

RURAL AND REGIONAL MOBILITIES:

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF (IM)MOBILITIES IN RURAL & REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

REPORT



University of
South Australia

Hawke
EU Centre



Rural and Regional Mobilities Final Report

Introduction

This Rural and Regional Mobilities Workshop: Exploring the Impact of (Im)Mobilities in Rural and Regional Communities was presented by the Hawke EU Centre for Mobilities, Migrations and Cultural Transformations on 26 September 2017 at the University of South Australia's Mount Gambier Campus. The workshop was presented in association with La Trobe University's Department of Social Inquiry and Centre for the Study of the Inland.

Characterised as being fixed, stable and homogenous communities, rural and regional areas are often viewed as largely untouched by the mobility of cosmopolitan, globalising dynamics associated with fast-paced connected urban centres. These notions have been challenged in recent years in Australia and Europe with claims that rural and regional communities have also experienced significant changes with increasing forms of mobility across a number of areas involving rural-to-rural, rural-to-urban, urban-to-rural or international-to-rural migration. Indeed it has been argued that 'mobility is central to the enactment of the rural... and the rural is at least as mobile as the urban' (Bell and Osti 2010).

The workshop was an opportunity for academics involved in research in regional and rural Australian communities as well as key regional leaders and stakeholders to learn from one another and engage with the challenges associated with changing regional and rural mobilities. A key aim of the workshop was to suggest recommendations that will enable regional and rural communities to effectively respond to these challenges. These challenges are not unique to the Australian context. We are also pleased that the Regional and Rural Mobilities Workshop was able to draw on the experiences and lessons learned from recent migration challenges in Europe (Germany) and New Zealand.



From left to right – Dr David Radford (UniSA), Mayor Erika Vickery OAM (Naracoorte Lucindale Council), Mayor Richard Sage (District Council of Grant), Mayor Andrew Lee (City of Mt. Gambier), Associate Professor Anna Ziersch (Flinders University), Mayor Reg Lyon (Kingston District Council).

Rural and Regional Mobilities Report: Exploring the Impact of (Im)Mobilities in Rural and Regional Communities
Dr David Radford, Assoc. Prof. Raelene Wilding, Dr Anthony Moran, Dr Martina Boese

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Workshop Convenors

Dr David Radford – University of South Australia



David is a lecturer in sociology, at the University of South Australia, where he is also the Superdiversity and Human Rights research leader at the Hawke-EU Centre for Mobilities, Migrations and Cultural Transformations. David's research focuses on mobilities, identities and social change. David investigates multiculturalism and migration in regional Australia, emphasising the importance of investigating the micro or everyday lived experiences of migration and interculturality while drawing on macro factors impacting these experiences. David's recent publications include: 'Space, Place and Identity: Intercultural encounters, affect and belonging in rural Australia spaces', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* (2017); 'Everyday otherness: Intercultural refugee encounters and everyday multiculturalism in a rural South Australia town', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2016).

Associate Professor Raelene Wilding – La Trobe University



Raelene Wilding is Associate Professor, Sociology, at La Trobe University. Her research investigates the family and community relationships of migrants and refugees in urban and non-urban Australia, with a specific focus on the role of new media in sustaining ethnic identities and transnational intimacies. Her current ARC project (with Loretta Baldassar, UWA) explores the role of new media in the aged care and support of migrants, refugees and Australia-born elderly in urban and rural contexts. Wilding's most recent book is *Families, Intimacies and Globalisation: Floating Ties* (Palgrave, 2017)

Dr Anthony Moran – La Trobe University



Anthony Moran is a senior lecturer in Sociology at La Trobe University. He is the author of *The Public Life of Australian Multiculturalism: Building a Diverse Nation* (Palgrave, 2017), *Australia: Nation, Belonging and Globalization* (Routledge, 2005), and the co-author of *Ordinary People's Politics* (Pluto Press Australia, 2006). He teaches and researches in the areas of race, ethnicity, nationalism, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and indigenous/settler politics and relations. In 2015 he was commissioned by the Victorian Multicultural Commission to research social cohesion and multiculturalism in Shepparton and Mildura. The findings were published in the co-authored report *Understanding Social Cohesion in Shepparton and Mildura* (November 2015).

Dr Martina Boese – La Trobe University



Martina Boese is a lecturer in Sociology at La Trobe University. Her research has focused on migrant and refugee mobilities in regional Australia, migrant employment; and the governance of migration and migrant work. Recent publications include the book *Becoming Australian. Migration, Settlement, Citizenship* (Melbourne University Publishing, 2014), the edited collection *Critical reflections on Migration, 'Race' and Multiculturalism: Australia in a Global Context* (Routledge, 2017) a Special Issue on Temporary migration in *Migration, Mobility and Displacement*, and the article 'The role of local government in migrant and refugee settlement in regional and rural Australia' in the *Australian Journal of Social Issues*.

Migration as an Agent of Regional Change: Settlement, Demographic and Development Implications of Restructuring in Rural Australia



Professor Neil Argent – University of New England, Dr Peter Smailes – University of Adelaide, Mr Trevor Griffin – University of Adelaide

Drawing on a longitudinal study (1947-2011) of six functional regions across south-eastern Australia, this presentation explored the role of intra- and inter-regional migration in shaping the current and future demographic structures of major regional centres, smaller towns and their hinterlands. The analysis highlights the spatially differentiated impact of internal migration processes,

together with fertility trends, on local age-sex structures, within and between the urban hierarchies of Port Lincoln, Murray Bridge, Mildura, Shepparton, Griffith and Dubbo.

The six regional centres of Port Lincoln, Murray Bridge, Mildura, Shepparton, Griffith and Dubbo are demonstrable success stories in Australia's post-WWII demographic history, all growing faster than the national average over recent intercensal periods. In 1947 none of the six had reached 10 000 residents, the level often used as the population threshold to denote city status in Australia, and four of the six held less than twenty per cent of their individual region's population. However, by 2011 each centre had grown between three- and five-fold in population terms (on 1947 levels), and increased their share of their region's population to between one-third and one half.

Between 1947 and 2011 the six case study regions (Port Lincoln, Murray Bridge, Mildura, Shepparton, Griffith and Dubbo) experienced an enormous centralisation of their populations within the cities at the apex of their urban hierarchy.

Over the same period, in aggregate, the smaller towns surrounding the regional centres broadly maintained their share of population within each region and held similar population levels in 2011 as at 1947. However, this broad pattern disguises considerable diversity in the performance of individual towns. Towns in emergent lifestyle/tourism regions (e.g. surrounding Shepparton) grew rapidly over the period while more remote towns economically dependent on servicing the farm sector experienced decline.

The non-urban, essentially farming, parts of each functional region underwent sustained decline, with only Shepparton and Mildura holding higher rural populations in 2011 than in 1947. A key driver of population loss over this period was the increased capital intensification of farm production and resultant processes of labour shedding and farm amalgamation as farmers were forced to seek to attain greater scale economies. Agriculture employed 41 000 workers across all six regions in 1947, and this figure grew to 42 600 by 1981. However, between 1981 and 2011 aggregate primary employment across the entire study region dropped by 40% to just 26 000.

However, and consistent with structural changes in the broader Australian economy, the loss of agricultural employment was more than compensated by growth in non-agricultural employment. Across the six regions, 45 000 non-farm jobs were added between 1981 and 2011. The vast majority of these jobs (over 90%, excluding Shepparton) were created in the regional centres themselves or within an hour's commute of the centre. Hence, both population and employment have become increasingly concentrated in the six regional cities, particularly from the 1980s.

While fertility levels have declined across the six regions since the early 1980s, in line with national trends, natural increase rates have generally remained above national levels. However, the hinterland zone rates of natural increase have fallen persistently below national levels since this time, indicating the after-effect of age-specific migration loss.

Age-specific net migration loss from the 1980s is concentrated in the 15-24 year old cohorts and is witnessed particularly strongly in the hinterlands but also in the regional centres.

The almost inevitable outcome of structural ageing is driven by a disproportionate loss of prime reproductive cohorts (15-24 year olds) from the centres and hinterland areas, and net gains in the post-reproductive ages. Together, these trends signal further demographic decline in the hinterlands and in the regional cities at the apex of the regional settlement hierarchy.

The capacity for extra-regional (including international) migration to ameliorate these trends appears remote but growing international migration to all regions offers some hope of demographic and economic revitalisation.

In terms of policy/strategy options to tackle the potential downward spiral of decline outlined above it is important to remember that: 1) there are no simple, off-the-shelf solutions that can be successfully applied to each case study region; and 2) demography is not necessarily destiny. That is, while the trends already discussed will be difficult to reverse, carefully thought-through policy and strategy can make a difference.



Regardless of the desirability or otherwise of stymieing youth net migration loss from rural areas, it would seem almost impossible to prevent young people seeking further education and career advancement opportunities which lie overwhelmingly in the capital and other major cities. However, those regions and communities that are able to offer relatively high levels of amenity and satisfying career options will be better placed to attract back those who leave but wish to return to, for instance, start and raise families, along with other potential in-migrants. Given ongoing technological revolution and its application to agriculture, jobs in this sector will continue to decline, necessitating economic diversification at the local and regional scale. There are numerous examples of communities that have embraced ICT and used these tools to develop competitive advantages in gaming, animation and state-of-the-art agronomic monitoring services, thereby retaining more people in the community than would otherwise be the case and creating positive multiplier effects throughout the region. Investment in geographically-comprehensive reliable and high speed broadband is crucial in this context.

While rural communities have long been told that increasingly they need to be the masters of their own destinies in developmental terms they have rarely been given access to the resources (financial and human) to allow this to occur. More funding of basic cultural, recreational and artistic infrastructure, events and training would help facilitate communities to combine their talents and interests to, inter alia, promote their towns and regions to broader tourism markets and, hence to potential in-migrants, and to live healthier and happier lives.

Managing the increasing concentrations of elderly people in hinterland areas and towns will require careful management and investment. In order to respect many people's desire to age in place while also ensuring quality of care, aged care services at the regional scale must be appropriately resourced to provide out-reach services (including ICT mediated diagnostic tools). This could also facilitate regional centres and towns developing agglomeration economies in aged care service provision, an industry sector that will only experience growth over the coming decades.

Regional Resettlement Experiences of People from Refugee Backgrounds in Mount Gambier

Associate Professor Anna Ziersch – Flinders University, Dr Lillian Mwanri – Flinders University & Dr Mel Baak - UniSA



Associate Professor
Anna Ziersch

Traditionally refugees have been settled in urban areas where services have been concentrated and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) populations have a greater critical mass. In recent years, there has been an increasing trend to resettle new migrants in rural and regional areas of Australia, many of which have not previously had large migrant populations. Existing research on regional resettlement experiences indicates differential levels of success depending on whether or not settlement was part of a planned programme or through informal means, whether the regional town was the first or subsequent place of resettlement, attitudes of the host community, regional employment opportunities and size and connections of the incoming community.

This presentation reported on a pilot research project examining the experiences of people from refugee backgrounds resettling in Mount Gambier. Mount Gambier was selected as a focus given the programme of resettling refugees from Burma there over the last decade, and more recently those from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Interviews were conducted with 44 participants: 21 people originally from Burma (10 male, 11 female) and with 23 people originally from African countries – predominantly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (11 male, 12 female). The study drew on a social determinants of health approach (the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age - e.g. employment conditions, housing, social networks and support). The project sought to understand the perspectives of people from refugee backgrounds, and their lived experience of resettling in Mount Gambier.

Key findings:

Overall people were very appreciative of being resettled in Australia more generally and key positive elements of their experiences in Mount Gambier related to a sense of safety and security, a quiet atmosphere, affordability and as a good place to raise children

Participants came from a variety of educational backgrounds – from limited formal education to high level tertiary qualifications. They reported a variety of educational experiences in Mount Gambier. Some of the younger participants had attended the New Arrivals Program at Mt Gambier High, and others had studied English language at TAFE as part of their initial resettlement services. Others had also completed TAFE courses such as dairy farming, aged care, disability, pathology, hospitality, children's services, and tickets in forklift and welding, though the costs of some of these courses were seen as prohibitive for others. All participants with higher levels of education described difficulty in getting their qualifications recognised which was very frustrating. Some participants suggested that the initial educational programmes at TAFE as part of resettlement should be more tailored to the varied needs of students rather than a one-size-fits all given the variety of educational backgrounds of people – for example, one highly educated member of the Congolese community said her initial experiences in the class had felt 'like being in kindergarten'. More limited educational opportunities available within regional areas was noted as a concern, with some reporting other community members moving to Adelaide or Melbourne to pursue courses not available in Mount Gambier, and others said that their children would most likely need to move when they completed school.

Finding suitable employment was a challenge for many people. Less than half of the sample were currently employed and all of those who had secured a job were in casual, part-time or seasonal work. The main way that people had found work was through social networks, which were more limited for those from the less established Congolese community. Barriers to finding employment reported included not having their qualifications or skills recognised, limited English language skills, and discrimination. Difficulties finding employment were identified as the main reason other community members had already left or that they would consider moving themselves.

While more affordable housing was identified as a key positive to living in Mount Gambier, for some housing was still too expensive. Some people found it difficult to find suitable housing once their initial supported accommodation period was finished – this was especially hard for those without rental references or current employment. A small number reported experiencing racism. A few were able to purchase their own home and this was an aspiration for many others in the future.

In terms of community engagement most people reported connections with various local churches and religious institutions spanning multiple faiths including Baptist, Jehovah's Witness, Pentecostal, Catholic, Buddhist, Muslim and their own community churches. Members from these religious communities provided vital settlement support such as finding employment and assisting in learning how to drive. Overall there had been good experiences building relationships with members of the broader Mount Gambier community through schools and neighbourhoods. However, barriers to these connections included limited English language skills particularly for older refugees and those from Burma, and different ways of socialising where locals were seen as less interested in forming strong social bonds with their neighbours. A few reported experiences of discrimination. Most people felt supported by members of their communities of origin (i.e. Burmese and Congolese) but there was sadness when community members left and small number felt quite isolated.

For members of the Congolese community in particular access to food and other cultural resources such as food, cosmetics and clothes required travelling to Adelaide or elsewhere as their small community meant these were not available locally.

Participants had received initial resettlement support from a number of organisations (including the Australian Migrant Resource Centre, Anglicare, churches, community). This had included the provision of accommodation, being taken to Centrelink and for health, banking and school appointments and translating letters. People were appreciative of this initial support and suggested a number of improvements or additional services. It was felt that the diversity of refugee experiences could be further acknowledged (i.e. prior education and life experience, ethnic and language differences within communities). Longer-term case support was also requested as was longer and more diverse levels of English support and budgeting skills.

Key health issues for people related to accessing interpreters (particularly ones from the exact region as the patient), availability of affordable or bulk billed services in Mount Gambier, and the need to travel to Adelaide for specialist appointments. The resettlement issues highlighted above were also seen as impacting on health and wellbeing – in particular difficulties in finding employment and experiences of isolation and discrimination.

Recommendations:

- Specific employment initiatives developed for people from refugee backgrounds, with programmes specifically tailored depending on size of community and length of time in the town, as well as considering language skills and educational background.
- Targeted and longer term language training and other skills development such as budgeting classes
- Further community development and social inclusion strategies to assist building social connections (especially in smaller communities) and to address discrimination – working with faith communities and local government likely to be fruitful.

Social and Spatial (Im)Mobilities of Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants in Shepparton

Dr Martina Boese – La Trobe University



This presentation focused on the relationship between spatial and social mobilities of regional residents with migration and refugee backgrounds. It presented preliminary findings from an ongoing research project on migrant workers in Shepparton.

By spatial mobilities, we mean capacities for geographical movements for residence purposes across but particularly within borders, i.e. post-migration to Australia. We understand social mobilities, on the other hand, as the transformation in the socioeconomic position of individuals, related to occupational, income, wealth, and status mobility. Few studies have focused on the intersections of these two forms of mobility, leaving unanswered questions about their relationship.

The Research

The study took place between 2016 and 2017 and received seed-funding through the Research Focus Area 'Transforming Human Societies' at La Trobe University. The research team is led by Dr Martina Boese and includes Dr Anthony Moran and Dr Mark Mallman.

The research included interviews with 18 Shepparton residents from a range of ethnic backgrounds and in different migrant and visa categories, with the majority (10) currently or formerly on humanitarian visas. The other 8 interview participants included skilled temporary visa (S457) holders, WH (417) visa holders and 1 international student. Interview questions focused on employment pathways and post-migration moves within Australia as well as the aspirations for and outcomes of these moves. The second set of interviews included 11 stakeholders from local government, business and the community sector who were asked about their perspectives on migrants' mobilities and employment patterns, barriers and opportunities.

The Research Site

Shepparton is a regional centre and service town for a large, fruit growing industry, a dairy industry, and other agricultural production. As such, it has long attracted mobile workers, both from within and beyond Australia's borders. Besides its food production and processing related industries, its health care and social service sector is another large employer.

Shepparton has also gained a reputation as a rural multicultural city that has welcomed many groups of migrants and refugees. Many of the farmers and orchardists as well as small business owners are 2nd and 3rd generation Australians from diverse, in particular Italian, ethnic backgrounds. Since the 1990s, refugees from the Middle East (mainly Iraq and Afghanistan), and from Africa (mainly Congolese, Sudanese and South Sudanese) have settled in Shepparton.

Preliminary Findings

What our research shows so far is that both kinds of mobilities are far less linear than expected. Contrary to the common perception of migrants arriving from overseas and settling where they arrive or stay where their secondary move leads them, geographical movements often continue. Social mobilities are also non-linear. Employment pathways often do not lead beyond entry-level work and aspirations for upward mobility meet a lack of employment pathways in the local economy.

Among the factors shaping migrants' mobilities we found that work featured as the top influence on mobilities within Australia, across the different groups of entrants, including the move to Shepparton, whether based on a particular job (as in the case of *temporary skilled visa holders* and some *WH visa holders*), or the likelihood of finding work in the local orchards, farms or related business.

Work is not the only part of the story of mobilities. Other important factors influence people's movements beside their perception of employment opportunities and aspirations for social mobility.

In the case of humanitarian entrants in particular, other place-based factors emerged as key influences on moving to the regional town of Shepparton and partly also for staying there. These include factors such as the already mentioned reputation of Shepparton as a site where cultural diversity is embraced, and more specific factors such as the presence of particular ethnic communities (and thus specific ethnic links and sources of community-based belonging) and community infrastructures. Whilst these factors may be associated with possible entry paths into paid work, they are pull factors in their own right. In some cases, the decision to stay in Shepparton is one that prevents or frustrates upward social mobility.

In other cases, the lack of employment pathways acts as a push factor, often alongside the lack of tertiary education options for the children of new arrivals. Employment – in the form of easily accessed, low-skilled jobs on farms - can hence act as both a pull factor for initial migration to Shepparton and a push factor for those who seek social mobility.

Preliminary Recommendations:

- Regional resettlement initiatives – whether direct resettlement of unlinked refugees or relocation initiatives – need to be based on an assessment of long term employment opportunities for new arrivals beyond precarious entry-level work.
- Local support for recent arrivals with refugee backgrounds needs to include the consideration of social, cultural and economic integration beyond mere survival for those residents to remain and feel included – socially, culturally and economically, in the local community.
- Such support requires the coordination of different providers (settlement and employment services; mainstream and targeted service providers) and the inclusion of employers as potential partners.

The Challenge of Diversity: Refugee Allocation in Rural Communities in Germany

Professor Birgit Glorius – Chemnitz University of Technology

Executive Summary



Migration has severely changed the population structure and social fabric of many regions in Europe. Especially in recent years, many urban but also peripheral, rural regions in Europe have experienced increasing population diversity due to the inflow of various groups of migrants, among them European free movers, labor migrants from third countries and refugees. Contrary to urban agglomerations, rural communities often have few experiences with diversity.

In Germany, the huge inflow of refugees since 2013 and their redistribution among federal states and counties confronted many rural municipalities with questions of integration and diversity for the first time. In dealing with these questions we can observe a new East-West divide, with the post-socialist part of Germany appearing especially hostile, xenophobic and even dangerous for foreigners. A recent longitudinal study on the reception culture in Germany revealed that almost every second East German citizen believe that immigrants are not welcome in Germany. While in West Germany, this perception is found in one third of the population. As those differences were not found in earlier versions of the survey, it can be assumed that East and West Germany are developing in different directions concerning the willingness and ability to develop a welcoming reception environment for immigrants.

Differences regarding the openness towards immigrants can be found throughout Europe. The European Eurobarometer-survey shows differing perceptions concerning immigration in accordance to age and social status.

Negative and hostile perceptions were especially frequent in older age groups and in those groups with low social status. The socio-economic and age profile of regions may serve to explain why there are differing reception cultures.

In Germany, regional differences are not only found in perceptions towards immigrants, but also in practices such as criminal attacks against foreigners or refugee accommodations. Police statistics covering the year 2015 revealed a high number of criminal assaults against refugee accommodations in most East German federal states. In 2015 in Saxony, with a share of 5% of the total population and accommodating 6% of asylum seekers, more than one tenth of all incidents against refugee accommodations took place.

Explanatory Factors

Several factors are currently debated to explain these varying reception conditions. First, there are considerable differences concerning experiences with heterogeneity, which is due to the different immigration histories of the two German states. Also, the experience of political, economic and social transformation in East Germany seems to play a role. Particularly for inhabitants of rural areas in East Germany, the transformation period was associated with various losses. Experiences of personal loss (such as the loss of employment and social status or loss of social networks due to outmigration of family members) mingled with the (perceived) disconnection from economic and social progress, which also included the dismantling of public infrastructure. Those processes of “peripheralisation” particularly hit the more vulnerable segments of rural populations, such as the elderly, the poorly educated, the unemployed, and poor people. Another argument is the persisting stance from the socialist period that

individuals are not self-determined subjects, but rather victims of state intervention (dependency). This attitude prevented a reflection on creative possibilities for individuals and promoted a retreat into private life, political abstinence and a general mistrust of public institutions and political actors.

Conceptual Approach and Findings

Considering those contextual features, field research for this paper was based on theories from social psychology to explain intergroup behavior. Relative deprivation theory helped to explain the development of right wing extremist attitudes, combined with a decreasing legitimacy of public institutions. Social groups fighting against deprivation were confirmed in their distrust by the experience of negative information about arriving refugees, and by perceiving refugees as social groups inferior to the local population. Low intercultural competence and xenophobic reactions could be explained with the historical context of a homogeneous society where heterogeneity (diversity) was officially denied. The lack of first-hand contact with refugees also explained existing fears and xenophobic reactions. The historical context of nation-building and national belonging helped reinforce the concept of ethnic homogeneity and for people to thus oppose the settlement of strangers. As earlier findings on rural regions suggest, the crucial role of local stakeholders in shaping local discourses on integration were evident in this case study. Unfortunately, in my empirical research, the passive role of local stakeholders supported the spreading of rumors and enforcement of xenophobic stereotypes and offered right-wing activists an entry gate for taking over local discourses. In the relevant cases, right-wing activists not only acted openly in town meetings, but also had a major influence within local networks formed through social media.



Recommendations:

Based on the findings from ongoing field research and supported by findings elsewhere some key recommendations for the management of refugee reception in rural municipalities can be drawn:

Context: the specific local migration history and the political and economic development are important contextual factors for the development of local reception conditions. Therefore, structures and management concepts for the reception of refugees and the preparation of local inhabitants have to be adapted to the specific local context.

Role of local stakeholders: the research findings revealed the important role of local stakeholders for the development of local reception cultures. Thus, local stakeholders should be aware of the messages that are communicated, especially where local discourses are developing in a negative and destructive direction.

Long-term-efforts: Reception and integration processes need to include all involved actors. For a positive long-term development of integration work, specific programs are needed in key areas such as education and labor market participation, which relate to the very specific and different living conditions of refugees. Local integration managers can help to bridge the divide between different state agencies involved in this process, and can also support efforts from civil society organizations in promoting the integration of the newcomers.

Employment of Migrants in the Aged Care Sector – Strategy to Overcome Workforce Shortage in the Regions

Dr Kalpana Goel – University of South Australia (Whyalla Campus)

Introduction



Australia's demographic landscape clearly indicates that care work and care workers will increase over the next 30 years. In the last twenty years (1995-2015) the proportion of the Australian population in the age group 15-64 years has remained fairly stable, while the proportion of population aged 65 plus has increased from 11.9 percent to 15 percent, and the proportion of people aged 85 plus has almost doubled from 1.1% in 1995 to 2% in 2015 (ABS, 2015). Many studies have projected substantial increase in demand for aged care services and thus the need to recruit and retain existing staff to provide quality service to the elderly population of Australia over the next four decades (e.g. Productivity Commission Report [2008, 2011, 2013]).

The research has indicated that increasing workforce retention in the aged care sector is a key imperative to overcome workforce shortage as well as recruitment of new workers.

Aged Care Workforce

A significant proportion of the aged care workforce are immigrant workers. The number of overseas-born workers in the Australian residential aged care sector rose from 25% in 2003, to 33% in 2007. There has been a 1% increase in the overseas-born population working in aged care since 2007 to 34% in 2012. This diversity presents distinct challenges for all sectors of the society. Although the recruitment and development of an immigrant workforce is recommended as one of the strategies to overcome shortages in the aged care workforce, concerns have also been raised about immigrant workers' vulnerable status, as well as possible discrimination and barriers to employing them.

Methodology

A study was carried out in one of the regional South Australian cities in 2011. It revealed some of the diverse experiences of immigrant aged-care workers and their co-workers and employers in workplaces and suggested factors that could help retain the workforce in the region. Those who participated in the research included immigrant workers (7), co-workers (4) and employers (3). The researchers were able to explore the experiences, beliefs, practices and self-disclosed needs, barriers and challenges of immigrant workers in aged care facilities. It also throws light on how the aged care sector may be assisted in providing a satisfactory work experience for immigrant workers in regional locations.

Findings

The results indicated mixed experiences of feeling satisfaction and dissatisfaction by immigrant workers. Positive experiences were attributed to having flexible hours, acceptable income, self-satisfaction from caring, easy job availability and encouraging feedback from clients. Dissatisfaction arose due to the nature of the work, dealing with the frail and aged and individuals with dementia or chronic illnesses; undesirable attitudes and behaviours amongst co-workers and clients; and organisational constraints, including in relation to time, workload, staff shortages, absenteeism, and lack of support and supervision. Challenges due to language and cultural differences were also expressed.

Co-workers and employers valued workforce diversity though there were challenges. Challenges with immigrant workers faced by co-workers included language and communication difficulties, cultural barriers, and isolation. Challenges faced by employers with immigrant workers included inadequate educational preparation of the workers, the need for staff professional development, and for immigrant workers to learn Australian culture.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings from this study, recommendations can be made at three levels.

- Intra-personal – providing staff development opportunities in nursing, and professional training in the areas of language, communication and culture should be considered.
- Inter-personal – include peer support, improved communication amongst staff, and increased staff awareness of cultural beliefs/practices.
- Transpersonal – providing structured handover of care, mentoring and emphasising team work, salary review, and better shift allocations.

Social Cohesion and Multiculturalism in Two Regional Victorian Cities: The Importance of Local Leadership and Local Commitment to Making Shepparton and Mildura ‘Welcoming Places’

Dr Anthony Moran – La Trobe University



Local leadership at all levels has played a vital role in making Shepparton and Mildura, both agriculture and horticulture based regional cities, welcoming places for people from diverse migrant backgrounds. Shepparton and Mildura have long histories of attracting diverse migrants, and more recently have attracted many humanitarian/refugee migrants, with significant numbers arriving through secondary migration from Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

Qualitative research conducted for the Victorian Multicultural Commission in 2015, reported in ‘Understanding Social Cohesion in Shepparton and Mildura: Final Report’ (co-authored by Anthony Moran and Mark Mallman), had three main aims:

1. To identify the key success factors in Shepparton’s and Mildura’s experience of integrating their multicultural populations
2. To identify the key points of stress in Shepparton’s and Mildura’s communities
3. To suggest whether some of the successes of Shepparton and Mildura might help governments and other organisations in Victoria to improve their multicultural relations and social cohesion in other places



From left to right - Dr Kalpana Goel (UniSA Whyalla Campus), Mayor Richard Sage (District Council of Grant), Mayor Erika Vickery OAM (Naracoorte Lucindale Council), Dr David Radford (UniSA), Mayor Andrew Lee (City of Mt. Gambier), Associate Professor Branka Krivokapic-Skoko (Charles Sturt University), Associate Professor Anna Ziersch (Flinders University), Mayor Reg Lyon (Kingston District Council).

The research involved multiple stays at each location, and methods included: general observation, informal conversations, and chance encounters on the street and in other public places; semi-structured interviews (approx. 80) with a range of local agency representatives (e.g. local government, police, health and welfare agencies, schools, TAFEs, and Universities, and other government and non-government organisations) and local community members; 4 small focus groups with key stakeholders and community members; and observation at community based events (e.g. NAIDOC Week, ANZAC Day events, local festivals, a film night, a neighbourhood house, a community garden).

The presentation focused upon the leadership of local government/local Council, the police, the ethnic councils, and local community members who went out of their way to help migrants from diverse backgrounds to settle and feel welcomed into the regional cities.

Local councils in Shepparton and Mildura have taken significant steps to promote social cohesion and the acceptance and celebration of cultural diversity, including developing a range of supportive policies and strategies. The experience of Greater Shepparton City Council as a partner with VicHealth in the Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity (LEAD) pilot had helped to stimulate and develop the Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan, 2012-2015. Greater Shepparton City Council had an active role in communicating with and including diverse migrant communities, with a strong emphasis on Council-supported cultural festivals and events, and on supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities' leadership and capacity building. Mildura Rural City Council had also developed a range of policies and strategies including the 'Social Inclusion Framework', 'Social Inclusion Policy', and the 'Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2012-2017'. The proactive roles of cultural diversity officers in both councils were emphasised. There were, nevertheless, some local criticisms from community members from diverse migrant backgrounds, who noted that Council-led initiatives were symbolic rather than clear strategies focused on migrant outcomes. Several interviewees from various backgrounds noted the lack of cultural diversity of council employees.

Police in Shepparton and Mildura were closely engaged with CALD communities. The role of Shepparton's popular and highly visible Multicultural Liaison Officer was emphasised. Shepparton police were active in local networks (e.g. GV Family Violence Prevention Network, Hume Region Justice CALD Committee) and collaborate frequently with the Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District (ECSD). There had been a prominent, community-engaged Superintendent at Shepparton whose leadership role was well recognised in the community, and often mentioned by interviewees (including refugees and people working with refugees). Police in Mildura also provided important community leadership. A senior police officer serves on the Board of Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC); there was a close collaborative relationship between police and SMECC; there was a Community Liaison Officer with responsibility for CALD communities; and there was active involvement of police in a range of networks relevant to CALD communities.

Interviews with SMECC board members and workers, and others at welfare agencies, revealed that Mildura police played an important role in reassuring people from CALD backgrounds that police wanted to hear if they are mistreated or fearful, or experienced racism; for example, in response to terrorist events elsewhere that may lead to targeting of people from Muslim backgrounds in Mildura.

The ethnic councils in Shepparton and Mildura are hubs of resources and support for CALD community members, as well as serving important roles in linking them to the mainstream local communities. Both ECSD (1978-) and SMECC (1988-) employ a diverse staff, reflective of recent migrant groups, which enhances their capacity to engage with local migrant communities. SMECC expanded its role considerably when contracted by governments to provide extensive settlement services. One recent important initiative was the setting up of a 'Skills transition shed', partnering with registered training organisations as a local employment initiative for disadvantaged recent migrants. ECSD, operating on a smaller scale than SMECC, partnered with many other agencies for a range of projects and activities that encouraged the social inclusion of CALD communities, providing funding and logistical support, and also meeting space for CALD community leaders (as did SMECC). ECSD had a strong local media presence, a strong advocacy role, and organised innovative 'cultural bus tours', visiting Mosques, the local Buddhist temple, and the Aboriginal cooperative, to encourage closer engagement and understanding between mainstream Shepparton, CALD and Indigenous communities.

A number of local community members went out of their way in their attempts to connect with people from diverse backgrounds in Shepparton and Mildura. For example, during the direct settlement of Congolese refugees in Shepparton around 2006-07, there were many examples of locals connected to Catholic churches and Catholic schools, who made extraordinary efforts to welcome and orient new Congolese families into the area, visiting families in their homes and helping them out with school related matters, or inviting children and their parents into their homes. In both Shepparton and Mildura the welcoming and inclusive activities of locals are forms of social capital vital to the successful functioning of these cities as socially cohesive, multicultural communities.

Recommendations:

- Local Councils should place the settlement and celebration of diverse peoples in their communities as a high priority. Local Councils should seek to diversify their workforce, to be more representative of the diversity of the community.
- Police play a vital role in ensuring the safety of communities, and in ensuring aspects of community cohesion and community resilience. In areas with significant CALD communities police should be funded to appoint officers with specific responsibilities for multicultural affairs to act as major links between police and communities, and to build trust between police and communities.
- Ethnic councils should be supported by governments or established where they do not yet exist, as they serve a vital role as hubs for addressing the needs of newer migrants, and in linking them with other parts of the community. These councils are essential to multicultural social cohesion at the local level, providing locally sensitive settlement and other support services to newer residents, which cannot be easily performed by other agencies.
- Federal, state and local governments should continue to support and provide funding, including longer term funding, for multicultural and related events and celebrations at the local community level.
- Regional cities should encourage and acknowledge community members and leaders who actively engage in multicultural contexts, interacting with and assisting people across cultural differences. These people can be held up as role models exemplifying the values that the community wants to foster.

From 'Attraction Points' Towards Retention: What do We Know about International Immigrants Who Come to Stay in Non-Metropolitan Australia?

Associate Professor Branka Krivokapic-Skoko – Charles Sturt University, Professor Jock Collins – University of Technology Sydney



Since the mid-1990s regionalisation of Australian immigration policy has become more apparent since a number of initiatives encouraging new immigrants to settle in non-metropolitan areas have been introduced. Experts on immigration studies (Wullff and Dharmalingam, 2008) argued that the sole focus of immigration policy should not be on the attraction of an increasing number of skilled immigrants in rural and regional Australia, but their retention in these areas. Similarly, Hugo et al. (2006) point out that the retention of immigrants in regional areas is an even greater challenge than attracting them. However, most of the empirical studies within the Australian context tend to focus on the

attraction factors without in-depth exploration of how newly arrived immigrants adjust over time to living and working in non-metropolitan areas.

This presentation is based on the results of the longitudinal survey of almost 1,000 new immigrants in regional and rural Australia (Collins and Krivokapic-Skoko, 2011). The survey was designed to answer the questions of what it would take to keep the new immigrants in small regional townships and rural areas. The main topics covered by this survey were: (a) migrant decisions and mobility, (b) labour market experience, (c) migrant satisfaction and (d) community participation. We also selected five regional and rural towns in New South Wales and Western Australia with a significant number of new immigrants for closer fieldwork involving interviews with new immigrants, key business, government and community stakeholders and long-term residents.

The retention of the immigrants in rural and regional Australia is very strongly related to 'constructed' attractors - the availability and quality of the public transport, social and professional networks, recreational, entertainment or cultural activities. While friends and family attract new immigrants into rural areas, the quality of life, friendliness of the people, environment, and relaxed atmosphere play more significant roles in retaining them.

According to this longitudinal survey, the three most important reasons for living in a current place were: life style, family connections and job opportunities. Half of the respondents living in regional and rural Australia identified the life style as the main reason for staying in a current place.

Immigrants living in regional areas single out friendliness of the people, a peaceful and safe environment without pollution and traffic, a relaxed atmosphere and climate as the main features they liked about the place they were living in. However, the new immigrants moving into regional Australia also talk very strongly about isolation, conservatism, and parochialism of small rural communities which all together can make their integration more difficult.

These new immigrants tend to experience the disadvantages and challenges which are also faced by everyone living and working in non-metropolitan Australia. Limited labour markets in terms of size, career advancement and diversity of occupational possibilities were particularly difficult for the new immigrants settling in regional areas.



Immigrants moving in regional and rural Australia tend to continue with their education. More than a third of the respondents included in this longitudinal survey received further qualifications after moving to Australia. Most of the respondents (45%) obtained different trade qualifications which improved their employability in the labour market or helped them remain and get promoted in their current job. According to this longitudinal survey, one in five immigrants living and working in regional areas received a postgraduate degree after moving to Australia. Importantly, a half of the participants in this survey still intend to undertake further study or training at a university, TAFE or other education institution. These findings of clear intention of immigrants to acquire new skills and obtain additional formal qualifications should be welcomed by policy makers and addressed by regional educational providers. There are a number of ways to provide pathways to acquire additional training and work experience, such as partnership between local employers and education institutions in developing an internship program to provide work placements for immigrants each year in regional areas.

New immigrants are more likely to stay in the same community if they are economically successful and meaningfully engaged in all aspects of community life. According to Wullf and Dharmalingam (2008) communities wishing to retain immigrants need to have “*well-developed social support structures including religious activities meeting places, sporting facilities and so forth, all of which give migrants an opportunity to build links with the community (Ibidem, p. 149)*”. These structures can anchor people to places and therefore the retention factors can be located within the social and cultural milieu of the community.

The experience from some regions in Canada - a country with much longer experience in the regionalisation of immigration- may be very relevant in the Australian context. The key to success of one of Canada's most successful regional migration programs in terms of retention of new immigrants (the Manitoba Provincial Nominee programs, which achieved the retention rate of 80 per cent after 5 years of settlement) was involvement of communities and local employers in settlement planning, and their greater control over the nomination and selection of immigrants (Carter et al. 2008). Improving the communities' competitive advantage in retaining new immigrants has been also on the agenda for Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) which released *A Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres*. Some of the ideas in that document include encouraging intercultural harmony, educating the local population about cultural diversity and antiracism, and including the local Indigenous communities in promoting non-metropolitan areas as a preferable destination for new immigrants.

Rural and regional communities have to be consulted and included in settlement planning. “*Communities must display an adequate desire to explore immigration as a component of a development plan based on an assessment of needs and appropriateness, rather than having immigration ‘forced’ upon them*”

(Silvius and Annis 2005, p. 5). Also, communities which are more welcoming and inclusive, with vibrant and diverse art and cultural life, and involve local Indigenous people, and the communities which embrace creative thinking, innovation and tolerance, are more likely to retain professional, globally linked and highly mobile new immigrants.

Recommendations:

Strategies for retaining new immigrants settling in non-metropolitan Australia should be developed through a partnership between government, employers and community organisations. That partnership can lead towards the following activities:

- Establishing an Immigrant Employment Network or an Immigrant Employment Council to bring together representatives from business, immigrants, governments, education institutions and community-based organisations (based on the positive experience these institutions achieve in the Atlantic region of Canada)
- Providing new immigrants with wage subsidy placement in rural areas for a six-month period in order to gain experience of living and working outside of the major urban centres; this policy proved to be very effective in the context of Canadian regional migration programmes (Akbari and Sun, 2006)
- Establishing a National Rural Think Tank in order to have public debate around the issues surrounding regional immigration and strengthen the capacities for regional settlement planning

Taking into account that new immigrants settling into non-metropolitan Australia tend to be highly educated and skilled, cosmopolitan and professionally mobile, local communities should:

- Develop a plan on how to make community a creative place through the promotion of arts and culture, local heritage, as well as economic development, healthy life style and environment
- Encourage intercultural harmony, educate the local population about cultural diversity and promote the presence of new immigrants as “Perhaps a Blessing”; use community newspapers, media, community leaders and interpersonal communication to support and promote positive attitudes towards new immigrants

Negotiating Social Division: Challenges for Cohesion in Bendigo

Dr Julie Rudner – La Trobe University, Bendigo Campus

Introduction



This paper highlights issues of leadership, democracy, social networks and communication when different publics seek to control the political agenda over new developments. The case presented below focuses on a development application for a mosque in an industrial area three kilometres from the centre of town. Data for this paper were obtained through a document review of publically available Council files, Victorian Civil and Administration Tribunal (VCAT), Victorian High Court and Supreme Court rulings; 19 interviews with representatives from local government, Victoria Police multicultural and health services, business and community leaders; and 183 articles from the ABC, SBS, Age, Herald Sun,

Bendigo Advertiser and social media posts on Facebook. Stakeholders ideologies, beliefs, rationales and aspirations were identified as were their contributions to organisational and communication strategies.

Extent of the Conflict

Conflict centred on competing imaginations about the ideal city and nation, rather than the material aspects of the mosque development. These ideals were articulated through competing notions of human rights. Mosque objectors claimed their rights to safety, amenity, lifestyle and practicing Christianity were under threat. Mosque supporters emphasised equal rights, including freedom of religion and freedom of association. Conflict was expressed through formal objections to Council, online media, street rallies, and interpersonal abuse.

After pre-application meetings, the mosque proposal was submitted to the local Council in January 2014. Within two days a 'Stop the Mosque' Facebook page was created, and by August 2015, local objectors linked with national and international anti-Islam groups and 'experts', disrupted council meetings, started crowd-funding for planning appeals, and held the first street rally staged by the United Patriots Front neo-Nazi group. This, and subsequent rallies, were attended by people bussing in from Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney; local anti-racism counter-protesters were also joined by Antifa from Melbourne.

Over this time, community members who supported ethno-cultural and religious diversity in the city held BBQs and peace rallies, and formed the Interfaith Council with representation from the Catholic, Anglican, Buddhist and Islamic faiths. In addition, Believe in Bendigo, an idea promoted by a group of local business and community leaders, created a strong presence through community events. Importantly, their production and dissemination of a yellow logo to promote social inclusion created an ongoing territorial imprint across the city and within organisations that outlasted the anti-Islam events.

Various forms of protest, counter-protest and less antagonist forms of community engagement continued until June 2016, when objectors exhausted their options at VCAT and the Victorian Supreme Court did not give them leave to appeal. The intensity of conflict has waned. However, it is still simmering with local nationalist-anti-Islam groups with protests at the development site.

Governing Development

Mosque developments are significant acts of place-making. They are symbolic of Muslim people's claim to territory, belonging and faith in the present and future. Development is also representative of continuous negotiation of demographic, cultural, symbolic and physical change within broader communities as mosques become symbolic sites of inclusion/exclusion or safety/insecurity for different groups at different times.

Ironically, planning systems fail to address these plural imaginations of what makes an ideal city or town and people's emotive response to change. Indeed, after 60 years of critical urban theory and radical planning praxis, scholars and practitioners are still grappling with the mismatch between institutional imperatives and public expectation. The socially transformative potential of planning for difference, equality and equity, rights to the city and right to politically participate in planning processes is stymied by codified practice.

Yet, regulatory processes play an important role when controversial issues arise. The planning system, inclusive of legislation, policy, processes and practitioners can protect broader ideals of a just society. The emphasis on process, effect and the nature of legitimate evidence in planning law circumscribes public engagement with development processes. Within planning regulation, only matters that have a demonstrable (and measurable) material impact on neighbouring properties (or areas identified by delegated authority) can be considered, for example, traffic noise or overshadowing.

In Bendigo, the delegated planning officer determined there would not be significant social effects, and therefore a social impact assessment was not required. The proposal was approved, with two Councillors objecting to the development. Objectors believed that there would be a direct causal

connection between development of the mosque and negative impacts on community safety and amenity. However, their assessment of the dangers of Islam and Muslims, such as rape, physical violence and future imposition of Shari'a law, did not meet the standards of evidence required. Essentially, objections targeted the users rather than the land use – a Place of Worship, which can be any denomination. Council's determination was upheld by VCAT, and the VCAT decision was upheld by the Victorian Supreme Court. Throughout the process, objectors maintained that the processes were illegal and delegated authorities were corrupt.

Managing Conflict

Leaders in Bendigo were slow to respond to the situation because they failed to recognise the cues, and they could not anticipate the support provided by national anti-Islam groups to local protestors. The City of Casey also experienced conflict related to a mosque development; in both cases, incumbent Councillors were engaged in anti-Islam protests. In comparison, Ballarat, whose population size and demographics mirror Bendigo, as well as Horsham and Ararat, approved mosques without incident during this time.

The Bendigo mosque example underlines the importance of leadership, early identification of issues, swift coordinated action, and strong communication.

- Incorrect information and misrepresentation needs to be addressed quickly, and strong alternative narratives with links to resources are required.
- Messages need to be developed and targeted for different audiences.
- Strong, clear, and easily understood coherent narratives about democratic systems and their processes should be developed and disseminated.
- Anti-discrimination legislation and the obligation for professionals and citizens to uphold the law need to be explained and reinforced.
- Methods of engagement, how they are facilitated by regulation, and citizens' rights and responsibilities need to be communicated early and often.

The Victorian Multicultural Commission is currently in the final stages of producing guide to assist decision-makers when addressing these types of conflicts.



Intercultural Settlement: The Way Forward for Migrant Settlement in Regional Australia.

Lynda Ford and Amanda Hennessy – Victorian Regional Community Leadership Programs (VRCLP)

Introduction



Migration by people born overseas is critical to the future of regional communities. It is also critical to the people of those communities as some communities are experiencing closures of schools and other public facilities due to ageing and declining populations.

Many people born overseas enjoyed a sense of community in their countries of origin which does not exist in the same form in large cities, and for many people who arrived in Australia as migrant or humanitarian entrants, settlement services are located in cities with no links to regions or plans to offer regional migration to the families post arrival.

Diversity is critical to the health of any environment and diversity of culture, faith and language in regional areas provides not only a visible demonstration of diversity but a daily lived experience of difference in ideas, purchasing preferences, arts and political life, and using an intercultural approach in neighbourliness and social interaction.

Intercultural practice means, at every opportunity, the intentional bringing together of people from diverse cultural, language and faith backgrounds which result in meaningful interactions which help people to:

- reduce fear
- increase understanding
- engage in dialogue
- share experiences
- create new ideas

The Regional Intercultural Settlement Ecosystem outlines an approach which values new and existing diversity, meets local needs for skills to enhance regional productivity and profitability, creates a cohesive community and extends longevity to the survival of small communities.

Project

The Great South Coast Economic Migration Pilot is an exercise in creating communities that are prepared for an increase in cultural, faith and language diversity and relocating residents that are ready to become part of the social fabric of their new community.

The proponents of this project located in south-western Victoria (known as the great South Coast region) are Leadership Great South Coast; iGen Foundation and the Great Lakes Agency for Peace and Development.

The drivers for this project are:

1. the provision of people to meet regional skills gaps;
2. the opportunity for families from African backgrounds who live in metropolitan areas to move to a regional area to gain employment in their field of expertise – mainly agriculture.

The Great South Coast project and the Regional Intercultural Settlement Ecosystem are at the early stages of implementation so the successes are as yet untested.

There are safeguards in place to ensure that the project will be successful. These include:

- Employment available and confirmed prior to relocating
- Housing available and confirmed prior to relocating
- To reduce possibilities of racism or unpleasant settlement experiences, families not moving to a community unless the community has advised they are ready and willing to take in people from other cultural backgrounds (in this case African backgrounds).
- Communities committing to introducing new families into local networks such as sporting and service clubs and other recreational opportunities and schools.
- Families committing to contributing to local community life.
- No less than 3 families and no more than 6 families (of which there are often 8-10 people per family) moving to one small town so that social cohesion and integration into daily community life can occur.

Recent Outcomes

In September, 2016 a group of people representing 9 families visited the Southern Grampians Shire to assess the local opportunities for their families. Hosted by local families, guest families visited local employers, schools and towns which had expressed an interest in families moving to their area. Most heads of families indicated they would be interested in moving and advised others in their networks about the available opportunities.

In October a second visit was undertaken using the same process. On this occasion 10 families attended the visit. This has created some problems as now many more families want to move to the region but our partnership and local governments with small populations and rates bases do not have the resources to assist in the settlement of more than 10 families. As a result criteria for families to be considered as part of the project have had to be implemented. Criteria include: ability and willingness to take up employment immediately on arrival; readiness to move within the next three months; willingness to provide personal information prior to moving (information which includes family size, skills etc.) as many families are reluctant to provide this information due to previous experiences of this information being used against them in their country of origin; and that families are 'of good standing' and will participate in community activities and contribute to their local area.

The Regional Intercultural Settlement Ecosystem improves local social and economic outcomes for small communities in the Great South Coast region of Victoria.

Recommendations:

- A central register of families from all cultural backgrounds that desire to move to regional Australia.
- A register of towns that not only want families to move to their area but are prepared and ready for significant increases in cultural diversity in their areas
 - this includes intercultural training and conversations about what this will mean to their community.
- Expectations placed on Department of Social Services funded organisations to offer regional settlement from metropolitan areas to families they support.
- Financial assistance to local communities and settlement services to facilitate local employment, housing and education relationships for families and for post-arrival intercultural inclusion support to integrate families into local communities.

The Impact of Migrants in the Naracoorte-Lucindale Area

Mayor Erika Vickery OAM – Naracoorte Lucindale Council



Background: The Naracoorte Lucindale Council is a rural council, approximately 3.5 hours south east of Adelaide. The main industry is agriculture with associated industries including seed production, Teys Brothers meat processing and exporting, the wool bedding manufacturer and exporter “Mini Jumbuk”, and the well-established wine industry of Wrattenbully surrounding Naracoorte, Coonawarra in the south and Padthaway to the north. Naracoorte is also the retail and service centre for the district.

Migration: this local government area was host to immigrants from Europe after the Second World War. They came as skilled tradespeople, many working to build the railway that connected the South East to Adelaide and Melbourne providing transport pathways for primary industry. Second and third generation families are still in the Naracoorte District.

A second significant and more recent group were the Maori New Zealanders and Chinese and other Asian, 457 Visa holders who were sponsored to work in the meat works about fifteen years ago. Many of the Maori workers have settled with their families in Naracoorte but very few of those 457 Visa holders remained in Naracoorte although there are many Asian families settled there.

At about the same time around 5 Afghan men, quickly followed by their families, settled in Naracoorte. One became a contractor for itinerant workers during peak seasons in the vineyards. Other itinerant workers from a diversity of cultural groups arrived, particularly from Asian countries, including international students.

For about 3 years Naracoorte saw an influx of mainly Afghan men who resided in the town joining the first few established Afghan settlers. Since then some of these men have brought their wives and children. Many have families waiting in Pakistan to be re-united with them. Over 300 Hazara Afghan single males are living in Naracoorte and working in the vineyards for about 8 months of the year or in the meatworks. This number reduces when the pruning season finishes.

There are nearly 32 Hazara families residing in Naracoorte with a growing number of children born here and now attending kindergarten, primary and secondary schooling. As some arrive others leave: a couple of prominent families have moved to either Adelaide or Melbourne to support their daughters as they pursue university education. Most live collectively, sharing houses and expenses, while some have bought their own houses. Two commercial businesses are owned by Afghan men.

The Hazara have blended into the town without any preliminary service planning and without any fanfare. The media, the services, schools and local clubs have welcomed them because they have demonstrated their industriousness. A number of the Afghan men have become Rotarians and have linked the Afghan community with the local townspeople. All this has happened in spite of many of the newcomers not being able to speak English. A number of factors have attracted Afghans to settle in Naracoorte. None of the factors can be isolated as each is dependent on the other. Employment, even though it is seasonal, is one of the main factors that has attracted the men. Equally important has been a core group of Afghan families who have taken on a leadership role which has provided social support and links to migrant services.

What has assisted this sustained settlement?

The very understated and positive reception migrants have received from the town, schools, and services has helped as well as the establishment of the Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC) to co-ordinate settlement services, to link new settlers with the services, and to assist the building of the community's capacity to navigate and engage the town, their work opportunities, housing and social interaction.

There has been a concerted effort on behalf of AMRC to highlight the achievements of the Hazara residents: the Naracoorte Herald needs recognition for its positive stories about cultural diversity and efforts at inclusiveness including recent stories about Hazara students achieving excellent academic results and the conversational English class being well supported.

Ongoing community development involvement by the Hazara community include providing the Persian New Year; free food for attendees at the Australia Day celebrations and Harmony Day; and for the first time, ANZAC Day where Didar Ali, community leader laid a wreath on behalf of his Hazara community.



What are the challenges and recommendations for the future?

- Social and Cultural outlets are essential, as many of the men do not have their families with them. Most of the men are anxious and depressed that their wives and children may be in danger. One issue relates to the impact of long delays in processing Bridging Visa applications, citizenship applications and the worsening security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Some clients are now requesting referrals to counselling services and GPs to address mental health concerns. Family reunion is essential to sustaining settlement.
- There are currently 394 entries on the AMRC data base representing Settlement Grants Programme (SGP) clients: this number is comprised of mostly single adult males who come and go from Naracoorte depending on the availability of work. After 5 years of settlement permanent residents are not strictly part of the SGP program. However, bureaucratic processes are becoming more complex for those who speak English as a second language; and who arrived in Australia by boat. This group continues to seek advocacy and service support with filling out documents. Issues remain relating to service providers' cultural competency and the appropriate use of interpreters. Clients regularly turn up at appointments where they have previously requested interpreters to find out that this requirement has been overlooked.
- The Naracoorte Migrant Resource Centre has provided Conversational English classes since late January 2017. Once a week, for 2 hours, English tutoring is provided to 9 to 12 female Hazara clients at different levels of literacy and numeracy under the guidance of two retired teachers and about a dozen dedicated volunteers. In recent days there has been a concerted effort to collect numbers of women who are eligible and willing to attend for AMEP English classes, which are accredited English classes. It is hoped that AMEP can be convinced to reopen classes here so that these clients do not lose precious allotted hours dedicated to literacy and numeracy in a more structured setting than Conversational English can provide. It should be noted that the two services are envisaged to be complementary.
- Housing may become a problem as the population increases – the lack of affordable housing has been an identified issue for some time now.
- It remains a challenge to keep families with children postsecondary school in the area.
- Experienced settlement coordination is essential to ensure people stay and have their needs met, including employment. This resource may be small but without it the broader community can't effectively consult with the new settlers, and cannot assist the services to provide the much needed supports that are required for good reception. It is the essential difference between having continuous itinerants that do not commit to staying in our town, come to work for a few months, then leave and are replaced by others, and providing an environment in which families want to live.
- Too much dependence on an itinerant workforce situation does little for a community's fabric, its wellbeing and its economy. We want to support all new settlers to feel they are part of our community, to stay more permanently in our town, to become part of our local area and to assist their own prosperity and well-being and the town's prosperity and well-being at the same time.

Conclusion

The Workshop considered the way mobilities in its various forms are transforming rural and regional communities highlighting the challenges and opportunities that are being faced. We were reminded that mobilities involve complex internal and external dynamics that include intra/inter-regional and international mobilities as well as rural to urban and urban to rural mobilities.

Professor Birgit Glorius, in her key note presentation on recent migration challenges in Germany, emphasised the importance of understanding the historical, political and economic factors that impact on local stakeholder reception of international migration. Other presenters spoke of the need to develop long-term policies and plans related to employment, education, English language learning, health and migrant service provision and that this required contributions across several sectors including government, employers, and community organisations. Mayor Erika Vickery, from the Naracoorte-Lucindale LGA, expressed the felt-need of rural and regional communities to both attract and retain permanently those who move to their localities.

Reception for new arrivals across all levels of the community was viewed as essential for creating a welcoming environment. Practical recommendations were given including the importance of strong, positive local leadership, cross-organisation coordination of services, the development of intercultural competencies for long-term residents and new arrivals, and the effective engagement of local awareness with migrant needs, aspirations and skills.

The executive summaries found in this report provide a valuable resource for those interested in the pressing issue of regional and rural mobilities and the challenges and opportunities these have brought. The report has further underscored the importance of bringing together the contributions of researchers from different academic disciplines, in this case, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, together with key local regional leaders and stakeholders.

Acknowledgements

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PRESENTERS

Professor Birgit Glorius – Chemnitz University of Technology



Birgit Glorius works as Professor for Human Geography of East Central Europe at Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany. She was trained in Geography, Geology and Political Sciences at the universities of Erlangen-Nürnberg, Würzburg and the University of Texas at Austin. She earned a diploma in Human Geography from the University of Würzburg and a doctoral degree from the University of Halle-Wittenberg. Her research interests and majority of publications are in the fields of international migration, demographic change and geographies of education; most of her research is carried out in Eastern Germany, Poland, Bulgaria and the Western Balkans. Recent research projects include refugee reception in Europe, concentrating on questions of local governance and local reception cultures; effects of the European financial and economic crisis on migratory processes from southern European countries; and return migration of Bulgarian graduates from studies abroad and mechanisms of knowledge transfer.

Professor Neil Argent – University of New England



Neil Argent is Professor of Human Geography at the University of New England, Armidale NSW. His research and teaching focus on the evolving population, economic and social geography of rural areas. Over the past two decades and via a series of Australian Research Council Discovery-Project grants he has helped demonstrate the impact of financial sector restructuring on rural town economies, the relative importance of population density in influencing the demographic and economic characteristics of rural communities, the role of amenity as a driver of inter-regional migration into rural areas, and the dimensions, causes and implications of youth migration for sending regions and localities. More recently, Neil has investigated the processes underlying demographic decline and numerical and structural ageing across rural regions of south-eastern Australia. He is also currently exploring the rise of the craft beer brewing sector in rural Australia, along with its contributions to local economic development.

Dr Kalpana Goel – University of South Australia (Whyalla Campus)



Kalpana Goel is an academic and researcher in the School of Psychology, Social Work, and Social Policy, University of South Australia and is based at a regional campus of the University. She has both practice and teaching experience in the field of rural community development and mental health. She has widely published in the area of migration, community settlement, migrants in unorganized sector and coping and resilience of immigrants. She is member of Australian Association of Social Workers, Refugee and Migration Research Network and Centre for Social Change.

PRESENTERS

Amanda Hennessy – Victorian Regional Community Leadership Programs (VRCLP)



Amanda Hennessy – Executive Officer, Leadership Great South Coast, Board Chair, Victorian Regional Community Leadership Programs (VRCLP). Holding a regional role stretching from the glorious Otway Rangers to the South Australian border and up the Grampians National Park. Amanda is passionate about supporting and empowering our regional community leaders to effect economic and social growth. Coming to LGSC from an executive position in the vocational education sector Amanda holds management, leadership and education qualifications. Working in governance roles with dedicated community organisations, such as Lifeline South West Inc., and supporting philanthropy in regional areas is a long term commitment for Amanda.

Associate Professor Branka Krivokapic-Skoko – Charles Sturt University



Branka Krivokapic-Skoko is currently an Associate Professor in Management at Charles Sturt University, on Bathurst campus. Branka's research interests are particularly around the revitalisation of regional and rural Australia. For instance, Branka worked on research project funded by RIRDC on Attracting and Retaining Immigrants in Non-metropolitan Australia which produces 'a tool box of ideas' for rural and regional communities which are trying to attract new, highly skilled immigrants and resolve a labour shortage in some professions. She just finalised (together with Professor Jock Collins from UTS) a three-year, large-scale project on New Immigrants Improving Productivity in Australian Agriculture, which can contribute to the increasing vitality of Australian agriculture in coming decades. That research also assessed contribution of temporary migration scheme such as Working Holiday Makers and Pacific Island Seasonal workers to Australian agriculture.

Associate Professor Jay Marlowe – University of Auckland, New Zealand



Jay Marlowe is Associate Professor in the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. A former visiting fellow with the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford, UK, he has published more than 50 papers related to refugee settlement and is currently leading a Marsden project on how refugees practise transnational family and friendship through social media and what this means for people's commitments to local places. He has a book in press with Routledge entitled *Belonging and Transnational Refugee Settlement*.

PRESENTERS

Dr Julie Rudner – La Trobe University (Bendigo Campus)



Julie Rudner is a Senior Lecturer in Community Planning and Development in Bendigo. She explores risk, safety and belonging regarding people's use of public space, political engagement and urban development. Formerly a strategic planner, her extensive work with young people and more recently, different ethno-cultural and religious groups, has had a strong influence on local and state government policy. Dr Rudner was the lead investigator on a well-received project commissioned by the Victorian Multicultural Commission that focused on the Bendigo mosque protests 2014-2016.

Mayor Erika Vickery OAM – Naracoorte Lucindale Council



Erika Vickery OAM is the Mayor of the Naracoorte-Lucindale Council. Erika has been an elected member in local government for 17 years and elected as Mayor in 2010. She is the President of the Limestone Coast Local Government Association, Chairman of SAROC (South Australian Regional Organisation of Councils) and board member of LGA SA and RDA Limestone Coast. Erika was born in Austria and immigrated with her family and settled in Naracoorte over 50 years ago. She has always been very community minded, receiving the Australia Day Citizenship Award in 1991 and Order of the Medal of Australia this year.

Associate Professor Anna Ziersch – Flinders University



Anna Ziersch holds an ARC Future Fellowship in the Southgate Institute for Health, Society and Equity. Her research focuses on health equity and the social determinants of health, with a particular focus on refugee health and wellbeing. In addition to the research on regional refugee resettlement experiences, her research in this area has also included an exploration of the links between housing and health for refugees and asylum seekers, access to primary healthcare for refugees with a trauma background, oral health for refugees from the Middle East, mental health issues for refugee youth and the impact of temporary protection visas on health and wellbeing.

PARTICIPANTS



Mayor Andrew Lee
City of Mt. Gambier



Mayor Reg Lyon
Kingston District Council



Mayor Richard Sage
District Council of Grant



Jenny Stirling
Migrant Resource Centre, Naracoorte

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Acknowledgement of Country

UniSA respects the Kaurna, Boandik and Barngarla peoples' spiritual relationship with their country. We also acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal peoples, past and present.

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