

CONSULTATION REPORT

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON JOBS

IPSWICH 11 APRIL 2017

BACKGROUND

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

The purpose of the consultation was to identify the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in relation to jobs, such as education and training, lack of English language proficiency and skills recognition. The consultation also provided members of the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council with information and evidence to support discussion with the Jobs Queensland Board regarding potential workforce opportunities for CALD Queenslanders. The Jobs Queensland Board focuses on:

- skills need and demand for particular industries and regional areas
- workforce development and planning
- the apprenticeships and traineeship system in Queensland.

Twenty-four participants attended with representation from multicultural support service workers, employment and training programs and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

STRUCTURE

Members of the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council, supported by Multicultural Affairs Queensland, facilitated small group discussions with participants on a range of consultation questions (see Appendix 1). Key themes were then reported back to the broader group.

KEY RESPONSES

Consultation participants discussed a range of barriers affecting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds getting a job. The four top issues discussed were:

- Training and recognition of overseas qualifications and skills
- Unconscious bias
- Transport
- Access to small business opportunities

The following report outlines the barriers discussed in detail as well as examples provided by participants regarding what is working well.

THE DETAIL

TRAINING

An issue raised by a number of participants is the lack of confidence experienced by many culturally and linguistically diverse jobseekers, especially those who are newly arrived.

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It can be very confronting for new arrivals who are not familiar with Australian work culture or how to go about getting a job, which can be quite different from their country of origin. A lack of understanding about their work rights can lead to people being exploited.

Some participants identified that the longer the gap between arrival and gaining fulltime work, the further the impact on people's confidence and the harder it became to find work.

Participants discussed the need for support to be provided both during and prior to training courses to build people's confidence and develop skills that will assist new arrivals in their further study and/or in seeking employment (e.g. prep courses, how to go about getting work experience, finding employment and on practical skills like how to write a resume and what is expected in the workplace).

The benefits of work experience programs were mentioned repeatedly, including linking people with potential employers.

It was also mentioned that 13 per cent of participants in Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. However, two barriers were identified for people participating:

1. The mandatory employment outcome may be a disincentive for some organisations to recruit participants with higher needs, such as limited English proficiency, as it can be more difficult to place them in work.
2. Some participants with limited English proficiency can be intimidated by the computers used as part of the self-paced literacy test at the start of the program.

It was suggested that a pre-program for developing basic level skills would greatly improve peoples' participation in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs.

Pre-program elements proposed included adult computer literacy and vocational English as opposed to the focus on functional English that supports settlement that is currently provided through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

It was acknowledged that some foundational programs do currently exist and that Jobactive services provide help with writing a resume and preparing for interviews etc. However, approaches vary across services which adds a layer of complexity and can make it difficult for people to find the right approach for them.

Some participants also raised the difficulties experienced by some new arrivals in taking up training opportunities, including the cost of course fees and transport to and from the course.

WHAT'S WORKED

Participants were asked if they were aware of examples of programs or activities that worked well in supporting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds into work. Some of the examples provided are listed below.

Training that provides additional supports to participants from non-English speaking backgrounds to improve vocabulary and increase work experience. Also providing access to lower level certificate courses which can help migrants establish a small business or gain employment (e.g. food safety).

Challenge Employment's Multicultural Economic Participation Project, assisted participants to establish their own small business in the Ipswich area. The project included workshops and mentoring that provided participants with access to information about how to start a small business in Queensland, awareness about tax and other legal requirements, and link into other supports, such as the Australian Government's New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS).

www.challengeemployment.org.au/2016/11/25/multicultural-economic-participation-project-totoya-african-hair/

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It was also mentioned that some people from a CALD background did not understand the HELP debt system and are incurring debts for some training programs because they did not realise there was a cost. It was suggested that training organisations be more accountable for the amount of training they are providing and the actual prospects of getting a job.

APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

It was raised that there is little awareness of how to apply for apprenticeships or traineeships amongst multicultural communities. Participants provided some suggestions on how to engage with communities, including:

- accessing family networks
- word of mouth
- using the networks of community leaders (e.g. Queensland Multicultural Resource Directory / Community Action for a Multicultural Society (CAMS))
- running community workshops with a job focus
- utilising agency databases or contacts – e.g. Multicultural Affairs Queensland networks

It was also raised that traineeships can be very difficult to get. Some refugees, as a result of their refugee journey, have documentation that incorrectly identify their age and this can impact on their capacity to access an apprenticeship.

RECOGNITION OF OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

The majority of participants identified complexities with gaining recognition of overseas qualifications and skills as a barrier to employment for new arrivals, both for skilled migrants and refugees.

Some new arrivals come from countries that do not have a Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, instead have learnt skills on the job. They have no documented evidence to verify their skills, which makes recognition of prior learning difficult in the Australian context. Participants suggested alternative options for people to demonstrate or test their skills in a work setting in the relevant industry should be explored. This would also assist people to gain work experience in their industry of choice while transitioning to employment or more training to seek Australian qualifications.

Another barrier discussed by participants was the cost associated with having overseas qualifications or skills assessed, especially if further training is required to reach the Australian standard. Participants suggested developing pathways to support people in this process with a HELP style model or micro-loan scheme.

Activate Ipswich, by Ipswich City Council, gives start-up enterprises a helping hand by finding short and medium term uses for buildings in the Ipswich CBD that are currently vacant, disused or awaiting redevelopment, until their enterprise becomes commercially viable to be able to pay rent, or another tenant is identified or the premises are redeveloped.

www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/business/activate_ipswich

There are **social enterprises** within the community which help migrants to get practical work experience and connect with communities.

Recruit smarter is a Victorian Government initiative to target unconscious bias in recruitment processes. Recruit Smarter will de-identify personal details – such as names, gender, age, and locations – to reduce potential bias during the application process. Recent research, conducted by management consulting firm McKinsey & Company, indicates that organisations in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their national industry medians.

www.vic.gov.au/recruit-smarter.html

A South Sudanese community group in Ipswich has run classes on the **difference in food preparation between Sudanese culture and Australian standards**. This has assisted women from the community to gain the confidence to seek jobs in the hospitality industry.

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Some participants also raised the difficulties people are experiencing even after their skills or qualifications have been recognised. There appears to be a lack of understanding among employers on how recognition works leading to an assumption that overseas qualifications are not as good as Australian qualifications. Some participants suggested that after recognition has been granted, assistance be provided to individuals to link in with employers.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Unconscious bias occurs when unintentional assumptions are made about job applicants based on features such as their age, gender, culture, religion or other background¹.

Participants discussed that some employers make assumptions about people's skill levels if they come from a non-English speaking background and/or have a strong accent.

The level of work experience required by some employers was also discussed as a barrier for new arrivals to get a job, with some employers asking for 2—3 years' work experience.

Applicants from diverse backgrounds must submit significantly more applications than other people to secure an interview. Someone with a Middle Eastern-sounding name typically must submit 64 per cent more applications than a person with an Anglo-sounding name to land a job interview. Those with a Chinese-sounding name needed to submit 68 per cent more applications, an Indigenous person 35 per cent more, and an Italian person 12 per cent more². As a result some people from CALD backgrounds feel as though they need to change their name to gain employment, compounding a lack of confidence.

Some participants suggested cultural capability or cultural intelligence programs targeted towards employers could help break down these barriers.

TRANSPORT

Affordability of public transport as well as the cost associated with obtaining a driver's licence were also raised as barriers to employment for new arrivals. Many jobs require applicants to have a driver's licence and their own private transport, things that most new arrivals do not have access to. New arrivals, under the age of 25 years, struggle with the requirement for 100 hours of supervised driving experience to gain a driver's licence. Without the support of friends or family, which many learners access to log their 100 hours, new arrivals must utilise private lessons. The cost of these lessons can be prohibitive for new arrivals on a limited income.

SMALL BUSINESS

Participants raised that many migrants and refugees start their own business as they are able to use their strengths and existing skills more readily than seeking employment. Small business ownership builds confidence, connects, inspires and supports other people in the community through providing jobs and mentoring opportunities.

Providing support to migrants and refugees, such as mentoring and education regarding taxation and other legal requirements, will support the creation of more small businesses.

¹ www.vic.gov.au/recruit-smarter.html

² Booth, A., Leigh A., & Varganova E., (2009) *Does Racial and Ethnic Discrimination Vary Across Minority Groups? Evidence From a Field Experiment*, Australian National University, Available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1521229

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

TOPIC	QUESTIONS
Barriers to getting a job	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some of the key barriers experienced when <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finding employment opportunities? • applying for vacancies? • accessing apprenticeships and traineeships? 2. Can you provide specific examples of barriers you have experienced/aware of? 3. What level of support did you receive and from who (e.g. state government program, Job Active, other organisation?) 4. What difficulties did you experience in finding support? 5. What kind of support or assistance would you like to see? 6. Have you participated in any programs that have improved your employment opportunities? 7. Would you participate in a work experience, traineeship or apprenticeship?
Skills recognition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the barriers for recognising overseas qualifications and skills? 2. How can these be overcome? 3. How can the process for recognition of overseas qualifications and skills be improved to address skills shortages in particular industries and regional areas?
Education and training needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What specific training or education would assist you in finding and securing employment? 2. Would you be interested in accessing training or education opportunities in industries of high demand? 3. Were you able to access information about education and training opportunities? 4. Were you able to access information about apprenticeships and traineeships? 5. Were there any barriers to you accessing education or training opportunities, or apprenticeships and traineeships?
Other	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you currently have a job, what, if any, difficulties have you faced in the workplace? 2. What type of support do you need at the workplace? 3. How can we employ more migrants in regional areas to reduce dependency on temporary visa holders?