



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark blue polo shirt, safety glasses, and large yellow earplugs, is working in a workshop. He is holding a piece of wood and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred industrial setting with metal structures.

A social entrepreneur's guide

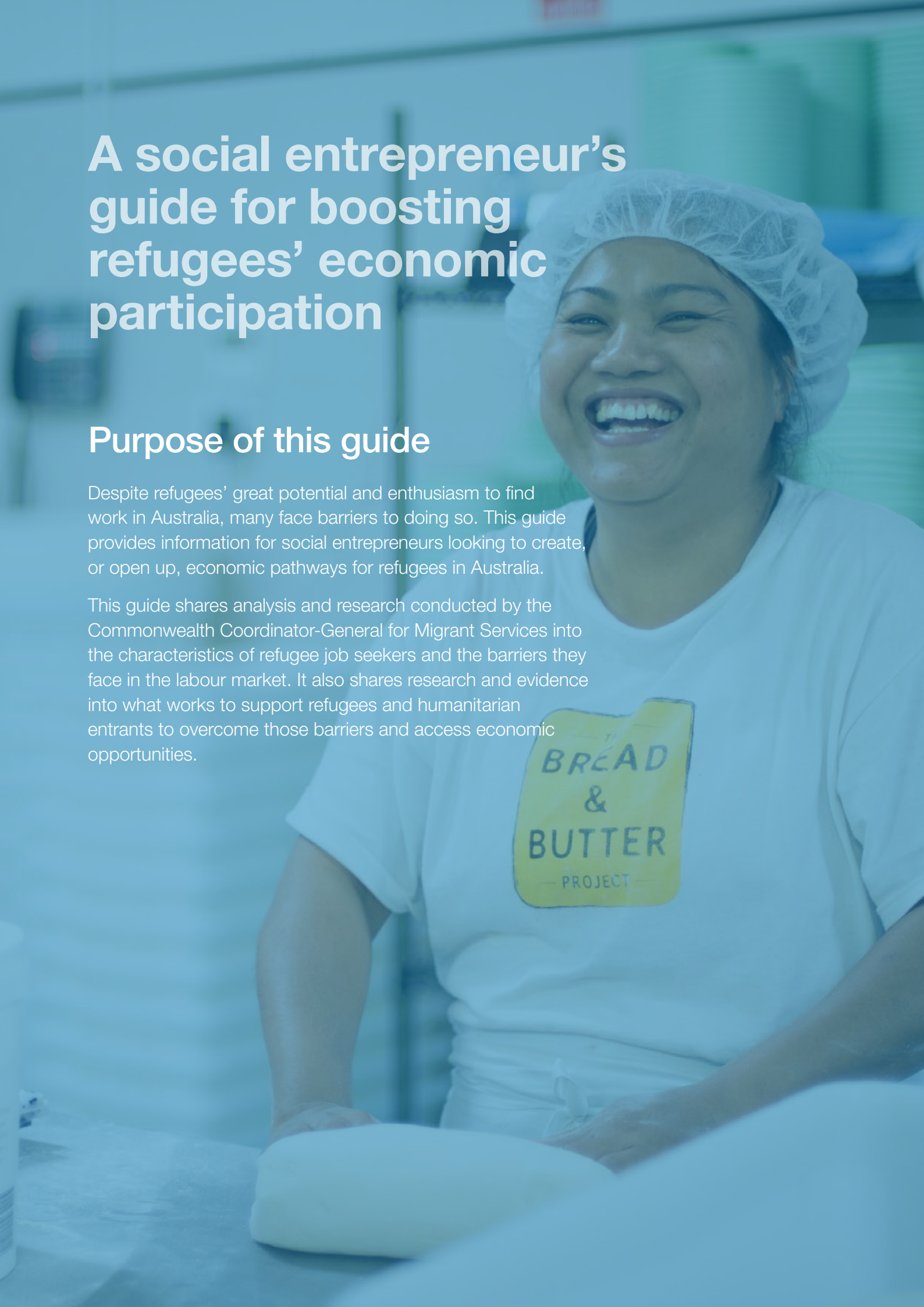
Boosting refugees' economic participation

A social entrepreneur's guide for boosting refugees' economic participation

Purpose of this guide

Despite refugees' great potential and enthusiasm to find work in Australia, many face barriers to doing so. This guide provides information for social entrepreneurs looking to create, or open up, economic pathways for refugees in Australia.

This guide shares analysis and research conducted by the Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services into the characteristics of refugee job seekers and the barriers they face in the labour market. It also shares research and evidence into what works to support refugees and humanitarian entrants to overcome those barriers and access economic opportunities.



Foreword

Economic participation is vitally important to refugee settlement and integration. It is through work that refugees are able to build social networks, gain independence and establish a sense of belonging in Australia.

While finding a job is a high and first priority for many refugees, entering the Australian labour market or starting a business can be difficult for new arrivals. This booklet canvasses some of the reasons refugees can find it challenging to get a foot in the door, in Australia's advanced economy.

Social entrepreneurs already make enormous contributions to refugee settlement and integration. Many social entrepreneurs – including social enterprises, settlement service providers, industry, community groups and individuals – work with great commitment to identify ways to overcome challenges and create opportunities to advance refugee employment and self-employment. Some examples are included in this booklet.

In recognition of the valuable contributions of social entrepreneurs, in December 2021 the Australian Government committed \$21.3 million for the new Economic Pathways to Refugee Integration (EPRI) grant program to support organisations demonstrating success assisting refugees to achieve their economic participation goals.

To support social entrepreneurs in their consideration of how to assist refugees, this booklet shares the results of a literature review on what sort of interventions work best for different people, as well as data to help social entrepreneurs understand the characteristics of refugee job seekers.

Refugees have proven to be extremely successful in Australia when given the chance to reach their full potential. The Australian Government will continue to engage with social entrepreneurs as we work together to support refugees to succeed.

Alison Larkins
Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services

Who are refugee job seekers?

Refugees are motivated job seekers

The first priority for many refugees when they arrive in Australia is to find work. The entrepreneurial spirit of refugees is well established – the Centre for Policy Development reports that refugees are the most entrepreneurial type of migrants in Australia and are far more likely to start a business than the Australian population as a whole.¹

The contributions refugees make through work – to workplaces and employers, as well as to Australia's broader economic, social and political life – are well documented. The role of work as an enabler of settlement and integration is also well established. Work helps refugees build their independence and access the benefits that flow from financial security and stability. Work also helps refugees build their social capital, establish friendships, improve their English language skills and build a sense of belonging in Australia.

Refugees and humanitarian entrants are diverse

In the past 5 years, Australia has resettled over 88,000 refugees and humanitarian entrants. Refugees arrive from many different countries and bring with them different skills, experiences and abilities. The composition of the refugee and humanitarian intake each year varies, sometimes significantly, depending on the nature of humanitarian need.²

Figure 1: Top 5 countries of birth for humanitarian visas granted in 2018–19²

Afghanistan	1,323
Syria	1,836
Myanmar	1,995
Democratic Republic of Congo	2,114
Iraq	7,095

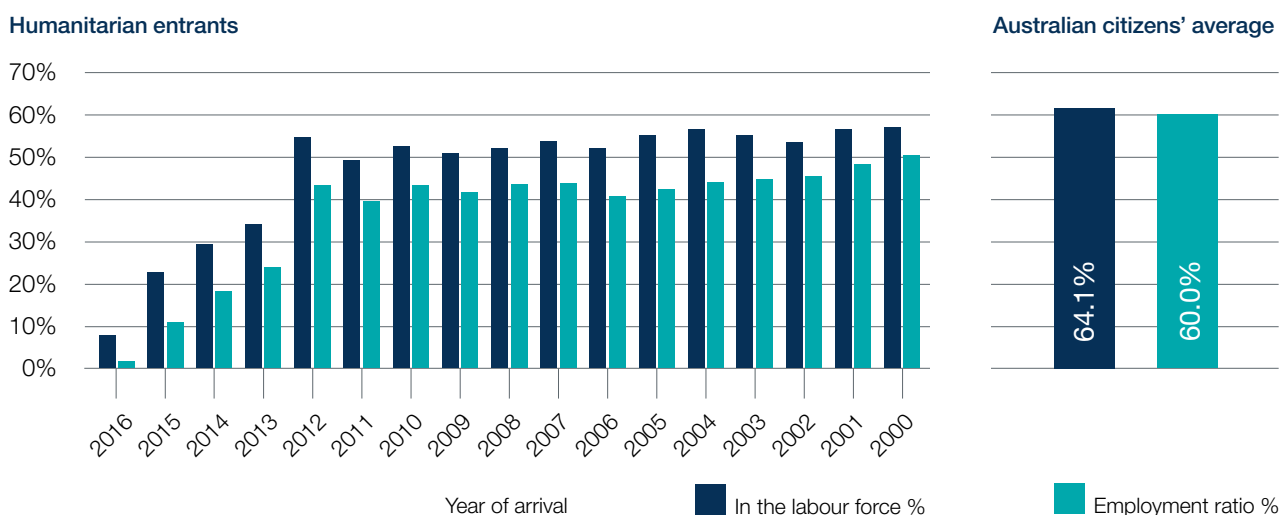
¹ Legrain, P. & Burridge, A. (2019), 'Seven Steps to SUCCESS: Enabling refugee entrepreneurs to flourish', <<https://cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Seven-Steps-to-SUCCESS.pdf>>.

² ACMID 2016 (Understanding Migrant Outcomes – Insights from the Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset, Australia, 2016. Australian Bureau of Statistics [abs.gov.au]).

Humanitarian entrants' economic participation outcomes improve over time

However, it takes approximately 15 years for outcomes to be comparable with the Australian-born population.

Figure 2: Labour force participation rate and employment ratio of humanitarian entrants by year of arrival, as compared with Australian citizens' average³



Around 75% of refugee job seekers can be found in just 11 employment regions

The [Labour Market Information Portal](#) includes quarterly publications on the location of self-identified refugee job seekers participating in employment services. In September 2021, refugee job seekers registered with *jobactive* largely resided in metropolitan regions like Sydney South West, which was home to over 5,500 refugee job seekers in *jobactive*.⁴

Location of self-identified refugees in <i>jobactive</i> in September 2021 ⁵	No. refugee job seekers	% of total
Sydney South West	5,599	13%
Western Melbourne	4,373	11%
Sydney Greater West	3,378	8%
South Eastern Melbourne and Peninsula	3,335	8%
Adelaide North	2,672	6%
North Western Melbourne	2,543	6%
Brisbane South East	2,392	6%
Perth North	2,141	5%
North Eastern Melbourne	1,676	4%
Inner Metropolitan Melbourne	1,594	4%
Perth South	1,408	3%

³ Data used for this graph/chart comes from the 2016 Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset (ACMID), the Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2016 ACMID figures only include permanent migrants that arrived in Australia between 1 January 2000 and 9 August 2016. Australian citizens' average excludes Australian residents that do not have citizenship, including temporary residents.

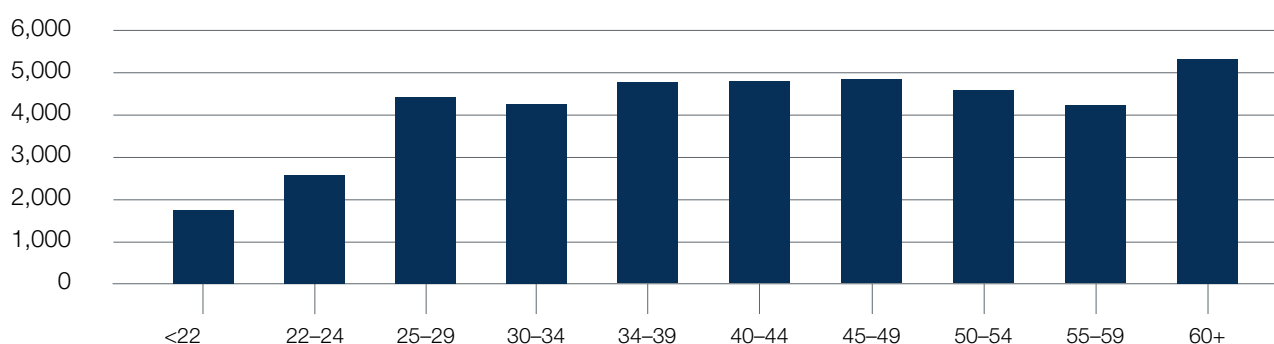
⁴ For current statistics, see: <https://lmp.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/Downloads/EmploymentRegion>.

⁵ *jobactive* caseload data, September 2021, Department Education, Skills and Employment. The location is based upon either the provider servicing the participant or where the participant resides for online employment services.

Self-identified refugees in *jobactive* in September 2021 ranged in age, and had diverse characteristics

Self-identified refugees on the <i>jobactive</i> caseload as at 30 September 2021	
Total number of self-identified refugees	41,642
Female	18,956
Male	22,686
Person with disability	11,765
Homeless	7,984
Parent	7,229

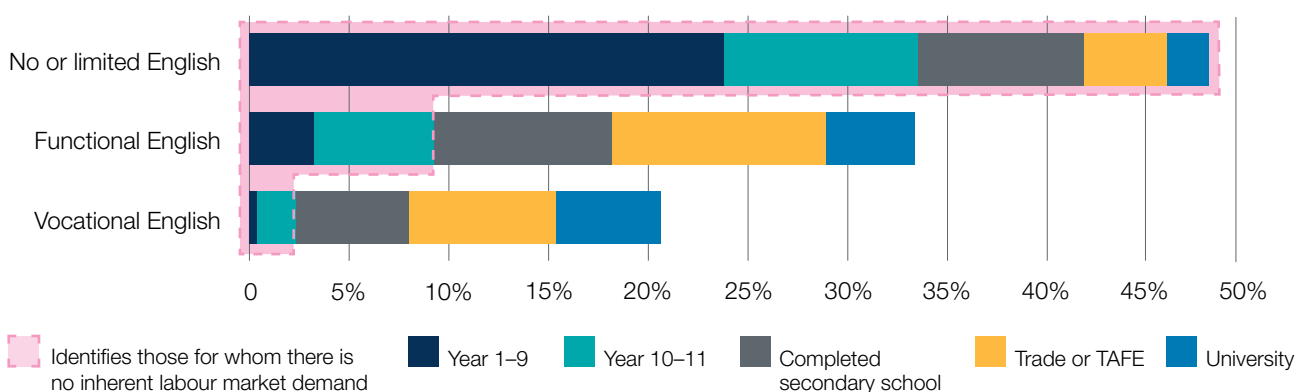
Figure 3: Age of self-identified refugees in *jobactive* in September 2021



Many refugee job seekers have no or limited English and/or have not completed secondary school

As of 30 September 2021, there were almost 42,000 *jobactive* participants on the caseload who self-identified as refugees. Just over 62% of these self-identified refugee job seekers had either limited formal education and/or low levels of English language skill.⁶

Figure 4: English language ability and educational attainment of self-identified refugees in *jobactive* in September 2021⁷



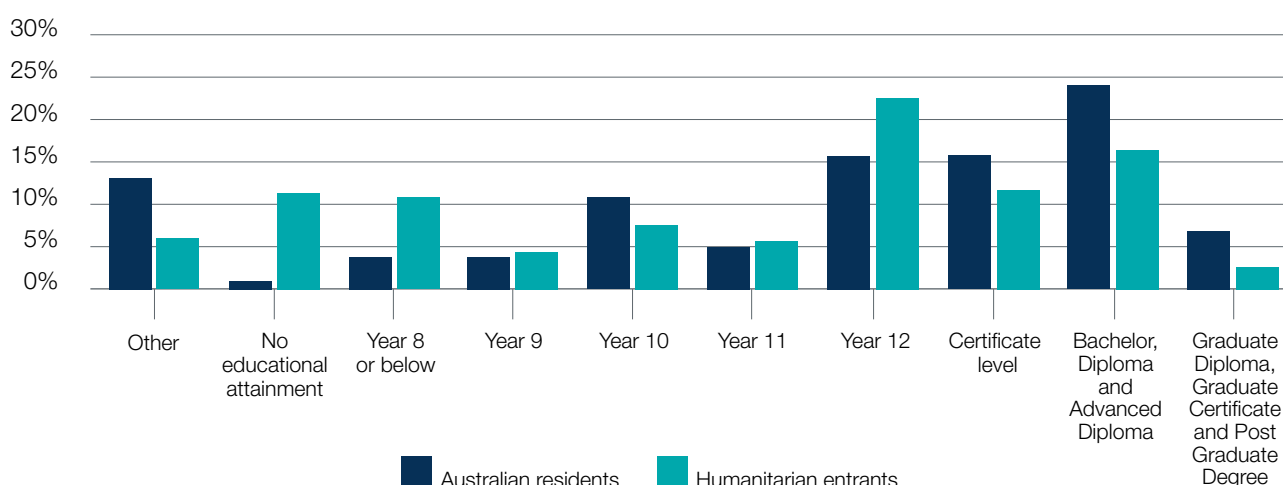
⁶ This includes all refugee job seekers with no or limited English and/or educational attainment at or below year 11.

⁷ *jobactive* caseload data, September 2021, Department Education, Skills and Employment. Note – data excludes those who have not provided language or education level (total = 89%).

	Vocational English	Functional English ⁸	No or limited English	Total
Years 1–9	0%	3%	23%	26%
Years 10–11	2%	5%	9%	15%
Completed secondary school	5%	8%	8%	20%
Trade or TAFE	6%	9%	4%	18%
University	4%	4%	2%	10%
Total	17%	28%	45%	

While just over a quarter of self-identified refugee job seekers in *jobactive* have either a trade, TAFE, or university qualification, approximately 41% have not completed secondary school and 26% have not completed year 10.

*Figure 5: Proportion of humanitarian entrants and general population aged 15 years and over by highest level of education attained^{9–11} **



More detailed data, including the age, gender, skill and English language levels, of self-identified refugees in employment services, is shared as part of the grant opportunity guidelines under the Economic Pathways to Refugee Integration (EPRI) grant program advertised on GrantConnect, the Australian Government’s centralised website for grant opportunities: [GrantConnect \(grants.gov.au\)](https://grants.gov.au).

⁸ A person with this level of English is generally considered to be able to take part in informal conversations and handle routine activity that is not linguistically demanding. This level of proficiency is insufficient for participation in Vocational Education and Training beyond the Certificate I/II level and considered by many employers as too low for employment.

⁹ Note: Humanitarian entrants are a subset of the general population and are therefore included within the totals displayed for the general population.

¹⁰ Data used for this graph/chart comes from the 2016 Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset (ACMID) in Tablebuilder, the Australian Bureau of Statistics. [Understanding Migrant Outcomes - Insights from the Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset](https://www.abs.gov.au/Understanding-Migrant-Outcomes-Insights-from-the-Australian-Census-and-Migrants-Integrated-Dataset), Australia, 2016. Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au).

¹¹ 2016 AzD figures only include permanent migrants that arrived in Australia between 1 January 2000 and 9 August 2016.

* The category ‘Certificate Level’ includes: Certificate III and IV Level, nfd; Certificate IV; Certificate III; Certificate I and II Level, nfd; Certificate II; Certificate I. The category ‘Bachelor, Diploma and Advanced Diploma’ includes: Bachelor Degree Level, nfd; Bachelor (Honours) Degree; Bachelor (Pass) Degree; Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level, nfd; Advanced Diploma and Associate Degree Level, nfd; Advanced Diploma; Associate Degree; Diploma Level, nfd; Diploma. The category ‘Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate and Post Graduate Degree’ includes: Postgraduate Degree Level, nfd; Doctoral Degree Level, nfd; Higher Doctorate; Doctorate by Research; Doctorate by Coursework; Professional Specialist Qualification, Doctoral Level; Master Degree Level, nfd; Master Degree by Research; Master Degree by Coursework; Professional Specialist Qualification, Master Level; Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate Level, nfd; Graduate Diploma Level, nfd; Graduate Diploma; Professional Specialist Qualification, Graduate Diploma Level; Graduate Certificate Level, nfd; Graduate Certificate; Professional Specialist Qualification, Graduate Certificate Level.

The Bread & Butter Project

On-the-job training and an accreditation with a clear employment pathway

The Bread & Butter Project (B&B), which started in 2013, is Australia's first social enterprise artisan bakery.

The non-profit aims to boost refugee settlement and integration outcomes in Sydney through creating training and employment pathways for refugees who are attracted to professional careers in Australia's baking and hospitality industry. Every year B&B provides training for up to 30 new refugees in the baking profession, often people who have struggled to find employment in Australia due to language skills or lack of recognised qualifications. Over a 6–8 month traineeship, participants are provided with on-the-job training, TAFE accreditation, English tutoring and job-readiness support.

A strength of B&B's model is its focus on training refugees in an area of workforce shortage: B&B identified that there was a chronic shortage of bakers in Australia and works to meet this demand through its business model.

So far, over 60 refugees have participated in the project. Almost all participants remain sustainably employed after completing the program, with sufficient income to remain financially independent. In addition to this, independent research conducted by Social Impact Hub in 2018 reports that 100% of the children of program participants are in school, university or employed – pointing to the positive intergenerational impacts of the program.¹²



“A strength of B&B's model is its focus on training refugees in an area of workforce shortage.”

¹² *About Us*, The Bread & Butter Project, <thebreadandbutterproject.com>.



Community Corporate

An employer-led approach delivers outcomes

Community Corporate (a certified social enterprise) helps over 300 migrants and refugees into work each year nationally across a range of industries from retail, hospitality, the care sector, business services and IT.

Community Corporate applies an ‘employer-led model’ which is co-designed with employers, and based on workforce needs to identify and match suitable refugees through a ‘hire-for-attitude’ approach. Employer partners are driven by a genuine desire to create inclusive workplaces and commit to ongoing permanent roles across their businesses for refugees to offer sustainable employment and career pathways.

Community Corporate is the national lead refugee employment partner to the Woolworths Group. The refugee recruitment model is underpinned by a cultural and strengths-based assessment tool, customised pre-employment training, jobs coaching and supported work experience, and on-the-job training to address one of the most significant barriers to employment for refugees – no local experience.

Community Corporate also provided support in the form of cultural confidence training for Woolworths’ teams to effectively support refugees in their workplace. Community Corporate sources refugees from their database and word-of-mouth referrals as well as local *jobactive*, community and settlement providers, to identify refugees for the employer.

During 2020, the Woolworths Refugee Employment Program was able to surpass its own goals and successfully placed over 100 refugees and humanitarian entrants into 40+ hours of work experience placements. Of this sample, over 83% reported having no previous work experience prior to the program in Australia. Through this supported job-readiness initiative, 86% of project participants were still employed in permanent part-time roles after 6 months and 84% remained working for the Woolworths Group after the program. This was the first paid job for 64% of participants and 40% of the total sample were reported to no longer be receiving any form of income support. The high retention rates can be attributed to post-placement mentoring with ongoing assistance provided to refugees for 12 months with both vocational and non-vocational support services.

“Community Corporate...addresses one of the most significant barriers to employment for refugees – no local experience.”



There is no inherent labour market demand for the majority of refugees, who have no or limited English and have not completed secondary school

Just over 58% of self-identified refugee job seekers in *jobactive* have either not completed school and/or cannot speak English well or at all.

In our advanced economy, many of these job seekers will find it extremely difficult to meet inherent labour market demand. In other words, their low skill level and/or low English language ability makes them suited to only a very small number of roles in Australia. Even when there is little competition for roles, these refugee and humanitarian entrant jobseekers may not become productive quickly enough to meet a business' needs. In late 2020, PwC analysed the labour market in three regions with particularly high numbers of refugee job seekers: Western Sydney, Eastern Melbourne and Brisbane. PwC's analysis of labour market demand – job vacancy data, industry growth trends and occupations data – found there were very few opportunities available in these regions for people who have low English language ability and/or low skill level.

PwC's findings in these regions are consistent with the evidence on the importance of English and vocational skills to finding work in Australia:

- The importance of English language ability in the Australian labour market is well established. Even low-skilled jobs in Australia currently require a good working knowledge of English language. For example, most jobs require some English language ability to understand and follow Workplace Health & Safety requirements and to communicate basic instructions in the workplace. The evidence suggests that people who have little or no English language ability may require up to 2,000 hours of language learning to reach a functional level of English competency. People without prior education or who are not literate in their first language also typically take longer to learn English.

- Education and skill play an important role in securing work in Australia's advanced economy. Indeed, the Australian Bureau of Statistics assumes that a completed secondary education (and/or Certificate I) is a requirement for all occupations in Australia.

Refugees face other barriers to work including disability, prejudice and caring responsibilities

Refugees can face other barriers to employment and self-employment.

Prejudice can prevent refugees from finding work. Research shows that workers from certain ethnic groups may be disadvantaged even when they have the right qualifications, experience and strong language capabilities. Recruitment companies and potential employers can perceive refugees as not the right 'cultural fit'.

Disability and poor health are also barriers refugees may face. This can stem from a person's own perception of their ability to perform work, discrimination or incorrect support. In the 30 September 2020 caseload, 22% of job seekers in *jobactive* who identified as a refugee also identified as having a disability.

A refugee's home-life or living conditions affect their ability to participate in employment. Caring responsibilities are a significant barrier to work that disproportionately affect female refugees. Homelessness is another significant barrier that, in the 30 September 2020 *jobactive* caseload, affected 18% of job seekers who self-identified as refugees in *jobactive*.

Skilled refugees also face challenges to having their overseas qualifications and/or experience recognised and face barriers due to their lack of networks and lack of local Australian work experience.

What works when and for whom?

Different kinds of supports, which can be delivered alone or in combination	Works best for...
<p>Support to help people build foundational skills</p> <p>Support building foundational skills includes services that help improve refugee and humanitarian entrants' English language skills, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.</p> <p>Support to help people build foundational skills can be very effective when combined with vocational skill building. For example, language training integrated with vocational training in an area of identified workforce shortage can create a strong employment pathway.</p> <p>Given the fact that many refugees have lower English language abilities, social entrepreneurs should consider how the opportunities they create can accommodate ongoing language learning, even if building foundational skills is not a primary focus in the program they deliver. Collaboration with Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) providers can produce flexible approaches that allow refugees to both learn English and take up economic participation opportunities.</p>	<p>Works best for job seekers who do not yet have the foundational skills they need to meet job requirements</p>
<p>Support to help people build job-specific skills</p> <p>Supporting refugees to gain a formal qualification (including at certificate level) and/or develop skills to perform particular roles 'on the job', can help refugees build job-specific skills.</p> <p>Job-specific training is often most effective when combined with other kinds of support aimed at ensuring job-readiness. For example, where a person's English proficiency is also a barrier to their job-readiness, integrating skill development with applied language learning can be valuable. Providing work experience opportunities and using work placements to allow refugees to demonstrate the job-specific skills they have learned to an Australian employer, can also help translate job-specific skill development into an ongoing job.</p> <p>As with other kinds of services, it's important that refugees are supported to build the job-specific skills that employers actually need. Both refugees and employers say that they value programs that make sure skills learnt are directly connected to available jobs. This ensures that skills learnt aren't wasted and that companies hiring can be confident in the ability of their new employees.</p>	<p>Works best for job seekers who are keen to learn specific skills linked to existing opportunities</p>
<p>Support for employers</p> <p>Organisations can create employment opportunities for refugees by helping employers with recruitment, on-boarding and ongoing staff support. This means linking employers with job-ready refugees, providing workplace inductions for refugees and helping workplaces manage new refugee employees through cultural guidance and the provision of support for existing employees. An 'employer-led' model has as its starting point what employers need when thinking about hiring refugees and humanitarian entrants.</p> <p>This kind of support helps companies create job opportunities and can ensure that both refugees and employers feel supported during their new working relationships.</p>	<p>Can support job-ready job seekers into work, or ensure job seekers building their skill levels are on a pathway to work once they have acquired those skills</p>

Different kinds of supports, which can be delivered alone or in combination (continued)	Works best for...
<p>Support to help people demonstrate existing skills and capabilities</p> <p>For refugees and humanitarian entrants who already have vocational skills, opportunities to demonstrate skills to Australian employers can be extremely valuable. Australian work experience is valued highly by Australian employers. A work experience placement or internship can provide a refugee with the opportunity to demonstrate their skills to an employer, or signal their capabilities to future employers.</p> <p>As noted above, Australian qualifications are also an important way to signal job-specific skills. Formal recognition of an overseas qualification can also help people signal their skills and capabilities to Australian employers.</p> <p>Not only are work experience opportunities valuable for refugees with already existing skill-sets, they can also be helpful for refugees and humanitarian entrants who have some training but lack an understanding of Australian workplaces and culture.</p> <p>The success of internships or work experience placement often depend on there being demand for the skill refugees are supported to demonstrate. The more successful programs are those where services are linked with employer and industry networks as well as particular employment pathways.</p>	<p>Works best for job seekers with pre-existing skills, qualifications or work experience</p>
<p>Self-employment support</p> <p>Support for refugees and humanitarian entrants looking to start their own businesses often includes financing to support business start-up costs, business mentoring and/or training.</p> <p>Financial support can come in various forms including community-funded micro-financing/group lending, interest-free loans, loan guarantees and equity funding. Instead of direct financial aid, there are also programs that focus on building refugee and humanitarian entrants' credit history so that they can apply for loans from traditional banks.</p> <p>Developing essential business skills is a vital part of making this kind of support successful, particularly for refugees and humanitarian entrants who have little-to-no experience running their own business. Even for those who do have experience, mentoring often helps introduce business owners to the particulars of the Australian business landscape, including licencing and legal requirements, and build their networks.</p>	<p>Works best for those with entrepreneurial background or interest</p>
<p>Wraparound support</p> <p>The provision of wraparound support services to refugees and humanitarian entrants entering economic participation can be vital to ensuring that long-term employment outcomes are realised.</p> <p>Refugees and humanitarian entrants can face various structural barriers and life situations that can make traditional working hours and conditions hard to maintain. The provision of flexible opportunities and additional support to address barriers such as a lack of transport, can ensure job seekers build skills, experience and confidence that will support them with their economic participation goals in the long-term.</p>	<p>Works best for those that face multiple barriers to employment</p>

Fast Track

Pathways into vocations with identified labour shortages

Fast Track is a Swedish program that aims to make it easier for newly arrived immigrants with existing work experience to establish themselves in the labour market.

Fast Track creates pathways into vocations with identified labour shortages – including teaching, hospitality, allied health and medical roles.

The Chef Fast Track was the first stream that was created. It allows newly arrived immigrants who have relevant hospitality experience to validate their skills in their mother tongue. Validation occurs within the workplace and is assessed by bilingual trained professionals. Once validated, migrants are provided with work experience opportunities as well as vocational Swedish language training and workplace mentoring.

Fast Track aims to shorten the time between arrival and work, leveraging existing skills as a way that reduces employment timeframes.

“Fast Track creates pathways into vocations with identified labour shortages.”



“It allows newly arrived immigrants who have relevant hospitality experience to validate their skills in their mother tongue.”



Thrive

Self-employment support assists low and high skill refugees

Since 2017, Thrive has enabled over 300 refugee entrepreneurs to start and grow their small business.

This assistance is in the form of business ideas, planning, financing, start-up and ongoing training. Thrive also caters for refugees who do not have a specific passion or idea by providing business options in transport, parcel delivery, commercial cleaning, and health care through its network of industry and corporate partners. Business financing is up to \$50,000 and comes with ongoing support from a combination of Thrive team members and volunteers.

Thrive supports refugees between the age of 18 and 60 who have a functional level of English, and reside in any of the capital and key regional cities. Applicants do not need to have prior small business experience but they do need strong determination and resilience.

To date, Thrive has successfully provided over \$4.6 million in funds to refugee entrepreneurs, 95% of whom are located in NSW and VIC. This includes businesses in the transport and courier, commercial cleaning, building trades (painting, tiling, carpentry), food services and personal services sectors. Thrive's support network is also particularly strong, with over 50% of volunteers having directly assisted refugee entrepreneurs to create their own business plans.¹³

“Thrive helps refugees to start and grow their own small business.”

¹³ [thrive-progress-update-report-august-2020.pdf](#), <thrivereferenceenterprise.org.au>.

Initiatives to address barriers to economic participation

Effective programs are connected to well-defined opportunities

Successful programs lead to clear labour market opportunities. Conversely, providing support that is not connected to the opportunities available in the local labour market may fail to translate into outcomes.

Social entrepreneurs can think about where there might be areas of workforce shortage or market opportunity. There are many resources and sources of information available to help with this task, including:

- Local Jobs and Skills Taskforces and Employment Facilitators in relevant employment regions, which have been established by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) under the Local Jobs Program. The Local Jobs Program has been designed to support local communities to develop tailored solutions that focus on upskilling, reskilling and establishing employment pathways, with a key emphasis on collaboration and locally led approaches. The contact details for the Employment Facilitator of each region can be found on the DESE website here: <https://www.dese.gov.au/local-jobs-program/employment-facilitators>
- the Labour Market Information Portal, which includes employment projections, vacancy reports, and insights from research and surveys carried out by the National Skills Commission
- resources developed by governments and others on developing a business idea, for example the Department of Industry's [guide to starting a business](#).

Initiatives that address the multiple barriers refugees and humanitarian entrants face to economic participation are more effective

Refugees often face multiple challenges in accessing the labour market or becoming self-employed.

Initiatives that support refugees with more than one barrier are more likely to result in the achievement of effective outcomes. For example, effective interventions may combine treatments that assist refugees to simultaneously overcome the labour market challenges associated with low English language proficiency, a lack of Australian work experience, low skill levels, disability and caring responsibilities.

There are fewer social entrepreneurs that focus on helping less job-ready refugees such as those with limited skills, English and work experience.

While refugees who have lower English language and skill levels make up the majority of job seekers, more social entrepreneurs focus on refugees who have higher levels of skill and English ability.

Social entrepreneurs looking to work with refugees who have lower skill levels and/or limited English capabilities can partner with organisations that focus on skill building, including language learning. For example, working with an organisation that's able to deliver English language training (e.g. an Adult Migrant English Program [AMEP] provider) or higher educational institution (e.g. a Vocational Education and Training [VET] provider) can help social entrepreneurs efficiently maximise their impact.

Establishing referral pathways from an existing case-management service (e.g. a *jobactive*, Settlement Engagement and Transition Support [SETS] or Humanitarian Settlement Program [HSP] provider) can also help organisations link up with those refugees who will benefit most from their support.



Social enterprises identify opportunities

Part of social enterprise The Bread & Butter Project's success stems from the organisation's insight that there was a shortage of bakers in Australia – designing a program to address that workforce shortage helped ensure the program translated into outcomes. Social enterprise Community Corporate meanwhile takes an employer-led approach and partners with large employers in need of a large and regular supply of new employees; support is then designed around creating pathways for refugees into identified roles within those businesses.

A modular approach incorporating language training and job-specific training

Koto-SIB helps non-citizens in Finland find permanent employment in occupations experiencing labour shortages.

Their programs use a modular approach – participants are able to choose different length modules of learning depending on pre-existing skillsets. This modularisation maximises program flexibility to address the needs of a wider client base.

Under the program, participants can access career coaching, skill screening, vocational language training and on-the-job sector-specific training – all in addition to 3 years' worth of job-search support after the program's completion. Koto-SIB also caters for companies and employers who participate in the program by granting access to staff that will meet their business needs.

Occupation streams include logistics and warehousing, bus/taxi driving, restaurant and hospitality work, cleaning, property maintenance, customer service, personal care assistance, manufacturing and construction.

Mid-project reviews have shown that 80% of those who found work through the program continued working in the same place long-term.¹⁴

For more information and support, see the Alliance of Social Enterprise Networks Australia:

<https://www.asena.org.au/>.



“This modularisation maximises program flexibility to address the needs of a wider client base.”

¹⁴ Using social impact bonds to integrate refugees in Finland – will it work? <ox.ac.uk>.

Women's Employment into Action

Vocational training and mentoring helps women into work

Women's Employment into Action (WEIA) aims to increase the workforce participation of migrant and refugee women with family responsibilities and unable to access flexible working and training arrangements.

WEIA provides training, mentoring and support to help migrant and refugee women find employment in the aged and disability care sector.

An important part of WEIA's success is the way the program responds to the different needs of different cohorts. Participants are placed into four streams based on their previous qualifications and experience, as well as their English language, literacy and numeracy competency. WEIA provides a different mix of services to different streams based on the different barriers and opportunities the different cohorts face. Services include accessing prior learning, mentoring, pre-vocational training, onsite crèche services, vocational training (a Certificate III in Individual Support at TAFE), advice on recognising overseas qualifications, cultural awareness training for linked employment providers, work placements, and case management services using a holistic approach in addressing the individual barriers the women face. Of the 43 participants who completed the WEIA program between March 2019 and December 2020, 75% became employed.¹⁵

Working with the migrant and refugee women in a culturally safe environment, WEIA discovered a plethora of skills the women already had but did not acknowledge or present in a format accepted by the Australian employment processes. WEIA supported women to identify and improve their skills and utilise them as per Australian job requirements.

“An important part of WEIA's success is the way the program responds to the different needs of different cohorts.”

15. D21 2934 Summary – Try Test and Learn Fund projects targeting migrants and refugees.



Support for social enterprises

There are a range of support services available for social entrepreneurs looking to start and grow a social enterprise.

Catalysr

Catalysr is a start-up incubator for early stage tech start-ups and social enterprises. It runs intensive pre-accelerator and accelerate programs for high-performing migrant and refugee entrepreneurs trying to build and grow their start-ups in Australia. Since 2016, Catalysr has supported over 520 migrant and refugee entrepreneurs to create more than 175 businesses. The Catalysr community includes over 1,200 professionals, advisors, mentors and investors.

Catalysr offers its services to start-ups with at least one first-generation migrant or refugee co-founder. The business needs to be based in Australia and the founder(s) must be able to work in Australia. Catalysr's programs are completely free and include masterclasses covering start-up essentials, one-on-one coaching and community sessions. From 2021, Catalysr has also started disbursing small grants to the top performing entrepreneurs from each cohort of Accelerate programs to support their growth.

Social Startup Studio

The Social Startup Studio helps build impactful and sustainable social enterprises. It works with early stage social enterprises as well as more established organisations and provides both free online information and one-on-one support.

Its [Social Enterprise Fundamentals](#) are an accessible set of online resources – webinars covering key social enterprise topics and a downloadable workbook – for anyone who's keen to learn more about social enterprise. The Studio's [Aviate Program](#) focuses on emerging social enterprises and is designed to support the social entrepreneur at every stage of their social enterprise journey.

Social Impact Hub

Social Impact Hub (SIH) collaborates with purpose-driven organisations to accelerate change. Through advisory services, thought leadership, education, and capital mobilisation, they help create a world where people and the planet thrive. SIH specialises in supporting social enterprises, not-for-profits, and purpose-driven organisations to design, demonstrate and scale their impact through:

- [diagnostic and tailored advisory services](#) that are practical, responsive to client needs, high quality and rooted in a capacity building approach
- [impact education and capacity building programs](#) that combine academic theory with experiential learning to educate and empower changemakers and social entrepreneurs
- building the capability of social enterprises to scale and prepare for impact investment through [enterprise development support](#) and rigorous [accelerator programs](#)
- connecting funders with opportunities for impact in the social enterprise, impact investing and not-for-profit sectors
- ecosystem building initiatives and events, including the [Australian Impact Investing Awards](#) and [Impact Investing Hub](#).

“The Studio’s Aviate Program focuses on emerging social enterprises and is designed to support the social entrepreneur at every stage of their social enterprise journey.”

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