened in both communities at different times whilst some of this development and planning "caught up" to the project implementation

Financial support for relocation of the refugee community

Financial support for relocation of the refugee community is an essential component for success. The Warrnambool project was supported by a grant from a private fund. On this basis, the project was able to engage people that may relocate with the support of a "relocation package". This provided Warrnambool with the opportunity to implement a selection process, in which families applied to relocate to Warrnambool and in so doing gained access to the package benefits. This was a significant factor in the sustainability of the project in this community. There were

many African refugees in Melbourne, who expressed a desire to relocate to Swan Hill but ultimately did not do so because of the relocation costs. Their lack of a relocation funding package has clearly contributed to the different outcomes in the two communities.

Establish an anchor community as the basis for further relocation and resettlement

Good community processes will build a refugee relocation program by establishing a stable anchor community for the refugee community to build both resettlement and relocation in the long term. The long-term success of relocation projects is highly dependent upon the resilience and abilities of the first wave of relocating refugees as well as on the readiness of the host community. The process put in place by the Warrnambool Council to engage members of the refugee community to enter the Warrnambool Relocation project assisted in their retention and the subsequent sustainability of that project.

Avoiding relocation in stages over longer periods of time without funding relocation cost

In Swan Hill, many of the refugee community, who had visions of a longer term relocation, found it necessary to undertake a family reconnaissance, before the family as a whole would make the move. This effectively meant that the men would move to Swan Hill ahead of their family to see whether circumstances for the whole family to move would work. However, often this only served to deplete family resources while the working father would travel between the two communities. It was frequently reported that the women did not want to come in the absence of adequate social resources and networks.

The limited resources in Swan Hill meant that there was never a critical mass of families, women and children that provided the community with the necessary social connections to support long term retention. This is a significant factor of the success and challenges of the two projects.

Allowing and planning for ongoing growth

Based on international experience, it was predicted that the migrant community would continue to grow due to family reconnection through sponsorship. This growth needs to be planned for, and such planning occurred in Warrnambool.

Engage families

Women and Children are an essential component of establishing a strong anchor community and community networks that connect the relocated community to the host community. Families build communities and they connect individuals into those communities. Women and children are the most common mechanism to connect individuals into a community through their social networks, through their church and by connecting to other women and children. This was a key factor that contributed to the sustainability of the Warrnambool project.

Offer refugees a better life

The refugee community often reflected on how they relocated in search of a better life. The country (rural Victoria) would be safer for their children, the employment opportunities were better, they felt safe and they knew their neighbours. It is entirely logical to consider that no-one will relocate from family and friends of their own cultural community, some hours drive away, unless there is a firm belief that it will improve their current circumstances.

Offer sustainable employment with career pathways and fair conditions

Consistent and fair employment is an essential component of a sustainable lifestyle. Employment also needs to link to a career pathway in order to provide hope and optimism for the future. This often means training and work reallocation while new skills are acquired. The refugee community will relocate again if employment is not consistent or is exploitative in its practice.

In both projects employment planning and information on employment availability was less than optimal. There have been ongoing employment challenges in both communities which is an essential building block for a successful project.

Employers play a critical role and there must be an understanding of the links between the sustainability for the employer's business and the sustainability of the community as a whole. Unfortunately, there were few examples in this project of employers who demonstrated that understanding. In fact, the project found numerous examples of employers who were willing to exploit the situation of vulnerable employment seekers. Employers need to be fully engaged in the relocation projects in order for them to succeed.

Support host community volunteers

Volunteer Programs need to be adequately supported by a range of stakeholders. The establishment of a well-organised volunteer association like South Western Association for Refugee Support (SWARS) provided the African community with much needed support. If too much burden is placed on host community members in their volunteer capacity, there is indeed a real danger of 'fatigue syndrome' setting in. A well-balanced approach to involving community members in welcoming new arrivals therefore needs to be adhered to.

Establish partnerships with key host community organisations

Strong partnerships established between organisations within local communities can achieve an integrated approach to relocation whereby a variety of needs can be met.

Flexibility in government funding and financial support for communities and partnerships to build capacity to support the refugees

Community groups need to be funded so that they can respond to, advise, seek solutions for and support the refugee community. Each component of a successful relocation project needs strong partnerships, shared visions, community liaison and community coordination. Without such a coordinated approach, success will be limited, and more importantly, the health and well-being of the refugee community could be compromised. This is a distinct policy issue because currently many community policy/program guidelines do not match the needs of relocating communities.

There were numerous examples of this, however, the need for better access to English language training and resettlement services were the most critical given their impact on life, employment and education choices. For relocation projects to be successful and sustainable, funding needs to be available for all aspects of community capacity building.

Creating a socially inclusive environment through community activities

One of the key indicators of the success of a relocation project is the extent to which refugees and host communities can develop supportive relationships and connections with the host community. The activities that both the Swan Hill and Warrnambool communities provided as an avenue to assist relocating refugees to start to make these connections to their community included a diverse range of

gatherings. Becoming involved in community activities, sporting events as well as being recognised within the social structure of the community are considered important factors in healthy adjustments to the new communities, and will, to a large degree, determine the relocating families' commitment to stay.

The promotion of cultural forums, community readiness and cultural appreciation

Community readiness is an important component for successful relocation programs. An absence of planning around this theme can and will lead to unfavourable repercussions that impact greatly upon the mental health and wellbeing of the refugee community. Communities that are able to adequately cater for the needs of the refugee community are more likely to benefit from the richness that cultural diversity brings. Enriching the knowledge base of all members so that cultural appreciation and tolerance is embedded within the community is essential for long term sustainability.

Ensuring freedom from discrimination and violence

Freedom from prejudice, sexism, racism and religious persecution is necessary for creating a safe and nurturing environment. As such, dispelling negative stereotypes linked to refugees and creating an atmosphere of hope and acceptance is the first step in promoting the relocation process to host communities and consolidating strong links between communities. Highlighting the richness that comes with cultural diversity, celebrating difference, embracing uniqueness, helps to place value on the various skills that refugees bring to local communities. The fundamental issue around discrimination seems to be how to inform and educate both the relocating community and the host community about cultural difference and the need for two way communication, tolerance and support.

Integrate children

Different ways of raising and disciplining children has been mentioned as a concern for both the relocating and the host community. This has been identified as an issue that needed to be addressed publicly as once again assumptions were being made in ignorance.

Celebrate diversity

The relocating community members were quite clear that the rural communities would be strengthened and enhanced by their presence and not just in relation to filling workforce gaps.

Host community readiness

Successful relocation programs not only consider stages of adjustment for refugees, but also stages of adjustment for host communities (see chapter 5).

Policy issues

The complexity of navigating Federal and State Government responsibilities is an important program barrier. Each level of Government has responsibility for some section of the range of services required. Currently, it is up to the community to creatively put the funding patchwork quilt together. This issue could be addressed by encouraging all Government partners including Local, State and Federal Governments to listen to the community experience and be willing to act.

Throughout the project, stakeholders discussed the limitations of the current policy models and a number of policy barriers were identified. Much of our current refugee policy is focussed on cities. It is based on the critical mass of refugee numbers that cities attract. It is also a policy framework that is underpinned by an acceptance that the current infrastructure is adequate. This is a suggestion that many would refute.

Conclusion

Refugee communities have a higher risk of mental health problems and higher rates of unemployment and so the relocation of refugee communities is not an alternative to well planned and implemented resettlement services. As such, relocation programs present both opportunities and risks. We need to acknowledge the potential benefits relocation programs may bring, as well recognise that the consequences of failure can be much greater.

It is important that supportive services are in place to deal with the range of challenges and emotions that have evolved from the refugee journey. This knowledge should be the framework when designing services, successful relocation programs and settlement procedures. Planning can assist in enlightening researchers, policy makers, government officials and host communities, in what

makes a positive relocation and resettlement experience for all stakeholders. As such, we believe that while there have been many successful outcomes arising from the relocation projects, their success relies on long-term planning and resources or planning and coordination for a minimum of five years.

The model that has been outlined in this report has identified a number of key components that build a good practice model of refugee relocation. Much of what we suggest does not fit with current policy frameworks which are premised on the belief that resettlement and/or relocation is feasible in any community if the community has a willingness to invite new arrivals and the employment prospects for them to participate within. We are not proponents of this theory. Whilst working with members of the refugee community and their advocates, we were constantly reminded that the program profoundly impacts on people's lives. Refugee and host communities cannot be simply considered as pawns in an economic development strategy and are deserving of the deepest respect.

It is also clear that relocation projects are not a panacea to resolve the settlement needs of refugees and the economic development needs of regional areas. While there can be mutual benefit for both host and refugee community, it is also only one option amongst many. For many rural communities and refugee communities, it is not a suitable response in light of the considerable life change that has already been experienced by Australia's Humanitarian entrants. Refusal to relocate to a rural community is a reasonable and rational response. However, for some, relocation can be an opportunity to be embraced. When well supported, relocation can also turn to resettlement. It is not only about host and refugee community willingness. It is about visionary political will that does not want short-term fixes, but focuses on long-term sustainable solutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the report of an action research evaluation of the impacts and outcomes of programs relocating refugees from Melbourne to the regional communities of Swan Hill and Warrnambool. Conducted over two years, from January 2003 to December 2005, the evaluation only included refugee participants who entered Australia through the Humanitarian Entrant Category and who are permanent settlers in Australia.

The Evaluation was funded by VicHealth. It incorporated the key determinants of the VicHealth Mental Health Promotion Framework as the foundation of the research framework, namely freedom from discrimination and violence, social inclusion and economic participation. This, it was envisaged, would enable further development of the components of each of the mental health key determinants as they related to refugee relocation projects in a rural or regional community. VicHealth was keen to focus on the specific needs of refugees as their experiences prior to and following arrival meant that they are at higher risk of poor mental health and are significantly disadvantaged in their access to employment and successful resettlement in their new country.

The evaluation had two main aims:

(i) To contribute to the knowledge base on practices in regional migrant and refugee relocation that improve access to economic resources, facilitate social inclusion and address discrimination and violence, thereby promoting the mental health and well-being of migrants and refugees and regional communities.

The following activities were undertaken to meet this aim:

- Documenting the processes involved in establishing refugee migrant and relocation projects at Swan-Hill and Warrnambool.
- Identifying the extent to which the projects have achieved outcomes at the individual, organisational and community levels that are likely to contribute to positive mental health in both relocating and receiving regional communities.

- Identifying practices which are likely to contribute to achieving these outcomes.
- Identifying barriers to and facilitators to achieving these outcomes.
- Documenting the perceptions of key stakeholders, including those from refugee and migrant communities, as to the extent to which the relocation projects have been successful in meeting their aims.
- Documenting the above in an accessible report of publishable standard.
- Disseminating the learning's from the evaluation to relevant stakeholders.

(ii) To support and engage refugee, migrant and regional communities in the planning and evaluation of pilot regional resettlement projects in Swan-Hill and Warrnambool

The following activities were undertaken to meet this aim:

- Establishing reference groups and focus groups to ensure that key stakeholders, in particular refugee and migrant communities, contribute to the evaluation processes and outcomes.
- Incorporating into the design of the evaluation feedback loops to support and inform project stakeholders in a cycle of planning and reflection, giving particular consideration to the mental health impacts of the projects.

The Evaluation focused on the experiences of refugees choosing to relocate from Melbourne to rural communities in Victoria, Australia. It explored:

- All the layers of infrastructure required to support the development of a cohesive and functional community.
- The diverse range of services that are required.
- The stages that both the refugees and the communities journey through in the process of resettlement.

A goal of the evaluation was to identify good practices to assist all three levels of government and local and regional communities to plan future initiatives.

It should be noted that the relocation projects are happening against a backdrop of policy change. There are currently a number of initiatives in place to support new entrants to Australia. Presently there is a diversity of programs targeting humanitarian entrants to resettle in rural Australia. There are also opportunities for skilled migrants who can fill skill shortages in urban, regional and/or rural communities, as well as the prospect for guest workers to come to Australia to fulfil a

specific employment contract. This project was of particular interest to VicHealth because it was targeting entrants who were to become permanent residents and who had entered Australia on a Humanitarian visa or migrants with similar migration experiences.

The Warrnambool City Council (WCC) Authority (WLGA) developed a program in 2003, funded initially by a philanthropic consortium, to attract refugees (predominantly from the Horn of Africa) to settle there. In Warrnambool's case, the council initiated a population summit in 2001 to develop a strategic plan to address the issue of low population growth (and ageing community) and labour shortages. In 2002 the council were approached by a group of philanthropists who were exploring the opportunity to fund a pilot that would encourage Refugees and Iranian Temporary Protection Visa holders to move to regional community. In this case they approached WCC to gauge their interest in hosting such a pilot. In return the philanthropic group committed to funding a housing and transition package for the refugees and Temporary Protection Visa Holders (TPVs) to relocate from Melbourne to Warrnambool.

Swan Hill shared similar issues to Warrnambool of low population growth (and ageing community) and labour shortages, however, the Swan Hill relocation program was devised through a partnership sought by HACN and Victoria University TAFE Division with the Murray Mallee Training Company. In 2002 members of the Horn of Africa Communities Network (HACN) management committee began discussions in their own networks about their growing frustration of the high unemployment faced by their community in Melbourne. HACN had a series of ideas and were working with Victoria University on a number of projects that focussed on employment and education access. Victoria University, through the Community Partnerships Officer, and on the basis of their established partnership with HACN, used their networks to seek out and team with Murray-Mallee Training (Inc.). Discussions were held about developing an approach that would resolve issues faced by both the Horn of African communities and the Swan Hill community. Swan Hill needed workers for a growing economy and the Horn of Africa Community Network were desperately seeking solutions to the enormous unemployment that was faced by their community. This

led to a partnership in 2002 that sought to attract refugees from the Horn of Africa to settle in Swan Hill.¹

Both the Swan Hill and Warrnambool programs originally arose as a response to static or very slow population growth and skill/labour shortages (in the host cities) and as a response to unemployment amongst Horn of Africa and other refugee community members living in Melbourne. They were designed as projects of mutual benefit and not as a solution to the myriad of resettlement issues faced by urban and refugee communities. These were local solutions by local communities that believed their community had something unique to offer people who may want to relocate. The projects shared the goal for successful relocation for refugee populations but each community operated according to different models of driving, facilitating and supporting those who relocated. This would, it was envisaged, offer a unique opportunity to work with two projects and consider their similarities and contrast their differences, and thus make it appropriate for a comparative evaluation.

Both the Swan Hill and Warrnambool initiatives focused on new arrival refugee communities. These communities have a higher risk of mental health problems and higher rates of unemployment. Accordingly, the importance of relocation programs and the potential for failure becomes clear. Regardless of the focus on employment in the communities, they have both demonstrated an understanding of a more comprehensive approach to community building. The aim of the project was always to incorporate a holistic strategy of employment, capacity building of the Horn of Africa community and community development of their own rural communities.

THE ROLE OF VICHEALTH

Since 1999, mental health has been one of VicHealth's health promotion priorities, with work in this area focussing on three factors understood to particularly influence mental health and wellbeing – access to economic resources, violence and discrimination and social inclusion. VicHealth supports research and evaluation as important mechanisms for improving the knowledge base to promote mental health and wellbeing. People from culturally diverse backgrounds, in particular those having recently arrived to Australia, have been identified by VicHealth as facing particular constraints on their access to the resources required for mental health and wellbeing.

¹ HACN have told their story of the development of this project in a Department of Victorian Communities publication called, *Employment Project Gives African Community New Hope*. The publication is a series of community case studies that have been produced by this department.

This evaluation was supported by VicHealth recognising that there has been increasing Victorian and Australian government interest in migrant and refugee settlement in regional areas. Regional settlement has the potential to promote mental health and wellbeing among new arrivals and in regional communities by increasing employment opportunities, stimulating population growth and increasing community diversity. However, international and emerging Australian experience indicates that for refugee arrivals in particular (many of whom have had past experiences of trauma and deprivation), careful planning is important to ensure that the conditions for positive mental health and wellbeing exist.

When both the Warrnambool and Swan Hill projects approached VicHealth independently to support an evaluation of their respective initiatives, it was proposed that a joint evaluation would produce stronger findings through the ability to compare outcomes.

HISTORY OF MIGRATION AND REFUGEE SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

Since 1973, with the rise of the Whitlam government and an ending to the 'White Australia Policy', Australia has prided itself on promoting a 'Multicultural' society. With the welcoming of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds there is also a vision of an Australian society that is cohesive, vibrant and enriching to all. The embodiment of an immigration policy that seeks to exemplify 'inclusive' and 'equitable' principles is seen to support the moulding of respectful and tolerant Australian citizens. Similarly, a society that is socially connected and free of racism and discrimination assists in developing a community that is collective and unified.

Approximately 6 million migrants have settled in Australia since the Second World War (DIMIA 1999:2).² Over the past 6 years, Australia has resettled over 645,000 refugees (Parliament of Australia 2005). In April 2005, the Federal government announced that it had allocated 13 000 places for 2005-2006. Within the 13 000 places 6000 refugees had been referred to Australia by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and 7000 places were assigned to the Special Humanitarian Program and protection visas in Australia (Vanstone 2005). The background of new arrivals varies with over 150 countries represented in our migrant

² Australia Wide Migration Group note that the highest number of migrants to settle in Australia since the Second World War was 185, 099 in 1969-70. The lowest number of settlers on a yearly basis was 52, 752 in 1975-76. See <http://www.australiamigration.com.au> for further information.

population. In the last five decades, half a million refugees and displaced persons have settled in Australia.

In Australia, most refugees continue to settle in major cities where there is cultural, social and settlement support. Of the number of refugees that settle in Australia, Kaplan and Webster (2003) note that 48 % have been women who have come from countries such as 'Vietnam, Central American countries, the former Yugoslavia, the Horn of Africa region and Iraq' (pg105)³. In Victoria alone, there are around 40,000 individuals from the Horn of Africa with 2,000 new arrivals settling on a yearly basis. With increasing numbers of humanitarian entrants, the Horn of Africa Community Network (HACN) note that 'Melbourne has a higher proportion of these settlers than any other area of Victoria, and therefore bears a major responsibility for responding to the settlement needs of the community of refugees' (2005:2).

THE SETTLEMENT NEEDS OF HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS

Federal government initiatives, introduced in January 2004, aim to address and deal with issues connected to the settlement of humanitarian entrants in major cities. Richardson et al, (2001) indicate that the successful settlement of a cohort of migrants could in part be judged by their employment experience. A longitudinal study of immigrants in Australia (LSIA) that was conducted over three years outlines various measures of successful settlement. The study involved a comparison of the settlement experiences of migrants and humanitarian entrants. Results indicated considerable differences in settlement experiences between migrants and humanitarian entrants. DIMIA noted that 'humanitarian entrants had an unemployment rate of 32% when compared with other cohorts of migrants who had entered Australia under different migration schemes. Even after ten years in Australia research indicates that a relatively high proportion of humanitarian entrants are dependant upon government payments as their main source of income' (DIMIA 2002:84). In comparison to migrants, data from this study reported that refugees were less likely to speak English, more likely to display psychological distress and least happy with their accommodation (op cit, 2001:8). Migrants with a high level of English skill reported that their 'incomes were able to meet their basic needs' which was largely tied to the ease at which permanent employment could be secured.

³ Pittaway and Bartolomei (2002:83) estimate that the total number of refugees has risen from 11 million in 1975 to 20 million in 2002, 'with an additional 20 to 25 million internally displaced peoples'.

'In the case of refugees, the need to gain employment quickly, especially important for refugees as they attempt to achieve some security, can lead to accepting less desirable jobs or to foregoing opportunities to learn English. Such experiences – combined with a pre-migration experience of interrupted employment – can have negative impacts on labour market prospects in the long term' (Doughney et al, 2004:ii).

The LSIA report also identified differences in settlement processes for refugees, when compared to migrants. Overall the key indicators of a successful or unsuccessful settlement experience hinges upon participation in the labour force, competence in English and the securing of housing that is affordable and allows access to resources. A recognition of qualifications, physical and mental wellbeing and social connectedness were also measures of a successful settlement (pg 63). All these factors in turn need to be considered by host communities involved in relocation programs.

DIMIA's Report of the Review of Settlements Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants (2003-2004) makes note of that fact that with diminished social capital and lack of early intervention for disadvantaged humanitarian entrants during their settlement, a series of challenges for both refugees and host communities is likely to evolve. Over the longer-term, a combination of interrelated problems such as unemployment, continuing reliance on income support, health issues and physical and social isolation can create a cumulative effect of social and economic exclusion from mainstream Australian society (DIMIA 2003-2004). In this instance, inter-generational joblessness and welfare dependency could follow which would impact upon mental health and wellbeing.

Unemployment rates amongst refugees and filling labour shortages in regional and rural areas are some of the key elements that can be addressed through the establishment of relocation pathways (Parliament of Australia 2005).

It is important to note that in order to contribute to the knowledge base of refugee relocation programs, the research team never intended to make judgements on either of the relocation projects. The approach was to focus on the experience, the process and the outcomes, and therefore recognise both positive steps and more hazardous approaches, without necessarily attributing practice to either community.

The guiding ethical principle of maximising the benefits of this research whilst minimising the potential for harm to communities was closely adhered to in the reporting of this evaluation project.

2. METHODOLOGY

This section of the report describes the methodology used for the evaluation and the rationale for the use of this methodology. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in this project.

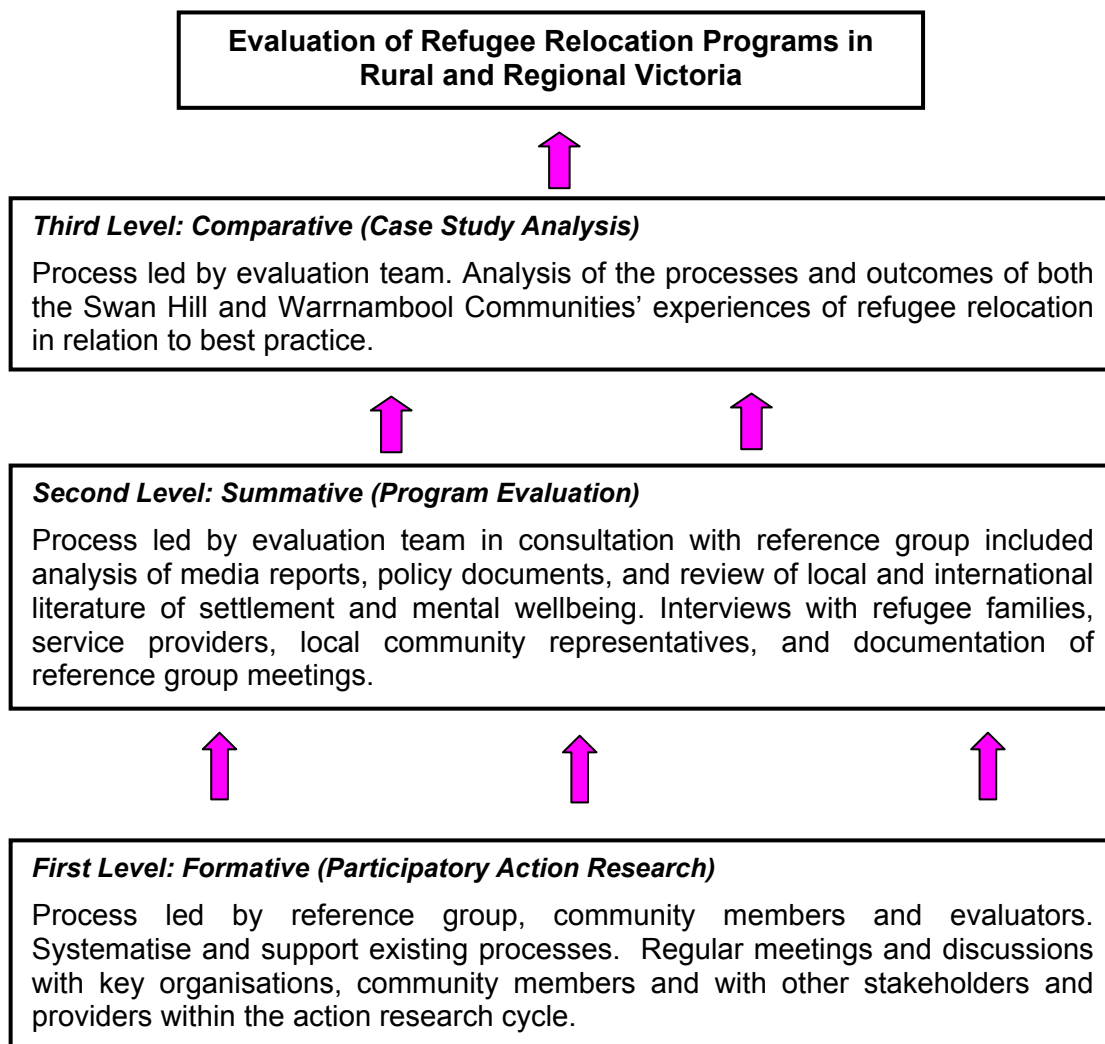
PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The evaluation employed Participatory Action Research to authentically capture and document the collaborative journey to understand and enhance the refugee relocation experience during the entirety of the project. A range of specific tools were embedded within the participatory action research methodology to enable project aims to be achieved.

In order for these aims to be met, the research team structured three levels, or methods, of evaluation (see Diagram 1): a 'formative' level, utilising a participatory action research approach; a 'summative' level, using traditional program evaluation methods; and, a 'comparative case study' approach, combining all the sources of information to provide a comprehensive story of the two locations' experience of relocation. Each level built on the previous one and in many ways enabled each level to be functioning for the duration of the research project.

During the initial scoping stage of the project the research methodology was discussed with stakeholders during consultation meetings held in both communities. The research plan was determined, and protocols were established, along with the sequence and frequency of data collection activities. Pilot interviews with small groups of local government and service providers, project organisers and refugees, enabled the research team to refine the interview questions and methods of analysis, whilst ensuring the research actions, process and analysis would enable the evaluators to meet the explicit aims of the evaluation project.

Diagram 1



The “formative” level involved collaborating with the refugee representatives, local managers and other stake-holders, and supporting the deliberations of local reference groups. The research team participated in local meetings and informal discussions, giving feedback based on our on-going data collection, suggesting ways of improving and developing the program.

The “summative” evaluation was the more formal outcomes evaluation of the program. It included interviews and focus groups with refugee families, local community members and service providers, (taped and transcribed), as well as analysis of key policy documents, media reports and other documents to determine key issues and concerns of all participants.

The “comparative” case studies were compiled through a synthesis of all the accumulated data. Information and data about both relocation programs was compared and analysed. As has been mentioned earlier, the research compared practice, process and outcomes from both Swan Hill and Warrnambool, however this was never to critique either community. It has been an important component of the participatory action research process to trust that guiding principles around best practice will emerge from within both communities. The case studies describe significant experiences in relation to mental health and wellbeing determinants, as well as highlighting barriers to successful relocation.

At all stages of data collection, significant findings were continually fed back to the local reference group. This stimulated a continuing focus by all stake-holders on understanding what was happening and what new directions might be taken. The embedded nature of the three tiered approach required the research team to balance relationships with project participants and stakeholders between that of ‘detached professional evaluators’ (the summative, more objective level of evaluation) and committed project supporters and participants including action researchers, as is appropriate within the formative level of the evaluation.

Throughout the three levels of the evaluation, a central focus was on making an assessment of the ‘mental health and wellbeing’ of the migrant or refugee community members who are making the transition to living in a rural town. In keeping with the commitment to a participatory and collaborative style in this research, the emphasis as far as possible was on ‘self reporting’ rather than a top down ‘objective’ analysis on the state of the participants’ mental health, as this could be construed by various stakeholders but especially the relocating community, as an unwanted intervention.

DATA SETS AND CODING

At the completion of the data collection stage, the research team compiled the following sets of data:

1. Documentation of issues, processes and outcomes coming out of the collaborative action research process including the minutes of reference group meetings and the feedback that was provided to both locations.

2. Multiple interview transcripts of 58 individuals (many people were interviewed two or three times over the two year period):
 - 22 members of the refugee community (nominated by reference groups, HACN, or self selecting).
 - 18 service providers (all key services in both locations were approached).
 - Six community stakeholders (representatives of refugee support groups voluntary tutors, taxi drivers etc).
 - Six refugee community leaders.
 - Six Murray Mallee and local government managers.
 - Demographic data on Swan Hill and Warrnambool.
 - A collection of press cuttings, policy documents and other relevant texts.
 - A description of other migrant, refugee and refugee-like rural resettlement programs in Australia.
 - Information about similar international programs.
 - Literature outlining good practice in migrant and refugee settlement programs.

The interview transcripts were used to inform aspects of these progress reports, however, the major rationale for the interviews was to gain a clearer perception of the total experience. These semi structured interview responses were transcribed and coded using a software product called Nvivo. The coding process was layered to enable us to examine the data around the key determinants of mental health and wellbeing (social inclusion, economic participation and freedom from discrimination and violence), from the perspectives of the key stakeholders (service providers, relocating refugee community, etc), and finally, to explore all individuals changing experiences over the duration of the project.

The coding was also completed independently leading to a myriad of sub sets and clusters of data that were then discussed and rationalised. The interpretation of the data was cross checked, and the coding verified into simplified sets based on the overlapping nature of these key determinants. This enabled the emergence of new insights and theories through 'grounded theory' analytic approaches (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

The demographic data focused on tracking the movements of the refugee relocating community as well as providing insight into the two host communities. This data was analysed using descriptive statistics and has been graphed or presented numerically.

The collection of documents including press cuttings, local policy documents, international programs and texts were used to inform the project and to provide a baseline to measure and determine best practice.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The research enabled the development of ongoing relationships that raised ethical issues around power, status and authority, as well as critical reflection on our roles, intentions, actions and the ultimate selection of content. Developing trust, reciprocity and respect for the skills that all stakeholders brought to the project was essential to enable the project to inject sustainable changes in their communities. It was also an essential component to the role of the research team to maintain the integrity of the work with each community and to ensure a valid role for the research team within those processes.

The role of all the partners was to be active in the project and be open to the experience and the journey and be prepared to embark on change. These interactive relationships ensured that the findings and analysis of refugee experiences were constantly being fed back into the communities to support the process of change, whilst also being documented as stages in the shared journey. As one of the relocating community members stated, “walk tall in the sun and be open, if you walk in the shadows in the woods you are up to no good”.

This evaluation research project clearly depended upon the active participation by all stakeholders in order to achieve the above aims. The wide spectrum of professional and personal reflections from a range of individuals and organisational representatives involved in the research project was necessary in this community project.

The naturalistic evaluation approach utilised by the research team (involved stakeholders and participants in shaping the procedures and the interview questions) emphasised the significance of the participatory action research approach to the entire project. The participatory action research cycle embeds the collective analysis of the findings within the parameters of the process. The spiral stages of planning, acting and observing, reflecting, before developing a revised plan and moving through the cycle again, occurred throughout the project (Kemmis & Taggart 1988).

The progress reports provided to each community after each round of data collection were discussed and acted upon within the community reference groups. These reports were informed by the interview data from all the key stakeholders. The researchers immediately sifted through the information to highlight the key issues and concerns raised. By having three independent researchers working within the community simultaneously and each interviewing relocating community members, refugee community leaders, service providers as well as government managers and general community stakeholders, we were able to cross check our perceptions of the key concerns and the general evolution of the refugee relocation project. These progress reports provided documentation of issues that required resolution immediately to ensure the maintenance of optimal health and wellbeing for the relocating community as well as the host community.

The final approach to sharing the findings of the research project resulted in the development of two case studies. The case study information was analysed naturalistically, with the identification of patterns, themes, trends and linkages, as described by Patton (1990 p. 406). All of the data was considered within the context of the Swan Hill or Warrnambool experience to demonstrate the similarities and difference of the two projects.

Pseudonyms have been used to protect the confidentiality of participants. The names of employment organisations have also been altered in the section titled, *Tale of Two Sites*.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Despite best intentions, all research projects experience a range of limitations that impact on the application of their findings. This project was no exception and the following limitations were identified:

- The refugee relocating communities were often in a state of transition and whilst the team hoped to maintain continuity with the members interviewed this was not always possible.
- The changing international, state and local political context of the refugee relocation programs over the two years had an impact on the evaluation project as different agendas gained or lost prominence.
- The possibility of emphasising one story over another depending on who was interviewed by which member of the research team was always a risk.

- Representing lived experiences of the African community required a cultural, historical and structural sensitivity. In order to achieve this, the research team employed a cultural liaison person who was able to perform a number of roles. They not only acted as an interpreter during some interview sessions but also served to inform the researchers of cultural values and beliefs that form part of the African community. There were however limitations to this process. With second hand dialogue there is inevitably a loss of a truly accurate reflection of experience and experiences become subject to the translator's discretion where there are no English or African words that have similar meanings.
- The researchers were morally and ethically required to maintain open communication with both communities. As the research team became aware of issues emerging within either community, and of funding opportunities, or were informed of international programs that could increase understanding of what was happening in Australia, the team felt obliged to communicate this knowledge to the communities. Obviously this has impacted on the evolution of the projects over the two years and increased the levels of understanding in relocation programs for refugee communities, host communities and the researchers.
- The research team is also aware that to some extent, simply focusing attention of participants' experiences, could contribute to a more positive relocation experience. This 'Hawthorn effect' can lead those being studied to be more conscious of their own practice and lead to more positive findings. While this impact is normally minimal it should be acknowledged.

The research team was conscious of the need to minimise the impact of these limitations on the final evaluation of refugee relocation programs. These findings represent a true account of the experiences of both the relocating community, the host communities of Swan Hill and Warrnambool. The recommendations on best practice for the relocation of refugees arises from sound analysis of valid and trustworthy data.

LITERATURE INFORMING THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in this project. The quantitative methodologies outlined the demographics of host communities as well as documenting the numbers of refugees relocating, their employment pattern, and country of origin. The qualitative methodologies such as interviews, participant observations and focus group sessions provided insight into the ontological realm of

the relocation journey. For this reason qualitative research tools were emphasised because they were able to authentically capture a rich analysis of people's feelings and emotions. A more accurate picture of the subjective states of thinking and existing is necessary to have when evaluating characteristics that support sustainable relocation programs. Bulmer (1977:278) states:

The fact of the matter is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meaning they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.

For the reasons outlined above, the data obtained in this evaluation project is rich in emotion and reflection. Quantitative techniques such as surveys and analysis of census data provided a numerical tracking on research themes like migratory movement between relocation sites, employment statistics, demographic evidence and education qualifications. It also allowed the researchers to find answers to questions like: 'How many?', 'How long?' and 'Who is involved?'

The research was a partnership that assisted each stakeholder in having a voice about the journey, barriers and successes to establish sustainable change. Carr and Kemmis (1997) outline that such a partnership within a research context has two essential aims: to improve and to involve. Participatory action research partnerships encourage participants to reflect on their work and gain insights from others whilst developing processes and quality practices within both communities (Swan Hill and Warrnambool). Once the research was underway, the critical observation and reflection upon emerging issues contributed to further enhance service delivery

The active participation of all members allowed for a discursive model to evolve. Colombo (2003:3) discusses the importance of action research as a narrative, reflective and discursive process. She writes:

Although there are differences of opinion about what constitutes action research and practice as inquiry the various forms of research have in common the fact that they are fundamentally based on the idea that performing skills can be translated into more general knowledge by means of a circular process which connects, at various levels, declarative-propositional knowledge with practical knowledge and experiential knowledge. In this sense, it underscores the fact that by means of the research process it is possible to

undertake a circular comparison between knowledge and actions which allows for the bringing forth of habits, cultural models and styles of thought.

Colombo's words inform us that a discursive model is an important and a necessary tool in asking, probing and reflecting upon questions and social actions (Stringer 1999). The evaluation of the two relocation programs is framed largely on the narratives of participants. Narratives were seen as an invaluable tool for gaining access into the interpretative frameworks from which individuals construct themselves. Throughout the interview process, encapsulating people's sense of the relocation experience was important. Similarly, ensuring that the researcher was adequately representing social and cultural meanings during the analysis and writing up stage was a chief concern. Narrative analysis therefore involved finding overriding themes that stemmed from the data. Maintaining each participant's self identity was also a chief concern during the analysis stage in that the researchers wanted to capture the cultural and social idiosyncrasies of each story. Sarbin (1986) notes the importance of maintaining the self-identity of participants during the analysis process. Where for each interviewee 'particular social identity is being claimed' (p243) in the analysis of data and that 'everything said functions to express, confirm, and validate this claimed identity' (ibid).

The research methods utilised are an established and accepted methodology for determining the detailed stories and experiences within the sociological framework. Participatory action research values the role and contributions of all the stakeholders and as Yin outlines, case studies enable us to understand the how and the why of the experience "when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context" (Yin 1994 p.1) Wadsworth expands the reasons for utilising this method, "case study is a whole and detailed study of a single instance (for example a family... a community) in order that generalisations may be made about a whole class of instances" (Wadsworth 1997 p.102).

The examination of the experiences of all stakeholders in both the Swan Hill and Warrnambool relocation programs has enabled the research team to articulate and understand the impact of the relocation journey process in all areas. The analysis of the key components and the evolution of the decisions made enabled the research team to make more informed recommendations for future relocation programs.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the report includes the literature review which informed the development of the survey instruments and identification of key issues

THE REFUGEE JOURNEY

The journey of a refugee is long and arduous. A refugee's flight is not only aligned with great uncertainty and extreme loss, but also considerable trepidation. To be given the status or label of a refugee signifies a destruction of ones' personal and social world. Pittaway and Bartolomei (2002:83) estimate that the total number of refugees has risen from 11 million in 1975 to 20 million in 2002, 'with an additional 20 to 25 million internally displaced peoples'. With such figures that are invariably connected to refugee camps, resettlement projects, relocation programs and government migration policies it is essential that the refugee voice is given due attention.

Australia takes approximately 13,000 humanitarian entrants each year and an understanding of the refugee journey is critical to ensuring that the resettlement and integration of refugees in Australia is successful. The refugee context and their emerging histories must be considered when planning for, implementing and evaluating relocation programs. While refugee experiences are diverse there are commonalities that can be identified. The United Nations High Commission for Refugee Resettlement (UNHCR) (2004:16) notes certain characteristics that can be attributed to social, political, economic and moral decay which in turn leads to a series of adverse chain of events that result in refugee status. The economic status of a country can impact greatly upon an individual's wellbeing and sense of safety. Human lives are seriously under threat when:

- Social services and economic services become obsolete or are seriously limited.
- Resources are not equally distributed.
- There is little economic growth that weighs down on financial security and the wealth of a nation.
- With a volatile economic structure there often emerges (2004:16).
- Ineffectual and corrupt systems of authority that maintain law and order.

- Organisations and governing bodies that lack a sense of just and ethical boundaries.
- The likelihood of conduct amongst authorities and leaders that is undemocratic and threatens human rights.

In the event of civil and moral breakdowns within communities, or dissolution of social capital, emotional, psychological and physical distress is likely to take place. Socio-cultural tensions are next to follow where there is an absence of civil duty and a blurred vision of working in a united way when there is 'poor social cohesion, systematic oppression and discrimination and an undermining/destruction of cultural and religious systems and institutions' (pg16). An absence of supporting social structures can leave individuals open to fear and abuse where lives are at risk.

An absence of basic rights adds to a refugee status. These include a 'deprivation of food, shelter, employment, and health care' (UNHCR 2004:16). Other negative experiences, that disempower and threaten the wellbeing of individuals involve:

- Unsafe and unsanitary living conditions.
- Little or no education.
- Loss or separation of family members.
- Torture and killing.
- An inability to voice one's opinions due to a lack of rights and freedoms.
- Unjust treatment due to ethnicity, gender and cultural background.
- Discriminatory treatment based on religious beliefs.
- No protection from government and state officials which places livelihood at risk.
- No economic stability which leads to financial instability and poverty.
- Forced relocation and displacement.

Shining a light on the lived experiences of refugees assists in providing a contextual framework around successful relocation practices. Drawing attention to the multitude of experiences encountered by refugees in their country of origin allows for a deeper awareness of how best to support the settlement of refugees who choose to relocate to a new region of their host country. While each refugee story is unique, an underlying framework of practice tied to relocation needs to take into consideration the refugee phenomenon (Taylor 2004: 19). Most refugees, as distinct from migrants, have emerged from great pain and suffering. Many refugees have experienced first-hand the trauma of war. Rape, murder, torture and imprisonment

are some of the barbaric acts that are frequently witnessed or experienced by refugees in their countries of origin (Jaranson *et al* 2004). Indeed exposure to violence, trauma and constant conflict impacts upon mental health, social connectedness and economic stability.

The provision of relocation services in rural and regional parts of Australia therefore need to consider the context from which refugees have emerged. Refugees need to be welcomed by host communities, feel safe and have access to economic resources. Ensuring that refugees are given the tools and support structures in which to rebuild their lives is a chief concern. Notwithstanding the fact that the refugee migrating community having had their basic human rights violated and therefore need to be able to trust volunteers and professionals who are assisting them with their settlement (UNHCR 2004:17).

VICHEALTH MENTAL HEALTH FRAMEWORKS

At an International Conference on Health Promotion in 1986, the *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* was developed, identifying the importance of environments supportive of health, stating that the inextricable links between people and their environment are the basis for a socio-ecological approach to health (World Health Organization, 1986). The World Health Organisation continued to develop broad descriptions of health and wellbeing, and in 2001 described mental health as ‘a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community’ (World Health Organisation, 2001). This is a significantly different approach to mental health; the focus is on ability, rather than on their limitations.

In attempting to define health and wellbeing for the Australian population, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (1998) identifies holistic wellbeing as a crucial concept for understanding health. They nominate seven dimensions of health, including: biological and mental wellbeing, social wellbeing, economic wellbeing, environmental wellbeing, life satisfaction, spiritual or existential wellbeing, and “other characteristics valued by humans” (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 1998). These are all dimensions of health that need to be considered by host communities when planning to support refugee relocation.

The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation has identified three factors as having a particular influence on mental health and wellbeing:

Social Connectedness	Economic Participation	Freedom from discrimination and violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive relationships and environments • Social networks and physical activities • Valued social position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to work and meaningful engagement • Access to education • Adequate housing • Access to money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical security • Self – determination and control of one’s life

(VicHealth 2005:2)

The inter-relationships between the three determinants of mental health provide researchers, health professionals, government officials and service providers with a view to seeing wellbeing and social connectedness in a holistic and integrated way. Further, this model draws the attention of the researchers to the fact that if there is a lack of support for individuals in one of the determinants of social health there is also a strong likelihood that the two other determinants will be deeply affected.

RELOCATION LITERATURE

VicHealth’s framework for promoting mental health and wellbeing (2005) informs us of inclusion and exclusion practices tied to relocation programs in Australia. VicHealth argue that refugees need access and exposure to resources that promote social inclusion, freedom from discrimination and economic participation. Mental health, feelings of social connectedness and the establishment of healthy beliefs and attitudes can all be attributed to the construction of dynamic and innovative partnerships. The construction of stable and supportive environments for both host community members and refugee communities is connected to governance, services and infrastructure that each share in common goals. VicHealth notes that:

Many of the factors influencing mental health lie outside the health system, partnerships with individuals and organisations in other sectors, such as those concerned with housing, employment, sport and recreation, education and income security, are identified as pivotal to effective mental health promotion. This includes funding partnerships with both government and non-government organisations to increase the resource base for mental health promotion, engage a wider range of sectors and ensure that mental health promotion is integrated into new and existing initiatives in a sustained way. (2005:3)

In line with VicHealth's framework on specialised factors that assist in the creation of mental health and wellbeing, relocation programs must ensure that a range of resources, pathways and initiatives are established for all members of the community so that feelings of value and worth can flourish amidst a celebration of diversity and multicultural sentiments.

The creation of employment and training pathways for both host and relocating community members and the establishment of a youth policy framework that targets refugee issues are some of the necessary determinants of social wellbeing and mental health (Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council 2002). Access to adequate housing, education and medical services are also essential to positive relocation settlement. As noted by Finney, Lamb & Cunningham (2003:123-124):

'refugee populations have special needs for clinical service delivery, interpersonal care and public health activities that may not always be common to mainstream populations. They may require specialised forms of clinical care to address the physical and mental health conditions produced by their refugee experience'.

Relocation programs therefore need to ensure that health service models on offer provide refugee communities with access to physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Within the parameters of relocation programs the relationship between social capital and health, while multifaceted, is linked. Research carried out by Ziersch and her colleagues on neighbourhood life and social capital outline the inter-relationships between mental health and construct of one's place of residence. Neighbourhood activities, community centres and local football clubs make up local community life all impact upon physical and mental wellbeing. Social networks, relocation advisory groups, resources and belonging to communities therefore play an integral part in integrating, socialising and engaging refugees to larger social groups and forces (Cambell & Gillies 2001; Putnam 1995; Forrest & Kearns 2001; Martin 1972).

Life chances are connected to healthy communities that breed prosperity and build clear pathways to academic and social success. Feeling safe and perceiving one's neighbourhood to have 'a shared sense of morality' enhances social cohesion.

Moreover, social cohesion and social bonding is strengthened when kinships and norms provide individuals with guidance and are a source of comfort and support (Forest and Kearns 2001: 2128). Bauman (2001), who writes extensively on the theme of community, argues that the construction of communities and the level of solidarity experienced by its members impacts upon freedom and rights. In the presence of strong communities that value human rights, that seek to work towards common goals, members are provided with a solid framework in which to build their lives.

Social capital is, in effect, a measure of the health of society (Russell & Withers, 1998, p. 59). Russell and Withers make an essential point in relation to a refugee community that may lack the friends and familial connections that may have sustained their lives previously. They go on to point out that the absence of social capital may mean that individuals or families no longer have the resources of extended family, friends or neighbours to turn to for advice, company or support. A part of everyday life involves supporting the notion that people with diverse networks of quality relationships are healthier than people who are socially isolated (Bowe and Hayes, 1999). Relocation programs must therefore ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for strengthening social capital between host and refugee community members. There is a comprehensive body of work that outlines the requirement of a community infrastructure that is connected, dynamic and provides opportunities to increase key protective factors for marginalised communities to have access to life's opportunities. A sense of belonging and social connectedness is consistently identified as crucially important for marginalised communities, especially in the current social environment of risk and uncertainty.⁴

In connecting the themes of life chances, community participation, inclusion, social capital and social connectedness to refugee participation and engagement in host communities, one project, funded by VicHealth, highlights the various dynamics in place that can lead to positive mental health outcomes. The United Wood Co-Op is a partnership that involves the Adult Multicultural Education Service (AMES) and the Horn of African Community Network (HACN). This project operates in North Melbourne and is managed by recent male settlers from the Horn of Africa. The men are involved in furniture making and have been so successful in their creations that

⁴ The Centre for Adolescent Health Gatehouse Project strongly suggested that security, social connectedness and positive regard are associated with emotional wellbeing and overall mental health (Glover et al, 1998, pp 1-6).

there is a market for their craftsmanship.⁵ Not only has this project served to foster social links and networks between the African men but it has also reinforced a sense of value in the skills they can offer to the community. Young African men are also provided with training around the themes of skill development in a range of areas. With involvement from key agencies such as AMES, there has also been a willingness to link up the UWC project with English language programs.⁶ Pierson notes that (2003:8):

Participants were provided with 'on-the-job' English language instruction, training in small business, leadership and carpentry skills while having the chance to form supportive social connections with their peers, paid staff and volunteers. They were able to gradually build their confidence and learn the skills needed to participate in the Australian workforce and community.

The ability to implement a project that involves a variety of sectors is essential for taking on a whole community approach to relocation. In the case of relocation programs, successful partnerships between organisations, which are based on a set of common goals and outcomes, can help to support those factors that influence mental health and wellbeing. It is important that a full understanding of each of the components of the mental health framework is seen to be fundamental to good practice for refugee relocation projects.

Taylor & Stanovic's (2005) research into the regional settlement of two refugee groups in Shepparton, Colac and Warrnambool, make note of social inclusion factors that helped in the settlement process. Iraqi refugees, based in Shepparton, noted that services that adopted bilingual employees allowed for a clear transfer of information and knowledge. Yet aside from the use of interpreters, 'unemployment was a greater problem for the Iraqis in Shepparton than for the Sudanese in Colac and Warrnambool' (op cit, 2001:5). An absence of economic participation therefore contributed to feelings of distress that was partly attributed to discrimination and a lack of job placements. Focus groups of Iraqis, including both men and women, commented on employment prospects being a main reason for their move from

⁵ Initially the men utilised a small tool shed at the North Melbourne Community Centre and approached the MVCC to help them with their idea. The MVCC saw this as an opportunity to work with AMES who could also provide on site English language training programs.

⁶ Many new settlers find it increasingly difficult to attend and access English Language Programs. This initiative had numerous benefits to a range of stakeholders in that it not only provided AMES with a group in which to run its classes, but it also provided a group of men with resources in which to run their business.

Melbourne to Shepparton. Many were lured to Shepparton because they had been told that 'all that you need to be is physically fit' in order to pick seasonal fruit (op cit, 2005, 16). Yet difficulties in securing permanent employment soon became apparent. Fruit picking was only on offer two months of the year and there was then a need to find employment elsewhere. Limited English, little recognition of prior skills and few job prospects meant that many refugee community members were less successful in attaining permanent employment positions.⁷ One refugee community member asserted:

We've been deprived from taking any work opportunity at all. Specifically for those who are highly qualified, the thing is they experience a language barrier and their English is a bit limited. If those people haven't got the opportunity to practice their English, how are they going to improve their English? (op cit, 2001:17)

There was then the presence of discrimination that came in the form of low pay for refugee community members when compared to host community employees. Inexperienced job placement agencies, unable to cater for high employment demands alongside training programs that had no secured job placement pathway, left many disheartened refugees wondering why they had moved from the city to Shepparton in the first place. Relocation programs must therefore embrace a holistic approach to settlement. Movement to regional and rural parts of Australia that is based solely on economic gain, as witnessed in this case, can mean an absence of thought in other determinants of mental health and wellbeing.

An absence of planning by rural and regional towns around relocation policies, human services, education support systems and social inclusion infrastructure, can impact greatly upon the relocation experience for both refugees and host communities. Research conducted by Nsubuga-Kyobe on the management of service delivery to emerging communities in rural areas (2004:6) indicates that refugee and humanitarian entrants, who have settled in Shepparton, Swan-Hill, Warrnambool, Mildura or Colac, have confronted a series of issues. The Iraqi pioneer group, who had migrated from Melbourne to Shepparton, reported many problems that they faced. These problems included an absence of a well networked transport system that provided access to job placements, schools and recreational facilities. Iraqi participants interviewed also commented on the availability of limited

⁷ The professional status of the Iraqis varied from teachers to doctors to food technicians

English tuition in that 510 hrs, paid by DIMIA, was not enough to develop language skills to enter into vocational and educational pathways.

An absence of a formal local body that recognised prior qualifications and employment skills as well as experiencing difficulties in making local friends, were some of the responses to emerge from the Iraqi study. Other challenges included 'adapting to local culture and coping with systems, reciprocity in understanding each other's ways of life, methods of raising children and access to child care and the relevant costs, problems of mixing cultures with religion, changing roles and clash of shift between the new and old ways of doing things' (op cit, 2004:6). Despite these challenges, the interviewees commented that over time Shepparton had addressed some of these issues — An Arabic teaching school had been created as well as a mosque and ethno-specific child care facilities had also been erected that worked with mainstream child care centres (pg 6). Cultural workshops had also been organised by Iraqi leaders informing host community members of their customs and beliefs. This helped to inform all members of the local community of reasons attached to set behavioural patterns thereby demystifying stereotypical views attached to certain rituals and value systems.

The UNHCR handbook for refugee resettlement points out that refugees 'have a high level of motivation not only to rebuild their lives but to also make a meaningful contribution to the receiving society...refugees also make an important economic contribution by creating new businesses and jobs, filling labour market gaps, and helping improve productivity' (2004:8). Engaging refugees in meaningful employment opportunities, providing refugees with the necessary support structures to reconstruct their lives and ensuring that refugees feel welcomed and valued helps to build community ties (Allotey, 2003). The Refugee Council of Australia (2004) argue that refugees are better equipped to face the challenges that settlement brings when they are supported in a holistic way.

Relocation programs, from their inception, must consider the importance of providing adequate resources for refugee members with avenues to engagement in community life. Bringing together and celebrating a range of cultural, spiritual and historical viewpoints, in a collective and respectful way, allows for the establishment of closer partnerships between host community members, government organisations, service providers and the refugee community. With the construction of community building

strategies that integrate social inclusion and economic development models of practice, there are greater opportunities for the strengthening of social cohesion, social capital, tolerance and civic equality (Toye & Infanti 2004).

STAGES OF ADJUSTMENT

The UNHCR handbook for resettling refugees (pg25) outlines four stages of adjustment that are commonly encountered by new arrivals. There is no set timeline as to the progression through the various stages and the process is not linear. Some refugees will experience all these stages while others may not. There are then a number of refugees who move back and forward between certain stages depending upon circumstances and support given to them by host community infrastructure. Again it is the refugee experience that will have a significant impact on how an individual adapts and integrates into his or her host country. Ensuring that key services are available to refugees upon arrival will assist in the settlement period.

The migration stages provide a guideline as to what to expect when working with refugees. These stages are summarised below.

a) The Honeymoon Stage

The honeymoon stage is connected to refugee preconceptions of what his/her new life will look like in his/her host country. This stage is made up of a variety of emotions that range from excitement, relief, trepidation and fear. Reactions are dependant upon the journey and the history that has resulted in forced migration. Most refugees will encounter a desire to quickly settle in a new country, find employment and become financially settled. Finding accommodation and establishing links with people who share a similar background is also necessary for a positive resettlement process. The Refugee Council of Australia identify the honeymoon stage as comprising of two levels, 'on the physical level — this involves learning about the new place. On the psychological level — it is about adjusting emotionally to the new environment' (Refugee Council of Australia, 2002:6).

b) The Confrontation Stage

The confrontation stage for new settlers is representative of a series of 'reality checks' that arise through confronting issues as diverse as child discipline, appropriate ways to greet people, to acceptance of culturally evolved gender roles. These issues are extremely challenging emotionally as well as intellectually. It can

seem as though others are making negative judgements about one's culture and community. Difficulties in finding suitable employment, being unable to communicate needs and desires, feeling 'useless' and 'inactive', are common experiences in this stage (Lavik *et al* 1996).⁸ Part of this frustration and alienation is the knowledge that one can never return to his or her past lifestyle. Refugees undergoing this stage need to be supported by relocating communities. Such support needs to be negotiated between host communities and refugee community members and may include cultural supporting officers, migrant liaison officers, volunteer networks, health service providers, employment agencies and government bodies.

c) The Adjustment and Reorientation Stage

The adjustment stage is categorised by a willingness to re-examine assumptions about resettlement in a host country. The inability to question current actions and behaviours that inhibit the settlement process is counterproductive to achieving success and emotional stability. This stage is therefore indicative of a reconstitution in vision for the future and an embracing of certain beliefs and values that can provide new pathways to achieving future success and empowerment. Similarly, feeling accepted by the dominant culture is also a central component of this phase where, 'the culture begins to make sense, and negative reactions and responses to the culture are reduced as one recognises that problems are due to the inability to accept, and adapt. An appreciation of the other culture begins to emerge and learning about it becomes fun and challenging' (Winkelman 1994: 73). Feelings of stress because of a sudden change in social norms and expectations begin to subside with the presence of coping strategies. This precipitates a deeper connection with the social community of which the relocating refugee community are a part and strengthens wellbeing and self-esteem. In achieving reachable goals new settlers are encouraged to take control of their lives and their future.

d) The Reconstruction Stage

The reconstruction stage is the stage where new settlers feel most at ease. Characteristics of this phase involve a feeling of control and satisfaction in the new community of which they are a part. Individuals who manage to reach this level of existing do so because of an ability to come to terms with the series of cultural,

⁸ During this stage, established refugee and migrant communities are essential in that they provide social support and guidance. As pointed out by the UNHCR, 'established refugee communities can serve as bridges between new arrivals and the receiving country, interpreting the practices and values of the receiving society to new arrivals and promoting understanding of the needs of refugees in the wider community' (refugee resettlement handbook part 1:pg 35).

social, physical and psychological challenges that come with migration. In the case of refugees who must endure forced migration it is the acceptance factor that assists in the settlement process. Acceptance of new life, alternative beliefs, values and customs helps to cope with settlement. Similarly, accepting new rules and new identities empowers individuals to work within existing structures and bureaucratic entities.⁹ Retraining, learning the new language, dispelling damaging stereotypes, tapping into community networks and working with government bodies and service providers is essential to sustainable relocation and resettlement.

The stages of adjustment often encountered by refugees informs us of the work that must be undertaken by the host community to deliver the service and community mix that is essential to successful resettlement. A comprehensive approach to understanding the health and wellbeing of individuals within this community construct is fundamental to the evaluation process as it clearly outlines the essential components for a healthy community.

Factors in a Positive Settlement Experience

Indicators to emerge in facilitating a positive settlement experience, noted by DIMIA (2003), include induction programs that ensure that migrants and refugees receive support in basic settlement needs. Based on DIMIA's review of settlement services for migrants and humanitarian entrants (2003) and the work carried out by the Refugee Council of Victoria (2001) a summary is provided below of characteristics that assist in positive refugee relocation programs. They have been grouped into the three key determinants of mental health that align the VicHealth 'Mental Health Promotion Framework' (2005). They are as follows:

Social Inclusion

- Health Care (Counselling Services — mental health, medical care).
- Education processes which involve parents and guardians.
- Adult English tuition- Supportive educational needs for refugees.
- Supporting Religious/Spiritual needs whereby refugees have a place to worship and knowledge of burial procedures.

⁹ This in no way means that refugees or migrants should be accepting of racism or oppressive attitudes and beliefs. Rather, acceptance in this case, is a state of existing that embraces differing cultural, social, religious and gender attitudes; acceptance forgoes xenophobia, ethnocentrism, ignorance and racism and is replaced with a multicultural perspective on life and living.

- Providing access to support groups, peer networks, community refugee settlement schemes and Migrant Resource Centres.
- Responding to kinship needs that are culturally based and essential to wellbeing.
- Recognising community groups assists in the fostering of social connectedness where a sense of identity and belonging is nourished.
- Promoting, initiating and supporting networks of civic engagement and sporting or social clubs.
- Ensuring there are effective transport systems that are reliable and accessible to places of work, worship and community settings.
- Involving both the host community and refugees in a range of social activities that celebrate and show case ethnic diversity and its richness to rural areas.
- Valuing the social position of newcomers and adopting an inclusive approach to individuals assists in the creation of strong links between all stakeholders.
- Cultivating the establishment of strong partnership ties that have at its centre the goal of procuring a sustainable and productive relocation program.
- Establishing a review of current processes and programs for settlement procedures that assist in improving current practice and addressing short and long term goals.
- Working with and informing refugees of the necessary procedures needed to sponsor family members into Australia.

Freedom from Discrimination and Violence

- Informing refugees of their legal rights and its impact on everyday life.
- Providing adequate prayer sites to assist with diversity in spiritual practices, and recognising the need for alternative burial practices.
- Ensuring that newly arrived refugees are provided with adequate resources in which to voice their opinions on matters that impact upon their wellbeing.
- Ensuring that adequate and professional services are provided to refugees who require assistance in dealing with the trauma associated with their journey.
- Providing a place for ethnic representatives to work with local governments, NGOs and other organisations where there is an establishment of partnerships across sectors. These partnerships can also help to dispel myths that are aligned with ethnocentrism and racist attitudes.

Access to Economic Resources

- Employment assistance that can assist refugees in attaining not only financial security, but also job satisfaction.
- Access to government benefits (Medicare, income support, rent assistance, Youth Allowance, Austudy, Sickness allowance, sponsorship of family members into Australia).
- Informing and assisting refugees on how to access to banks and how to effectively budget and manage financial resources.
- Providing adequate housing needs that are stable and affordable.
- Housing also needs to be located in areas where there is easy access to social support networks and employment.
- Recognition of prior qualifications of refugees or the creation of pathways that can assist with retraining in professions previously held.
- Supporting ongoing training where employers display initiative in increasing the skill base of new employees. Employers should also consider providing employees with English language classes on site.

4. THE SWAN HILL AND WARRNAMBOOL RELOCATION PROGRAMS: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DATA

This section of the report describes the nature of the Swan Hill and Warrnambool relocation programs and data from these programs.

During the two years of this study 67 people moved to Swan Hill and 68 moved to Warrnambool. They were employed in 20 different places in Swan Hill and 5 in Warrnambool. 10 remained in employment and residence in Swan Hill and 55 in Warrnambool.

Below is a snapshot of the two projects and some key details.

Components	Warrnambool	Swan Hill
Funding	Philanthropic and Council for relocation costs.	Murray Mallee and Community Jobs Program and Crisp Employment funding. In the latter of 2005 monies from the Department of Victorian Communities for community building were made available.
Auspice	Local Government.	Murray Mallee Community Employment and Training provider.
Demographic	Population 29,000.	Central Swan Hill population 9,000.
Distance from Melbourne	3 hours.	4 hours.
Support staff	Migrant Liaison Officer.	Murray Mallee Project Workers in Melbourne and in Swan Hill.
Advocacy	HACN Memorandum of understanding.	Partnership with HACN and Victoria University.

Components	Warrnambool	Swan Hill
Community advisory	Regulated as a committee	Committee of interested

	of council met bi-monthly.	stakeholders that met intermittently in the first eighteen months.
Training component	Upon arrival opportunities to attend TAFE.	Pre-relocation training course tailored to needs of participants and local employers.
Refugee community who relocated.	Sudanese.	From the Horn of Africa: Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, Ethiopia.

Warrnambool and Swan Hill are, in many ways, *Greenfield* sites. Though it had been reported to the research team that Swan Hill had been built by waves of migration from the 1950s, the data shows a community that is still largely of Anglo Celtic descent. This is particularly the case for Warrnambool that, it would seem, had even missed out on the previous migrations waves that had built the Australian population. In both cases the communities had an indigenous population but were limited in their diversity of population.

INTRODUCTION TO SWAN HILL



The Swan Hill region is an area of low unemployment with strong employment growth (greater than 3% per annum over the past five years). As such, an important issue for the region is how it is to meet a growth of employment and the subsequent skills shortages that it brings

The Swan Hill Shire is home to over 20,000 people, however it is important to note that the Shire of Swan Hill stretches a considerable distance and has a number of *communities of interest* within it. An economic catchment stretching along the Murray Valley into the Mallee in Victoria and the Western Riverina in New South Wales is also serviced by the city. The Swan Hill region incorporates the following towns:

- Swan Hill
- Lake Boga
- Manangatang
- Nyah Nyah West
- Piangil
- Robinvale
- Ultima.

The Swan Hill Centre has a population of 19,771. 17,729 people were born in Australia whilst only 1,765 people were born overseas. Of those born overseas, the three main countries of birth recorded at the 2001 Census were:

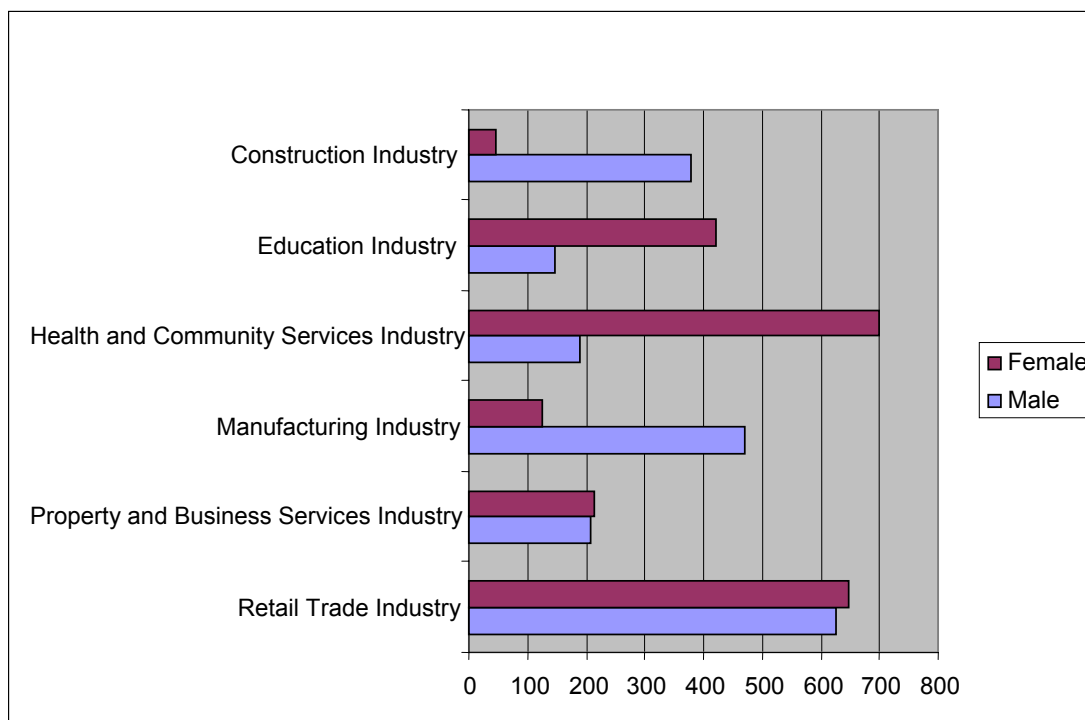
- Italy 383
- United Kingdom 262
- New Zealand 192.

Following irrigation water reform in the early 1990s, the region has seen approximately 7,000 hectares of dry land turned into irrigated horticultural production (principally vegetables, nuts, wine grapes, table grapes, stone fruit and olives). This is in addition to the 10,000 hectares previously under horticultural production. This has resulted in the irrigated horticulture sector continuing to expand at about 10% per annum. There are currently over 560 horticultural enterprises growing a wide range of produce. Producers range from those on smaller holdings growing traditional crops such as grapes and stone fruit to those growing vegetables under large-scale broad acre conditions. Corporate producers also operate in the region. Collectively the horticultural industry employs the largest number of employees (many employing over ten full time employees). Tourism and retail operations also employ large numbers of people.

Manufacturing is also a growing sector in the economy. According to the Local Government, manufacturing jobs in Swan Hill grew by 50% between 1991 and 1996 with over 300 people in the city employed in this industry (see Table 1 below).

There has been a growth in population in Swan Hill, but not enough to fill labour demand. Swan Hill also has a significant ageing population.

Table 1: Swan Hill Region Employment



Source: ABS Census Data, 2001

REFUGEE RELOCATION IN SWAN HILL

Project Background

The Swan Hill Refugee Relocation Project was jointly developed by the following organisations who co-managed the project:

- The Horn of African Community Network (HACN), an umbrella body of Horn of African communities in Melbourne.
- Murray Mallee Training Company (MMTC), a major not-for-profit employment provider in the Swan Hill area with a community development focus.
- Victoria University (VU) through the TAFE Division of the University.
- Swan Hill City Council and a local reference group composed of community stakeholders.

The project aimed to relocate members of the Horn of African community from the Melbourne Cities of Maribyrnong/Dandenong. Of this group, 70% were unemployed and the aim was to link them to employment in the regions of Loddon, Mallee, and Murray with the aim of long term relocation. The Swan Hill LGA Economic Development Unit identified fourteen major private industry projects that have

commenced (since July 2003) or were likely to commence in the next one to two years (with either planning well advanced or investment commenced) and be fully operational by the end of 2007. However, the project was not only about employment, it was designed to build community capacity of both the HACN and Swan Hill communities.

A Holistic Community Building Program

Supported by a community development framework, the project was intended to build community capacity of the Horn of Africa community and to provide a greater choice of employment opportunities. It was envisaged that such an approach would have mutual benefits for both the host community and the refugee community. As such, the program was to offer a holistic approach to relocation, supporting both the relocating community and the host community. This approach was based on procedures developed by the partners to offer support to members of the refugee community to minimise any issues that may arise when working with a refugee target group. Within this context there was to be an ongoing role for HACN post relocation so that members of the community who have moved to Swan Hill could continue to be supported by HACN in Melbourne and the host community could benefit from HACN's cultural experience.

Moreover, the HACN community were clear about what they wanted from the relocation project: social, cultural and economic engagement and support. The program components as designed by the Swan Hill partnership are described below.

The Relocation Program

The original program was designed to have five main stages:

(i) Maribyrnong Promotion to HACN

This first stage involved the MMTC working with HACN to raise awareness of the program amongst the Horn of Africa community in Maribyrnong.

(ii) Pre-relocation information tours to Swan Hill

African refugees who expressed an interest in stage one were invited to participate in pre-relocation information tours of Swan Hill which included meeting employers and the community, e.g. schools, sports clubs etc. These tours were organised and funded by MMTC.

During the relocation tours participants undertook four days work experience in diverse occupations in the Swan Hill Region. This not only provided an insight into rural industries, and invaluable work experience, but also promoted the diverse qualification and skills that are located within the Horn of Africa workforce.

(iii) Pre-relocation Training

Those who agreed to relocate after participating in a tour undertook a Pre-Relocation Training Program. The program was provided by Victoria University TAFE Division which was developed in partnership with HACN. The training program included job search training, familiarisation with the rural community and preparation for work experience. Training delivery reflected the need to be flexible to accommodate the needs of the group, who have differing levels of formal education, training and work experience as well as different levels of English language proficiency.

(iv) Relocation orientation and job placement

Upon relocation Murray Mallee Training would locate permanent full-time employment opportunities and assist the member of the refugee community to gain housing, cultural and settlement support.

(v) Community Engagement

The relocation program was not just about employment. The project has promoted refugee and migrant communities to people of the Murray Mallee Region as positive additions to their community in both a social, cultural, and economic sense.

INTRODUCTION TO WARRNAMBOOL



Warrnambool's demographics are largely mono-cultural, with over 94% of its population claiming predominantly Anglo-Celtic heritage. The City's population is growing, but at a gradual rate. There are 28,755 people (13,916 males and 14,839 females) living in the Warrnambool Community. In Warrnambool 25,322 people were born in Australia whilst only 1,648 people were born overseas. Of those born overseas, the three main countries of birth in the 2001 Census were:

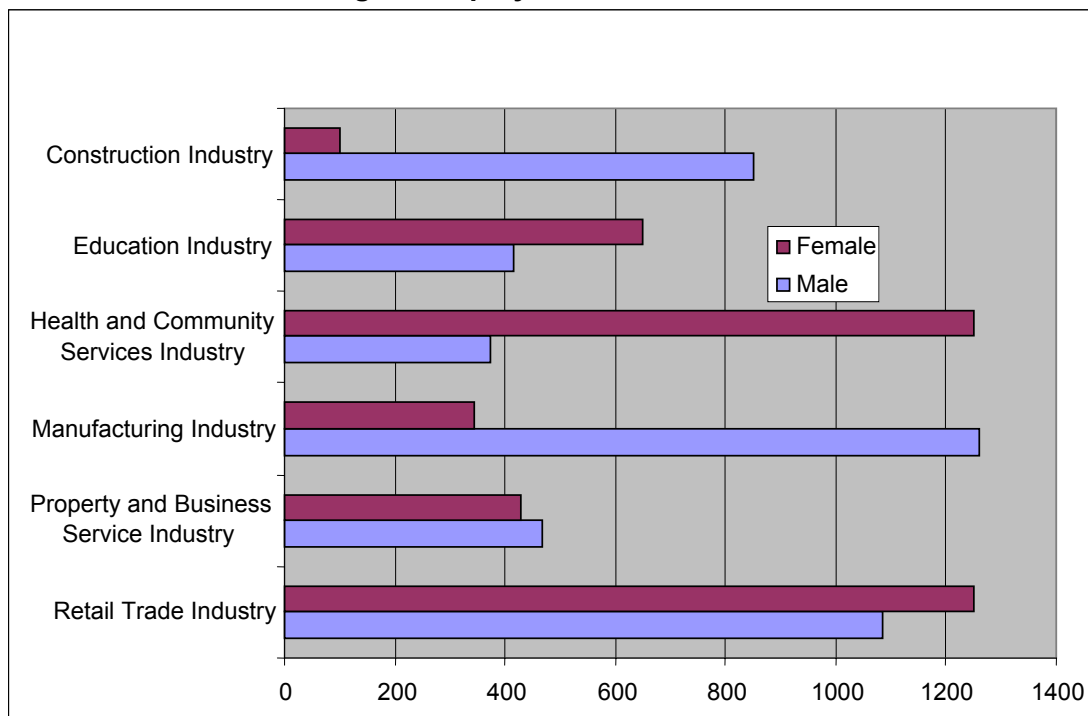
- United Kingdom 722
- New Zealand 201
- Netherlands 125.

Warrnambool has an ageing population, making a project such as migrant relocation even more attractive to the community as they consider how they may reinvigorate their population.

Warrnambool is the largest city on the Great Ocean Road and incorporates wet lands and some of Australia’s richest pastoral land which meet the coast of Australia. Warrnambool is a regional service centre and major industries and services include retail, tourism, education, health, dairy, meat processing, clothing manufacture and construction.

Table 2 below indicates the range of businesses in Warrnambool identifying a large number of small businesses. Warrnambool has had a long period of growth in building and construction as a result of an increase in the popularity of the area particularly due to its coastal location which is part of an Australian wide trend.

Table 2: Warrnambool Region Employment



Source: ABS Census Data, 2001

The City is home to the Warrnambool campus of Deakin University and is the central location of the South West Institute of TAFE.

REFUGEE RELOCATION IN WARRNAMBOOL

Project Background

In April 2002, the Greater Green Triangle Area Consultative Committee (GGTACC) held a regional summit on the skilled labour force issue. That summit concluded that

programs to attract migrant groups should be pursued in the region as a strategy to develop a population with demographics that could boost the labour force, i.e. younger men and families. This suggestion coincided with an initiative of the Warrnambool City Council to attract members of Australia's refugee community to the area. The Council held a regional information forum for community groups associated with the North Western Migrant Resource Centre and Westgate Migrant Resource Centre in Melbourne.

In 2002 a group representing the various interests in Warrnambool, was formed to establish whether it was feasible to relocate refugees into the area. They concluded that it may well be, but lacked the resources to complete the planning and implementation design of the project.

In early 2003 a philanthropic organisation carried out a feasibility study for relocating refugees in regional areas and concluded that Warrnambool would be a good place to run a pilot project based on its findings. The group of interested stakeholders in Warrnambool, led by Local Government and the philanthropic organisation had a very similar view on how such a project might be carried out. On that basis the philanthropists agreed to assist with financial backing and capacity building. A working party was established and identified four factors as key to the success of the project. They were:

- A welcoming community
- Employment and education opportunities
- Access to services
- Ability to connect with own community.

In 2003, the project began with an initial aim to relocate ten families from two migrant communities: Sudanese refugees and Iranian humanitarian or Temporary Protection Visa Holders. Warrnambool City Council had become the auspice of the project and had formally constituted the Advisory group as a Council Committee (Source: Warrnambool City Council). WCC specifically sought families rather than individuals.

As a result of the support from the philanthropic organisation, the project designed a relocation package to assist in the relocation costs to prospective new entrants.

The Relocation Package

- Two months of rent (equivalent to \$200 pw).
- Bond.
- Utility connection costs.
- Transport costs relevant to the identified needs of the family - assessed by the Migrant Liaison Officer (MLO).
- MLO support to access ESL, education, employment, housing, health and community services.

Families accepting this package also had to make a commitment as part of their agreement to relocate.

Commitment by Families

At least one adult member of each family to be in employment within one month of arrival.

- Be agreeable to secure private housing.
- Intend to settle permanently in the area.

The project began in earnest in 2003 and by mid 2004 had relocated the ten families required as an outcome of the funded project. Extended members of these families subsequently moved to Warrnambool either relocating from Melbourne or resettling directly to Warrnambool as a result of family sponsorship.

RELOCATION DATA: SWAN HILL AND WARRNAMBOOL

The research team initiated two major data collections, between July 2003 and December 2004, and December 2004 and July 2005. The aim was to quantify the movement of the refugee and migrant communities in and out of Swan Hill and Warrnambool. It has also aimed to provide a clear snapshot of employment pathways that were followed by the refugee and migrant community who had relocated.

Swan Hill July 2003 - December 2004

Core data for this period was:

- A total of 55 people moved to Swan Hill. 50 were single males and there was 1 family of 5. 37 have since left Swan Hill and 18 remain including 3 children.
- All have lived in private rental housing.

Table 3: Country of Origin – Swan Hill July 2003-Dec 2004

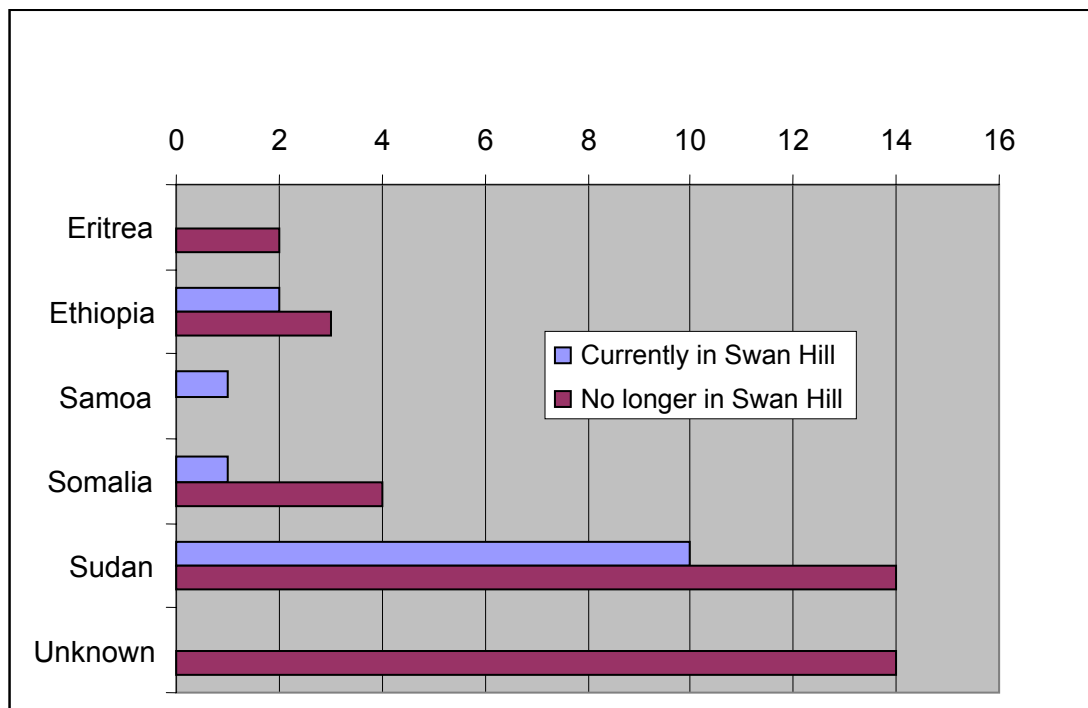
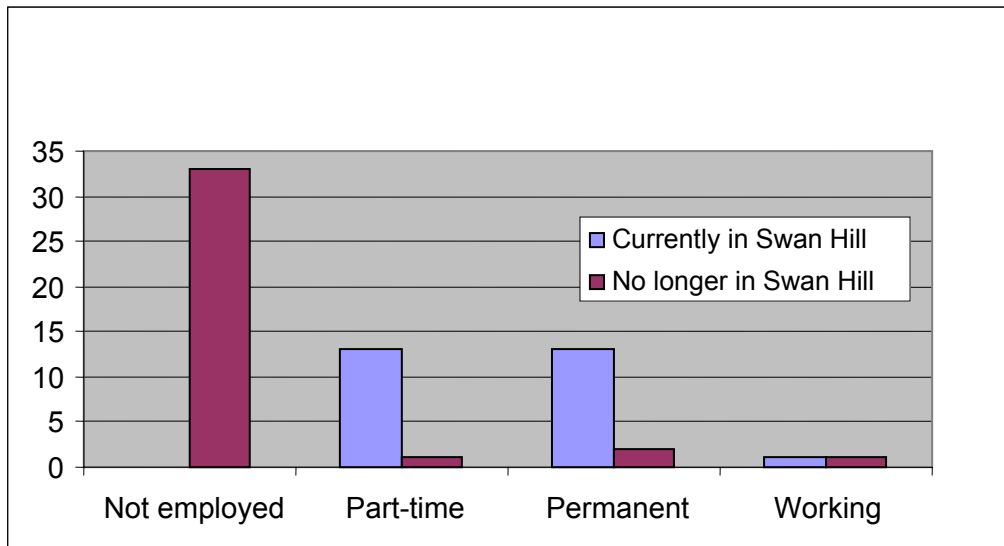


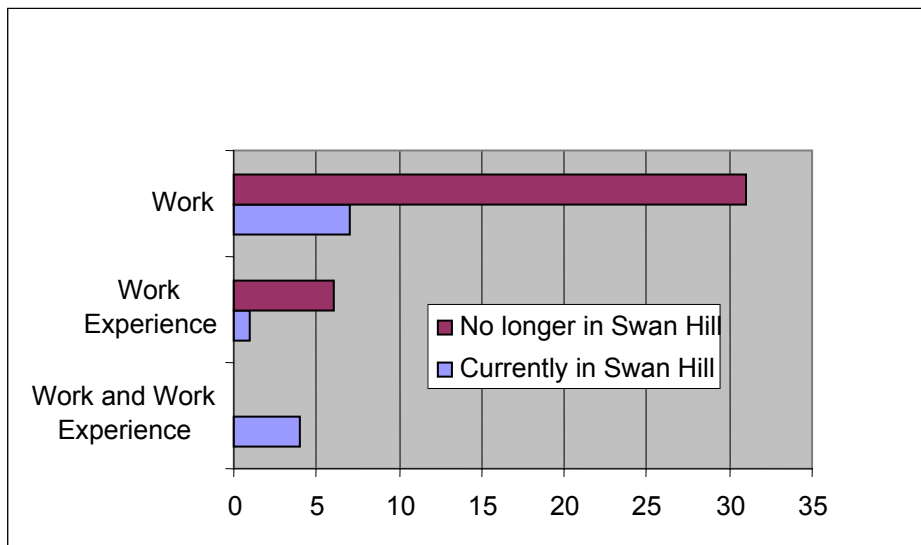
Table 4: Employment Status – Swan Hill July 2003-Dec 2004



All those currently living in Swan Hill have some form of employment.

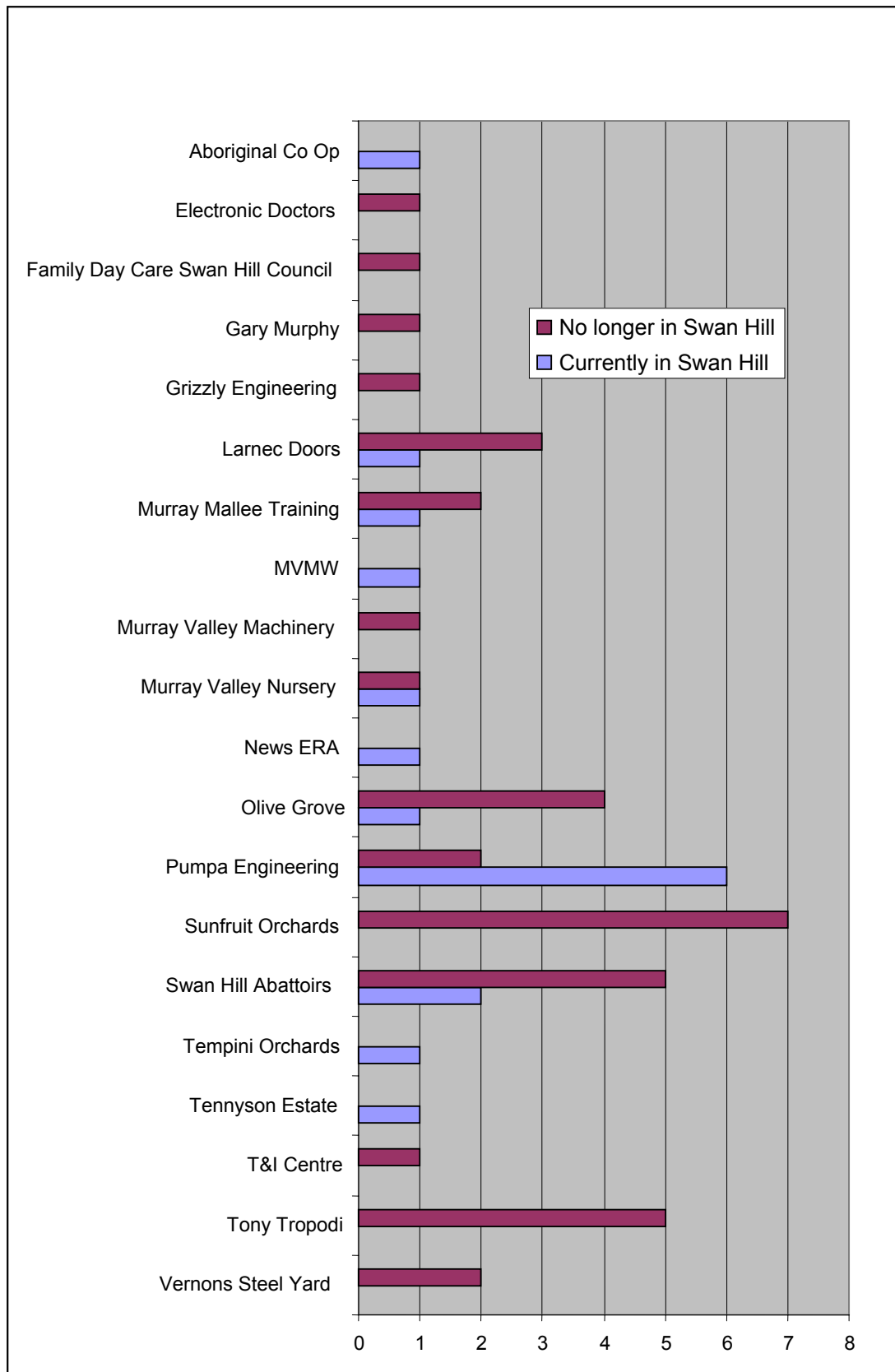
Table 5 below shows one of the key components of the Swan Hill project, which was work experience and the Community Jobs Programs. It was hoped that these programs would assist in the matching of both employer and employee and would also allow members of the refugee community to experience Swan Hill in the hope that they would relocate to the community.

Table 5: Placements (work, work experience, training) – Swan Hill July 2003-Dec 2004



Swan Hill had a range of employers, however, the community is heavily dominated by the Horticultural sector.

Table 6: Job Placements – Swan Hill July 2003-Dec 2004



Swan Hill December 2004 - October 2005

Core data collected for this period was:

- A total of 67 people have been a part of the program in Swan Hill through work and work experience
- 64 are single males and one family of 5
- 57 have left Swan Hill (including the family of five)
- Out of the 57 who have left Swan Hill, seventeen of them were part of the Community Jobs Program *
- 9 remain in Swan Hill and have been there for 2 to 3 years
- 5 of the current participants are attending courses other than ESL. 3 are attending Cert III Engineering courses and one is attending Cert III Mechanics.

* Community Jobs Programs (CJP) was funded by the Department of Victorian Communities, Employment Branch to develop infrastructure within a community. Projects were funded to employ an average of 12 participants full-time on a full-time salary whilst also providing training in specific industries.

Table 7: Number of people – Swan Hill October 2005

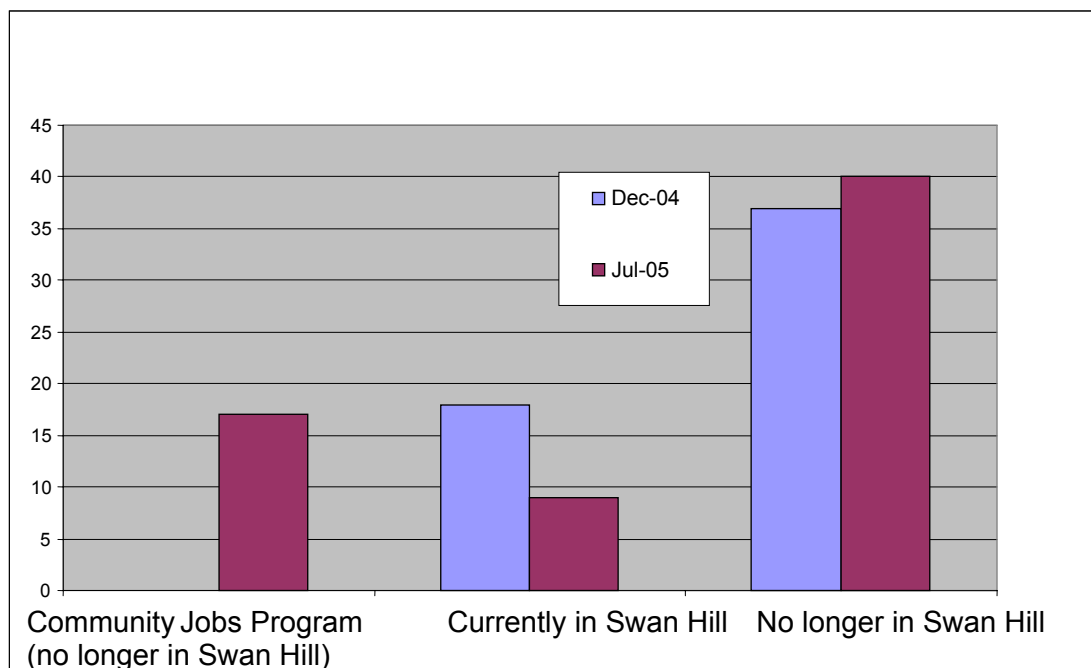
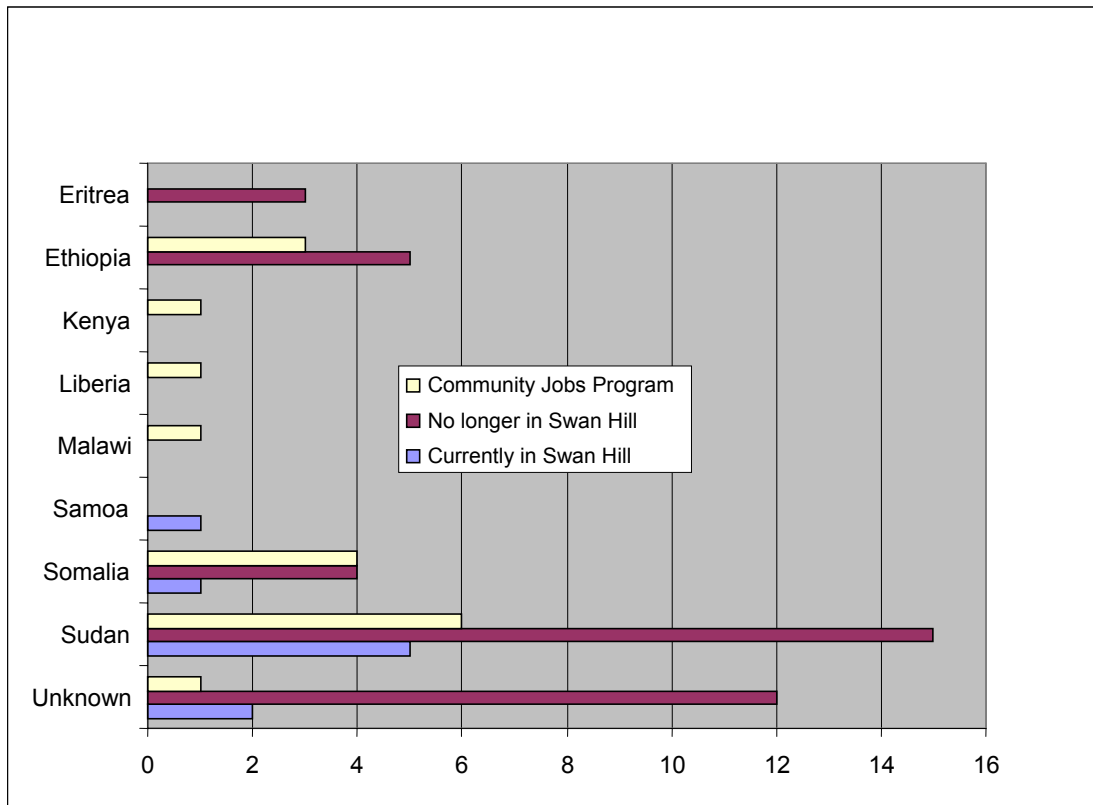


Table 8: Country of Origin of Participants – Swan Hill October 2005



N.B. 8 out of the 9 currently living in Swan Hill in October 2005 had permanent employment.

Table 9: Swan Hill placements – October 2005

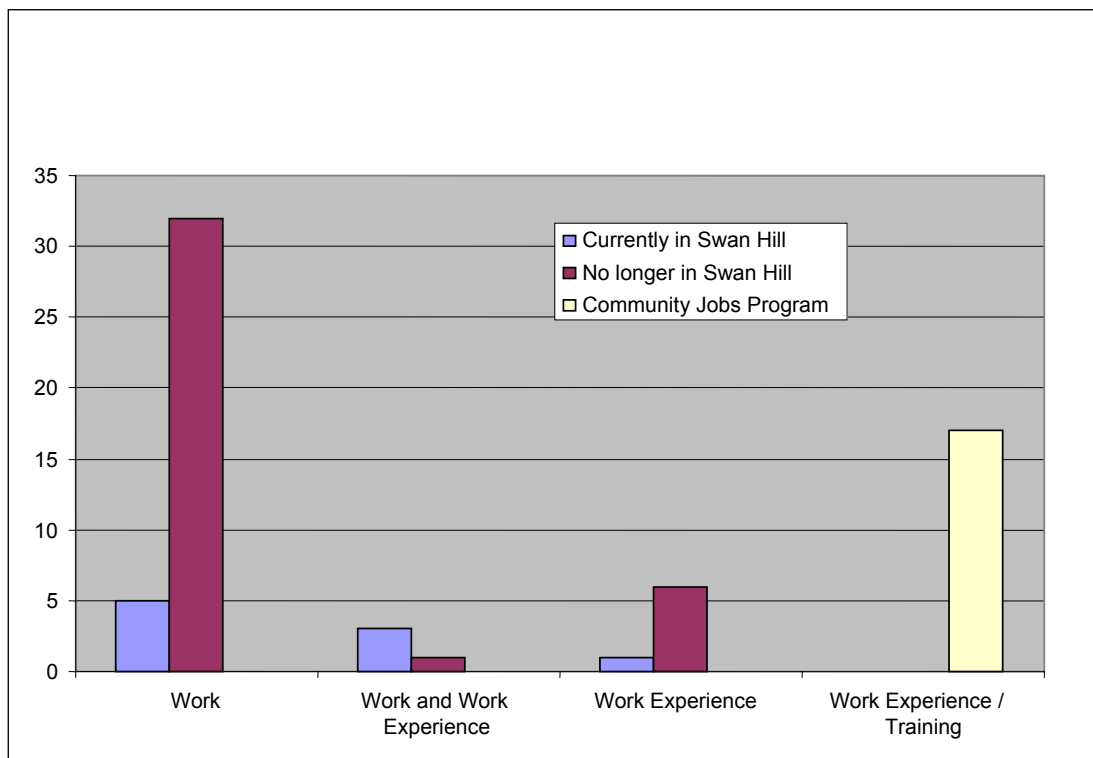
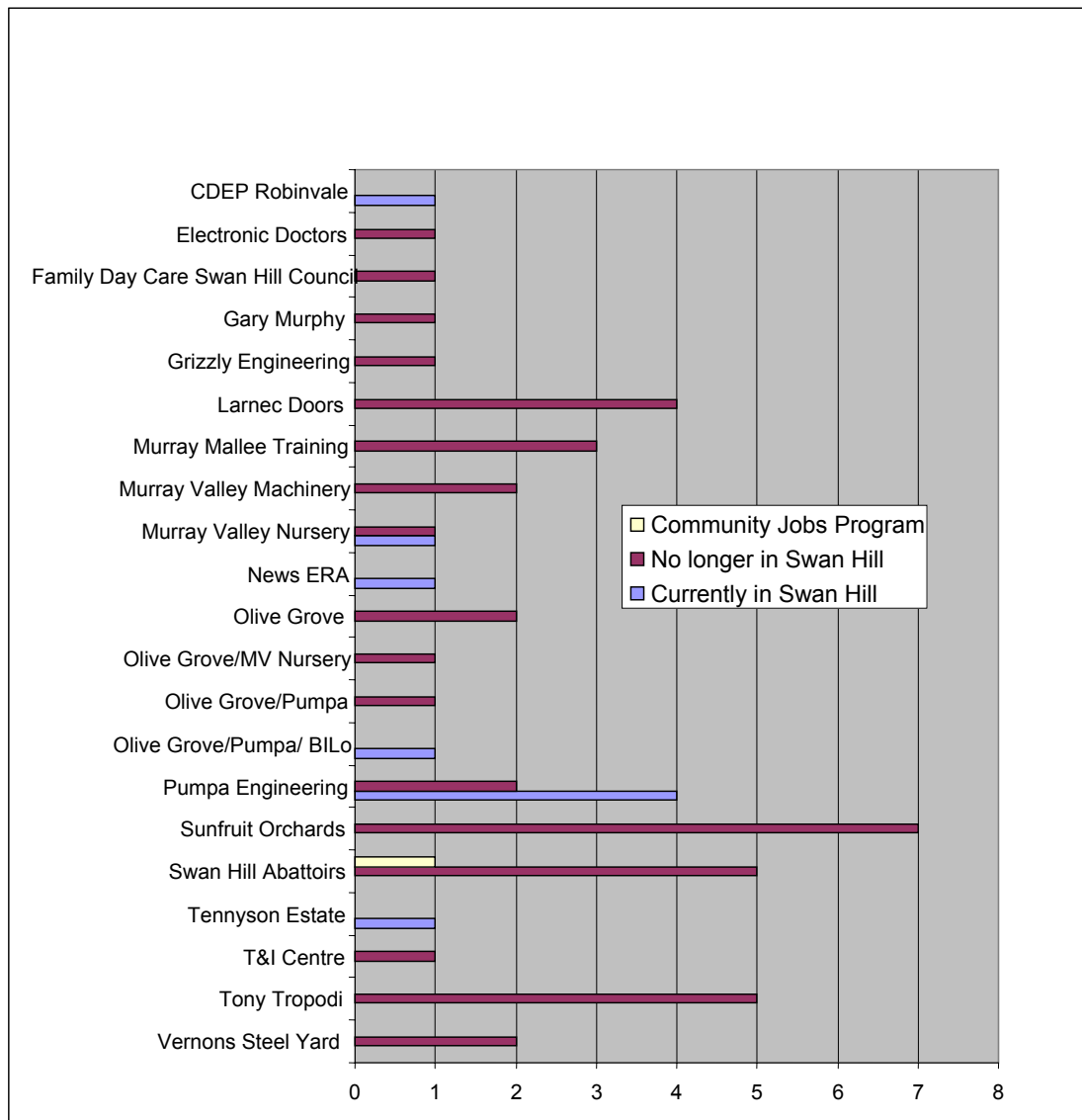


Table 10: Employment Placements in Swan Hill – October 2005



Warrnambool July 2003 - December 2004

Data for this period from Warrnambool was:

- 67 people making up 15 families consisting of 32 adults and 35 children
- All 15 families are from Sudan
- 6 of the 15 families were sponsored by relatives
- All 15 families are in private rental housing.

Table 11: School and preschool attendance – Warrnambool July 2003-Dec 2004

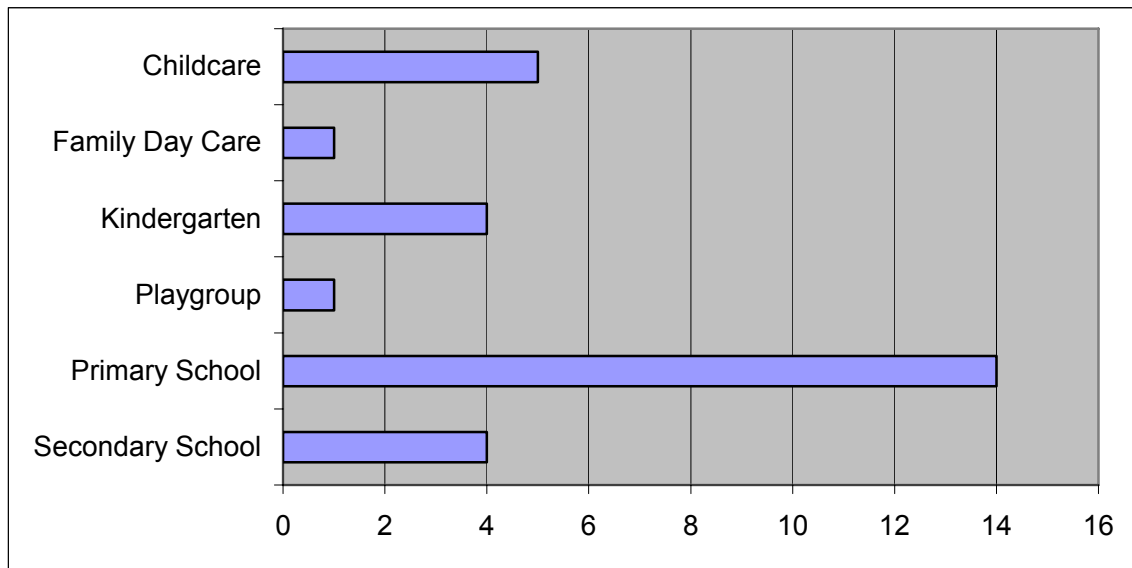


Table 12: Employment Status – Warrnambool July 2003-Dec 2004

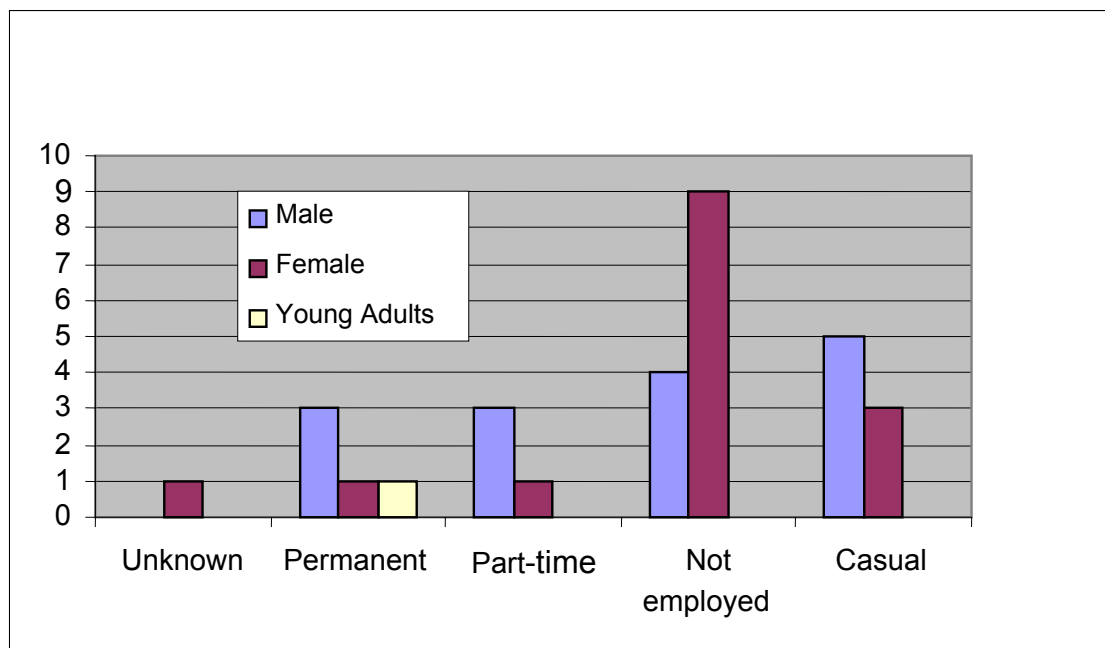


Table13: Job placements – Warrnambool July 2003-Dec 2004

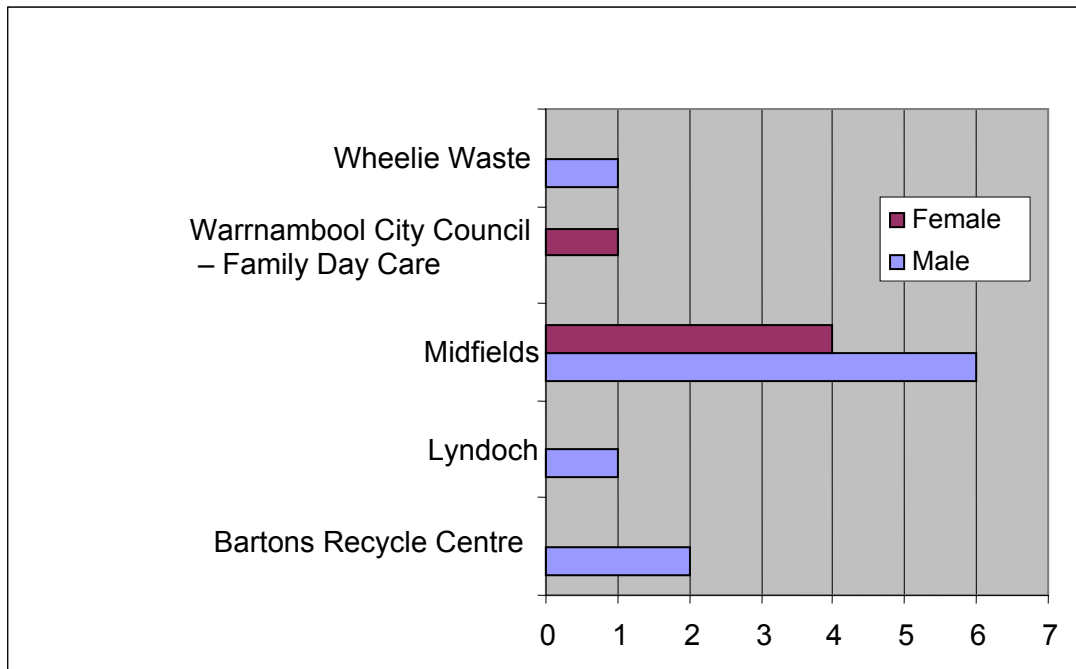
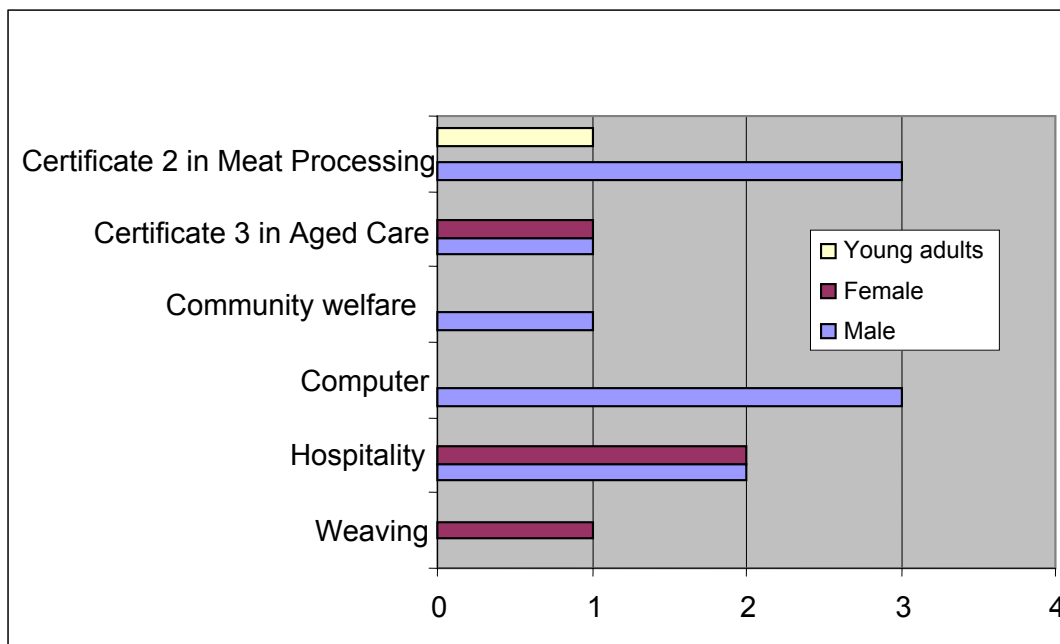


Table 14: Courses attended/ing (excluding ESL) – Warrnambool July 2003-Dec 2004



Warrnambool December 2004 - October 2005

Data from this collection found:

- 53 people making up 12 families currently reside in Warrnambool. There are 25 adults and 28 children.

- Since the last data collection, 4 families (7 adults and 8 children) have left Warrnambool and 1 family (2 adults and 2 children) are new arrivals.
- All 12 families were from Sudan.
- All 12 families were in private rental housing.

Table 15: Number of People – Warrnambool October 2005

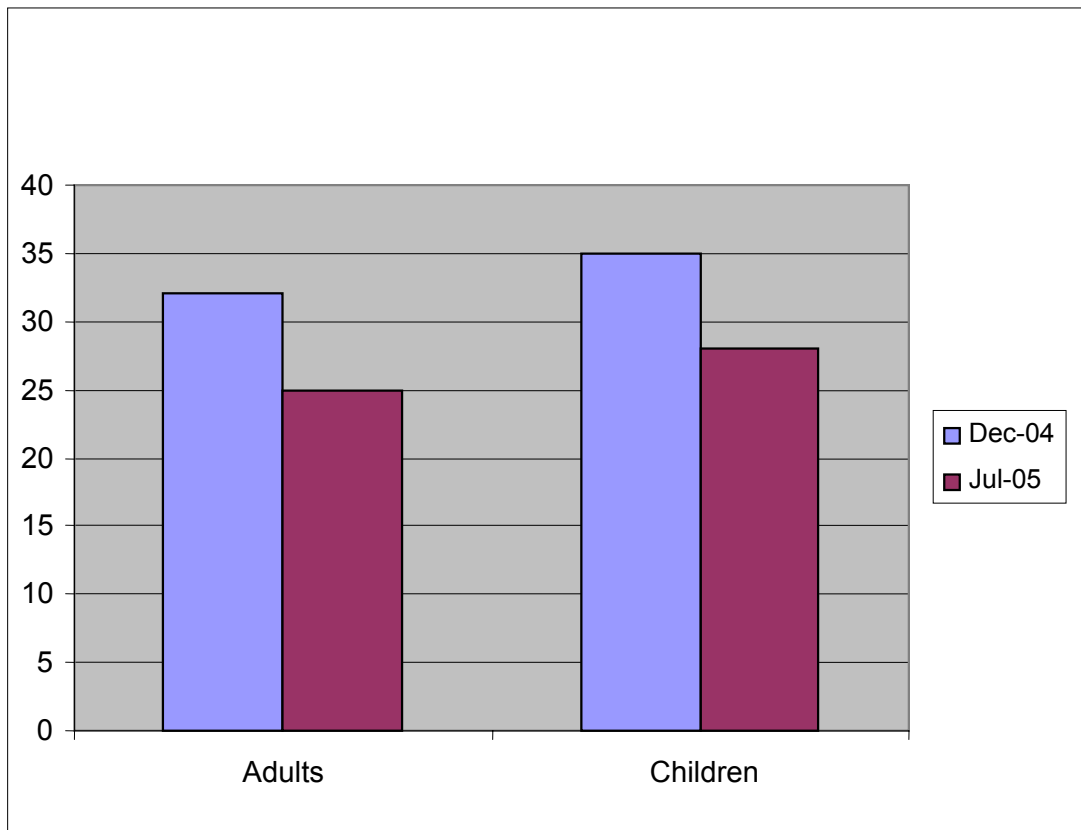


Table 16: School and preschool attendance – Warrnambool October 2005

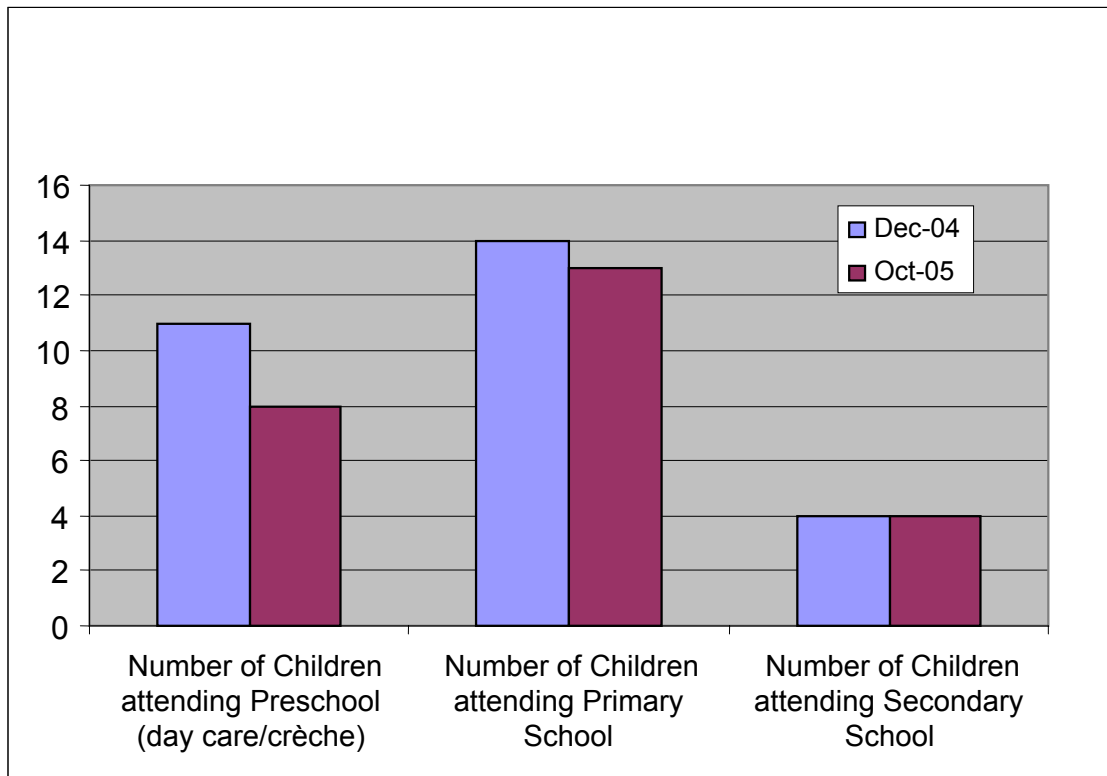


Table 17 identifies that there are still some members of the refugee community who could not find permanent work. This remains one of the current barriers to the sustainability of the Warrnambool project.

Table 17: Employment status – Warrnambool October 2005

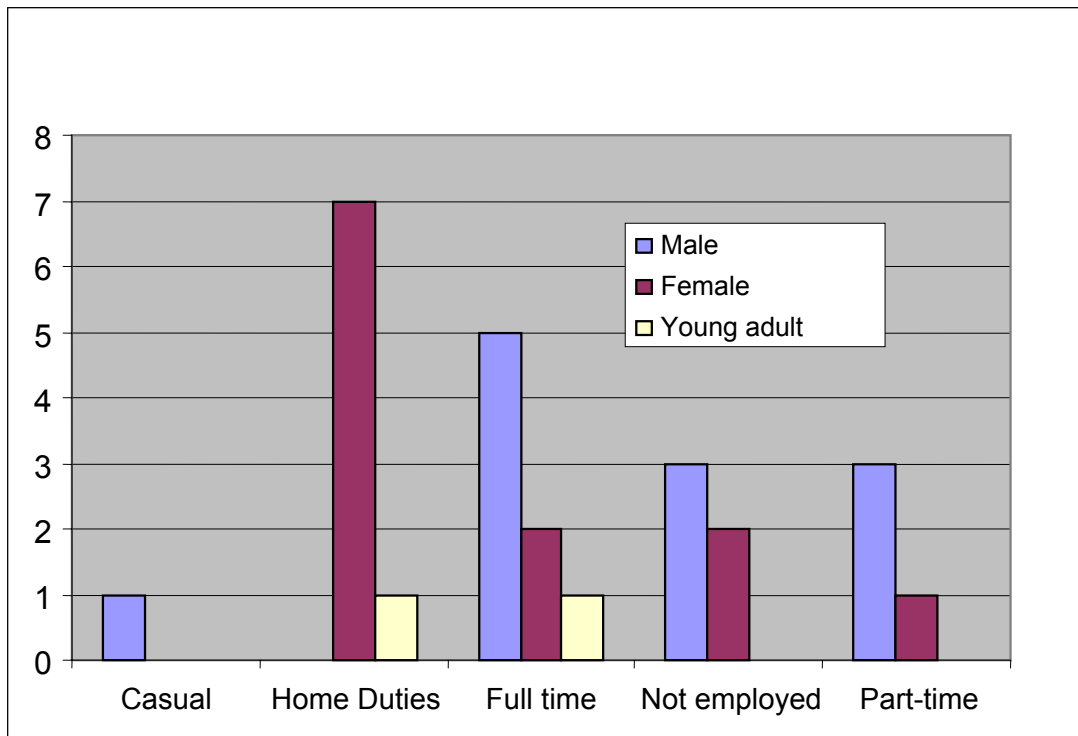
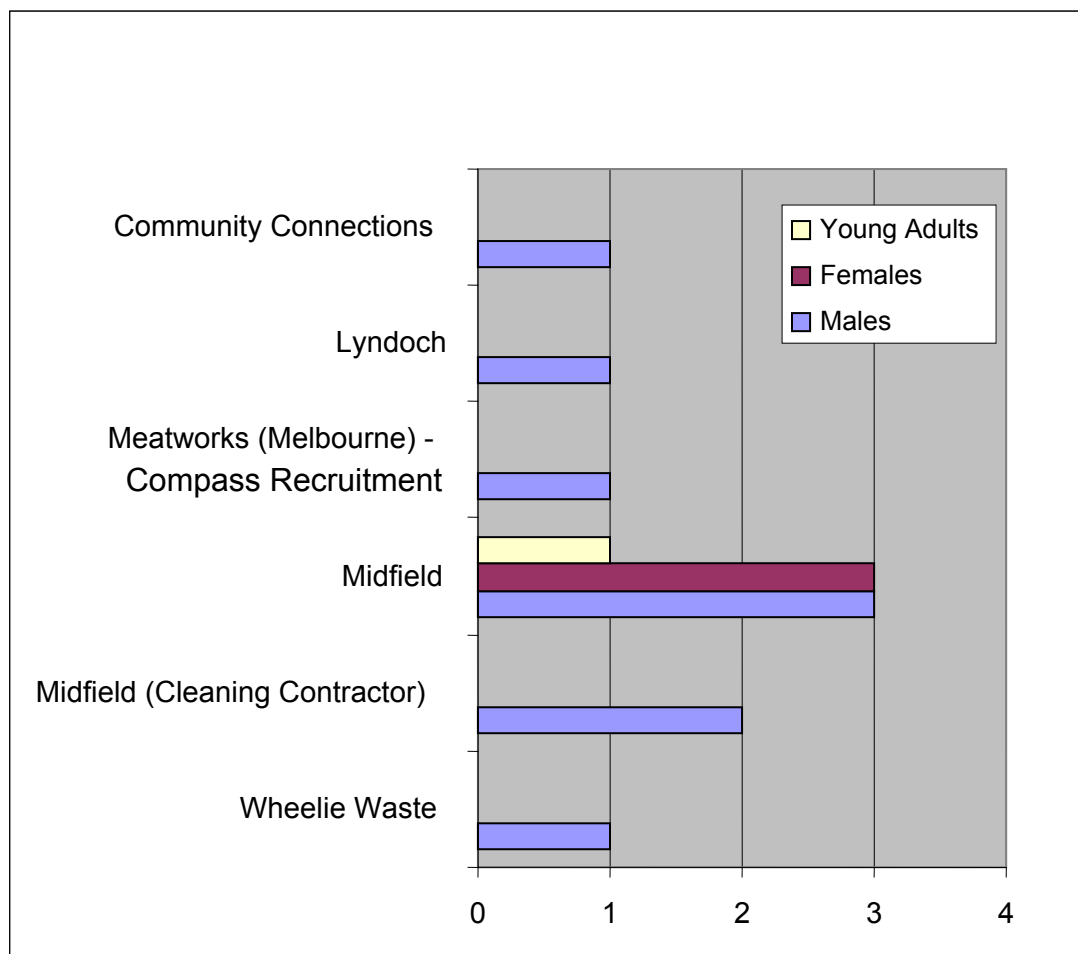


Table 18: Employment placements – Warrnambool October 2005



Comparing the Swan Hill and Warrnambool Data

The summary of data collection for both Warrnambool and Swan Hill enables us to contextualise the history and the experiences of the host and relocating communities. This statistical data enables us to identify differences and similarities within the two regional communities, the patterns of work and education experiences, as well as the migrant history of the communities.

The data that was collected during the period of the research show both similarities as well as differences between the two sites. One of the clear similarities is evidence that the Horn of African community has brought a range of skills into Australia, and has further built on those skills whilst in Australia. In the discussion on skilled migration, it is a salient reminder that we already have a population of humanitarian entrants that are keen to establish their credentials in a new country and have a range of established skill sets. Often what refugees lack is a firm

understanding of the Australian cultural terrain. The need to access these underutilised skills is a strong argument for greater investment in employment training for this group. Unfortunately, however, this project, as will be discussed later, found that many employers were not prepared to partner in this cost. This reluctance by employers is further evidenced by the high unemployment faced by the refugee community in every major city in Australia.

The first notable difference between the two communities is the fact that Warrnambool has a significantly larger population. It is not immediately obvious because of the Swan Hill Shire's broader population definition that includes a number of townships. However, some of these townships are an hour or more in distance from the Swan Hill city central defining that population's *community of interest* and the reality of employment opportunities and community networks and infrastructure. Swan Hill itself has a population of less than 10,000 people compared to the almost 29,000 in Warrnambool. A population differential such as this directly translates into differences in community infrastructure, education, volunteer networks, churches, recreation facilities and small business opportunities.

The figures are also quite stark when comparing the level of refugee retention in the two host communities. There has been considerable movement in Swan Hill, a factor noted and discussed later in this report. However stark the data may be, in Swan Hill, it is notable that there have been outcomes at the Melbourne end. Employment capacity of the refugee community participants has been built alongside the Swan Hill project as a result of the training component that was embedded in the initial project design. Eighty percent of the fifty participants in the Swan Hill Community Jobs Programs, work experience and Swan Hill pre-employment training are either in employment, employment and education or have remained within the education and training system and continue to develop their skills and English language. For these people the programs offered an entry point that was tailored to their specific needs.

Through their active participation in the pre-employment training that was available through the Swan Hill project, participants demonstrated their willingness to enter an employment and training pathway. However, as discussed later, it is also evident that they were not fully equipped or funded to make the significant move to Swan Hill on a permanent basis. Having made the trip to Australia, when faced with the choice, many did not wish to move again and face all of the challenges that moving to yet

another community would bring. Secondly, it is important to note that those that still remain in Swan Hill have permanent employment, though primarily with one employer.

The employment readiness of the two communities is a factor discussed later in the report and is evident in the data. Swan Hill had a wide range of employers that were at least willing to engage with the project. The Local Government at Swan Hill also had a well-developed economic plan, which centred on the agricultural industry. In Warrnambool the economic planning was a work in progress and consequently there were still members of the refugee community who could not find permanent employment. Those that had left the Warrnambool project, it was reported to the researchers, did so as a direct consequence of the lack of employment options and support available. Nevertheless, in both communities the employment outcomes have been a more fragile component to the projects, suggesting that there is still some work to be done with local employers.

The availability of education at Warrnambool may partly account for the relatively high participation in education by the refugee community, particularly in the first year of the project. However, as explored later in this report, this participation rate can be at least partly explained by the readiness of the refugee group located at Warrnambool. It was evident that the group were at a stage of their migration that allowed them to consider reviewing their employment and education options and taking action. The refugees expressed the view, that the move to Warrnambool was their attempt at establishing their lives in Australia and building the foundation of a good life for their children. As was expressed on many occasions, the move to Warrnambool was seen as an essential step in building their long-term future in Australia.

Engagement in education at Warrnambool became a clear feature of the refugee community's experience. This was likely to be due to the relatively easy access to education that was available as Warrnambool as the home of the major campus of South West TAFE. This was not the case at Swan Hill, reflecting the lack of education options and access in the smaller community of Swan Hill.

Finally, the data shows the importance of various components of the projects. School attendance was important in Warrnambool because all of the members of the

refugee community that relocated to Warrnambool did so with their family. In Swan Hill it was not until May 2005 the first family relocated to the community. The family did have one school age child but had left by the time the second collation of data was to be tabulated. Swan Hill data also reflects the number of participants who had work experience and/or were a part of the Community Jobs Program. Such programs were a consistent component of the Swan Hill project but not of the Warrnambool project. This is also notable and must be considered concurrently with the earlier discussion of the Melbourne outcomes of the Swan Hill project. Without fully understanding the framework of the Swan Hill project, the refugee retention data looks even more fragile than it actually is.

The following section provides more in depth analysis of successful and less successful elements of the two relocation programs while identifying key principles in relocation good practice.

5. THE COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL RELOCATION

This section of the report outlines the key criteria for successful relocation and the experiences in Swan Hill and Warrnambool in relation to these criteria.

A partnership between host communities, the refugee community and their advocates is fundamental to establishing a successful refugee relocation project

Partnership with the refugee community that may be relocating is an essential step in relocation projects. Without this communication vehicle the host community will never really know the challenges that are being faced by the refugee community. They may not reveal to the host community their real experience and are more likely to “vote with their feet”, leaving the host community long before there is any knowledge of problems encountered.

Advocates such as HACN can provide advice, cultural guidance and are a source of cultural information for local services. In the case of Swan Hill and at a latter point Warrnambool, HACN took on the partnership role of *Cultural Guidance*. This role, which was in place at the beginning of the Swan Hill project partnership, entailed HACN encouraging the Horn of Africa community to consider the relocation project. HACN effectively set out to promote the project within the community and attract potential participants.

The Swan Hill project was built on this partnership that grew between senior members of Murray Mallee Training, Victoria University and HACN. This is outlined below.

To tell you frankly, when we started this relocation in Swan Hill that was my vision, that people would go there, and they would have 100% support from us, you know we go and visit them, if there's any issue, they can pick up the phone and tell us and we will fix it. Murray Mallee would be very happy because we've got all the people coming there, So, that vision was shared and stays there, we share this vision with you. And we were planning to talk to schools, we were planning to go to the health centre and provide cross cultural information, its like the other suburb of Melbourne.

That's what my vision was about in Swan Hill because people as long as they work, they will be happy to be there. When you run a consultation, that's what people are saying, send us anywhere as long as we are valued. (HACN Community Leader)

Regardless of the barriers outlined, this cultural guidance role provided by HACN provided an essential link to the refugee community and an information conduit that can be a successful process for promoting the host community. This is an essential component to a successful project. Warrnambool identified the importance of the partnership in their guide, *A Warrnambool Welcome*, (2005).

Encouraging cultural group leaders to be involved in the process of introducing families to the program improves its chances of succeeding, as leaders have a greater knowledge of their community members than any outsider does.

Experience from previous relocation programs suggests that cultural leaders can deal with problems that may arise involving new settlers more effectively than local community workers can. Once a particular cultural group has decided to support relocation to your area, they and their leaders have a stake in making it work. This is a key in helping negotiate your way through any issues that arise. Warrnambool City Council, (2005)

Funding advocates: the Horn of Africa Community Network/Sudanese in Warrnambool Network

A building of capacity, in essence allocating funds for the volunteer advocates, is a vital part of a service delivery project and needs to stand alone as a project deliverable. Refugee advocates cannot work for free (though they continue to do so). When this occurs, there is risk of “burning out” and an inevitable loss of skills and knowledge to their community.

HACN operate as an umbrella organisation across Victorian and local community groups such as the Sudanese community group in Warrnambool which is a network of volunteers that develop programs, provide advice, advocate for their own ethnic community, liaise with other communities and drive policy change. It is a complex challenge to support those activities. The cost of travel, administration, phone and office are all currently done without any direct funding for those activities.

Having access to the expertise of a broad umbrella group such as HACN, who can offer a depth of experience of working with all communities, as well as local groups such as the Sudanese community group in Warrnambool who have the local focus, is invaluable to the implementation of relocation programs. This resource, however, is not sufficient in itself and it has been very difficult to attract capacity building funds.

Resources are required for the advisors, the advocates and what is effectively the voice of the refugee community who are consistently called upon for their expertise and their skills. Do they charge unit prices to local government and the community, and where does that cost flow on go? Which line item can it be funded from? This is a funding conundrum that requires resolve before the advocates are “burnt out”, and the communities have lost a coordinated voice.

We have been voicing our issues in regard to education, training, employment, housing, health. The government is really happy to give money but they don't give money for the community. They give money for service providers. And service providers are not using the money properly. What happen is you can put a submission, you can write up all the horrible things about the community that they have been through and they say we are going to fix this community. Once they get the money they will go and employ someone and they will come and say can you fit in this program. (Community leader)

Local government as the drivers of relocation

Relocating refugee communities require employment and support across many areas and it is critical that local governments take on this responsibility. .

There is no question that both HACN and Murray Mallee understood that relocation needed a broad community approach that would engender ownership. However, there were not the funds, nor the organisation (HACN or Murray Mallee) of the appropriate body to develop such ownership within the host community. The partnership required a greater ownership from the local government in Swan Hill who have the community mandate, knowledge and power to drive a project that was not just about employment but about improving community capacity. Local government were clear, in the context of the project and their role. As they saw it;

Here are various solutions that the Murray Valley Training Company has come up with in partnership with HACN and Victoria University ...it is a very valid program and we support it. We are there saying yes, it fits the needs of the community and it is a targeted program and we will support it in whatever way we can. We are not actually running with the project because Murray Valley Training Company are doing it. (Local Government officer)

So when we think of migration, we should not just think of international migration -it could be people from within the Country and that's like the Horn of Africa Project because that's not really migration as such, its relocation within the country. So whoever has got the skills and wants to live in Swan Hill or Robinvale, that's who we will be targeting. (Local Government officer)

Relocation program must be underpinned by community development principles

A community development framework of practice that builds human and social capital must drive a refugee relocation program. There is a need for a community project to be underpinned by a community development framework of practice and set of drivers.

The literature review that informed this research identified the importance of a framework of practice that builds the capacity of communities. In turn, the literature referred to the importance of building social capital and using community development principles as the chief project principles to drive the relocation projects.

There are many community agencies that embed their day-to-day practice within a community development framework. Nevertheless, as was noted earlier, there are few that have a broad community overview and responsibility. Even fewer that capture the full sentiments of the saying *cradle to the grave* in practice. Local government has such a responsibility and is in the best position to work with a community to share the responsibility, promote the cultural outcomes of a project such as this and plan with their community the best ways to build capacity to respond to the issues as they arise. HACN and Local Government share their views on the importance of a more holistic response in the text below.

In general, this whole process is very fluid. Unless we handle it properly we can lose it any time. We are dealing with human beings, a community of human beings and at the end of the day the decision will be theirs to relocate. This presents a whole process that is totally new for us especially for Australia. What I am trying to say is yes the Swan Hill area and rural area want a labour force and on the other hand the local community, the refugee community will have their own problems. One of the effective solutions is employment and there is common interest about how to implement it. There needs to be careful assessment and support and allocate the resources. (HACN community leader)

What I would have done differently is reconsider the role of the Migrant Liaison Officer. It is really a role for two people. You really need a role that focuses on support and a role that is focussed on capacity building of the project, particularly within the host community. And I think that's two distinct needs there and it has needed a team approach that's because it is just too steep for one role. (Local Government manager)

Initially the emphasis was on the recruitment of that officer which as I said could have been thought about a bit better at the time because it didn't work as well as we would have liked. Initially we also had an emphasis that the role had to be filled by someone from an ethnic background, where in actual fact, in a rural area you've got

to have some local knowledge. And its great to have that cultural overlay as well but it can't work without the local and in reflection you can't have someone coming from Melbourne to work in rural Victoria. (Local government manager)

A critical mass of refugees

To ensure the long term viability of refugee relocation, HACN insist that the relocating community is representative of a range of Horn of Africa communities and backgrounds rather than only one country of origin. The refugee community in Swan Hill has been built from each corner of the Horn of Africa. This is a philosophy that has become a *framework of practice* that HACN believe is integral to successful resettlement, and in this case relocation, in Australia. HACN argues that for the Horn of Africa community to rebuild in Australia they must leave their political divisions in Africa. The Horn of Africa community now share a similar resettlement experience, they would argue and as such, HACN believe, must work together to strengthen their community links and in turn the advocacy that is required for all their communities in Australia.

A question, however, for regional communities and the relocating refugees is one of critical mass from each of the Horn of Africa communities. It could be suggested, based on the Warrnambool experience, that any relocation project may well be served by the vision of a multicultural community from the Horn of Africa, in effect members from each of the countries of the Horn. However, success may be dependent on a community attracting a critical mass from each of those Horn of Africa countries to enable sustained support and social connection. In saying this, the research team are fully aware that this may not be an argument supported by HACN. Again their views are respected. Given the range of factors impacting on the Swan Hill project, it is not possible to determine how the diversity of the African community functioned in relation to the success or failure of the relocation.

Planning for housing demand and providing diversity of housing options

Both host communities (Swan Hill and Warrnambool) expected the refugee community to rent existing private housing stock. For most, this meant giving up their public housing in Melbourne, something most people were unwilling to do. This was a significant barrier for Swan Hill which was compounded by the absence of funds to assist in the expensive transition to private rental.

In Warrnambool, the refugee community were required, as a part of the relocation package agreement, to agree to only enter private rental as opposed to applying for access to public housing stock. This is a restriction that may be difficult to enforce in the longer term. The WCC knew of the restrictions of public housing in relation to the waiting list and the fact that being in employment would also preclude members of the migrating community applying for public housing. Their decision to include such a clause in the relocation agreement, they would argue, was a strategic one. For rural communities that have existing community members that cannot access public housing the debate is a sensitive one and that is acknowledged. Therefore, building rural communities means having affordable housing options. Private rental is expensive, often not of an adequate standard and not always central to schools and transport.

In regard to other things in regard to settlement when we first arrived, the council helped us to get into this house. Now things are changed. If your contract is finished it will take you 9 months to get another house because no one is supporting us. Now this house where we live in is for sale. If they tell us now move out it will be hard for us to get another house. We will have to look for a house on our own. This is the main problem. If the landlord or real estate agent says you must move out that will be a big problem for us. That is a big issue. (Refugee community member)

Neither community, it was apparent to the research team, really understood the limitations of their relocation plans until they were exposed to the difficulties faced by the refugee community. There was evidence reported to the researchers of discriminatory practices by agents and landlords in relation to available housing stock and its availability was limited.

The community don't necessarily understand the impact of the move and losing their Centrelink benefits, rental assistance, not being able to apply for public housing here. (Community stakeholder)

A huge issue and if you are asking people to relocate, and they might already have access to a public housing, whether it be high rise or whatever, they're locating out here and they've got to pay bond and four weeks rent in advance, forget it. It's hard enough for professionals to come up with that sort of cash let alone someone who's on a factory worker wage and has six kids. No way. (Community service provider)

It is also important to acknowledge that the payment of rent on the private rental market limits the refugee community's ability to develop employment pathways, particularly if they wanted to undertake further training. Establishing greater choice in employment pathways, based on further study, means being further limited on the

type of paid work that can be undertaken. Paid work must also fit into course hours and as such may further limit earning capacity.

Central to this discussion is also the position of the refugee community in having to rebuild their own physical capital. The host community has had time to build physical capital; the refugee community is starting again and must purchase everything they need. Therefore, private rental poses further pressure on their employment choices, as they require a certain income to be able to pay rent and other household and family expenses. Both parents usually have to work, putting pressure on childcare. These compounding pressures need to be anticipated in the planning of good practice refugee relocation. This was becoming increasingly obvious to service providers as can be seen in this text below.

Also another problem I see for the people is that they have to survive so they are working shift work so having time then to be able to do things that will help to get their other skills recognised. Coming to ESL classes is so hard for those people to come. They have worked a 12 hour shift which makes it hard. The shift varies. Sometimes people can be working from 10.30pm to 6am and then there is 6am to 3 and then there is an interim shift which is 3-11. (Community Service provider)

This is a vexed issue and needs several responses. It is not an issue that is simply about public versus private housing provision. The issue of *affordable* housing must be a key concern in the broader debate. One potentially effective response is the provision of low-cost modular housing. This has already commenced in Warrnambool and could be considered as a national project to assist with the availability of quality housing in rural communities. The regional advisor in Warrnambool was already looking to advise council and government on the possibilities, as she outlined to the research team.

These are beautifully designed, five star energy rated buildings that come on the back of a flat bed truck, you start at 9.00 in the morning and you can move in at 5.00 that day. It takes two people to put them together. Everything is modular. And you can adapt the design for the five families that are coming, a basic three bedroom, two bathroom unit is around \$130,000 and that's about 15 squares. So its really quite an affordable fast housing solution which will be great to maybe look at how we can sponsor that so that's something that I think would be great to look into in the future. (Regional advisor)

The issue of affordable housing has already been highlighted as a crucial component of good practice. This is a policy issue that crosses every level of government and requires further coordination. The lack of affordable housing options in rural

communities is compounded by the poor access to public and private rental. This is further compounded by the lack of housing subsidy for private rental. This requires a multi pronged approach that is inclusive of the range of strategies that have been raised including access to public housing, low cost housing alternatives and relocation costs being subsidised.

Well it needs a whole government approach especially from the States working with the Feds because while we want them and we want the infrastructure, housing agreements you know all that needs to be sorted out. We need more public housing, yeah but the whole government has to work on it to build up the infrastructure in regional rural centres. (Community Service provider)

Community planning must happen previous to, at the beginning of, and concurrent to, the implementation of a refugee relocation program

The implementation of a systematic planning strategy is essential to relocation projects. Planning must be a fluid process that engages the community in the vision, aims to engender ownership, develops skills, identifies necessary service gaps and resources and works with all of the community to provide solutions. It is imperative that it begins before people arrive.

There will be (and was in both communities) planning issues for the community sector, the health sector, police, education (both primary, secondary and tertiary), employers, sport and recreation bodies, churches, volunteer networks, the indigenous community, local social networks, real estate agents, the media and retailers. It is necessary that all sectors are involved in the planning to avoid “bushfire management”. This is exactly what happened in both communities at different times whilst some of this development and planning “caught up” to the project implementation.

Generally this community is amazingly welcoming and go out of their way to be of assistance. The numbers will be a critical point to how the settlement works. We need case workers here and they need to be face to face and work beyond the 9 - 5 working hours. (Community stakeholder)

In the absence of early planning, however, the research team observed a very stressed education system as it tried to respond to the needs of new refugee children with only limited preparation being undertaken before their arrival. For example, the team encountered a young man who had been moved from Melbourne in November and had no way of developing or connecting to a social circle through education

before a very long summer break. The TAFE system, which had limited resources, also struggled to manage the increased demand for English Language. There were also a number of incidents documented involving police and local service providers. Not all issues could have been avoided, however, some problems that were encountered could have been avoided or minimised with good planning in place.

The quotes below provide an insight into the perspectives from a member of the refugee community and a community stakeholder that illustrates the intersection of community planning that is required.

I have brought this psychological impact from my past experience. I have never elected a leader in my own life, I never had a voice in politics. It is unbelievable to think that my voice means something in this country. Now I see how people have a voice and freedom and policies involve looking after their sector of their community. Back home the local politicians could have civilians arrested without a warrant so I was afraid of the police, they could hurt me. For a person who is brought up in this kind of environment to come and convince himself that this is a totally different culture and setting this takes quite a long time. (Refugee community leader)

And we have to do a mountain of work...we are trying to work out what are the issues, how do we best work with these people and the issue around their ethnic background, how that impacts and the issue of torture and all that we just don't know enough and we are not clear about what our role is and who is going to pick up what. I think that would be really useful for us, as agencies, to begin that thinking and be facilitated to do that. It needs to be facilitated, we just don't know enough. We are sort of running from, ok, we've got eight now, where is the pattern happening. (Community stakeholder)

All sections of the community require some induction, resources and support to develop long term planning strategies, many of which entail understanding cultural change.

- For the education sector it will be developing expertise in responding to the diverse learning needs of the refugee community.
- For the police it may be support to respond to policing issues with cultural sensitivity.
- For the community sector, it may be preparation and resources to respond to referrals for support services, cross-cultural training, a review of resources and a link with community elders.
- For the TAFE sector it will be managing their limited English as a second language (ESL) resources for a new population desperate for more English Language training and employers desperate for more English on the job.

- For the health sector it will mean reviewing all practices and procedures. In Warrnambool, for example, it was necessary to support a pregnant Muslim woman who was planning to give birth in Warrnambool. This presented cultural issues they had not come across before. The process is captured below.

I went with a couple to the hospital for that induction just mainly to assist the hospital and the couple to make the links with each other. The staff showed them around the nursing room. They explained all the machinery and not to be afraid of this etc. The couple didn't have any English at all. They also got the translators ... a couple of questions that I thought may have been in their minds around circumcision and explained all that. This gave them an opportunity to talk directly to the staff about who would come into the room, who would be involved etc. It was important to remember every detail, even taking them down to emergency because the Warrnambool hospital front door is closed during the night so you have to get access through emergency and only the security guard can let you in. Staff even introduced them to the security guard and explained that it would be someone like this and they will know that you are coming. I explained even where they had to park. So all the little really detailed stuff and then we followed up with that later on and just said, look after we've been to the hospital if you think of anything else, just draw up a list of questions that you think about. (Local government manager)

Each service needs a cultural plan that is inclusive of all cultures currently these are not culturally inclusive of all and are academic. This needs to become a living and breathing part of the process not just a framework. (Community service provider)

In the midst of all of this, there may be the odd crisis and there will be many community highlights – all of which would generate media interest. This must be done with the utmost sensitivity and requires coordination, liaison, resources and the ability to encourage a collaborative response to identifying gaps and developing further resources. This is a particular challenge given the current Federal Government policy of competitive tendering. The most recent round of funding in Warrnambool has seen a change of the provider for Refugee Settlement services. Their coordination work must now start again with a new provider that is to service Warrnambool. This process was further evidence that local government is in the best position to provide the community with the stability that is required to build a successful project within a changing environment.

Financial support for relocation of the refugee community

Financial support for relocation of the refugee community is an essential component for success. The Warrnambool project, as outlined in the introduction of this report, was supported by a grant from a private fund

On this basis the project was able to engage people that may relocate with the support of a “relocation package”. The package was in the form of an agreement, which included the following:

- At least one family member in employment within one month of arrival.
- Be agreeable to secure private housing.
- Be on Humanitarian Visas.
- Intend to settle permanently.
- Two months of rent (equivalent to \$200 pw).
- Amenity connection costs such as electricity, telephone, etc.
- Relocation costs assistance.

It was a flexible grant of up to \$10,000 per family that assisted them to relocate by paying relocation costs and also having a small amount that could be individually tailored to specific needs. That included such items as sporting club fees, school fees, license costs and initial job searching costs.

This provided Warrnambool with the opportunity to implement a selection process, in which families applied to relocate to Warrnambool and in so doing get access to the package benefits.

The research team believed that the opportunity to implement a process to engage members of the refugee community to consider moving to Warrnambool was a significant factor in the sustainability of the project in this community. Having said this, some of the rules of the package were restrictive, particularly in relation to housing, an issue discussed earlier.

There were many African refugees in Melbourne, HACS said over 200, who expressed a desire to relocate to Swan Hill but ultimately did not do so because of the relocation costs.

Establish an anchor community as a basis for further relocation and resettlement

Good community processes will build a refugee relocation program by establishing a stable anchor community for the refugee community to build both resettlement and relocation in the long term.

The refugee community have already faced the challenges of moving to a new country and in the case of those relocating, a new community. For the refugee community, resettlement is a challenging process that requires negotiating a different culture and language. For many, relocation would mean that they would need to consider another move from what have become trusted surrounds. For some, moving away from a community that is now familiar, will be a challenge considered too great. The lack of culturally appropriate food, availability of religious meeting places, family, shopping and simply a knowledge of the community infrastructure undermines feelings of safety and support, as attested to by this community leader:

So what is important when we talk about relocation is we come from a very communal life and even people get isolated while they live in Melbourne let alone to send them to an area where there is no African they can talk to. (Refugee community leader)

Relocation is to ask that refugees repeat parts of their resettlement experience. Only some will be able to manage the relocation process successfully in the initial stages of building a new community through relocation. The initial members of the refugee community are expected to establish multiple community entry points, in effect partner the host community to prepare to meet the needs of the relocating community. Therefore, the long-term success of relocation projects are highly dependent upon the resilience and abilities of the first wave as well as on the readiness of the host community.

To quantify such a personal skill set is a task for future research, however, it is clear from this research that the process set by the Warrnambool Council for the purpose of engaging members of the refugee community to enter the Warrnambool Relocation project assisted in their retention and the subsequent sustainability of that project. The quote below captures a piece of that personal vision that may drive a migrant to relocate from the original community that they resettled in.

You have to set for yourself certain dreams. Some you will be able to achieve and some you won't. You will evaluate yourself year by year that I have achieved these and I haven't achieved this. If it is important because some will come up important than the one you thought before. It actually has to do with the lifestyle. Because the lifestyle I want is not in the city. I want a relaxing life. (Refugee community member)

To place that process in a framework of practice that may provide some insight, the research project drew from the UNHCR work on Refugee Resettlement (UNHCR,

2002). The literature review outlines in some detail the *Stages of Adjustment* in which, the UNHCR argue is a common process of resettlement for the majority of the refugee community.

Many will pass through each stage as they grapple with the challenges of moving countries under what can be assumed as traumatic circumstances. The process is not linear and will not be the same for each person. Some may continue to struggle with aspects of transition to a new country and as such further transition, such as to a rural or regional community would only serve to be further disrupt the resettlement process for them, their family and community. On that basis a process to engage the refugee community to build a relocation project must try and come to terms with the components that will assist the refugee community, particularly in the first stage of the project establishment, to be successful. Two migrant leaders were asked about the transition and whether they themselves could identify with the stages of adjustment as outlined.

Whether they have it or not, when you talk to people, first of all, when you talk to them, you see that whether they are willing to take the challenge. As you said, just to go to school for example, it costs money, it costs energy, it cost a lot of things and to the family too. So when you talk to them you don't say go to school and listen. If you go to school, this is the result. If you do this and you get a job, this is where you are going to go. You give them all the options, two or three options. They go away and think about it. If they are keen, they get back to you. They keep coming back for more and more information, more ideas, more things and you see them, they research, they do things, they do whatever you ask them, they bring something back, and I'm doing this, I've applied here, I'm happy, what am I going to do next. (Refugee community leader)

In the Swan Hill and Warrnambool projects it would seem that Warrnambool had more success in identifying those factors and establishing a strong anchor community to build their relocation project. The research found limited evidence that the Warrnambool process used to engage the refugee community was based on a cultural understanding as has been outlined, however, it would seem that the process was built from solid community development practice. Community workers of some experience implemented the process using their knowledge of their own community, how social capital is developed, personal resiliency and the importance of families in securing social inclusion and individual wellbeing.

Below is a small excerpt from the *Warrnambool Welcome*, (2005) outlining their approach but more importantly the values that underpin the selection process. It is

coupled with a quote from a member of the refugee community about the importance of the opportunities to make a transition to a community that may offer new opportunities.

Results from other relocation programs have shown that those attracting young families rather than single workers are more likely to succeed. This is because families provide support to each other in difficult times and create a home environment where they can express their cultural identity freely. They also engage more easily with other newly arrived families and the wider community. Children in newly arrived families integrate into schools, learn English more quickly than many adults and provide community links for the whole family.

It is not easy for people once they have given up everything and once they have left, been uprooted from their area which they have lived in for 20 or 30 years leaving their careers, professions and come here and start to move on. For me these initiatives where ever it is, where they can utilise their talent or expertise, wherever it is, whether it is in a rural area or urban area they have decided to move on and give a positive contribution. (Refugee community member)

What this enabled Warrnambool to do was to build the first stage of a long-term community project. The first stage of the project has attracted a strong *anchor* community that have formed their own community group and who are currently working alongside council to identify the issues that they face as a relocating community and how they may collectively resolve them. If the vision for Warrnambool continues to progress and the community infrastructure required by the relocating community is established, then relocation will become resettlement in the longer term. Family sponsorship is one such vehicle to grow a community.

The quotes below illustrate a most interesting community perspective when asked about the level of independence evidenced by the first members of the relocation refugee project. The people relocating could identify key personal factors that meant that this group of refugees were managing the transition with some success.

The good results we have had from here have come from people who aren't as dependent at this point in their journey - that have had a purpose to get on with their lives. (Migrant Liaison worker)

Well the other difficulty is that it's not always going to be required. I'm astounded at the level of autonomy and independence that many of the Sudanese families demonstrate. So not everyone needs intensive support but some do and some just need access to information. Some are perfectly capable of doing what they need to do provided they've got the appropriate information. So I don't know how the Hospitality and Welfare students worked things out for themselves but they obviously have done it and navigated the system. (Community stakeholder)

A salient reminder, at this point, is to note that Warrnambool had the luxury of *requiring* a process to engage and inevitably invite members of the refugee community to participate in the pilot project. They had money to support the relocation process and wanted to engage refugees that were most likely to stay in Warrnambool post the relocation monies being available. The Swan Hill project has consistently sought such a fund without success. Their lack of a relocation funding package has clearly contributed to the different outcomes in the two communities two years hence.

Avoiding relocation in stages over longer periods of time and funding relocation cost

In Swan Hill, many of the refugee community, who had visions of a longer term relocation, found it necessary to undertake a family reconnaissance, *before* the family as a whole would make the move. This effectively meant that the men would move to Swan Hill ahead of their family to see whether circumstances for the whole family to move would prevail. However, often this only served to deplete family resources while the working father would travel between the two communities. It was frequently reported that the women did not want to come in the absence of adequate social resources and networks.

The quotes below highlight this issue. This member of the refugee community held a job and was trying to maintain a connection with his family whilst they decided whether they would move to Swan Hill.

As I told you I am thinking to bring my family here but it is too much money. Because when you bring your own luggage, all this stuff it is very costly. And when you bring your children you pay for the school. So this may take me time that is the thing. But the other thing, what I don't like is the transportation which is very expensive. For me I have no concession and I pay too much money. Because of transportation some time I cannot go to see my family for three weeks. One month I didn't go because I cannot afford myself. (Refugee community member)

Particularly with this guy, he has a family in Melbourne. He can't afford to bring his family up here. But what it is costing him here is 80.00 dollars a week for rent. He goes home every fortnight which is 100.00 dollars on the train. So it is 130.00 a week to have a house and maintain contact with family. He is paying 140.00 a wk to have a house in Melbourne. I am trying to tell him that up here he can get a three bedroom house for 160.00 dollars a week, but they are reluctant to give up their ministry homes in Melbourne. (Murray Mallee project officer)

HACN understand this information and the leaders of this community recognise who is likely to successfully make the relocation transition and who may want to move to a rural community. However, the lack of direct financial support for relocation meant that this process was at times more adhoc. HACN and Murray Mallee lacked the power of monies to support the process and many people went for a short term stay (and the benefits of employment) to Swan Hill probably without seriously intending to consider it to be long term. The project officer identified in this quote that there was only a limited attempt at a process to engage members of the refugee community to participate in the Swan Hill project.

We started with the first two orientation packages that were open to anybody male or female and didn't matter what the skill base was, it was just people who were interested in the thought of relocating to Swan Hill and being involved in the orientation program. (Swan Hill project officer)

This, of course, became its own self fulfilling prophesy for Swan Hill. The limited resources and process meant that there was never a critical mass of families, women and children that provided the community with the necessary social connections to support long term retention, a feature, which research has identified as a significant factor of the success and challenges of the two projects. This is further highlighted by the reality that Warrnambool was able to sustain its project and more importantly retain its migrant community beyond expectations which were based upon the international experience that the project was benchmarked against.

Allowing and planning for ongoing growth

A further important point relating to program retention in the Warrnambool project is that the Warrnambool leaders, based on international experience, predicted ongoing migrant community growth as a result of the original families who had chosen to relocate to Warrnambool. This growth, it was predicted, would be built from family reconnection through sponsorship.

This growth, originally predicted, as a ratio of five new families for each relocated family already based in Warrnambool, had not, at the completion of the evaluation, come to fruition. It could be suggested that this slow growth continues to substantiate the research paradigm on the stages for successful resettlement as a policy and program solution. It reflects the unwillingness of new refugees to move to communities with limited social infrastructure, preferring to move to urban centres

with a substantial critical mass of their fellow ethnic group and the subsequent culturally specific service provision that accompanies that critical mass.

This framework, it should be noted, is not exclusive to capital cities; the juxtaposition for the urban centre is the host community readiness, their ability to provide social inclusion, access to economic resources and a community that is free from discrimination. What is being suggested is that it is reasonable to assume that newly arrived members of the refugee community must make his or her own progress to be able to make the successful transition to their own reconstruction stage, and in so doing, require a level of community willingness and community infrastructure.

Engage families

Women and Children are an essential component of establishing a strong anchor community and community networks that connect the relocated community to the host community.

In line with the process of engagement as identified above, one of the key elements of that process was the engagement of families. Families build communities and they connect individuals into those communities. Children go to school or kindergarten, make friends, involve themselves in school events and connect their parents to the community. Women and children are the most common mechanism to connect individuals into a community through their social networks, through their church and by connecting to other women and children. This was the key mechanism of sustainability that Warrnambool aimed for and it proved to be successful for them. A range of community stakeholders as is identified below also easily identified it as an important strategy.

The children help integrate into community the women get smiles out shopping.
(Community stakeholder)

If single workers are selected and families remain elsewhere, the local community has only gained one worker – an important consideration if the area has an ageing population. Single workers have to pay for their own upkeep locally, as well as for their family elsewhere, leaving few funds for a future reunion. The social isolation of these workers is also highly stressful, making it an unsatisfactory short-term solution to a labour-force shortage. (Warrnambool Welcome, 2005)

And that people were prepared to obviously come and stay here on a permanent or semi permanent basis. That's a huge plus and a huge way of gaining community acceptance is obviously around the children and that's been a fundamental platform. And that was really obvious on Saturday at the multicultural festival. It was actually

wonderful to see a huge range of children from a big range of backgrounds, just getting on so well together. (Regional advisor to local government)

These women need more social connection. They engage with doctors and neighbours there is lots of potential but never enough time. The sewing class broadens out and connects the community the more involvement and practical experiences like the weaving class, all interaction outside the Sudanese community. (Community worker)

Offer refugees long term sustainability and a better life

The refugee community often reflected on how they relocated in search of a better life. The country (rural Victoria) would be safer for their children, the employment opportunities were better, they felt safe and they knew their neighbours. It is entirely logical to consider that no-one will relocate from family and friends of their own cultural community, some hours drive away, unless there is a firm belief that it will improve their current circumstances.

I was working with a catholic home for elderly people. It was my choice to move. Not because I am not working and am not settled. Even they were missing me and they said you settle in Melbourne why are you going to the countryside? I say that is the life I like because there is many advantages for living in the country to bring up the kid in a good environment. (Refugee community member)

It was clear that many of the families were deliberately deciding that the rural communities were a healthier place to raise a family. Relocating to a rural community was seen to be attractive despite the recognition that there would be fewer opportunities for language tuition, employment, education, training and support.

It is good to live in a quiet and friendly place - need to have community to welcome after the traumas of war. Cities are difficult for children. This is a good environment and good education, good community. (Relocating community member)

Some of these families were also choosing to sponsor their friends and relatives directly to the country location. Several stated clearly that the rural locations are a better place for people to readjust to the new country and to develop a sense of belonging. Others, however, were insistent that newcomers needed to go to the cities first to have access to language and migrant support services.

Offer sustainable employment with career pathways and proper rights

Employment is an essential component of that long term sustainability and a better life, however, it is must be sustainable, inclusive in its approach and be a part of the

development of an employment pathway. This often means training and work reallocation while new tasks are learnt. The refugee community will relocate again if employment is not consistent or as in the case of some of the reports provided to this research, it is exploitive in its practice.

In both projects employment planning and information access in relation to employment availability was less than optimum. In Warrnambool, members of the refugee community that relocated did so into a community that had not undertaken the economic planning that should precede a project such as this. It was a consistent barrier for some who aimed to establish their relocation to this community. The provision of Regional Migration Funds to Warrnambool is set to assist in further development of economic strategic planning for this project.

However, even with the well-developed economic plans and coordinated approach of the Swan Hill project, issues arose. It is an important to acknowledge, at this point, that the Swan Hill Project had an employment plan which seemed well coordinated and envisioned. Ultimately however, the issues discussed earlier on the range of processes attached to successful relocation, lack of funding and the lack of a shared vision by Employers, HACN and the host community, its implementation unravelled the plan. The vision of employment options did not eventuate. HACN ideally wanted people to move into positions that were akin to their qualifications and aspirations. In the text below the HACN community leader discusses their vision for the project in relation to employment outcomes.

And then the confrontation stage comes, when you stop and think what is next. Out looking for a job, not backed by all the applications you send out, you don't even get a response, you have doubts, and you won't be able to get a job in your profession so you'll have to work in the factory and you go down. And in the factory, you know, some of them have got Masters; working in a factory, so everyday you wake up in the morning and you think, gee, this is my life, and this is what I'm going to show my kids, qualifications and I work in a factory. So that's the confrontation stage for these people that we want to change. We want them to work in skilled jobs, not in gardening. They could do gardening in Melbourne, why would they relocate for that?
(HACN community leader)

In the face of the expectations of employers and the refugee community, both Swan Hill and Warrnambool have changed their original employment planning and practices. In both communities there have been ongoing employment challenges. This most essential building block has the potential to change the face of any project – this was certainly the case in Swan Hill, as was identified below.

We had a whole range. We had accountants, engineers, motor mechanics, retail, business administration, we had some farming. We found work for a motor mechanic and for those that had done some welding. Some of the issues that came up around the farming was that they weren't happy with the salary, accommodation and transport. Initially the farming positions were piece work and they couldn't make enough money to survive so that didn't work out. (Project officer)

Employment availability and cultural bias played their own part in this problem. However, it was also obvious that information provided to prospective members of the refugee community on relocation not always clear. Refugees have often seen the range of corruptive practices first hand and are more likely to be wary of protecting their own and their family rights. It means that information must always be exact, as the experience outlined below suggests.

There is a set wage. Company doesn't seem clear. We were told \$15.00 an hour initially and then when we arrived we were told \$11.50 an hour. Because our training time has to be paid for even though we are not at work. We didn't really understand and the owner is astonished about all this. We finally negotiate \$14.30. An apprenticeship wage. This is too long one day a week at TAFE changed to one year working on apprenticeship wage when course is finished finally we will get a full wage. (Refugee community member)

So I guess what we are doing is right. I suppose the other thing is that we are actually doing the difference now from our own learning but it is about making things much more clearer about having a translator, about not expecting that people are totally understanding what you are saying but spelling it out to the final degree that this is the award wage and this is the tax, this is the expectation that you will lose your Centrelink benefits, that if your families did come you are still entitled to this sort of support but you will lost your ministry house. It is just very prescriptive information. We need to make them very aware of what their personal requirements are. I have just developed an email about this that I will send out to all the job networks and it is about what protective clothing is and what you need if you are working out in the sun, or other industries. You have to have a water container if you are picking fruit. (Project officer)

In many cases employers wanted to *try people out*, a luxury that is difficult to accept for the refugee community. Such arrangements are often at lower wages. Income is essential to rebuild lives in a new country. Compromises around employment pressures their financial security as well as requiring them to accept that they must climb the employment ladder all over again. For many they would prefer to take the options of working illegally taking cash in hand temporary jobs rather than undertake this, often humiliating, pathway. The availability of illegal work in the communities, particularly in the horticultural industry, was evident and is a salient reminder that the

black market will thrive as long as there is employer and community acceptance of its worth.

In both communities, the sentiments that the Africans 'knew their rights' was expressed by employers to the research team. The comments were underpinned, both inherently in the context of the comments and at times clearly articulated, by the view that it would have been easier if the refugee community did not know their rights and could be "moulded" to the employer's employment frame of reference.

We are not expecting them to come out here and remain Africans by taking on a certain Australian culture. Otherwise there is no point in them coming out here. We have certain other nationalities that think they can move out from certain countries and they want to maintain the style of living they had over there. Well in a Western world that doesn't work. So we have to keep all that in context. (Employer)

I feel that for me to take on another HACN program person I would want them to be in the country no longer than 3-4 months. I am not exactly saying that I can train them better than anyone else but I just feel that they have an expectation of coming to Australia to work. After a while they will get used to the Australian culture and I suppose if some of these people are working in big places that may not necessarily be unionised but might have that influence well they will certainly go down in their standards. (Employer)

Workplace injuries were also reported to the research team. As one refugee community member reports, having spent eight months working in an abattoir and sustaining carpal tunnel syndrome to both hands,

I am blaming my employer for my hands because they did not give me a full time job and for 9 months I was doing the same kind of work. I told them I wanted to be changed to another job because of my health problems but they refused. The employment network and the council should have looked after me. I got sick from the company and the employment network should have been the one to talk to the company about my situation. I have no money to treat myself. (Refugee community member)

One workplace, involved in this study, required casual workers to line up at 5am so as to hand pick them for a day's work. Those individuals who were overlooked and told to go home often felt humiliated and for many the walk back home was long and painful. This is evident in Jimmy's story

I used to go there every morning as a casual really. Yes you sit and after they say no come tomorrow. I go another day and it is the same thing. This has been going for two weeks now. Really this is very hard because of the family I have to care for. Yes for the house. And you can see we are new arrivals. We want to start a new life. We

have to buy a chair and so many things. This is really hard. This is what is worrying me (sic). I need work. I have a family and the chance of finding work is very limited. (Refugee community member)

For those refugees whose professional qualifications far exceed the skill required in non-skilled employment such as packing boxes, or picking fruit, there is a danger of feeling vulnerable and dissatisfied. Poor rates of payment and a mismatching of new arrivals with job placements can be disastrous for both employers and employees. In the case of highly qualified workers, whose credentials are not recognised in this country, their status and subsequently their identity is seriously challenged.

Therefore each community is faced with the very crucial job of facilitating new arrivals to an employment pathway. An employment pathway recognises the skills that each new migrant brings to their respective communities. This must be done through well resourced recognition policies that must be accessible and flexible to respond to the journey. However, it must also provide the opportunity to access pathways to employment of choice. Having asked a woman in one of the communities where her husband works she told the research team the following:

My husband works in the meat works - this is not a good job. He is trained as a teacher in Maths and Science. In my country, only the uneducated work in such jobs. (Refugee community member)

Employers must be stakeholders and supporters

Successful Access to Economic Resources is Integral to any Relocation Project. The themes of health and wellbeing are strongly connected to access to economic resources — economic circumstances largely impinge upon an individual's sense of place and identity within the fabric of everyday life. For members of the refugee community, participation in the workforce not only provides financial stability, but also opens up pathways to embrace social connectedness and social capital (Taylor and Stanovic 2005; Kabeer 2000; Toye & Infanti 2004). Re-establishing a sense of coherence in one's life alongside establishing increased levels of self-esteem and confidence can be largely attributed to employment prospects.

The responsibility for access to economic resources lays with Government policy, the community *drivers* of the relocation project and the broader community. Employer ownership that is driven by an understanding of the link between their own sustainability and the community sustainability is essential for success.

Unfortunately, there were few examples in this project of employers who shared that responsibility with their local community and evidenced that they understood what they were to gain from a positive involvement in a community relocation project. In fact the project found numerous examples of employers who were willing to exploit the situation of vulnerable employment seekers.

Employers want skilled migrants, as does the rest of the western world. Of course, refugees are also skilled. However, they simply may require further cultural guidance within the employment sector, as was outlined by this community stakeholder.

Refugees have a lot of potential to contribute to this country's development, socially, culturally and economically as well. There is very productive labour which can effect the economies of regions. People need to be educated differently. Promotion is needed. Otherwise people think that all refugees who come to Australia are welfare recipients, burdens to the economy and burden to the country. This is not the case because we are talking about a very productive force, which can contribute to rural areas and their economy. (Community stakeholder)

It would be naïve to consider that all skilled migrants are going to “beat a path” to the door of rural Victoria. On that basis it would seem that refugee relocation is about everyone’s sustainability, employers and general community. The sooner that employers can be encouraged to share in that journey the more likely that relocation projects will succeed. Without such a joint strategy, however, there will be crisis and movement within the projects. Refugees are the most vulnerable to volatile employment arrangements because of their need for funds to support their families’ resettlement costs. Every community has an obligation to publicly identify such practices and condemn them.

Members of the refugee community involved in the relocation programs in Swan Hill and Warrnambool believe employment assists in the construction of a healthy mind and spirit. They challenge the business community to open up opportunities:

The business people are the ones who can contribute a lot for welcoming this refugee community for giving them opportunity. At least to see them and give them a go and see practically how these people can contribute to their business, can contribute to their society, can contribute to the community. But at this moment it is mainly with the business people that they have a wrong perception that refugee people are unproductive and have nothing to contribute which is far from the truth. Because these people have not had the opportunity to interact with refugees and see them in their productive force. (Refugee community leader)

If there is a job everything solves themselves. You can't solve problems if no job. Job is a basic need. You can make friends in job. NO job is problem for self and community. Nothing to do so all in town it is very public; a job is the most important thing. (Refugee community leader)

Employers who are aware of and implement workplace policies that support and nurture an inclusive workplace, understand the meaning of productive diversity models of practice. Quality of life is improved with increased access to employment that is satisfying and worthwhile. Work that is both secure and rewarding can assist in increased feelings of productivity, self-efficacy and control over one's surroundings (VicHealth 2003). Most importantly, with financial independence, there follows feelings of value, usefulness and increased levels of self-esteem (DIMIA 2003). Planning for employment in regional and rural relocation programs therefore involves a conscious effort by all stakeholders to ensure that employment for the refugee community is safe, respectful of their rights and rewarding.

The lack of secure job placements, or an inability to provide long-term assistance to refugees, inhibits the success of relocation projects. Isolation from family and friends can mean that work colleagues become critical in developing feelings of being connected to the community. One refugee commented on the importance of his work as a carer in a nursing home, in establishing further links with the local community.

Warrnambool is not big like Melbourne but you feel that many of the locals they have a loved one in a nursing home. When they go to visit the loved one they come to know me and then I will come to know them. That is why we come to be one close group where you working. Locals will know you through the mother or father living in the nursing home and you become closer to each other....

And when you go to the supermarket someone you don't know him and you don't know her they say hello to you in the street because they know you from the nursing home. So they are very friendly. This is the life of the country. You feel welcome from the very beginning, not just now. That is why day by day we are settling in. (Refugee community member)

Ensuring that refugees are provided with the necessary information to make an informed decision about relocation and to enable them to satisfactorily meet employer expectations is essential. This helps to establish long-term employment prospects between employers and employees that are solidified through the presence of common goals and a similar work-orientated vision.

The following case that exemplifies the ways in which the VicHealths' key determinants of mental health: access to employment, social inclusion and lack of discrimination, has been experienced by the relocating refugee community within the one workplace. This was promoted by the practices of one employer, who it is noted, has also been acknowledged for his productive diversity efforts at good practice by state and national employer awards.

A case integrating all key determinants of mental health

Frank is one employer who has embraced cultural diversity in his organisation and in doing so has established sustainable partnerships in his workplace with committed and reliable employees. Last year, Frank organised for Halal food to be incorporated into the Christmas lunch menu. African employees were so pleased that their dietary requirements were being met that they also wanted to bring along a plate of their own cultural cuisine. A mixture of African music and contemporary music was played throughout the day prompting a multicultural ambiance and a respect for cultural diversity.

Frank is also aware of the need to enhance the English skills of his African employees. As a result of this concern he approached AMES and inquired into the possibility of having some on-site English training. Frank also stressed that he would like his African employees to learn 'workshop language' so they were able to apply their learning to their work practices.

Well they get 500 hours funding for English tuition. What we want is for AMES to come here and we would either put one of us Australian English people with AMES and or the fella that could speak very good English with them as an interpreter.... Their workshop language is atrocious. Everything has a name that doesn't relate to it. Just tools mainly. Our blokes don't want to have to start explaining things in detail cause they are busy. They just want say get that grinder. We all know what that is but if you say that to them they have no idea. Now we said that we would do part of this in my time and a little bit of it in their time....

Frank's case highlights one inclusive employment model that embraces and connects cultural needs with workplace requirements. Providing access to onsite English language classes also helps those workers who find it difficult to attend TAFE

ESL courses. Occupational health and safety issues are also addressed providing a safer working environment for all.

As a result Frank is developing a sustainable workforce where he currently has four loyal and committed workers that have been in his workplace for upwards of eighteen months. The Africans feel connected to their workplace and are clearly appreciative of Frank's efforts.

I like the work, Frank is great. I am planning to work here for a long time. I even go to the footy on week-ends with my workmates. (Refugee community member)

Support host community volunteers

The establishment of a well-organised volunteer association like South Western Association for Refugee Support (SWARS) for example provided the African community with much needed support. SWARS not only welcomed new arrivals to the town through organising cultural events like the 'Wonta Festival', but were also instrumental in introducing a 'Buddy System'. This allowed for the strengthening of friendship circles amongst the refugee community and host community members. Relocation programs that provide such support networks are better placed to deal with real life issues faced by new members of a community. As one volunteer member noted in an interview,

It is very rewarding; it's just fantastic to see them settle in now. There is a new family that arrived a month ago and they moved into their place yesterday. And it is just wonderful to see the pleasure and excitement they got when they settle in. getting to meet people and stuff.....We have a refugee support group and one of the girls in that, her son has a Sudanese partner and she met Sudanese people when they came down through her son's partner and she just invited a couple of us to a community house for tea one night, you know bring a plate and meet the Sudanese people that have arrived and that is how I met them. (Community stakeholder)

Volunteer Programs like the one above also need to be adequately supported by a range of stakeholders. If too much burden is placed on host community members in their volunteer capacity, there is indeed a real danger of 'fatigue syndrome' setting in. A well-balanced approach to involving community members in welcoming new arrivals therefore needs to be adhered to.

Establish Partnerships with Key Host Community Organisations

Establishing local partnerships with other service providers is also an element of community readiness in embracing relocation programs. Strong partnerships established between organisations within local communities can achieve an integrated approach to relocation whereby a variety of needs can be met. One community member commented on the benefits of partnerships to relocation programs,

I think one of the good things about the women's group who meet at the swimming pool complex is the fact that it happens in a public space and not just an educational space in highlighting them being there and the children in the crèche. The women are there doing their English language classes because there is availability of the crèche, they do it there. I think this is a really good way of giving a very public face to the community because it is in a public place. It also is a good environment for the women because they have some where for the women and there is also a coffee shop there, which they go to afterwards so it is very social. I think that is a great way of highlighting their culture. There has been some good coverage in the newspaper that the Sudanese are involved in. (Refugee community member)

Local TAFE institutions are also instrumental in strengthening and empowering the mindset of new arrivals. English language tuition classes, a driving lesson course, vocational pathways and computer classes were just a few programs on offer at one TAFE. Having access to such programs serves to not only empower members of the refugee community in rebuilding their lives, but also provides greater security for those wanting to improve their economic and social status.

Flexibility in government funding and financial support for communities and partnerships to build capacity to support the refugees

Community groups need to be funded so that they can respond to, advise, seek solutions for and support the refugee community.

Each component of a successful relocation project needs strong partnerships, shared visions, community liaison and community coordination. There is a cost to all of these elements that must be funded by someone. Without such a coordinated approach success will be limited, and more importantly, the health and well-being of the refugee community could be compromised. This is a distinct policy issue because currently many community policy/program guidelines fund service provision at a unit cost per outcome achieved. Coordination, innovation, local policy development and coordinating and supporting appropriate response go unfunded.

Both communities provided considerable community funds, largely from their organisations to respond to the need of support and coordination.

There are many reasons why the project in Swan Hill did not evolve according to the original vision, not the least of which was the constant round of submissions and lack of consistent funding for project development. Murray Mallee Group Training Company, whilst trying to attract other sources of funding provided some of their own monies to support the project and fund a Horn of African project worker. This worker was based with HACN and their role was to raise awareness of the project and to undertake the recruitment of local (Horn of African) community members to enter the pre-employment training program and subsequently to consider relocation to Swan Hill.

If project development funds had been sourced and directly funded to the advocate, in this case HACN, such monies would have enabled HACN to further develop their role in the project. As it stood, Murray Mallee Group Training Company believed that they had provided a resource to HACN, however HACN never saw the position in that light and believed that the position was as an employee of Murray Mallee Group Training Company and they should respond accordingly. Being employed by the Murray Mallee Group Training Company compromised the project officer position making it very difficult for that position to effectively resource HACN in the issues that they saw as the priority. Different funding and program allocations may, as will be outlined further in this section of the report, have enabled HACN to employ greater powers in the process of engaging members of the refugee community who would move to Swan Hill. This flexibility, it will be evidenced by the research, is a critical component of a successful relocation project in its initial stages, such as the project at Swan Hill.

Project development funds would also have been able to fund the building of capacity in the refugee community, in particular, their advocates.

All policy has eligibility criteria, however, in the case of new and emerging cohorts of refugees in rural communities there is a lack of flexibility. There were numerous examples where community needs did not match the funding guidelines; ESL in schools, eligibility for community services, settlement support and employment support by Job network providers; where this proved to be significant barriers for the

community. English language training and resettlement services were the most critical of these given their impact on life, employment and education choices.

And its also about not understanding the resource issues when it comes to a rural community, everything is based on a numbers game and if you don't have that critical mass then you don't have the infrastructure, you don't have the funding and it's the same pretty much with those sort of blanket policies. Governments want to encourage migration to the rural areas, they just don't understand the reality of making it happen. (Local Government manager)

Neither community had the English Language resources to respond to the influx of refugees into their communities that required English language at school, for women who were isolated and for those that required English in the workplace. Many of the refugees had used some or all of their original allotment of hours as a "resettled" migrant. However, now that they were relocating to a new community they wanted to continue with language training, assist their employment options and ensure their children could be educated successfully.

In the city, they could enrol in TAFE and/or AMES English language programs. In communities of high migrant populations in metropolitan Melbourne both of these organisations have large program bases. In rural Victoria the existence of either is not guaranteed and the flexibility to respond to an emerging population of 40, for example, especially if your organisational base is two hours away, is simply not within the scope of program delivery.

Resettlement services face the same fate with examples of members of the refugee community being resettled in Warrnambool and facing delays in service provision and limited access to their caseworker, who was based two hours away. The organisation that was providing the service simply did not have the funding infrastructure to outpost to an emerging community. As was noted earlier there have been changes to the delivery, resources and guidelines of the Federal Government Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy, which aims to meet "head on" with the current limitations that have been experienced in regional communities. The community stakeholders below share some of the challenges that they faced.

There will be additional resources required for specific targeted areas of the project such as employment of choice which might involve developing quite distinctive strategies around English on the job, technical English, some sort of mentoring, financial mentoring as well. (Regional advisor)

I guess what's happening at the moment its sort of the old patchwork quilt is trying to stitch together money from a number of different sources to make it happen, that's going to make it very difficult in operation and in reporting. (Community Stakeholder)

One of the areas that we are going to struggle with is that most of our money that we get from government is very targeted so 25% comes from child protections, some from mental health, etc. It's all very targeted so when we look at this particular issue, we go, well, unless perhaps you are with child protection, we really can't do much with that group. Unless they are homeless and over 15 and under 25 we can't do too much with that. It's processing and therefore working with young people from various places Africa, and the capacity will be fairly much divorced or into separate areas of the various programs and there is always that other target stuff so we are not necessarily working with what their needs are but what the issues are that relate to the Anglo Saxon way of funding. (Community Service provider)

Yeah and that really follows the model that the primary should be able to cope. But they can't. If you are wanting to have some recommendations coming out of this I would certainly work on the idea that the funding formula is screwed too much for the secondary program. That if it was shown that there was a progression that a student was coming into the primary program, rather than just have that new arrivals immediate funding, this has been the only source of funds and that goes and then there is nothing is a foolish way of putting together a funding package. (Education provider)

This report has already raised the issue of planning in the host communities.

Planning is essential as is community coordination, which comes at a cost. Building capacity in communities is not their responsibility alone. As they build communities, they must be supported. There were numerous examples of community support and coordination that was required in both projects. Community information, individual support for the refugee community, assisting education providers and other service providers in responding to the new demands from the community, liaison with real estate agents, volunteer networks, employers and employer groups, facilitating community planning processes and cross cultural training are just a few of the constant stream of examples collated by the research project.

This was often compounded by a level of “bushfire management” that was required when the Migrant Liaison Officer or the project manager provided individual support to members of the refugee community. In the case of both communities these positions had no ongoing funding, (though Warrnambool had some initial assistance) and subsequently the individuals who filled these positions already had a position within the organisation that they somehow were expected to merge and manage. This did change at different points of the project's lifespan as both organisations used funding to support the model of a key person that would support the community.

Nevertheless, any of the personnel in those positions were, it seemed to the research team, juggling a challenging workload.

There is a hell of a lot of work in capacity building in just facilitating those partnerships, and coordinating them. (Local government manager)

Assisting with housing applications, linking individuals of the refugee community to health professionals, assistance with job searching, and ensuring that appropriate information was provided to both service provider and refugee member of the communities occurred on a daily basis. Each example took expertise, time and often written reports and submissions to funding providers. Local government located and then established their own information hub of the range of information from public sector providers that has had their information interpreted into community languages. This was by necessity as can be seen in this case study below.

And I noticed they had their Holden and I knew they didn't have a licence. And they said, well in Melbourne they didn't have a licence because you didn't need a licence in Melbourne and I said - in Warrnambool you do. So then it was going to the RTA and the RTA was one of the most responsive organisations, overnight they had, learning permits, information in Arabic. They really worked hard assisting people to get their licences, legitimately and it was a really good process. So in terms of response to building up organisational capacity, I would say the RTA were outstanding. (Local government manager)

Individual communities cannot bear the full cost. More importantly, as these programs have unfolded, the communities and government have begun to learn much more about the actual costs at the community level. The cost of capacity building, community development and coordination, planning and policy construction as well as being able to respond to the complexity of individual needs has taken a toll in both communities. Regional migration funds have made limited impact given that they also come with their own set of outcomes that must be delivered upon receipt of the funds. For relocation projects to be successful the elements that do not fill the eligibility criteria contained within direct service delivery also require funding for the future sustainability of these projects. This cost at the front end of the program will ensure that there is long-term economic and social benefits for both host and refugee community.

Creating a social inclusive environment through a range of community activities

According to the VicHealth's framework, social inclusion entails supportive relationships and environments, social networks and physical activity as well as individuals having a valued social position. The data provided some indication of the effectiveness of activities and efforts to include the relocating community within the host community and how the relocating refugees experienced this. The following excerpt shows that strategies for social inclusion provided important social support.

The Sudanese are a social society- it is very important to have friends - people you can really talk to. It is very hard to get friend in big cities- I'm talking like Australian communities because the Sudanese are all together everywhere. But because we are here in Australia we have to get friends in the Australian Community. This is very hard in big cities like Melbourne to get more friends, it is too busy, everyone is rushing - there is not time for social things. In rural areas life is better, people are used to visiting, and we had a very warm welcome from the community used to going to picnics and being together for a couple of hours. (Relocating community member)

One of the key indicators of the success of relocation project is the extent to which refugees and host communities could develop supportive relationships and connections with the host community. Becoming involved in community activities, sporting events as well as being recognised within the social structure of the community are considered important factors in healthy adjustments to the new communities, and will, to a large degree, determine the relocating families' commitment to stay.

The activities that both the Swan Hill and Warrnambool communities provided as an avenue to assist relocating refugees to start to make these connections to their community included a diverse range of gatherings.

There was last New Year's Day and of course it is every Sudanese' birthday on New Year's Day because they don't know their birthday so they were all born on the 1/1. They know the year they were born but we didn't know that last year and that was just a happy coincidence. It was just New Year's Day so we had a picnic in Port Ferry with all of them so that was really good. (Service provider)

The Warrnambool community had decided that welcoming the community was a really important process before any relocating community members arrived and were thus were better prepared to implement a broad range of activities to engage community members. This included weaving classes, embroidery sessions, fishing experiences, and invitations to participate in community festivals and social functions. Over time this extended to include women only swimming sessions, informative cultural sessions around religion, child rearing and food preparation.

The local churches and refugee organisations also played a vital role in connecting the relocating community with the host community. Warrnambool members provided driving lessons, lifts to appointments, social outings and picnics. The Swan Hill community also ran specific sessions to integrate community members including first aid courses, a 'celebration of foods across cultures' and information sessions. What was clear from both communities was that as soon as people from within the host community were aware of needs specific to the relocating refugees they were generally very happy to support the initiatives.

Now with this fishing program that I was telling you about before, when I spoke to the fellas at the angling club they were turning themselves inside out to help and I said look we need fishing rods and fishing rods were there the next day. So people are very happy to help, they are very happy to help these people settle in, but not enough people know about it or know how to become involved. (Service provider)

The volunteer English tutors program was also a significant component in enabling the relocating refugees to develop social relationships with members of the host community. This program was well organised in the Warrnambool community where minimal training was provided for volunteers and they agreed to meet with an African community member each week for an hour. Over time these sessions were often extended and the focus often changed from language support to being a desperately needed social connection and source of information. Tutors explained their frustration at not being able to provide the answers or support needed by the relocating community.

Our ESL classes end up talking rather than structured lessons, I am worried about her welfare mental health issues and feeling isolated. Her English has improved but difficult to really improve given her role (two children and supporting her husband) ... She wants the sessions to go longer, she doesn't want me to leave at the end of sessions. We had hoped to have a walk along the beach but impossible to access time without the children. (Volunteer tutor)

The relocating community identified these more informal language sessions as vital in assisting them to get to know members of the Australian community and to adapt to all the changes they were experiencing. However, many of the voluntary and community service providers had raised concerns over the fact that so many of the social connections or support structures were voluntary and as such not sustainable.

But I think that this community will get to a point of saturation, people will need to be able to change to the community development model rather than the charity model and I think a lot of people still see it within that charity model and the test will be a transition process I think for this community to go through. And if that's not well managed, then it can become very difficult/divisive. (Community provider)

Being in a supported relationship, having diverse social networks and having a valued position in society are all dimensions of our health and wellbeing. Both the host communities and the relocating communities are clearly progressing down a path that defines the supporting structures that will enhance the development of sustainable relationships. This final quote perhaps sums up the approach of the relocating community best in terms of emphasising the importance of social inclusion to the health and wellbeing of the individual and the need to maintain equality in the relationship.

You can send me to the end of the earth as long as I am valued, as long as I am helpful, I will be more than happy to give back to the society who accepted us. (Community leader)

The promotion of cultural forums, community readiness and cultural appreciation

Community readiness is an important component for successful relocation programs. An absence of planning around this theme can and will lead to unfavourable repercussions that impact greatly upon the mental health and wellbeing of the refugee community. Communities that are able to adequately cater for the needs of the refugee community are more likely to benefit from the richness that cultural diversity brings.

The promotion of cultural forums that involves all members of regional and rural communities is also another element to community readiness. Enriching the knowledge base of all members so that cultural appreciation and tolerance is embedded within the community is essential for long term sustainability. Open and transparent communication is therefore necessary for the formation of unified goals and directions. Such sentiments are echoed in the following passage,

I think people have realised that you can't just dump another culture in your community and expect it to work, that you actually have to work at things like cultural awareness and educating people and forging relationships and giving support on both sides and recognising that the level of support can be quite intense. This brings me back to the same thing of why we need this partnership of community services and stakeholders in the community to come together and talk about how do we

support this community and how can we be more proactive in catering for these kinds of things and how do we educate the wider community to. ...I think it is the things like seeing the people in the community celebrating their culture and being a part of events and across a whole range of areas that we see them not just with the festivals. What about the little athletics club having a Sudanese cultural day where they learn about the games and activities the kids would have played in Sudan and inviting them down and those sort of things. I think you have to be very active in keeping that cultural link going and reaching it out into other areas into the community. (Community service provider)

Cultural appreciation between the host community and new arrivals is essential to a sustainable relocation program. Both parties need to understand that which is deemed sacred by the other, so that values and belief systems are welcomed, understood and encouraged. Ensuring that new arrivals are treated in a culturally sensitive way is imperative to fostering a unified spirit. Both project leaders and members of the relocating community need to have an awareness of the needs and lifestyle of 'their' community in relation to those of 'others' and a desire to work towards common goals.

Both host communities demonstrated an understanding of the need to promote a proactive stance in relation to the new arrivals through the media and community celebrations. Such activities and partnerships sought to evoke a sense of inclusion and a welcoming host community as well as to inform the community members about the relocating refugees. These visible demonstrations of community support still need to be strengthened by cross cultural training and education.

Celebrate diversity

Many of the relocating and host community members commented on the richness of a multicultural society and how keen they were to change the dominant monoculture of rural regions. The relocating community members were quite clear that the rural communities would be strengthened and enhanced by their presence and not just in relation to filling workforce gaps. As one community member explains:

It's good to have refugees in rural areas, the Australian philosophy to be multicultural. Need to develop rural areas because the young rural people from these areas are going to the big cities. Need to maintain the population and interlinking of communities through friendship, gatherings and festivals, schools and TAFEs. After the long and painful journey you need to settle and put down roots, develop foundations (Relocating community leader).

Ensuring freedom from discrimination and violence

In the case of the relocation projects this also meant combating some of the stereotypes and labels often attached to the refugee community. Members of HACN highlighted this.

In most cases people perceive that refugees might have only problem issues. We need to educate the local community that this is not simply the case; these people have something to give back to the local community; these people can contribute to the Australian development, the Australian economy. (HACN Advisory committee member)

We need to do our homework properly before we start to do the actual job. Before we start to place people in rural areas we need to make sure that the rural area people really understand that newcomers are there to contribute to their economy, to help...they do have professional qualifications, vocational qualifications, expertise. Once the host community are aware of this their perceptions can change. (HACN Committee of Management member)

Freedom from prejudice, sexism, racism and religious persecution is necessary for creating a safe and nurturing environment. As such, dispelling negative stereotypes linked to refugees and creating an atmosphere of hope and acceptance is the first step in promoting the relocation process to host communities and consolidating strong links between communities. Highlighting the richness that comes with cultural diversity, celebrating difference, embracing uniqueness, helps to place value on the various skills that refugees bring to local communities. Education programs and initiatives can also help to inform local members of the ways in which members of the refugee community can contribute positively to the social, political and cultural spectrum of place and time.

Such strategies establish the building blocks for a more inclusive community and establishes a sense of connection between communities, assists in promoting benefits of multiculturalism and minimises potential discrimination against relocating communities.

For me belonging is where my family feels comfortable and where my family feels this is my place. When I see my children well integrated into the mainstream children and lifestyle and I see them happy and playing and I feel this is where they belong. (Refugee community member)

The health and wellbeing of each and every person also depends on their freedom from discrimination and violence. The right to feel safe, to have equal opportunity to

employment and education and the right to make decisions for your future are fundamental to healthy lives.

In order to participate in the economic life of the host community, being free from discriminatory workplaces is important. As previously discussed, the workplace environment in both rural locations showed evidence of discrimination in relation to expectations of the worker, their rights and opportunity to work freely. What was evident, however, was that while discrimination occurred, there was also evidence of members of the Swan Hill and Warrnambool community actively defending refugees against the actions or behaviours of others.

He really stood up for a man who was being bullied at the work place ... Yes I guess it was racially based 'cause no-one else at the work place was asked to do what he was asked to do....a very dangerous job...but an Australian stood up for him and told us about it. (Community member)

My son says that at school his friend has things said to him and he just sticks up for himself and nothing comes of it. There is support for the kids in the school. (Community member)

It is also important to note that often the relocating community members may not always be able to identify forms of discrimination such as being able to access private rental of housing, or the landlord's reluctance to meet tenants requests. These dilemmas were often described with bewilderment but not as discriminatory.

Discrimination is often a subjective experience and what is interpreted as discrimination by one group, is often perceived differently by others. In one case, a relocating family was talking about a small group of youths that broke a window and damaged their home on Christmas day. The family in question felt this was a great example of the lack of discrimination in the community and that they felt safe in this community because their neighbours and the police answered their call and came to try and find the offenders. To others, this experience could be interpreted as evidence that the local community were not fully accepting of the relocating family and were demonstrating this.

Another example of the ambiguity of perceptions of discrimination is the relocating families' perception that they are always being stared at. Whilst they mentioned this as a common experience in both locations it was not described as discrimination by them – however they were clearly perturbed that the people staring didn't say hello

and come and talk to them. They were seen to be physically or culturally different and the community made them uncomfortably aware of this.

One community member who has been working in Australia for a considerable period of time discussed a range of discriminatory situations that were generally based on ignorance and/or perceptions of superiority. For example, the common assumption that refugees have not had access to an education at all and would only ever be employable as cleaners or unskilled labour. One experience that highlighted the assumptions of the general community was when some church members decided a new migrant family needed clothes and dropped in with a large box only to be politely refused.

That lady till now does not talk to me because she was very offended. But, I was offended too because I am not there to beg clothes. I just went there to worship and to be part of the society. (Refugee community member)

The fundamental issue around discrimination seems to be how to inform and educate both the relocating community and the host community about cultural difference and the need for two way communication, tolerance and support.

Integrate children

Being accepted into the community as an equal is critical and yet there is much ignorance about the different needs of the relocating communities. Discussions on cultural differences highlighted the different perceptions on family structures and the traditional roles of men and women. The move from a patriarchal society to a democratic community has a range of implications on the family dynamics that relocating refugees are experiencing. There is evidence that this is an issue within the community as a number of community members and service providers made reference to issues of domestic violence. However domestic violence is, unfortunately, experienced in most communities and it is important to note that this was not raised or discussed by any of the relocating community members.

Apparently there has been quite a lot of violence in this household. Now we don't know whom the violence is towards, whether the kids are involved, whether the husband is violent to the wife or the wife is violent to the husband. (Service provider)

However the different ways of raising and disciplining children has been mentioned as a concern for both the relocating and the host community. This has been

identified as an issue that needed to be addressed publicly as once again assumptions were being made in ignorance. It is also interesting to note that initially the community expectation was that refugees coming to Australia had to abide by our customs and stop their traditional approaches to family roles including child rearing. However, over time, community members expressed more sensitivity in relation to cultural difference and many sectors have called for more cross-cultural training to be provided throughout the community.

It has taken some time for the culturally appropriate behaviour in Australia to become clear. For example hitting kids is not acceptable from adults or kids. The kids have now adapted to class rules and are in tune with the way the class works. (Service provider)

Police are focusing on positive reinforcement – youth camp, karate club etc. Taking the “softly softly approach” with warnings and then enforce the law. (Service provider)

The successful integration of the children into the new community is often the key to integrating the whole family. The local churches and district schools have played a vital role in enabling the relocating families to access support networks and connect to sports and activities. However, some community members have also questioned whether the host community were going too far in order to consider the needs of the relocating individuals, and how this affected other community members.

There is almost a reverse discrimination happening. There is a greater tolerance because of the understanding of the background that the boys have had so they are actually getting away with more in some of their behaviours than our regular students and that itself creates a feeling amongst the kids by them saying why is he allowed to wear his shirt like that? Why doesn't somebody go up to them and say that you just have to get to class on time? (Service provider)

There is no discrimination in the school ground, if anything the white kids were treating them like babies patting them and baby talk. (Service provider)

Clearly understanding the need for developing a consistent way of interacting with relocating communities is an important part of the experience. Cross-cultural training would also strengthen the communication links between the relocating and host communities, ultimately achieving the balance of supporting the relocating community whilst empowering them.

Host community readiness

The importance of identifying the transition stages of resettlement adjustment for the refugee community to reach a readiness to relocate is only matched by the importance of the host community readiness to welcome them into their communities. Informed by the literature, the research team has devised a set of host community indicators and it is hoped that this will provide an essential checklist for communities around Australia that are currently engaging in this work in their own communities.

Successful relocation programs not only consider stages of adjustment for refugees, but also stages of adjustment for host communities. There is no research to date that documents the stages of adjustment for cities or towns who are the recipients of large numbers of refugees. ‘Drivers of mental health’, as identified by VicHealth (Mental Health Promotion Framework 2005) should be identified and addressed within communities where there are new arrivals. Drivers of mental health such as economic resources, capacity building enterprises, government policies, innovative training initiatives through employment and service providers, assist in securing and sustaining a positive settlement experience. Ensuring that relocation and resettlement programs are continually monitored, evaluated and improved is essential to inclusive, responsive and accountable practices.

It is therefore useful to document stages of adjustment for host communities, as has been the case for resettling refugees in relocation programs. Based on the research literature, the VicHealth framework and current data from this project, the research team has mirrored the stages of adjustment for refugees to consider the indicators of adjustment for host communities. The following stages are noted;

Host community readiness is critical for the success of the relocation process. Communities need to be prepared to meet the needs of relocating communities in order to cater for the health and wellbeing needs of both communities. The stages of adjustment for the host community are summarised within this table that combines these stages with the key indicators within the VicHealth mental health promotion framework. Practical examples are also included to emphasise opportunities to be inclusive to all community members.

Key Social and Economic Determinants of Mental Health and community actions.	<i>Stages of Community Adjustment</i> and connections to the VicHealth Mental Health Promotion Framework.
Social Inclusion:	<i>Honeymoon stage:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming celebrations, festivals and the establishment

<p>“Supportive relationships, involvement in community and group activities, and civic engagement”.</p> <p><i>Are evidenced by:</i> Multi cultural festivals, accessible public transport, ESL classes at a range of levels and times, a network of ESL volunteer community tutors, and inclusive sport and leisure activities.</p>	<p>of support networks like volunteer services.</p> <p><i>Confrontation stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer and NGO Fatigue • Lack of funding and resources. <p><i>Adjustment and re-orientation stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient knowledge of culturally appropriate support for relocation. • Reassessment of host and relocating community goals. <p><i>Reconstruction stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host and relocating community tackle the challenges that are faced together and there is a collective vision of how to achieve and support a sustainable relocation.
<p>Access to Economic Resources:</p> <p>“Access to work, education, housing, and money”.</p> <p><i>Are evidenced by:</i> Employment needs and gaps audit, housing with accessible public transport, employment and training pathways, schools with ESL capacity and access to culturally appropriate health services.</p>	<p><i>Honeymoon stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial funding and resources available from DIMIA, council or NGOs. • Community welcomes relocating community to fill employment shortages and education programs. <p><i>Confrontation stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host community unable to cope with demand for services and support. • Schools, resources and government funding is limited and the quality of services is reduced. <p><i>Adjustment and re-orientation stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community identify and evaluate relocation issues around employment, housing and education. <p><i>Reconstruction stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical mass in numbers of the refugee community is achieved which injects resources in both host and relocating community.
<p>Freedom from Discrimination</p> <p>“Valuing of diversity, physical security, and self determination and control of ones’ life”</p> <p><i>Are evidenced by:</i> Cross cultural training for service providers, host community members and relocating community members, information on the changing community membership in the local press and the sharing of cultural practices.</p>	<p><i>Honeymoon stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The host community provides a safe secure environment for relocating community to live within. • The community welcomes cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. <p><i>Confrontation stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host community experiences political and cultural conflict. • Support services struggle to meet culturally diverse needs. <p><i>Adjustment and re-orientation stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community identify need for cultural and religious awareness and the need to include relocating community members in the decision making process. <p><i>Reconstruction stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host community supports the independence of relocating community and recognises the importance of cultural diversity and the richness it brings to the community.

Host communities who are sensitive to and understanding of the cultural needs of relocating community members display acceptance and tolerance. Freedom from discrimination involves an acceptance of cultural diversity and an acknowledgement of the richness that multiculturalism brings.

My kids barrack for the Western Bulldogs and now when the weekend comes, the whole family is busy following them and now we start to talk footy...this is what I used to miss leaving my place. One of the biggest losses in our lives was not having this. Now something has developed. (HACN committee of management member)

Community connection, friendships and a sense of belonging are also strongly connected to successful relocation and opportunities for recreation, health care, children's services and English language support must work in concert with the needs of the refugee community. These community opportunities must work concurrently from within the host community as key stakeholders increase their understanding of what diversity will bring to their community.

I went to weaving on Tuesday night, the women's weaving group which was fantastic. I think that the resilient safety net would be my sense as I go around the community is that those that have come into contact with the Africans love what its doing for the richness of their life in a sense of as you say breaking down the monoculture and having that cultural diversity added another layer to their experience of life. I think that we shouldn't estimate that there is a resilience in the community that actually loves having people here and is insightful enough to understand what brings to a community, that sort of cultural overlay that it brings and how important that is. (Community worker)

As can be seen in the text below, there have been innovators with vision in both communities who have taken risks to highlight the need for change in the current circumstances of the community/cohort that they advocate for.

The face of Warrnambool is changing and I really can't think of one negative thing from the community. (Local government manager)

6. CONCLUSION: LEARNINGS AND POLICY CONCLUSIONS

The Swan Hill and Warrnambool Relocation project partnerships have shared their experience with much of Australia. The projects have been very exposed to public scrutiny and as such should be applauded for their courage. There are many communities that will benefit from the lessons that have been learnt and both projects have demonstrated their willingness to share their journey. This generosity is acknowledged as a personal as well as a professional challenge.

The research began with reading the current literature in an effort to identify theories and models that can assist us in our thinking. There is a wide array of international experience that informed this work and can inform future work, however, the 'stages of adjustment' framework proved to be most relevant in understanding the relocation process.

Given the monocultural history of both host communities, the acceptance of a physically and culturally different community has demonstrated the ability of the host communities to be welcoming – one of the key readiness stages. The research identified little or no overt discrimination and the lack of control over jobs and housing were seen as the reality of life rather than discrimination.

The Horn of African community has brought a range of skills into Australia, (see Appendices 3 and 4), and has further built on those skills whilst in Australia. In the discussion on skilled migration, it is a salient reminder that we already have a population of humanitarian entrants that are keen to establish their credentials in a new country and have a range of established skill sets. Often what refugees lack is a firm understanding of the Australian cultural terrain. The need to access these underutilised skills is a strong argument for greater investment in employment training for this group. Unfortunately, however, this project, as noted elsewhere, found that many employers were not prepared to partner in this cost.

What have we learnt from these communities?

First and foremost, successful relocation programs must consider the broad community needs of relocating families including employment, employment pathways, education opportunities and housing. Community connection, friendships and a sense of belonging are also strongly connected to successful relocation and opportunities for recreation, health care, children's services and English language support must work in concert with the needs of the refugee community. These community opportunities must work concurrently from within the host community as key stakeholders increase their understanding of what diversity will bring to their community.

Successful relocation programs are twofold — they rely not only on individuals who are ready to begin a new life with a host community, but also thrive in the presence of energetic, eager and nurturing host communities. Host communities, who are ready to provide the support needed to generate a harmonious amalgamation of diverse cultures, who in the face of difference realise the importance of acceptance, tolerance and partnerships, are those where lasting powerful impressions of 'home' are forged. Host communities that are trusting and stable and are aware of the difficulties that forced migration brings are those that are best suited for relocation initiatives. An absence of a community spirit to support relocation can result in serious consequences. Further, communities that are ill prepared to deal with new settlers who are at a certain stage of adjustment can cause more harm than good. For example new settlers, who have been sponsored by friends or relatives, and whose first place of residence is in a rural town, will have very specialised needs. Such needs, if not adequately managed, can lead to a spiral of depression and poor mental health outcomes. The *Ottawa Charter of Health Promotion* (WHO 1986) argues that there are strong links between health, people and the environments of which they form a part. The charter notes that,

Community development draws on existing human and material resources in the community to enhance self-help and social support, and to develop flexible systems for strengthening public participation and direction of health matters. This requires full and continuous access to information, learning opportunities for health, as well as funding support.

Communities are therefore strong contributors to mental health and wellbeing. Community settings, that form the basis of daily life for new settlers, need to be systematic in their approach to accommodating new arrivals.

For both of these projects, it is imperative that there is evidence of a growing recognition that refugee relocation is about a community's long term sustainability. A community is made up of people and groups including employers who require workers, employers who require young families to spend money in the retail and service sector, and schools and kindergartens who require new children to stay open. Also, a community requires a cultural richness to their neighbourhood that makes it an interesting place to live. A community is about everyone's sustainability.

Increasing all-round prosperity, for both host communities and refugee community members, is a necessary framework that must underpin the creation of new directions for migration and settlement. High levels of social capital, a strengthening of community connectedness and freedom from discrimination are all indicators of successful relocation programs that impact greatly upon the quality of life for refugee community members (VicHealth 2005). Therefore, each community involved in relocation programs, is faced with the very crucial job of facilitating proactive partnerships that complement settlement procedures and processes.

Many refugees move to regional and rural towns having endured a loss of cultural identity and social connectedness. Similarly, most refugee voices have been silenced as a result of oppressive political regimes and tyrannical systems of government. Relocation programs in regional and rural areas must address the refugee experience and the work that must be undertaken by the host community to deliver the service and community mix that are essential to successful resettlement.

A common experience for refugees is often their lack of choice and control over their life and this is not conducive to good health and wellbeing. In the case of the relocating refugees they have all made the decision to move from urban regions to rural locations. This could be interpreted as exercising choice and control over ones life but for many of the relocating refugees – this was not really a true choice. After many years without any employment, they were willing to go where the work was, rather than where they may have wanted to be.

It is important that supportive services are in place to deal with the range of challenges and emotions that have evolved from the refugee journey. This knowledge should be the framework when designing services, successful relocation programs and settlement procedures. Planning can assist in enlightening researchers, policy makers, government officials and host communities, in what makes a positive relocation and resettlement experience for all stakeholders

This vision of a multicultural Australia, where the total community is seen as supportive and integrated, indicates how passionate the relocating community is about contributing and investing in their new life. Members of the refugee community, are essential to a successful relocation project as they form a strong anchor community. Their presence in the community promotes the values of diversity, reduces the incidence of discrimination and enhances feelings of safety and security in a new environment.

Relocation cannot be and is not an alternative to properly planned, resourced and implemented resettlement services. Relocation is asking the refugee community to make yet another significant life change. Nevertheless, for those that want to explore other living arrangements in Australia, a relocation project that is planned and implemented over the long-term in a welcoming community can provide a different set of opportunities. This would be the testimony of many of the refugees that moved to Warrnambool and Swan Hill. However, the research also identifies evidence of the distress that can be caused when, for whatever reason, it does not work. Such circumstances can cause further hardship to those that have already experienced more than their share of adversity.

Policy considerations

Policy establishes program guidelines that must be adhered to for program funding to be implemented in any community. In the case of relocation programs it is well documented that both State and Federal Governments are supporters of new programs in regional and rural communities in Victoria and in Australia. Both have clear policy guidelines supporting relocation and in the case of the Federal Government resettlement in rural and regional communities.

However, neither the Federal Government nor the State Government seem as decisive about the long term planning that is required to make such programs a

successful option in the resettlement/relocation choices of a refugee community. Systemic policy barriers are those that are embedded in our public system and policy barriers have been highlighted throughout the projects in the two communities.

It is hoped that this research will contribute to some of the thinking that still needs to be done in relation to how best to support the development of these programs in the longer term. The Federal Government is currently responsible for resettlement services. The framework of these services is focussed on the first six months of a humanitarian entrant coming to Australia. It is evident in this research that resources for relocation are also required and that is currently not within the Federal Government's guidelines.

In the case of Warrnambool, when relocation began to turn to resettlement, as members of the family reunification and sponsorship programs resettled in Warrnambool, the inadequacy of resettlement resources in this community was highlighted. It is to be noted, however, that in late 2005, as this evaluation came to an end, new guidelines and funding had been announced for resettlement services. The Federal Government had increased resources in this program and it is envisaged that these changes will make an impact in the communities for the better.

While the increased resources are one important component, navigating around the federal and state responsibilities has also been a program barrier and further information is required at the local level to assist communities. Each level of government has responsibility for some section of the range of services required. Presently it is up to the community to creatively put the funding *patchwork quilt* together. For example, in 2005 the Victorian state government announced the Regional Migration Incentive Fund (RMIF) and regional employment monies to assist disadvantaged communities and refugees are one of the target communities. The RMIF has provided important connections to state government, though its focus is on skilled migration, a different category to Humanitarian entrants. Employment funds such as the Community Regional Industry Skills Program have also provided funds for employment creation. However, employment is just one part of the solution. These are important initiatives, however there continues to be barriers to community access to the necessary information and funding sources.

The research also found that as the communities are 'learning by doing', there was evidence of the same process occurring at the policy development level of government. It is essential that communities can converse with government about policy, guidelines and program implementation that produce barriers to successful implementation of their programs. The real changes and outcomes occur at the community level, and the key to good policy development is that policy makers listen to the change makers. Successful policy implementation will be built from a governance system where policy can be driven from the community which is experiencing the change.

Throughout the project stakeholders discussed the limitations of the current policy models and a number of policy barriers were identified. Firstly much of our current refugee policy is focussed on cities. It is based on the critical mass of refugee numbers that cities attract. It is also a policy framework that is underpinned by an acceptance that the current infrastructure is adequate. This is a suggestion that many would refute.

The policy and program challenges, and in some cases barriers, that need to be addressed by all concerned with relocation projects are summarised below. Successful policy implementation will be built from a governance system where policy can be driven from the community that is experiencing the change. Many barriers are the result of a lack of government collaboration on programs and funds. Both state and federal governments need to see relocation programs as an entire integrated community package rather than stand alone, separate issues of concern.

The lack of affordable housing options in rural communities is compounded by poor access to public and private rental. A multi-pronged approach should include increasing access to public housing, low cost housing alternatives and subsidised relocation costs.

The lack of capacity building funds means that the cultural community networks, advisors and advocates, that are effectively the voice of the refugee community, are not funded. The expertise of these groups is constantly called upon yet there is no funding available to sustain their input.

There seems to be limited understanding by governments about the actual costs that relocation programs incur at the community level. The cost of community development and coordination, planning and policy construction as well as being able to respond to the complexity of individual needs has taken a toll in both communities.

This research has shown that the communities, both refugee and host can embrace relocation and gain mutual benefit. There seems little doubt that a number of the refugee community in Warrnambool will stay long term and continue to establish the Sudanese community there. It is expected that the experience will be similar in Swan Hill. However, as a more universal solution for Australia the research evidence is clear, there is considerable work to be done before such projects can become a real policy alternative. Change of policy and program implementation in relation to refugees is not only required at each level of government, but it must be coordinated. This is the least that could be expected if both host and refugee communities are to drive change at the local level. Productive community solutions can only be grown from this combination. The future of both projects, the future of other relocation projects that are currently being established and their communities depend on it.

Summing Up

Relocation projects that are established in rural communities are about everyone's sustainability in a host community, employers, employees, service providers, education providers and the community itself.

The research methodology was framed by VicHealth's three essential and connected components, social inclusion, access to economic resources and freedom from discrimination and the research is reflective of the data that was collected under these key themes. The research evidenced the importance of the three components as a part of a successful migrant relocation strategy from the perspectives of all community stakeholders. These process elements need to be included in the design of any new refugee relocation project and need to underpin policy development at both a state and national level.

Refugee communities have a higher risk of mental health problems and higher rates of unemployment and so the relocation of refugee communities is not an alternative to well planned and implemented resettlement services. As such, relocation programs present both opportunities and risks. We need to acknowledge the

potential benefits relocation programs may bring, as well recognise that the consequences of failure, can be much greater.

The model that has been outlined in this report has identified a number of key components that build a good practice model of refugee relocation. Much of it is contrary to the current policy dynamics that would lead us to believe that resettlement and/or relocation is feasible in any community if the community has a willingness to invite new arrivals and the employment prospects for them to participate within. This research is not a proponent of such theories. The research team whilst working with members of the refugee community and their advocates were constantly reminded that these were peoples' lives, not pawns in an economic development strategy and as such deserve the commensurate respect.

As such it is the responsibility of the researchers to state one last time that relocation projects are long-term community programs with several components to ensure success. Consequently, they require resources and planning for the long term. Given the experience of the two years of this evaluation, a period of support that is a minimum of five years is evident from the journey of these two projects.

There can be mutual benefit for both host and refugee community. For many it will not be suitable, and given the considerable life change that has already been experienced by Australia's Humanitarian entrants, refusal to relocate to a rural community is a reasonable and rational response. However, for some, relocation can be an opportunity to be embraced when it is well supported. It is not only about host and refugee community willingness. It is about the political will that does not want short-term fixes but long-term sustainable solutions.

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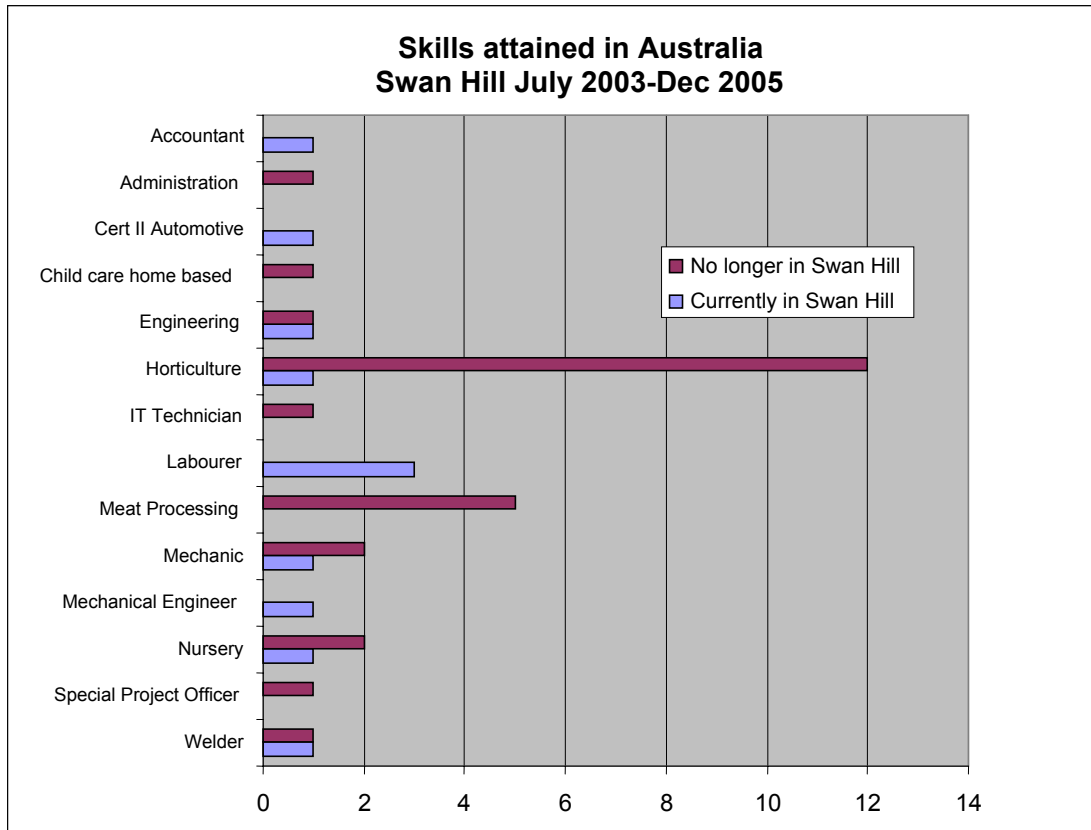
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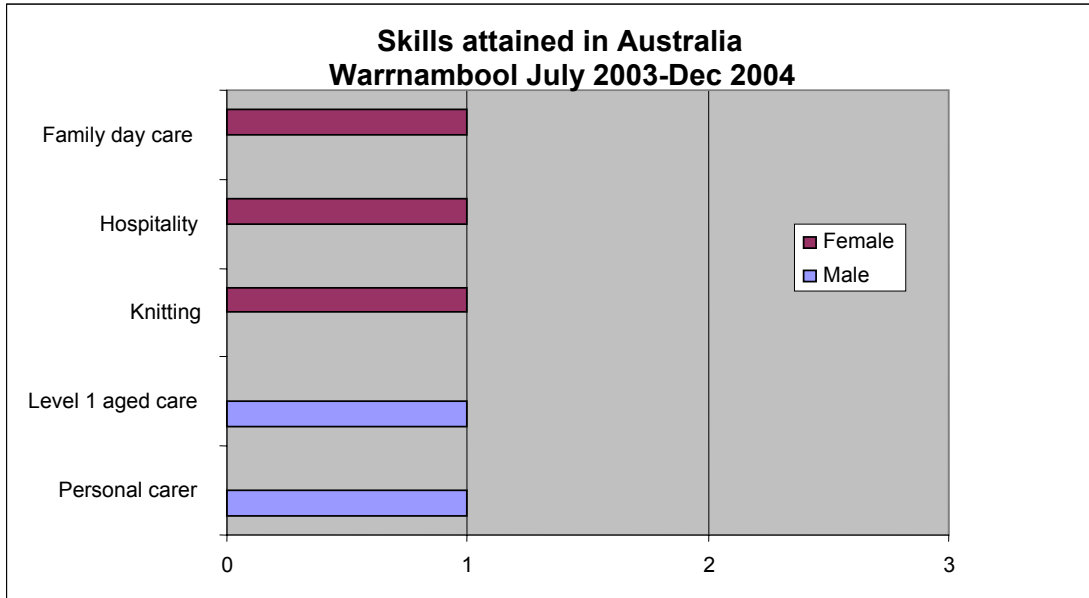
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8. APPENDICES

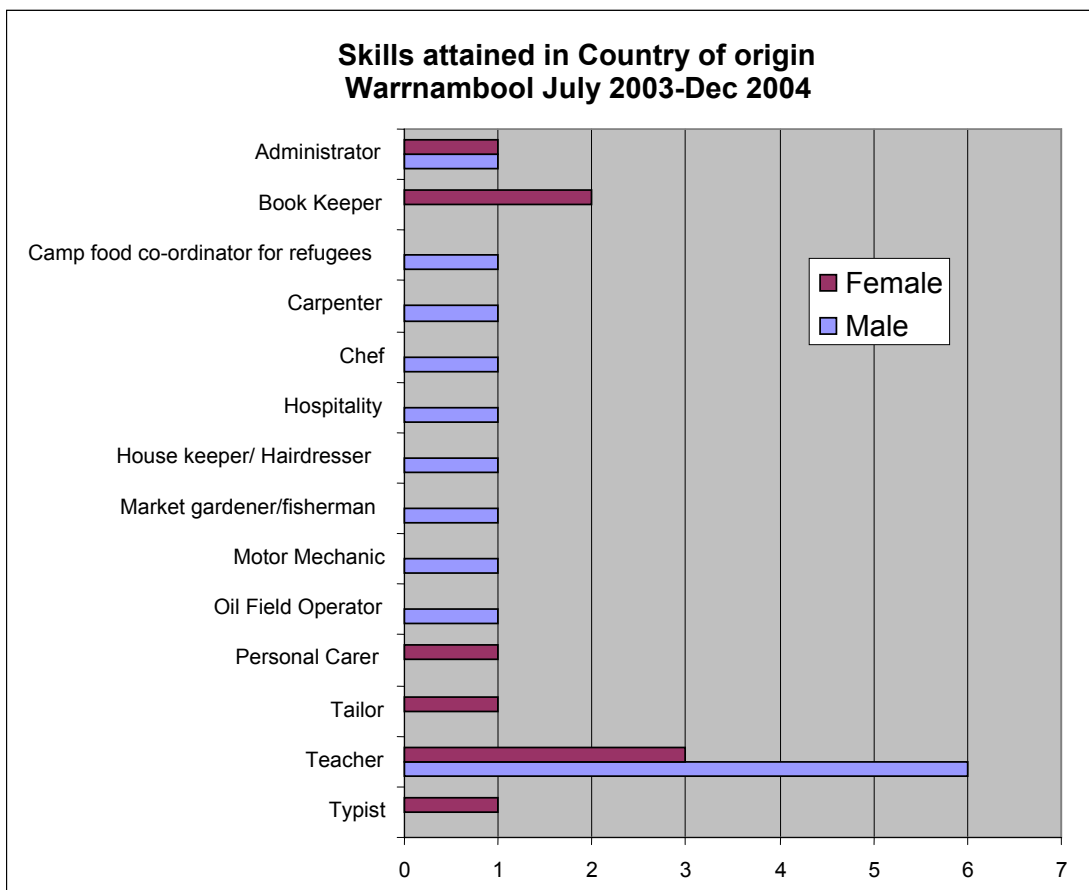
Appendix 1



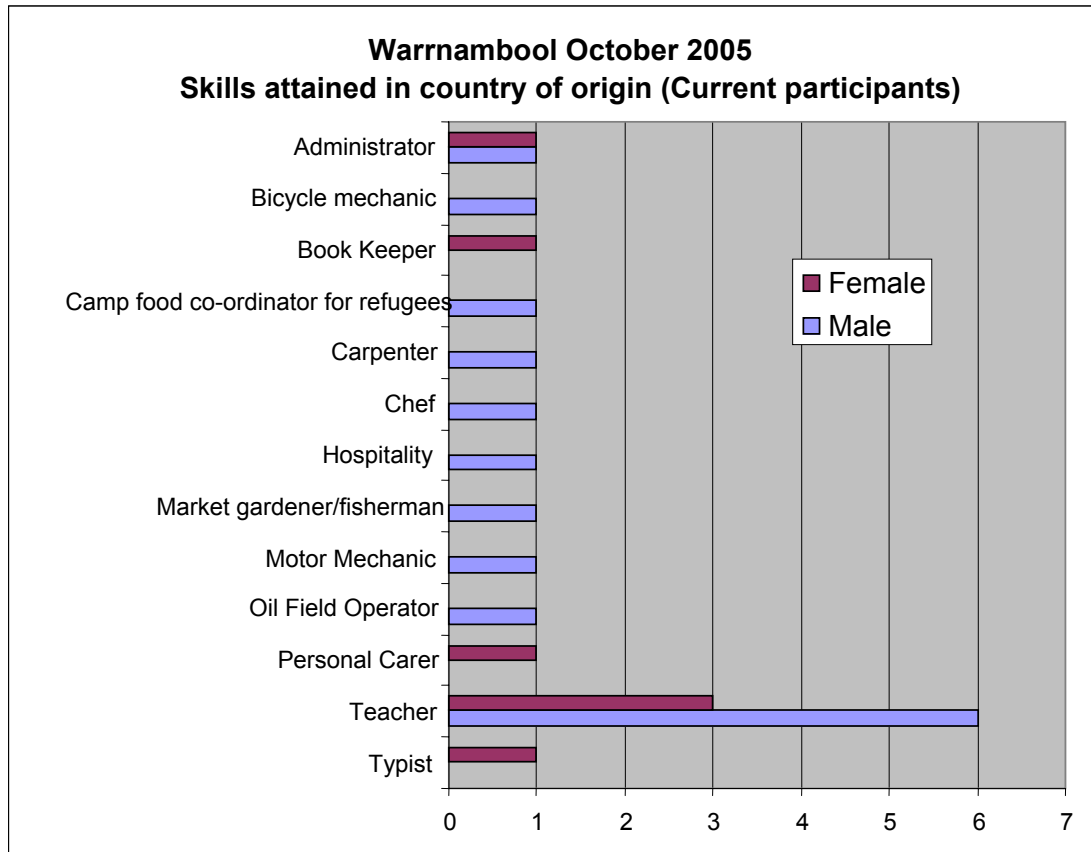
Appendix 2



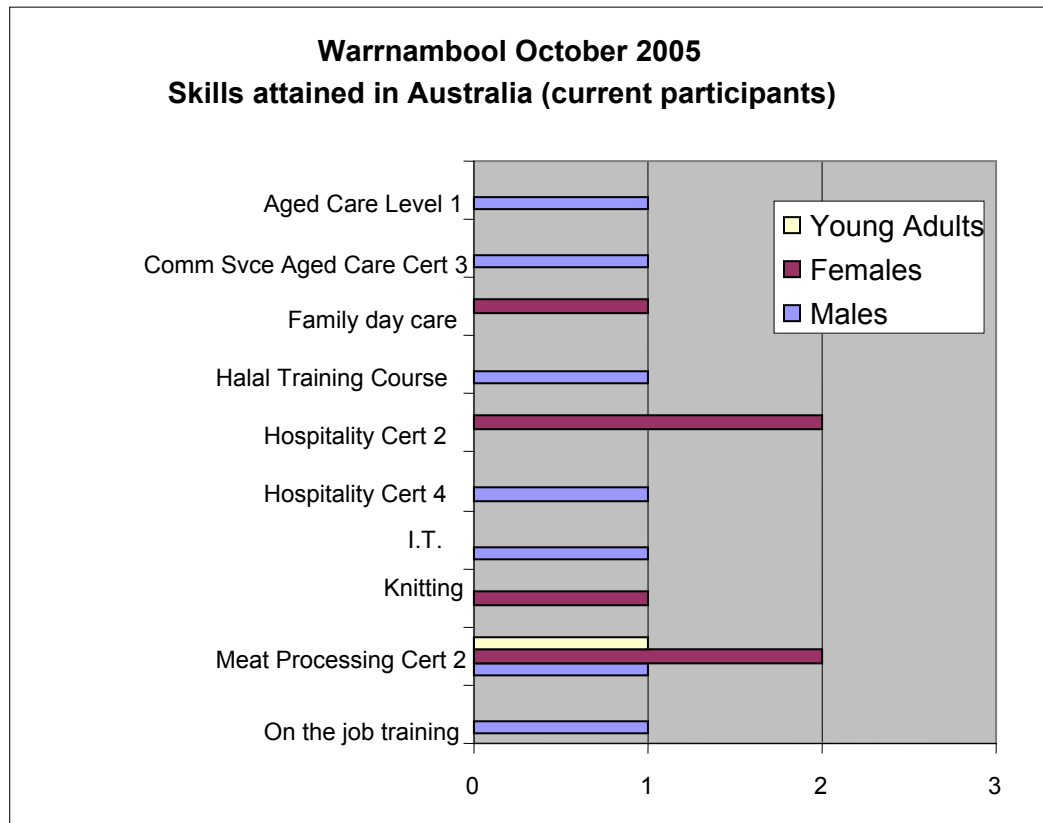
Appendix 3



Appendix 4



Appendix 5



Appendix 6

