



COMMITTEE FOR
ADELAIDE

MIGRANT CONSULTATION

14 SEPTEMBER 2022
DISCUSSION OUTCOMES

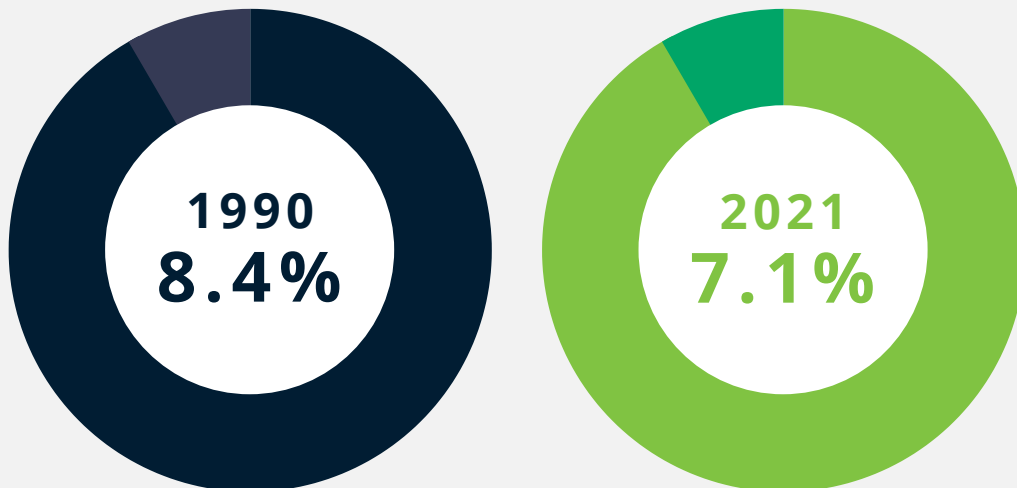
THE CHALLENGES

On 14 September 2022, the Committee for Adelaide, in collaboration with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department for Industry, Innovation and Science invited migrants and international students between the ages of 20 and 40 years, who arrived in Adelaide within the last 5 years, to participate in a Migrant Consultation Session.

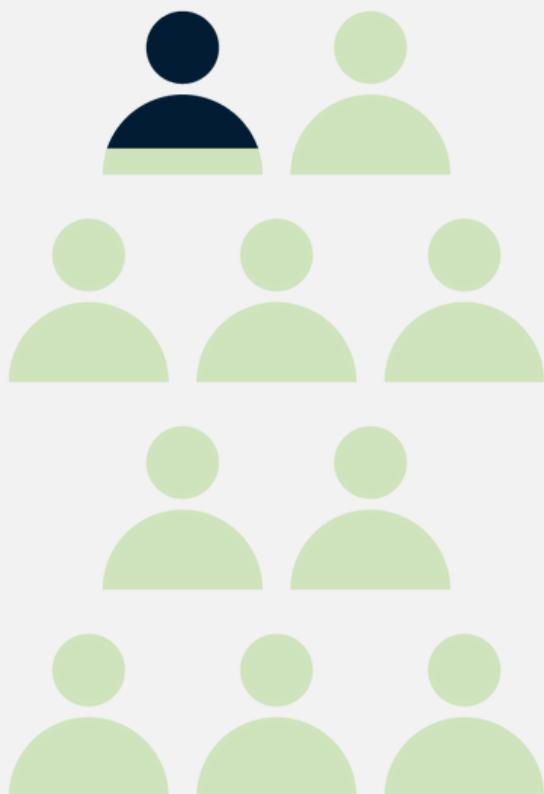
Migrants who participated in the consultation represented over 15 different countries utilising various visa pathways including skilled, humanitarian, family, and international student visas.

The purpose of the consultation was to engage with migrants to gain an understanding about their experiences moving to South Australia and to hear from them about what can or could be done to make the transition easier and to learn more about what would attract migrants to stay here in the longer term.

THE CHALLENGES



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.

TOP 4 CHALLENGES FOR MIGRANTS MOVING TO ADELAIDE

1. ACCOMMODATION

- Rentals can be expensive, poor quality, and lack space
- No rental history in Adelaide (or Australia) makes it difficult to secure accommodation initially
- Significant amount of time to find accommodation impedes job seeking ability and capacity
- It is difficult to secure accommodation prior to arriving in Adelaide. Rental applications are often rejected immediately because of an inability to physically view the property. Real estate agents request the property be inspected in person or applied for prior to inspection which makes it difficult for anyone interstate or overseas
- There is a lack of options on arrival that accommodate families with children

2 . SEEKING AND GAINING EMPLOYMENT

- Finding the first job is the most difficult
- Recruiters and employers often making local job experience a prerequisite makes it increasingly difficult for new arrivals to access the local job market
- There is no recognised system or adequate support do not appear to be any systems in place to assist migrants willing to enter the local job market. There are no information sessions for migrants to help them access jobs
- There is a reluctance to employ people who are on temporary visas
- Those who were successful failed to secure jobs due to 'lack of local experience'

TOP 4 CHALLENGES FOR MIGRANTS MOVING TO ADELAIDE

3. VISA PROCESSING

- Migrants expressed their frustrations with the visa processing system. With a lack of communication, transparency, consistency, and long waiting times negatively impacting their ability to feel settled in Adelaide
- There is no mechanism, either online, in person or over the phone, which can provide an update on how the visa application is processing and how much longer the migrant can expect to wait on the outcome
- The lengthy visa processing time leaves migrants in limbo with feelings of stress and despair, severely impacting their mental health and wellbeing. It therefore, becomes impossible for migrants to adequately plan for their future

4. ISOLATION AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM

- Many migrants shared feelings of isolation being away from their families and friends overseas
- It is difficult to make social connections and foster 'real and deep connections' with locals
- Feelings of low self-esteem and despair were discussed when migrants couldn't find jobs that matched their skill sets or the level of responsibility held in their home countries
- There is insufficient support for migrant mental health and wellbeing and lack of understanding of what they are going through



WHAT INITIATIVES WOULD BREAK DOWN BARRIERS TO PROVIDE A BETTER TRANSITION EXPERIENCE?

A number of initiatives were raised to address what could assist in the transition process to Adelaide. They include, but are not limited to:

- **There should be a confidential hotline** for migrants to speak with people outside of their family that can support them and understand what they are going through relocating and settling into a new country
- **Employers should accept non-resident migrants.** Many organisations have blanket recruitment policies - some exclude every one but citizens, others allow permanent residents but not visa holders
- **Educating employers and recruiting agents regarding:**
 - the value of temporary visas
 - bridging visas
 - work rights
- **Visas should be done differently:**
 - Visa process needs to be faster, more efficient and streamlined with greater consistency and transparency regarding bridging visas to permanent residency
 - Address inconsistencies such as the turnaround time for some migrants appears shorter whilst others wait many years for an outcome
 - The guidelines and waiting times are unclear. There is no real-time or attainable information regarding at which stage an application is in the approval process. In some instances, people are waiting years for an outcome.
 - Restrictions on leaving the country whilst on a bridging visa are unfair and impact migrant wellbeing with lengthy periods of time between seeing family members back home
 - Migrants should be notified if they are waiting for visa approval and an alternative visa becomes available that could result in their visa process being expedited

WHAT INITIATIVES WOULD BREAK DOWN BARRIERS TO PROVIDE A BETTER TRANSITION EXPERIENCE?

- **Provide access to quality, low cost 'bridging' accommodation** when you arrive such as backpacker hostels and accommodation suitable for families with children
- **Government to provide childcare services for students who are studying** who are also working to pay their bills
- **Welcome packs** must include more contemporary information including more industry specific information
- **Soft skills and cultural awareness training** would be helpful for migrants entering the country. Information about what support is available locally needs to be included in the welcome packs
- **Proof of identity should be easier** to attain, and this should be an acceptable form of identification, which is not currently the case with all SA businesses/organisations
- **Public transport system is archaic** with the need to buy tickets and top up metro cards. All payment systems must allow for payment to be made via all contemporary payment options, including, phone or debit/credit card tap and go options. This must apply on all modes of public transport
- **Service SA centres are only open during the week.** Several Service SA centres need to be open for at least a few hours on Saturdays. People should not be expected to take time out of their working day to transfer registrations and apply for SA licenses
- **Businesses to offer internships and job placements** with more consistent requirements across all degrees
- **Support for migrants to access the local job market** which appears opaque and cliquey for many – there may be platforms where you can find jobs but 'where are they and how do you find them?'
- **Help to access upskilling** if required to improve employment prospects
- **Networking events** should be mapped to help migrants connect with others – 'connections are everything' both socially and professionally
- **Migrating your pets should be cheaper and easier.** Currently it is expensive and can delay relocation and settlement for migrants moving to South Australia

WHAT WOULD ATTRACT MIGRANTS TO STAY HERE LONGER?

It was evident that inclusivity was a common theme for the group.

Some of the common answers provided are listed below:

- The core goal for many migrants was attaining Permanent Residency
- 'Blending into society is hard' – a more welcoming and inclusive culture and society is needed
- Better and more accommodation – 'if there were improvements we would stay'
- Finding work that aligns with skill set
- Growth prospects – jobs, business, real estate
- Making meaningful friendships
- More vibrancy, more entertainment, lively atmosphere, more shops open earlier and later
- More related cultural activities (to avoid feeling homesick)
- Improved ways to bring parents here permanently (challenge between balancing family and costs for parent visa)
- Improved industry/ university collaboration to help bridge the gap between study and employment opportunities



THE NEXT STEPS

We have addressed the challenges, and understand what could be done to entice migrants to stay.

How do we turn these recommendations and ideas into outcomes?

1. Bringing business, government, industry and migrants together, to implement practical solutions

2. Hold additional migrant workshops to explore more ideas and keep up to date with the ever changing migration landscape

3. Establish an affiliation/group for industry bodies and migrants to break down barriers for migrants entering the workforce in South Australia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department for Industry, Innovation and Science, for their support in delivering this consultation.

Many thanks to the migrants who gave their time and shared their experiences and ideas as part of this consultation session.



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