



# Resource List: Economic Considerations Prepared for 2022 Federal Election The cost of current Asylum and Refugee Policy

## **A Summary of Literature relating to the cost of indefinite detention and the economic contribution of refugees and those seeking asylum February 2022**

### **A COST OF OFF-SHORE AND ON-SHORE DETENTION:**

#### **Summary points:**

- The cost of offshore detention is prohibitive. Using the most conservative department data, it is over half a million dollars per person per year. When that figure is added to the various associated infrastructure costs (given an occupancy rate of 239 people across PNG and Nauru), the actual annual cost per detainee is close to \$3.4million dollars.
- The costs of on-shore detention are significantly lower, although not negligible, with the hotel industry receiving large amounts to hold people in detention. On the basis of data supplied by the Australian Government, the Refugee Council of Australia estimates that the average cost of keeping a person in on-shore immigration detention is \$361 865 per year. The annual cost of keeping someone in hotel type detention is \$471 493, while the cost of keeping someone in community detention is significantly less at approximately \$46 490 per annum. In contrast, the cost of allowing refugees to stay on a Bridging Visa is between \$16 801 and \$4 429.

### **ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY BY REFUGEES AND THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM**

#### **Summary points:**

- The public discourse tends to focus on the costs of resettlement imposed on Australia's economy by refugees and humanitarian migrants. In fact, there is compelling evidence revealing the economic benefits returned to Australia's economy by refugees and humanitarian migrants outweighs this. Financially, they contribute to labour force participation and consequently, national productivity; they create new businesses that employ people; consume goods and services with their wages and incomes; pay taxes when they work which in-turn offsets the cost of public services; and, they build a skilled workforce for Australia through their above-average uptake of higher education and skills training.
- There are not for profit organisations (NGOs) such as *The Tent Partnership for Refugees* and *Humans Like Us* who work with partner companies in supporting refugees to find suitable jobs and also to support organisations in how to link with and support potential employees.

- Many of the resources (see individual summaries, below) provide the statistics to support the argument for the economic and social benefits of increased participation of refugees and those seeking asylum, particularly in light of Australia's ageing population. Two studies, supported by AMES, of the social and economic benefits to the Nhill and Bendigo (Victorian) communities from the resettlement of Karen refugees from Myanmar reveal these economic benefits. Similar findings are provided by UniSA researchers on the economic contribution of refugees from Afghanistan to the Port Adelaide community.
- First and foremost, it is well understood that all migrants and especially refugees and humanitarian migrants are highly motivated to build a new and successful lives, after fleeing trauma, persecution and/or war. Obtaining employment and an independent income is a principle pathway to a successful life.
- Refugees and humanitarian migrants are known to accept menial, difficult and boring jobs that are distasteful to residents. They are especially noted for contributing to the much-needed labour force in regional Australia.
- Many have proven to be entrepreneurial, creative and innovative in establishing new businesses. "In the year 2000, five of Australia's eight billionaires were people whose families had originally come to the country as refugees" (Refugee Council of Australia 2010). This includes Adelaide's Shahin family.
- Justice 4 Refugees SA's argument for pathways to permanency is supported by data showing the higher rates of participation in fulltime employment by those who are not on temporary visas.
- The following situations limit refugee and humanitarian migrants' contribution to our economy and to their own resettlement processes:
  - COVID 19 and the shut-down of service industries where many refugees and humanitarian migrants work, has had a negative impact on their ability to earn wages and as well as on their health and wellbeing. More compassionate policies that protect their rights and wellbeing are required to ensure they are not adversely discriminated against during unforeseen events like the recent pandemic.
  - Australia's strict policies on family reunification are a cause of distress to refugees and humanitarian migrants, curtailing their productivity and ability to maintain the challenges of tertiary study.

## The Cost of Off-shore and On-shore Detention

### 1. With billions more allocated to immigration detention, it's another bleak year for refugees

Claire Higgins, *The Conversation*, May 13, 2021

<https://theconversation.com/with-billions-more-allocated-to-immigration-detention-its-another-bleak-year-for-refugees-160783>

This resource provides an examination of the 2021-22 immigration budget allocations, documenting the impact of cutting back of the humanitarian intake and pointing out the striking figure of \$812 million allocated to offshore processing. These 2021 figures show that with 109 people on Nauru and 130 in Papua New Guinea this equates to an cost of *\$3.39 million per person for 2021*.

Onshore detention arrangements are similarly vast, with \$1.2 billion allocated for onshore detention and compliance.

The reopening of Christmas Island is also documented as having been phenomenally expensive at \$55.6 million, and was initially done to house only the Murugappan family from Biloela, although now an additional 200 people have been added in a separate section of the facility.

Finally, the decrease in funding for support services for asylum seekers is explained: it is \$33 million for 2021–22, down from \$39 million two years previous.

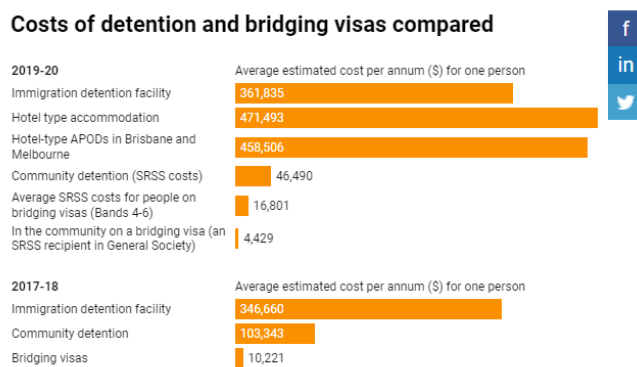
## 2. Statistics on people in detention in Australia

Refugee Council of Australia, current

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/detention-australia-statistics/9/>

The Refugee Council of Australia provides a broad overview of the forms of detention, the lengths that people have been detained and demographic details of the people in immigration detention. The average number of days people spend in detention (now 689 days) is at its highest ever recorded.

The Council offers some staggering statistics regarding the cost of keeping people in immigration detention both on-shore and offshore. The weekly costs of keeping people in Hotels in Australia is startling. This table summarises the offshore and onshore costs:



There is a discrepancy between SRSS costs given for hotel and bridging visa costs in the two sources for 2019-20, which may relate to the way these figures were calculated. Both are given for completeness.

Chart: Refugee Council of Australia - Source: 2019-20 figures: Answer to question on notice AE21-358 and BE21-445; 2017-18: Senate Estimates transcript, 21 May 2018, p. 100 - Get the data - Embed - Download image - Created with Datawrapper

## 3. The Cost of Australia’s Asylum Seeker and Refugees Policies: A source Guide

Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law Factsheet, 1 February 2021

<https://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/publication/cost-australias-asylum-policy>

This short 2021 paper looks at the economics around Australia’s asylum seeker policy providing some striking data, including that it costs:

\$3.4 million to hold an asylum seeker in offshore detention in PNG or Nauru

\$362 000 to hold an asylum seeker in onshore detention; and  
\$4 429 to live on a bridging visa

Other striking facts and figures about the costs include the National Commission of Audit's finding that from 2009-10 to 2013-14 spending on offshore detention and processing increased from \$118.4 million per year to \$3.3 billion per year.

The authors contrast these costs with many reports showing the economic benefits of refugee resettlement, including an Australian Bureau of Statistics report which showed that 'Those who arrive in Australia under the Humanitarian Program have been found to be more entrepreneurial than other migrants'. Another large study commissioned by the Department of Immigration found that refugees are a young and entrepreneurial cohort. Another study of refugees in the Victorian town of Nhill found their resettlement helped address labour shortages and demographic decline and boosted the local economy by \$41.5 million.

#### **4. In Australia and the UK, focus is on costs of detention**

**Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law , 1 February 2021**

<https://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/news/australia-and-uk-focus-costs-detention>

In 2020, the UK considered adopting the 'Australian model' of immigration detention but after hearing evidence from two Australian academics in February 2021 about the costs likely to be incurred, as well as many other issues that arise they were dissuaded to pursue this model. This attached table of the costs involved was telling, along with Minister Dutton's frank admission, after releasing 60 refugees into the community, that 'it's cheaper for people to be in the community than it is to be at a hotel, or for us to be paying for them to be in detention'.

**Table 1: Estimated actual expenses of offshore processing**

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Estimated actual expenses (A\$)</b>
2014-15	912,631,000
2015-16	1,078,064,000
2016-17	1,082,894,000
2017-18	1,481,985,000
2018-19	1,157,520,000
2019-20	961,680,000
2020-21 (forecast)	1,186,445,000

#### **5. At what cost?**

**The human and economic cost of Australia's offshore detention policies 2019**

<https://www.asrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/1912-At-What-Cost-report.pdf>

*Save the Children*, the *Asylum Seeker's Resource Centre* and *GetUp* all contributed to this report, which was based on 2016 Report sponsored by UNICEF.

The Report noted the difficulties of obtaining information on the spendings in this area but, using Departmental sources, it was established that at the very least, offshore detention cost \$573 000 annually (which did not include the infrastructure and administrative costs,

which the researchers argued would make this figure significantly higher. By comparison, onshore mandatory detention cost \$346 178. All of this contrasts with those living on a bridging visa, which was estimated as costing the government \$10 221 per person.

## **B ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF REFUGEES AND THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM**

### **1. Economic, Civic and Social Contributions of Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants - A Literature Review**

Prepared by the Refugee Council of Australia for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship February 2010

[https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/economic-civic-social-contributions-refugees-humanitarian-entrants-literature-review\\_access.pdf](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/economic-civic-social-contributions-refugees-humanitarian-entrants-literature-review_access.pdf)

This literature review found that while there might be short-term costs during the resettlement phase, rafter successful integration refugees make permanent cultural, social and economic contributions to Australian society.

- Humanitarian entrants are often entrepreneurial after having established themselves in a new environment. In 2000, five of Australia's eight billionaires were people whose families had originally come to the country as refugees.
- Their impact has been positive in regional and rural Australia through providing labour and stimulating economic growth and service delivery.
- Available sources, point to above-average rates of success in education and employment for children of Humanitarian entrants.
- Informal volunteering plays an important role in building social capital.

Volunteers from ethnic communities provide the greater part of their services to benefit society as a whole rather than their own ethnic group.

The literature review identified a relative lack of research differentiating Humanitarian entrants from other migrants and argued for a need for longitudinal data collection and research into their economic progress. It is suggested that priority be given to further study of local conditions that promote or hamper economic integration and participation.

### **2. Refugees: Economic Burden or Opportunity?**

Parsons, Richard. (2016). E-International Relations

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297324238 Refugees Economic Burden or Opportunity](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297324238_Refugees_Economic_Burden_or_Opportunity)

<http://www.e-ir.info/2016/03/07/refugees-economic-burden-or-opportunity/>

The contribution that refugees make in Australia is usually described in terms of intangible notions such as enhancing multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Refugees contribute to the Australian economy through employment, business and other activities, but we do not know the extent or value of this contribution or how to assess it holistically. This gap enables the public and media to focus on alleged negative consequences and financial costs of refugee settlement.

This review emerged from a sense among staff at the Multicultural Development Association (MDA) that current arguments mounted in support of refugee settlement sometimes fail to carry sufficient influence in public debate. Possible arguments for increasing a humanitarian intake of refugees can be grouped into three categories: legal, moral, and economic. Organisations such as MDA draw on aspects of all three, but rely especially on individual stories of refugees and the moral weight that these stories convey.

*Legal* arguments, they argue, can be effective in ensuring that Australia meets its obligations under international law, but do not generate wide public support for refugees. *Moral* arguments are those that appeal to people's sense of justice, fairness or duty of care, and typically draw on emotional experiences and personal stories. Moral arguments might confirm humanitarian values among those already sympathetic towards refugees but might not effectively counter xenophobia or misinformation. *Economic* arguments, by contrast, can potentially complement legal and moral arguments by offering a factual evidence base.

MDA's own work has found that "securing meaningful and sustainable employment is a vital part of successful settlement" (MDA, 2011-2012, p. 26). Experience suggests that refugees in Australia engage heavily in job searching and vocational education, often accept work below their levels of experience and education, and commonly undertake voluntary work (MDA, 2012b). A survey of 227 male refugees found that a majority was willing to take low-skilled work regardless of qualifications, experience, and education (MDA, 2012c). In terms of outcomes, almost 80% of the 1,200 jobseekers working with the MDA's Employment and Training Services team from 2002 to 2012 achieved employment and training places (MDA, 2011-2012, p. 26). In response to 30 advertised work placement positions for refugees and migrants in office administration, MDA received 300 applications (MDA, 2011-2012, p. 29).

### **3. The Economic Impact of Migration**

A report produced by Migration Council Australia using modelling by Independent Economics. Does not deal with refugees or people seeking asylum but provides an upto date analysis of the economic value immigration to Australia.

<https://migrationcouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/The-Economic-Impact-of-Migration.pdf>

The authors argue that for too long the economic contribution of migration to Australia has been significantly undervalued. This 2021 report documents the first comprehensive analysis in almost a decade of the impact of migration on our key economic indicators and the

verdict is conclusive: migration is central to Australia's future prosperity.

Australia's projected population will be 38 million by 2050 and migration will be contributing \$1,625 billion (1.6 trillion) to Australia's GDP. Moreover, migration will have added 15.7 per cent to our workforce participation rate, 21.9 per cent to after tax real wages for low skilled workers, 5.9 per cent in GDP per capita growth. Overall, by 2050, each individual migrant will on average be contributing approximately 10 per cent more to Australia's economy than existing residents.

The economic impact of migration flows through into every aspect of the economy. It has a profound positive impact not just on population growth, but also on labour participation and employment, on wages and incomes, on our national skills base and on net productivity. Set out in terms of the three 'Ps' — participation, productivity and population — migration is a significant factor.

In the absence of a migration program, Australia's population in 2050 would be 24 million; with the program we project a population by 2050 of 38 million. This population increase adds economic gains in and of itself, however the authors point out that the interaction of migration with our economic indicators is complex, and the returns go far beyond the benefits of simple population gain. Over the next 35 years, migration will drive employment growth. As migrants are concentrated in the prime working age group and are relatively highly educated they have a positive impact on the employment rate. By 2050, the percentage gain in employment of 45.1 per cent outstrips the population gain of 37.0 per cent. In addition, migration will ensure Australia remains a highly skilled nation, as it will have led to a 60.4 per cent increase in the population with a university education.

#### **4. Covid-19's Negative impact on refugees employment prospects**

Diarmuid Cooney O'Donoghue PhD student and Mladen Adamovic, Research Fellow, Monash University. 30 September 2021.

<https://lens.monash.edu/@politics-society/2021/09/30/1383840/covid-19s-negative-impact-on-refugees-employment-prospects>

As recent research indicates, refugees and people seeking asylum are suffering disproportionately from the COVID-19 pandemic and have become more and more "shut out" and marginalised. An important pathway to integration and self-reliance is sustainable employment. To explore the impacts of COVID-19 on the employment prospects of refugees and people seeking asylum, this study is based on 35 interviews with managers from Australian organisations that employ or assist refugees and asylum seekers in finding employment and 20 interviews with refugees and people seeking asylum. The interviews indicated that the labour market has become more difficult for these groups in the COVID-19 era due to (1) declines in job availabilities, (2) loss of jobs, (3) increased competition in the labour market and (4) increased discrimination with an "Australian first" mentality. The interviews suggest four strategies to improve employment prospects in the current situation: (1) pathways to permanent residency and citizenship for people seeking asylum; (2) access to healthcare and a financial safety net; (3) online training and education; and (4) social procurement.

Long-term benefits of migration are usually in the second generation through higher education compared to native citizens and higher earning capacity.

## 5. Refugees are not a burden but an opportunity

Philippe Legrain, Founder, Open Political Economy Network (OPEN), Senior Visiting Fellow, European Institute at the London School of Economics, OECD Forum 2016

<https://www.oecd.org/migration/refugees-are-not-a-burden-but-an-opportunity.htm>

This US study found that when nearly a million Vietnamese “boat people” fled their country in the late 1970s and early 1980s and sought refuge elsewhere, they were typically seen as a burden and often turned away. Eventually, many were allowed to settle in the US. Most arrived speaking little or no English and with few assets or relevant job skills. Yet Vietnamese refugees are now more likely to be employed and have higher incomes than people born in the US.

Refugees can contribute economically to the societies that welcome them in many ways: as workers, innovators, entrepreneurs, taxpayers, consumers and investors. Their efforts can help create jobs, raise the productivity and wages of local workers, lift capital returns, stimulate international trade and investment, and boost innovation, enterprise and growth.

Welcoming refugees generally implies an initial investment, mainly of public funds. However, in economies where demand is depressed, this increased investment acts like a small fiscal stimulus, yielding an immediate **demand dividend**.

Once refugees start working, this investment may yield seven further dividends:

- Some refugees do dirty, difficult, dangerous and dull (4D) jobs that locals spurn, such as cleaning offices and caring for the elderly. This **4D dividend** enables locals to do higher-skilled and better-paid jobs that they prefer.
- Higher-skilled refugees (and refugees’ highly skilled children) can provide a **deftness dividend**. Their different and complementary skills can fill gaps in the labour market and enhance locals’ productivity. A third of recent refugees in Sweden are graduates; more than two-thirds of those have skills which match graduate job vacancies.
- Enterprising refugees start businesses that create wealth, employ locals, make the economy more dynamic and adaptable, and boost international trade and investment. This **dynamism dividend** can be huge. Sergey Brin, who arrived in the US as a child refugee from the Soviet Union, co-founded Google, now America’s second most valuable company. Li Ka-shing, who was among the mainland Chinese who sought refuge in then British-run Hong Kong after the Communist Revolution in 1949, is now Asia’s richest man.
- Thanks to their diverse perspectives and experiences, refugees and their children can help spark new ideas and technologies. People who have been uprooted from one



culture and exposed to another tend to be more creative, while studies show that diverse groups outperform like-minded experts at problem solving. This **diversity dividend** is substantial too: more than three out of four patents generated at the top 10 patent-producing US universities in 2011 had at least one foreign-born inventor.

- Ageing societies, with a shrinking native working-age population such as Germany's, benefit from the arrival of younger refugees, who provide a **demographic dividend**. As well as complementing the skills of older, more experienced workers, refugees can help pay for the growing numbers of pensioners. They can also support population numbers, and thus investment and growth.
- Refugees can also provide a **debt dividend**. OECD studies show that migrants in general tend to be net contributors to public finances; in Australia refugees become so after 12 years. Better still, the taxes that refugees pay can help service and repay the huge public debts incurred in many countries to provide benefits for the existing populations.
- Finally, refugees provide a **development dividend**—to themselves, their children and their country of origin. Remittances to Liberia, a big refugee-sending country, are 18.5% of GDP.

## 6. Positive Impacts of Refugee Settlement on the Economic and Socio-Cultural Diversity of Australia

Muhammad Yasir Arslan and Abdulmajeed, University of Canberra (School of Management, Faculty of Business, Government and Law, 2018

<https://www.grin.com/document/419497>

This study found that the mindset of refugees is extremely motivated, enterprising and able-bodied and all they are looking for is a safe place to live and grow with their families. Despite unparalleled generosity demonstrated by host developing countries for prolonged periods, they also experience long-term socio-economic, political, and environmental effects. Refugees and those seeking asylum produce significant economic effects, both positive and negative (Cosser & Marsden 2013.) Literature also reveals that “there may be short-term initial costs as refugees are resettled and adjust to their new surroundings. However, once successful resettlement has occurred, refugees are able to quickly make permanent cultural, social and economic contributions and infuse vitality and multiculturalism into the communities into which they are resettled.

Although refugees can bring short-term costs, they are able to bring long-term benefits to their new country or region” (Zucker 1983, cited in Stevenson 2005). On contrary, few researchers also argue that the lack of proficiency in the host country's language, to unemployment or to the lack of acceptable equivalent educational background which leads to culture shock, trauma, helplessness and decreased social status (Bemak & Chung, 2015; Renner & Senft, 2013; Willott & Stevenson, 2013).

To sum up, economic effects are heterogeneous depending upon the economic structure of host countries which in case of Australia is more inclined towards multicultural diversity, entrepreneurial activities, innovation and flourishing of local businesses.

## 7. Migrant Intake into Australia

Productivity Commission Inquiry Report, 13 April, 2016.

<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/migrant-intake/report>

<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/migrant-intake/report/migrant-intake-report-overview.pdf>

While there is a passing reference in this 2016 report to the government of opportunities for Australian citizens to be altruistic towards foreigners including refugees, the main focus is on migration and the benefits of skilled migration.

There is an argument for mechanisms for achieving an optimal interaction between temporary and permanent migration noting that temporary migration is an established pathway to permanent migration. Discussions and recommendations include English Language proficiency tests and the costs of visas.

## 8. Stronger Together the Impact of Family Separation on Refugees and Humanitarian migrants in Australia

Lily Gardener and Conor Costello (Oxfam Australia)

<https://www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019-AC-012-Families-Together-report-FA2-WEB.pdf>

<https://media.oxfam.org.au/2019/08/accepting-more-refugees-good-for-australian-economy-and-society-report/>

“Oxfam report... includes comprehensive modelling by Deloitte Access Economics, which shows that lifting the humanitarian intake from 18,750 now to 44,000 by 2022/23 will increase overall GDP, demand in Australia for goods and services, and the number of jobs.”

Across 2018-2019, the Australian Government offered limited opportunities for family reunion for refugees and humanitarian migrants, and the barriers to successful applications were high. However, family reunion offers humanitarian migrants the best chance to rebuild their lives on a firm footing — with their family by their side.

The authors argue that Australia should establish a new Humanitarian Family Reunion visa stream within an increased Refugee and Humanitarian Program to make family reunion for humanitarian migrants more accessible Australia stands to reap significant long-term economic benefits from increasing our intake of people seeking safety.

Economic modelling, undertaken by Deloitte Access Economics for Oxfam, found that increasing Australia’s Refugee and Humanitarian Program could have significant positive impacts for the broader economy. The modelling indicated that an increase in the humanitarian intake from 18,750 in 2019–2020 to 44,000 by 2022–2023 would:

- increase the size of the Australian economy by \$37.7 billion in net present value terms over the next 50 years. On average, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) could be \$4.9 billion greater annually (in \$2017–2018) between 2018–2019 and 2067–2068;
- sustain on average an additional 35,000 full-time equivalent jobs in the Australian economy every year for the next 50 years; and

- increase demand for Australian goods and services by \$18.2 billion<sup>4</sup> in net present value terms.

The positive economic impacts increase over time, particularly as humanitarian migrants settle into life in Australia, finish education or retraining, and enter the labour force.

An argument is put forward that there is opportunity to meet the labour force needs in key expanding sectors, like health and aged care, which were even then projected to undergo a large increase in demand for labour. Humanitarian migrants are also known to be entrepreneurial, creating new businesses and jobs in Australia. In spite of initial challenges and barriers to settling in a new country, refugees and humanitarian migrants make a significant positive contribution to the Australian economy and society. The authors' position is that Australia can and must do more to welcome our fair share of displaced people and their families.

## 9. Australian Employers Guide to Hiring Refugees

Friendly Nation Initiative by Migration Council Australia

<https://www.fni.org.au/app/uploads/2019/09/Australian-Employers-Guide-to-Hiring-Refugees-25-January-2019.pdf>

*Tent* is an international not for profit organisation of over 200 major companies who provide opportunities for refugees to participate in the workforce of their host country. The supporting companies include Amazon, L'Oreal, Pfizer, Chobani, UniLever and Starbucks. This is a social and economic strategy to support refugees to integrate into their host countries. The initiative is now operating in Australia with the support of the Australian Migration Council and the Australian Industry Group

Raised in eastern Turkey, the founder, Hamdi Ulukaya, established Chobani in 2005 with the mission of making better food more accessible and providing good food for all, while also improving local communities. A devoted philanthropist, Ulukaya founded the Tent Partnership for Refugees in 2016 to help end the global refugee crisis.

This reference is an Australian employers' guide for hiring refugees.

## 10. Why Hire Refugees? Not only does it give a person the chance to build a new life, it's good for Australia, your business and your workforce.

<https://www.humanslikeus.org/business-case-for-hiring>

A good article as it contains some useful statistics, references and quotes from business. See following examples:

“Modelling shows that helping refugees into work when they arrive is a worthwhile investment.” The following research is put forward to support this statement:

- The International Monetary Fund calculates that investment in supporting refugees brings a return more than 1.8 times the initial investment within five years.

- The Centre for Policy Development calculated that if the labour market outcomes for just one year's intake of humanitarian migrants improved by 25%, then over the subsequent decade, those new arrivals would be \$465 million better off and the Australian government would bank \$175 million in budget savings.
- Deloitte research found that the Queensland economy would be \$250 million larger in 10 years if we tapped into the underutilised talent and experience of skilled migrants and refugees working in jobs they were overqualified for.
- More generally, Deloitte also found that the economic dividend from Australia supporting a more inclusive society is estimated to be worth \$12.7 billion annually "as a result of higher productivity, and better employment and health outcomes."
- "Equality is integrated in our business approach and we strongly believe that everyone is a talent. Refugees bring lots of skills and experience and as a business we have an important role to play in enabling refugees to integrate and build a new life and contribute fully to the community and local economy."  
— IKEA Australia, announcement of its Skills for Employment Program, Oct 2020

"As the nation's largest private employer, we want to help refugees build new, secure and fulfilling lives in Australia. We also believe our teams should reflect the cultural diverse communities we serve."

— Head of diversity and inclusion, Woolworths Group

## 11. Shaping A Nation Population Growth and Immigration Overtime

### [Shaping a Nation | Treasury Research Institute](https://research.treasury.gov.au)

<https://research.treasury.gov.au> › external-paper › shapi...

This 2018 research by the Australian Treasury and the Department for Home Affairs shows that migrants have softened the impact of Australia's ageing population, boosted labour force participation, and increased the diversity of Australia's workforce. The economic and fiscal benefits that migrants have brought to Australia have undoubtedly played a part in Australia's 26 years of uninterrupted growth.

While the report focuses mainly on the economic benefits of skilled migrants and those who are on temporary visas for the purposes of education, there are general statements relating to the economic benefits of a larger migrant workforce in terms of consumption.

While the report indicates that 34% of Australians believe that the migration rate is too high (34%), a key finding of the 2016 Scanlon Foundation survey was that these concerns about immigration remain low. The survey also showed high levels of support (80 per cent) for refugees resettled under the Humanitarian Program. There was a high level of agreement with the proposition that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia' – a consistent finding over time.

## **12.Characteristics of recent migrants -Data about migrants arriving in the last 10 years including employment outcomes relating to visa type, birth country, education and language skills November 2019**

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/characteristics-recent-migrants/latest-release>

This 2019 study by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provides data over a 10-year period highlighting how success in finding work relates to visa type, education, language skills or other characteristics. It provides a revealing analysis of the participation rate of refugees and migrants in the Australian workforce and the relative success of those who are on permanent visas or who had become Australian Citizens since arrival compared to those on temporary visas.

The 2019 findings show 68% of the 1.9 million recent migrants and temporary residents were employed.

- Migrants who had obtained Australian citizenship since arrival were more likely to be employed (76%) than migrants on a permanent visa (66%), or temporary residents (65%).
- Of those employed, 77% of people who gained Australian citizenship and 75% on a permanent visa were employed full-time, compared with 48% of temporary residents.

Also revealing are the findings that the proportion reporting wages or salary as their main source of household income gradually increased with length of stay in Australia:

- 65% of the most recent arrivals (arrived 2019)
- 88% of those who arrived between 2010 and 2015 (Table 10 in the Data downloads section).

This data supports the argument for pathways to permanency for refugees.

## **13. Small towns big returns – Economic and social impact of Karen resettlement in Nhill**

[Economic and social impact of the Karen resettlement in Nhill](https://www2.deloitte.com › dam › au › Economics)

<https://www2.deloitte.com › dam › au › Economics>

This 2015 report arose through collaboration between AMES and Deloitte Access Economics in Australia. Deloitte Access Economics assessed the social and economic impact of the Karen refugees on the township of Nhill.

In 2009, due to a rapidly increasing consumer demand for duck meat grown in the Wimmera region of Victoria, there was a labour shortage at the local Nhill meat processing plant. The single largest employer in the area is the company Luv-a-Duck which always gave employment priority to local people in Nhill. The increased demand required more labour than could be provided locally and so company management contacted AMES.

AMES works with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and delivers Job Services Australia Specialist Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) employment services in a number of regions in Melbourne. Through these services, AMES established a connection between the employer and the large Karen community in Werribee, in Melbourne's west, who were eager for employment and interested in jobs of this nature. Following this, AMES staff acted as brokers between the employer and the recently arrived Karen refugees from the border between Myanmar and Thailand. They aided in recruitment and the initial stages of relocation and resettlement of the Karen people.

The study reports that there was a considerable economic benefit from the employment of Karen refugees from Myanmar. The resettlement of the Karen people increased the supply of labour in the region, largely meeting this demand. The resettlement had a further indirect effect of increasing demand for labour to meet the needs of the growing Karen population. This led to increases in employment in other sectors of the local economy, which was met to a large extent by labour supplied by the Karen community. In net present value terms (NPV), the total economic impact on the regional economy is estimated to be **\$41.49 million**, and total labour supply of 70.5 FTE. The report also documents the social benefits to the township.

#### **14. Regional Futures Economic and social impact of the Karen resettlement in Bendigo**

[Economic and social impact of the Karen resettlement in ...](#)

<https://www2.deloitte.com/au/dam/au/Economics>

A 2018 report by Deloitte Access Economics and AMES showed similar social and economic benefits of the resettlement of Karen refugees in Bendigo, Victoria. The report's economic modelling provides an indication of the scale of the economic impact. In net present value terms (NPV) over a 10-year period, the total economic impact from the regional resettlement of the Karen population on the Bendigo economy is estimated to have been \$67.1 million, with an associated impact on employment of 177 full-time- equivalent (FTE).

The report also indicates that the demographic profile of the Karen population, with a high proportion of people under the age of 18 years indicating that, all things being equal, the Karen labour force will continue to grow over time, adding to the productive capacity of the region in years to come.

#### **15. Australian Migration and Population Dashboard**

updated 23/06/21

Scanlon Foundation Research Institute

<https://scanloninstitute.org.au/migrationdashboard>

Contains statistics re temporary visa holders including bridging visas

In recent years, migration has overtaken natural population increase as the dominant component of population growth. This has led to an accelerated rate of population growth. Each year, the Australian Government decides how many permanent residency visas to

grant. This is the primary policy-lever the Australian Government uses to affect the long-term rate of population growth. Apart from New Zealand citizens, it is very difficult to remain in Australia indefinitely without a permanent visa.

Sometimes, the number of permanent visas granted each year is confused with number of people coming to Australia each year. This is incorrect. Most new migrants come to Australia on a temporary visa. Because of this, about one in two permanent visas are granted to people already in Australia. Unlike permanent visas, the Australian Government does not cap or limit the number of temporary visas granted to migrants. Instead, policy settings and eligibility criteria are used to shape trends. This is why temporary visas are sometimes called 'demand-driven'.

There are a number of major temporary visa categories. New Zealand citizens are the largest group in Australia, followed by international students. Both of these groups of people increased throughout the 2000s and 2010s. This report does not address refugees and those seeking asylum as another category of people without permanent visas.

The statistics in this report show that there were 1,720,788 people who held a temporary visa in Australia on 30 April 2021. Most of these people were in Australia under skilled migration, with 13,171 humanitarian visas granted between 2018 and 2019 compared to the 140,366 Skilled and Family visas granted between 2019-2020.

## **16. Refugees, Rejuvenation and Connecting Communities**

Dr David Radford UNI SA (lead author) Report prepared by Uni SA, Charles Sturt Uni and Multicultural Community Council of SA, 29 March 2021

<https://www.unisa.edu.au/Media-Centre/Releases/2021/afghan-refugees-transform-and-rejuvenate-port-adelaide-lga/>

Uni SA sociologist Dr David Radford, L as the lead report author, argues that evidence suggests that the "highly entrepreneurial Hazara migrants have revitalised Port Adelaide in countless ways," contributing to a booming local economy through construction, real estate, food outlets, bakeries, carpet shops and other niche businesses." He also argues that while negative media coverage often portrays refugees and asylum seekers as a burden, cost or threat to Australian communities, the research points to the opposite.

The study also found that job discrimination remains a challenge (hence many starting their own businesses) but education and the development of language skills helps to overcome this.

"The Hazara community members we interviewed all shared a motivation to build a new life, to find work and become self-reliant, and to give back to their communities," Dr Radford says.