

# MIGRATION AND SKILLS ROUNDTABLE

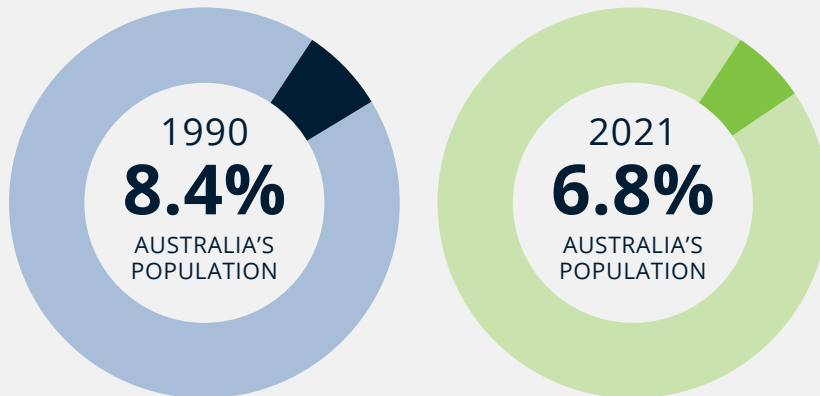
THURSDAY 19 MAY 2022  
DISCUSSION OUTCOMES



COMMITTEE FOR  
**ADELAIDE**

ADELAIDE  
CONNECTED

# THE CHALLENGE



**Our share of Australia's population has declined**



IN 2020-21 SA ONLY RECEIVED

# 6.1%

(9,829) OF AUSTRALIA'S TOTAL  
MIGRANT INTAKE LESS THAN  
OUR FAIR SHARE

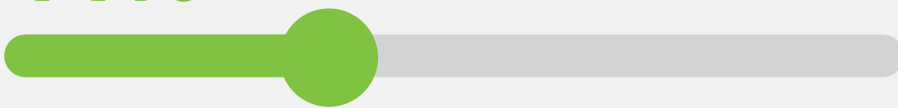
we want our intake to **be at least 10%** to meet our ambitions for business and economic growth in the state

**At 40, SA has the oldest median age of all mainland states and territories**

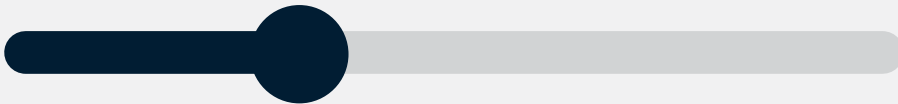
**Overseas migration will increase in importance as our population ages due to declining fertility rates**

**The challenge is retaining talent once they are here**

**44%**



**30%**

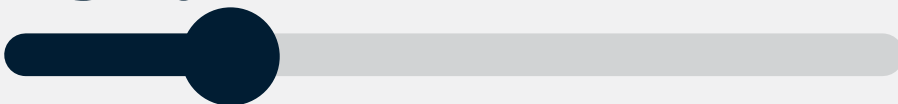


44% of migrants coming are not working in their nominated occupation compared with 30% nationally

**54%**



**25%**



54% are working below skill level compared with 25% nationally

## What factors, policies or actions does your business utilise to retain skilled migrants in South Australia? What are most impactful?

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- Being an 'Employer of Choice':
  - > employing at the correct skill and salary level – providing guaranteed award wages where relevant (particularly important for hospitality staff retention)
  - > great onboarding practices
- employee focused, making employee feel wanted and appreciated from the start. Putting more effort into better understanding their needs and providing a culturally supportive and safe environment
  - > establishing a culture of wellness and appreciation
  - > establishing career paths and promotions
  - > offering workplace flexibility including part time arrangements
  - > supporting employee connections with local networks and community
  - > being creative regarding longer term incentives (e.g. offering ownership share in business)
  - > providing language skills training for ESL employees if required
- Recruiting directly overseas has proven to be efficient. Retention starts at recruitment stage
- Collaborative projects and programs between universities and industry are valuable (in US Pittsburgh industries approach universities but this is not common practice here in SA)
- Paid student internships – students are the perfect age to settle in SA
- Encouraging international students to do business placements so they can develop relationships with industry
- Providing a welcome and inclusive environment. Welcoming students / migrants on arrival (e.g. Mayor welcomes students in region)
- Lifestyle factors are important for retention in SA plus real estate availability and affordability, access to schooling – financial incitement is not viable in the longer term
- Securing accommodation for migrants prior to commencing job, particularly critical in regional areas

## What are the barriers to employing skilled migrants who are already onshore and able to work in South Australia?

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- Adelaide's reputation is an issue – nationally and globally. An old school view of Adelaide still exists nationally. Globally, Adelaide is not well known. When migrants arrive interstate and are looking to relocate, they hear negative comments about Adelaide
- Wages are lower in SA compared to other states – remuneration is challenging, and it is difficult to compete on a cost basis when enticing talent to relocate here. Companies are paying 'top dollar' for skilled migrants. Poaching by other businesses is common
- Migrant skill sets that cannot be accommodated locally lead to jobs mismatch. We need to match incoming skill sets with quality job offers
- English as a Second Language (International Education sector) – English language proficiency is a barrier to local employment and can impact employers' willingness to take on an international students:
  - > there is a need for a base level of understanding when students leave university
  - > support is needed for students to develop English proficiency before moving into local workforce
- Lack of cultural awareness and understanding about where migrants are coming from. Cultural barriers can inhibit communication
- There is a local bias towards people who have previously worked in Adelaide. This exists across state boundaries so the impact on migrants is amplified even further
- Racism is a challenge – both unconscious and conscious racism from employers and recruiters
- Workforce diversity can impact how welcoming and culturally sensitive an organisation is. SME sector is large in SA therefore diversity can be a challenge. There can be a lack of cultural awareness and understanding about where migrants are coming from. Cultural barriers can inhibit communication
- Employers often perceive visa requirements relating to international students as being complex and there is a lack of confidence in the system regarding applications. This impacts recruitment of students into local industries – education/awareness of international student visa and post-study visa could better support business
- 'Work from anywhere' mentality is common now due to Covid border closure impacts, particularly an issue for white collar – it's hard to attract local workers as they can live here but get hired and paid more from interstate companies
- Genuine Temporary Entrant requirements for international students create a 'bias' in the system towards 'Temporary' and contradict efforts in SA to retain skilled talent

## What are the barriers to employing skilled migrants who are already onshore and able to work in South Australia? (continued)

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- There are state and federal ‘blanket rulings’ for employee clearances to work in specific sectors. Not all employees will be working on projects that need strict clearances (Defence and IT sectors – particularly problematic). Noting that migration program clearances are tough enough without additional blanket requirements
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is overly complex in many industries and can be costly which can lead to mismatch in the profession migrants are recruited into
- Construction licencing is a challenge regarding length of time it takes to process approval of licence, RPL, and requirements for TAFE face-to-face attendance
- Labour agreements (sponsored) – timing and resourcing to complete requirements is an issue for businesses
- FIFO checking an issue as businesses are accountable for checking that employees meet requirements which is a resourcing burden

## What can the SA Government and your organisation do to attract and better support skilled migrants into the right work?

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- Government / industry could collaborate to develop a 'Trade Show' type event to match with visa
- Migrants often find their 'cultural' group but not their 'professional' group. Is there a role for government/industry to facilitate introductions to 'professional' groups?
- Concierge services are required early on to connect those arriving with local services and employment opportunities if not secured before arrival
- Funding for existing concierge/welcome services (such as Adelaide Connected) is critical. Additional funding could assist in making services more widespread and better connected across industries and government. Services should include funding for the trailing spouse
- There needs to be a 'touch point' for migrants on entry to Adelaide. Arrive at airport ... what next? Clarity of roles needed around who does this
- Greater synergies should be developed between government and industry—some industries and population groups have their own welcoming practices; however, they should be better connected for greater impact
- Occupation lists versus job opportunities – gap exists between the two
- Improve connection between government and industry to align demand/supply and plan for future needs
- Communication is an issue between government/industry/migrants
- Job finder needed for migrants to match their skill set with job opportunities
- Assist migrants to identify what qualifications are transferable:
  - > Qualification check
  - > Bridging courses
  - > Availability of RPL
  - > Mapping of national standards and certification requirements would be useful
- Medical / Nursing / Allied health – registration process for migrants takes up to 10 weeks
- Information about migration programs should be clearer and more centralised
- Clarity is needed around joining skill sets – medical/engineer
- Enhance the way jobs are promoted here in SA
- Promote 'Employer of choice' brand interstate and overseas and position Adelaide as a workplace for global companies
- Industry can work with government to highlight opportunities with employers wanting to embrace global experience – bridging process.
- Mindset change – taking employers on the journey. Removing bias when looking to employ / interview staff

## What can the SA Government and your organisation do to attract and better support skilled migrants into the right work? (continued)

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- Implement and promote international student programs (e.g. JobShop) – find the right placement with the right skill set to suit temporary work (e.g. Uber, Shahin, McDonalds)
- Improve connections between government and industry associations to enhance understanding of barriers and fill gaps. Support businesses to provide ‘gap training’ – re-education/upskilling to meet specific skill demands
- Improve partnerships with recruitment agencies and promote value/understanding of offshore experience (global)
- Develop a framework to articulate focus – Business/Industry and International Students/migrants
- Better target and promote opportunities requiring specific skill sets to certain countries and markets
- Simplify ways to Permanent Residency
- DAMA – shift away from specific skill sets, costs are a barrier for employers



## Outside of work, what other supports might skilled migrants need to feel welcomed into South Australian communities and workplaces?

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- A comprehensive 'welcome pack' could be developed, including concierge type services such as those offered by Adelaide Connected. This could be a centralised 'app' to access points of information for living in SA, localised for regions, to help migrants settle (e.g. Global Detroit) and provide a better understanding of services and how local systems work including:
  - > Public transport (particularly lacking in regions)
  - > Education (public or private) – how to research schools
  - > Accommodation / housing
  - > Driving
  - > Costs
  - > Access to translated versions of key information
- Success and good news stories should be promoted by everyone to shift the conservative / negative mindset towards new arrivals
- Sporting, community, cultural and religious groups are all important as migrants form friendships and networks at local clubs/groups
- A more holistic approach needed to settle the whole family and accommodate individual family needs – it's not just about jobs
- Securing employment for partners (trailing spouse)
- Implement and promote international student programs (e.g. JobShop) – find the right placement with the right skill set to suit temporary work (e.g. Uber, Shahin, McDonalds)
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- Roles such as Ambassadors and Mentors suggested to welcome migrants (+students) in different regions/sectors – also extend this to families
- Introduce a Graduate / Student Career Service linking students with business and vice versa
- Executive level employees often met and helped by organisation with a dedicated concierge – this is needed for all migrants not just execs
- Better assistance needed for when things are not working well. Where do people go to reach out for help?

## Outside of work, what other supports might skilled migrants need to feel welcomed into South Australian communities and workplaces? (continued)

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- Volunteering opportunities should be promoted as it can provide opportunities to develop local network and connections  
Libraries and community facilities are frequently accessed by new arrivals. What is their role?
- Service clubs are underutilised – large number of professionals who can volunteer their time  
- potential for an 'army' of volunteers to assist with concierge service offer
- Promoting connections outside of existing culture. It's difficult to get locals to engage in events aimed at migrants
- Grants could be made available to specifically provide concierge services to regions
- State government has ability to influence – licensing, housing etc
- Increase awareness of representatives at state/federal/local level and what they can do to help
- Government sponsored events to facilitate networking
- Ask migrants what they need – (migrant experience/view to be explored in future roundtable)

# NEXT STEPS

The Committee for Adelaide, DPC and DIS will meet to discuss how best to utilise the information gathered from this Roundtable and determine who is best suited to progress the issues and ideas raised during our discussion.

Plans are underway to bring together migrants to hear more about their experiences of relocating to Adelaide, what assistance they would have found useful for their settlement, and views on retention.

An Ideas paper will be developed to turn the ideas raised by businesses, migrants, and stakeholders into action.

## Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that this Roundtable was held in collaboration with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Department for Innovation and Skills as part of Adelaide Connected, a program of the Committee for Adelaide.

We would like to thank the organisations involved for their contributions:

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Thomas Foods International  
The Hospital Research Foundation Group  
Mitsubishi Motors Australia Limited  
Hays  
Harrison McMillan  
Schneider Electric  
Master Plumbers Association SA  
Randstad  
ACH Group  
McGregor Tan

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