

Institute for Social Science Research

Community Support Program (CSP) Evaluation Program Outcomes report

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1. Introduction

The Community Support Program (CSP) Evaluation Program Outcomes report, prepared for the Department of Home Affairs (the Department), presents a comprehensive overview of the collective results of the settlement and integration outcomes from the CSP Evaluation.

The report includes the findings of all the cumulative data collected from participating CSP entrants, who arrived in Australia between 24 August 2022 and 14 October 2023, and the matched Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) entrants. In addition, the report includes findings from data collected from a select number of Australian Supporters, and staff from the Approved Proposing Organisations (APOs).

The report serves as a complementary document to the 'CRISP and CSP evaluations: Integrated findings of Australian Community Settlement Programs' report, which synthesises findings from both the CSP and the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) evaluations.

2. Background

2.1 Community Support Program

The CSP, that commenced on 1 July 2017, was developed to provide a sustainable model for private sponsorship of refugees that complements the existing Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) categories. It was designed to harness community support for humanitarian entrants and increase the chances of strong integration and settlement outcomes. It enables families, individuals, communities, or businesses to be an **'Australian Supporter'** who help humanitarian visa applicants with employment prospects and support new arrivals in their journey towards successful settlement in Australia.

The CSP promotes the resettlement of **people who are capable of supporting themselves** by the end of their first year in Australia. Prospective CSP applicants (the primary applicant) must be aged between 18 and 50, have adequate English, and have a job offer, employment pathway, or personal attributes that would enable them to become financially self-sufficient within 12 months of arrival, and meet the criteria for a Global Special Humanitarian (subclass 202) visa.

Potential CSP Australian Supporters and applicants who wish to apply for the CSP must work with one of the 11 **Approved Proposing Organisations (APOs)** appointed by the Department to implement the CSP program. APOs are responsible for: screening the proposed case against the eligibility requirements; linking the proposed applicant with secure employment; assisting with lodging the visa application; supporting the client throughout the application process; and ensuring the client receives settlement services once in Australia. APOs charge fees to cover the costs of their services. These costs vary between APOs depending on their business model and the level of services they offer.

Australian Supporters are required to fund the CSP applicant's visa process, including the APO fees, travel, medical screening, and settlement in Australia, either entirely or together with others. Australian Supporters must be prepared to support the CSP entrant in the first 12 months of settlement and provide an Assurance of Support (AoS). Under an AoS, an assurer agrees to repay the Australian Government for any working age social security payments that the Government makes to the CSP entrant during their first year in Australia.

In 2022–23, the Australian Government implemented changes to improve the accessibility of the CSP following a review of the CSP. **The reformed CSP** included reducing the Visa Application Charge (VAC) for primary applicants and removing the VAC for secondary applicants. In addition, changes were made to the AoS—from 1 July 2022, the number of CSP entrants an individual or body can sponsor under an AoS increased: from 2 to 4 adults (no limit on children) for individuals; and from 2 to 15 adults for bodies (no limit on children).

2.2 CSP Evaluation

In 2022, the Department of Home Affairs commissioned researchers from the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) at The University of Queensland (UQ), in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), to evaluate the effectiveness of the CSP as a successful community-led settlement program that delivers optimal settlement outcomes for entrants.

The CSP Evaluation Program Outcomes report presents the detailed findings of outcomes measured in the CSP evaluation.

3. CSP Evaluation design

3.1 Methodology

The CSP Evaluation aimed to test the effectiveness of the CSP in achieving strong settlement and integration outcomes for entrants by comparing these to other humanitarian entrants receiving services through the existing HSP pathway.

The CSP Evaluation was guided by the **Key Evaluation Questions** (KEQs) and the intermediate **Program Outcomes** (e.g., social connections, language acquisition, social and economic participation) identified in consultation with the Department and other relevant stakeholders (see Table A-1 in Appendix A).

The Evaluation followed a **developmental approach**—a flexible approach that enables adaptations based on the needs of the program and early evaluation findings. It employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating a **quasi-experimental (matched control) and pre-post design, with qualitative methods**. Broadly, the outcomes for CSP entrants were compared to the outcomes of comparable or 'matched' HSP entrants at 2 timepoints. The CSP and HSP entrant data was collected via surveys and in-depth interviews. These data were complemented by qualitative data collected from Australian Supporters and staff from the APOs, the administering organisations for CSP.



Matched control

To examine whether the outcomes and/or experiences of the CSP entrants were due to the program, rather than external factors or individual characteristics, a matched control group was used to compare outcomes for CSP entrants to outcomes for HSP entrants. **Broad characteristics of CSP primary applicants** were used to identify (match) HSP entrants, which included: linked (know someone in Australia); aged 18–50 years; family type; and country of origin.



Pre-post

To explore changes over time, survey and in-depth interview data were collected from CSP and HSP entrants at 2 timepoints (i.e., **T1 and T2**). T1 data were collected approximately 1–3 months after entrants arrived in Australia and T2 data were collected 10+ months after arrival. (See Figure B-1).

3.2 Methods

Data were collected using **mixed-methods** and incorporated data from CSP entrants and the matched HSP entrants, Australian Supporters, and APOs.



CSP and HSP entrants survey

A **multi-mode survey** method was used to collect self-reported data from CSP entrants and the matched HSP entrants at T1 and T2. These data were collected in 2 phases each employing a different survey mode.¹ The data source for CSP and HSP entrants' demographic information was also adapted, as outlined below. (See Appendix B-2 for details)..

COHORT 1

All adult CSP entrants who arrived between 24 Aug 2022 and 17 Aug 2023² (n=733) and the matched HSP entrants were eligible to self-complete an **online survey at T1**. The survey included **demographic questions** (e.g., age, gender, arrival date, role in the household).

COHORT 2

One adult³ (n=41 of 102) from CSP households who arrived between 2 Sept and 14 Oct 2023, and the matched HSP entrants, were purposively selected and invited to complete the survey over the telephone via **Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI)**. Entrants' **demographic information** (e.g., age, visa applicant status, arrival date) were supplied by the Department of those entrants who consented and completed the survey.

Only CSP and HSP entrants who completed the T1 survey, were invited to complete the T2 survey. Almost all⁴ CSP and HSP entrants from **Cohort 1 and 2** completed a **CATI survey at T2**.



CSP and HSP entrants in-depth interviews

A select number of CSP and HSP entrants, who expressed their interest via a question in the survey, were invited to participate in a **semi-structured in-depth interview** at T1 and T2. The in-depth interviews were conducted over the telephone by ISSR researchers, along with interpreters where necessary, and were approximately 60 minutes in duration.



Australian Supporter in-depth interviews and APO focus group

A select number of Australian Supporters were invited via the APOs to participate in a **semi-structured in-depth interview** approximately 9–11 months after the CSP entrant(s) they were supporting arrived in Australia. Interviews were conducted over Zoom/Teams or telephone by ISSR researchers, and were approximately 60 minutes in duration.

A **focus group** was conducted with staff from the APOs in July 2023.

¹ Changes to the mode of data collection, including sampling and recruitment strategy were made as a result of the low response rate to the online survey. See Appendix B for further details on sampling and recruitment for each cohort.

² The original online survey method which relied on APOs distributing the survey link to CSP entrants, meant researchers had less control over when and to whom the survey was sent. As a result, it is possible CSP entrants who arrived after 17 Aug 2023 were sent the survey, but did not respond.

³ Household members were sampled to ensure similar representation of main applicants versus dependants, and gender.

⁴ A few CSP and HSP entrants completed the T2 survey online prior to changes being made to the survey mode. See section 3.1 Sample.

3.3 Sample

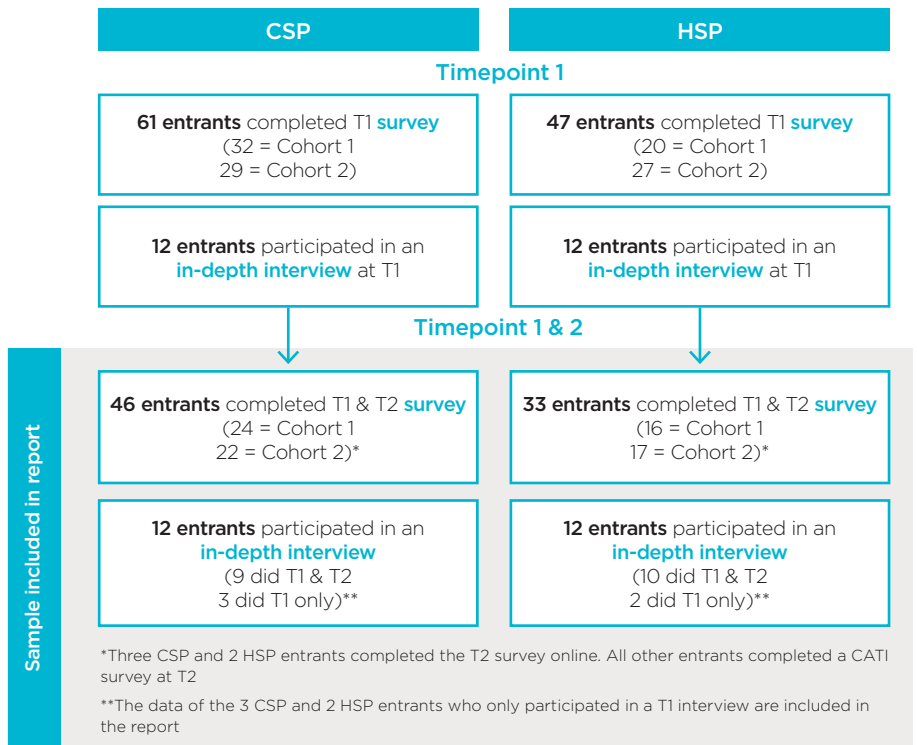
Approximately 922 adult CSP entrants arrived in Australia between 24 August 2022 and 14 October 2023.

Figure 1 outlines the number of CSP and HSP entrants who completed the T1 survey (including by cohort), and the number who completed an in-depth interview. It then presents the number who completed the T1 and T2 survey, and the number who participated in an in-depth interview at T1 and/or T2, which are the data included in the Program Outcomes report, indicated by the grey box.

Only CSP and HSP entrants who completed the T1 survey were invited to complete the T2 survey. The Program Outcomes report only includes the responses of those CSP and HSP entrants who completed both the T1 and T2 surveys. All data from the in-depth interviews are included, regardless of whether an entrant took part at both timepoints or not.

In addition, data from in-depth interviews conducted with 13 Australian Supporters, and a focus group conducted with 19 staff from 10 APOs are included.

Figure 1. CSP and HSP entrants' participation in evaluation and sample included in analyses



3.4 Reporting and limitations

The Program Outcomes report is structured according to the KEQ and the associated intermediate Program Outcomes (POs) that were measured. Each PO was assigned a number in Table A-1, and is referenced in the report (e.g., PO 1). Headline findings synthesise both the quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview) data to present triangulated results.

Where data are from in-depth interviews with CSP or HSP entrants, results refer to 'interviewees'. For survey results, significant differences are indicated with an asterisk (*). The results were considered significant if the probability of them occurring by chance was less than 5% ($p < 0.05$).¹

A strength of the CSP evaluation was the ability to measure the intermediate outcomes for CSP entrants over time (i.e., at 2 timepoints) and to compare CSP outcomes to the outcomes of comparable or 'matched' HSP entrants. In addition, the qualitative data provide rich insights into the experiences and perceptions of participants.

However, some key limitations need to be taken into consideration when reviewing the results.

Sample size: The number of entrants who participated in the evaluation was relatively small, thus lacks the statistical power¹ to reliably represent the population and outliers may disproportionately influence the results. While analyses indicate that the CSP entrants in the evaluation sample are broadly comparable to the CSP population, results should be interpreted with caution (see Appendix—C).

Survey adaptations: The developmental approach enabled necessary adaptations to the methods, including to the survey. However, as new questions were introduced partway through the data collection, not all entrants were asked these questions. Thus, the number of responses for these questions are lower and need to be interpreted with caution. Throughout the report, footnotes indicate where results are derived from these new questions, as well as the corresponding number of CSP and HSP responses included in the analyses.

Level of support: CSP entrants receive support from both their Australian Supporter(s) and APO caseworker(s), whereas HSP entrants predominantly receive support from HSP caseworker(s). However, throughout the report, support provided by Australian Supporters to CSP entrants is compared to support provided by HSP caseworkers to HSP entrants, to correspond to the way survey questions were designed and asked of the respective groups. Questions pertaining to the support CSP entrants may have received from the APO caseworker were introduced partway through T2 data collection, thus results are not of all CSP entrants who participated in the evaluation. As a result, the level of overall support CSP entrants received (i.e., from their Australian Supporter and/or APO caseworker) may be underestimated.

¹ Significance testing was conducted (where possible) to determine if any differences observed in the survey results were likely to occur again in similar situations, rather than due to chance. Small sample sizes have a reduced ability to detect statistically significant differences between groups though, thus significance testing was not conducted for all analyses. See Appendix B-2.

4. Sample demographics



4.1 CSP and HSP entrants demographics

The demographic characteristics of the CSP entrants (n=46) who completed surveys at both timepoints were compared to HSP entrants (n=33) who completed surveys at both timepoints.

Broadly, CSP and HSP entrants' demographics were similar, however, more CSP entrants were aged 18–29 years, compared to HSP. The proportion of entrants with **tertiary education** was similar between CSP (33%) and HSP (27%).¹

CSP entrants were predominately supported by Australian Supporters who were family members (70%), followed by other individuals (not family) (15%), or an employer (9%).

Forty four percent of CSP entrants and 33% of HSPs were supported by 2 or more Australian Supporters/HSP caseworkers respectively.

In addition, the demographic characteristics of the CSP sample were compared to the CSP population (see Appendix-C) and results indicated that the sample were broadly representative of the population.

Children—have children under 18



Young Children—have children under 6



English proficiency—speak, read, write, understand 'well' or 'very well' at T1



Age—18–29



Education level—more than 7 years of school



Gender—Female



Current citizenship—Afghanistan



Applicant type—primary visa applicant/main income earner²



Marital status—Married



4.2 Australian Supporter sample demographics

Thirteen (13) Australian Supporters participated in the in-depth interviews.

- 6 supported a family member, and 7 supported a friend (or friend of a friend)
- 10 male and 3 female
- Age ranged from 23 to 78 years (mean of 45 years)
- 12 were of the same ethnic background as the CSP entrant(s) (1 was an Australian retiree supporting a young person they knew through volunteer work)
- 10 lodged the CSP application prior to the reforms to CSP, 3 were post-reform³
- 10 were supporting a CSP entrant who also participated in the CSP evaluation
- 9 were a humanitarian entrant/refugee themselves
- 8 out of the 11 APOs who support Australian Supporters were represented.

¹ The 15 CSP entrants who only completed the T1 survey and are not included in the report, were on average more proficient in English and were more likely to have worked at T1 compared to those who completed both surveys. The observed difference could be because those who were working may have had less availability to complete the survey at T2.

² Data on **applicant type** i.e., primary or dependent applicant were only available for CSP entrants from Cohort 2 (n=22). CSP and HSP entrants from Cohort 1 self-reported their role in the household (e.g., main income earner). Thus 'Applicant type' includes primary applicants from Cohort 2 and main income earners from Cohort 1.

³ See Section 2.1 for details about the CSP reforms.

5. Key settlement outcomes 10-12 months after arrival



Stable housing

Of CSP entrants:

87% were in **long-term housing** (94% HSP entrants).



Study participation

Of CSP entrants:

24% had studied something other than **English** since arriving in Australia (39% HSP entrants).



Healthcare

Of CSP entrants:

93% accessed **healthcare services** (100% HSP entrants).



Social integration

Of CSP entrants:

93% felt **welcome** in their local community (86% HSP entrants).

91% felt **part** of their local community (86% HSP entrants).

91% found it **easy to settle** in Australia (66% HSP entrants).

84% found it **easy to make friends** with people in their local community who had a **different cultural background** to themselves (62% HSP entrants).

30% attended a **sporting or leisure activity** at least once in the previous 4 weeks with other people (27% HSP entrants).



English language proficiency

Of CSP entrants:

42% spoke **English** 'well' or 'very well' (45% HSP entrants).

41% studied **English** since arriving in Australia (88% HSP entrants).

24% were **still studying English** (76% HSP entrants).



Labour force participation

Of CSP entrants:

67% had **worked** for pay in the previous 4 weeks (15% HSP entrants).

27% had actively **looked for work** in the previous 4 weeks (36% HSP entrants).

76% participated in the **labour force** (worked or looked for work) (46% HSP entrants).

53% of those who were not working, **planned to work** in the next 12 months (75% HSP entrants).



Self-sufficiency

Of CSP entrants:

96% had a **driver licence (O, P or L)** (94% HSP entrants).

93% had a lot of¹ **confidence to use public transport** (97% HSP entrants).

80% had some² **confidence to get help in an emergency** (79% HSP entrants).

76% had some² **confidence to apply for a job** (42% HSP entrants).

91% had some² **confidence to access healthcare** (91% HSP entrants).

¹ No CSP entrants indicated that they had 'a little' confidence to use public transport.

² Includes 'a little' or 'a lot' of confidence.

6. How appropriate was the support provided by the Australian Supporters to meet the needs of the entrants? (KEQ 6)

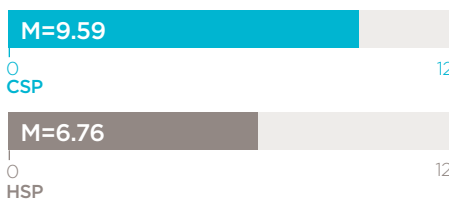


Overall, CSP entrants received support for more settlement activities

and were more likely to be **satisfied with the support they received**, compared to HSP

CSP entrants receive support from both their Australian Supporters and the APO caseworkers, whereas HSP entrants receive support from their HSP caseworkers.¹

Since arriving in Australia, the **average² number of settlement activities³** that CSP entrants received support for from the Australian Supporter was greater* compared to HSP (who received support from their HSP caseworker).



Overall, more* CSP entrants were **satisfied** with the **help they received from their Australian Supporter** compared to HSP entrants receiving support from their HSP caseworker.



71% of CSP entrants were **satisfied** with the help they received from their **APO caseworker⁵**.



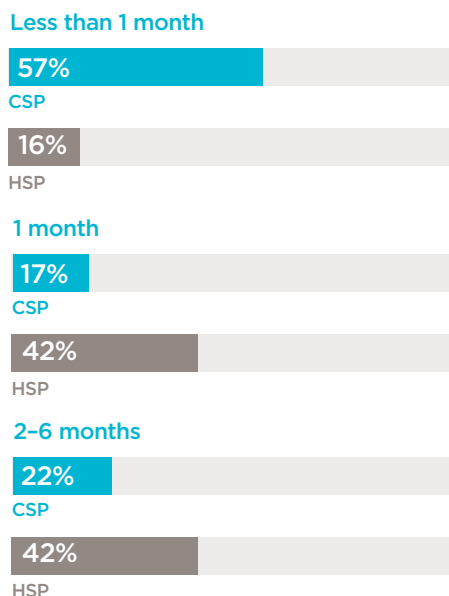
Most CSP and HSP entrants were in **long-term housing** at T2

(PO⁴ 28). However, CSP entrants secured this accommodation more quickly than HSP, and **felt more settled** and **more confident to apply for accommodation** in the future if they needed to

Most CSP and HSP entrants were in **long-term accommodation** at T2.

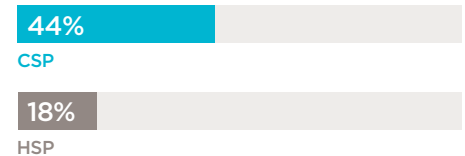


Of those in long-term accommodation at T2, CSP entrants were able to **secure long-term housing more* quickly** than HSP, with more than half securing it in less than one month.



(Forty percent of CSP entrants secured accommodation in less than one week.)

CSP entrants were more likely* than HSP entrants to report that they **had not moved to different accommodation** since arriving in Australia.



Of the 6 CSP entrants in short-term accommodation at T2, 5 reported that the available long-term **accommodation was too expensive**.

¹ Throughout the report, support received by Australian Supporters for CSP entrants is compared to support received from HSP caseworkers for HSP entrants. This does not include the support CSP entrants received from APO caseworkers which is reported separately, as these questions were included partway through fieldwork (see Appendix B-2).

² 'M' refers to the Mean or average.

³ Index of 12 survey items that incorporates a range of settlement activities that are relevant to all humanitarian entrants, i.e., excludes questions related to getting support to enrol children in school and getting qualifications recognised in Australia.

⁴ PO = Program Outcome. Refers to the outcome (and its associated number) identified for the CSP evaluation. See Appendix A.

⁵ Throughout the report, questions related to support received from APO caseworkers are of the n=26 CSP entrants who responded. See Section 3.4.

* Throughout the report, significant differences are indicated with an asterisk (*).

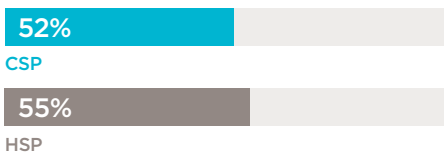
All CSP entrants received **support to secure their current accommodation**.

This support came from their Australian Supporter and/or from family or friends, as opposed to other people in the community (who are not family/friends).¹

Australian Supporter/HSP caseworker helped to secure accommodation



Family or friends helped to secure accommodation.



Further, 31% of CSP entrants also received help from **their APO caseworker to find long term accommodation**.

Many CSP and HSP entrants received support from their Australian Supporter/HSP caseworker to obtain **furniture or appliances** since arriving in Australia.



More* CSP entrants were **satisfied** with their accommodation, compared to HSP, in relation to the **suitability for their family**.



Both CSP and HSP entrants were **satisfied** with the:

safety of the home



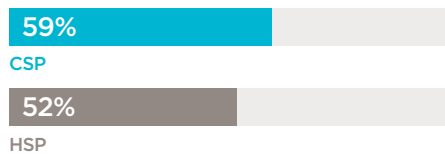
safety of the neighbourhood



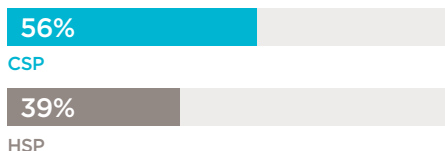
closeness to public transport.



However, in both groups, only just over half were **satisfied** with the **price they pay for rent**.



A greater percentage of CSP entrants had **'a lot' of confidence** to **apply for long-term accommodation** without the help from others, compared to HSP.



Both CSP interviewees and Australian Supporters noted in the respective **in-depth interviews** how crucial the Australian Supporters and/or family were in helping CSP entrants to secure accommodation when CSP entrants first arrived in Australia. Many CSP entrants were reportedly initially able to stay with family² (including Australian Supporters where they were family), after which the Australian Supporter and/or other family helped them secure their own accommodation. This included the Australian Supporters acting as guarantors on leases, or housing CSP interviewees in other properties they owned. This seemed to serve as an important buffer, as, by contrast, housing was a particular concern for many HSP interviewees at timepoint 1, who struggled to access support to find suitable housing.

Most CSP and HSP interviewees were in longer-term accommodation 10-12 months after arriving in Australia. While housing was often expensive for CSP interviewees, they were mostly settled and reported fewer issues with obtaining rental accommodation than HSP interviewees. As previously noted, this could be due to the support CSP interviewees received from their Australian Supporter to secure accommodation, as well as the fact CSP interviewees had higher employment rates compared to HSP, meaning they were able to apply for suitable accommodation.

By contrast, housing remained a prevalent issue for HSP interviewees at timepoint 2. Many described the challenges and delays they faced finding a longer-term lease, often having to leverage whatever community or family connections they could, in addition to any support they received from HSP caseworkers. Some were nervous about facing the same issue independently in the future, and many were struggling to afford the rent, especially with rent increases after the first lease period.

¹ The survey question was multiple choice, so entrants could select for e.g., 'Australian Supporter' and 'Family/friends' and 'People in my ethnic community'. This did not include APO caseworkers as a response option. Support from APO caseworkers was asked separately of a subset of the sample. Note, many Australian Supporters were family.

² Of the 15 CSP entrants who were not in long-term accommodation at T1, 80% (n=12) had stayed with family in their home (which could include Australian Supporters where they were family).



Similar proportions of CSP and HSP entrants received support to access **essential services** (PO 18) (e.g., Medicare, banks, doctors). However, CSP entrants were more likely to receive support to get **everyday essentials** (e.g., groceries, smart phones) (PO 33) from their Australian Supporter, compared to HSP

Since arriving in Australia, CSP entrants who needed it, were more likely* to have **received support** from their Australian Supporter to access **everyday essentials** (e.g., groceries, clothing, smart phones) compared to HSP.



Similar percentages of CSP and HSP entrants **received** support from their Australian Supporter/HSP caseworker to access **essential services** (e.g., bank, Medicare).



65% of CSP entrants also **received support** from their **APO caseworker** to access **essential services**.

Similar percentages of CSP and HSP entrants had **'a lot' of confidence** to **access essential services** without the help of others.



The percentage of CSP entrants who **received** support from their Australian Supporter to **book and/or attend a doctor or medical appointment** if they needed it, was similar to HSP.



Almost half (48%) of CSP entrants also **received support** from their **APO caseworker** to book and/or attend a **doctor or medical appointment**.



All CSP and HSP entrants with school-aged children had **enrolled their children in school**. However, a greater percentage of CSP entrants received help from their Australian Supporters, and to be confident to find a school without the help of others, compared to HSP

Over half of CSP and HSP entrants **had children under 18 years** of age.



All CSP and HSP entrants¹ had **enrolled their child/children** in school since arriving in Australia.



Of those who needed support, a greater percentage of CSP entrants **received help** from their Australian Supporter to **enrol their child/children in school**, compared to HSP.



A greater percentage of CSP entrants were confident ('a lot') to **find a school** for their children without the help of others, compared to HSP.



Eleven CSP and 7 HSP entrants had at least one child aged under 6 years of age. Only 2 CSP and 3 HSP entrants had **used formal childcare** in the previous 4 weeks. One HSP entrant said they could not access childcare, the remainder said it was not needed.

Of the entrants with children, 75% of CSP and 56% of HSP were **confident 'a lot'** to **find formal childcare**.

¹ Of those who answered the question.



Overall, CSP entrants received support for **formal and informal**

settlement activities from their Australian Supporters and/or their APO caseworker. Both CSP and HSP entrants initially relied on family for support (which could include Australian Supporters), but required less support 10–12 months after arriving in Australia

Over 80% of CSP entrants reported receiving support from their Australian Supporter and/or APO caseworker for a range of settlement activities.¹

The activities that the largest percentage of CSP entrants **received support** from their **Australian Supporter and/or the APO caseworker** were to:

access essential services



book and/or attend a doctor or medical appointment



use public transport



practice their English



connect with others in their local community.



Initially, in the timepoint 1 **in-depth interviews**, both CSP and HSP interviewees described the early settlement period as a large adjustment requiring a lot of support to gain access to the essential services, familiarise themselves with the neighbourhood, make health appointments, and learn transport routes. Broadly, both CSP and HSP interviewees were satisfied with the support they received early on.

For CSP interviewees, support was predominantly provided by family already living in Australia (including Australian Supporters who were family). Where the Australian Supporter was a family member, they provided support for formal activities (such as accessing essential services and housing) and informal activities (such as using transport and making friends). Whereas those sponsored by community groups or other individuals, mostly received support for formal activities from their Australian Supporter and relied on family already in Australia for additional support. This was reiterated in the Australian Supporter **in-depth interviews**—those who were not family of the CSP entrants reflected that they provided a lot of support for formal activities. However, while they were happy to provide any and all support to the CSP entrants, they often had other family in Australia who they more readily relied on for day-to-day activities.

HSP interviewees similarly reported that they relied on Australian family or friends to provide day-to-day support early on, particularly where the support provided by HSP caseworkers was not timely or forthcoming. The support they did receive from HSP caseworkers was mostly for formal activities (e.g., accessing services).

While most CSP interviewees spoke of receiving some support from their APO caseworker at timepoint 1, particularly for formal activities, the frequency and quality varied. Some CSP interviewees reported positive interactions, describing their APO caseworkers as helpful and responsive early on. However, others were dissatisfied with the level of support, pointing to poor communication and a lack of follow-up. In some instances, CSP interviewees perceived that having their APO caseworkers act as an intermediary

with services complicated tasks, meaning interviewees preferred to handle responsibilities on their own.

Many Australian Supporters similarly recounted in the in-depth interviews, that they (and/or the CSP entrants' Australian family) provided the majority of support post arrival, rather than the APO caseworkers. This included, securing accommodation, finding employment, and accessing essential services. As discussed in Section 9, Australian Supporters reported that most of the support received from APO caseworkers was pre-arrival, such as helping with the preparation of the visa application, and that there was minimal support once the CSP entrants arrived in Australia. There also seemed to be some confusion or lack of understanding about what APO caseworkers could and/or should provide support for by both Australian Supporters and CSP interviewees.

After about a year, CSP and HSP interviewees were less reliant on support from their Australian Supporters, APO caseworkers, HSP caseworkers, or friends. Most CSP interviewees had less regular contact with their Australian Supporter by timepoint 2. For example, many lived with their Australian Supporters when they first arrived in Australia but had moved into their own homes by timepoint 2. The connection with Australian Supporters was less focused on settlement support at this stage, but CSP interviewees knew they could still ask for support when needed.

Support from APO caseworkers was minimal at timepoint 2. Where APO caseworkers did provide one-off support later in the settlement journey, it was for example, arranging specialist medical appointments, or facilitating discounted driving lessons.

HSP interviewees similarly relied more on HSP caseworkers in the early stages of their settlement, and most had little or no contact with their HSP caseworkers at timepoint 2. However, some still reached out sporadically for support for specific things like arranging specialist appointments or accessing driving lesson concessions. Some HSP caseworkers phoned to check in occasionally, while others had essentially ceased contact.

¹ CSP entrants were asked about support they received for 12 settlement activities including, for example: 'getting essential items (e.g., groceries, clothes, or smart phones)', 'learning to drive', 'getting furniture or appliances', 'registering for English classes', 'securing long-term accommodation', 'money'. Questions regarding the support CSP entrants received from the APO caseworker were introduced part way through fieldwork. Results combine responses to questions about support received from Australian Supporters and APO caseworkers for the 12 settlement activities for the n=26 entrants who answered questions about both Australian Supporters and APO caseworker.

Many HSP interviewees described that they had conversation with their HSP caseworker about the program coming to an end, in terms of support from their original settlement organisations, and had been referred to another service provider for less intensive support (but may not have had contact with them yet). Others had a natural fade out where they received and initiated less contact over time. HSP interviewees were likely to be receiving support from caseworkers from other organisations, such as JobSeeker organisations as they made the transition into paid employment. Most felt confident in their own ability to access services, often with the aid of interpreters or personal connections that could interpret for them when needed. Further, friends provided critical guidance on daily activities and decision-making, thereby reducing the need for formal HSP caseworker involvement. Many did not feel a need for ongoing formal support from their HSP caseworker, but some did express that they were independent out of necessity.

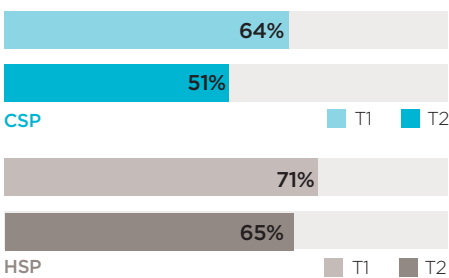
7. To what extent did CSP support the English language acquisition for entrants, compared to HSP? (KEQ 3)



Overall, some CSP and HSP entrants' perception of their **English language**

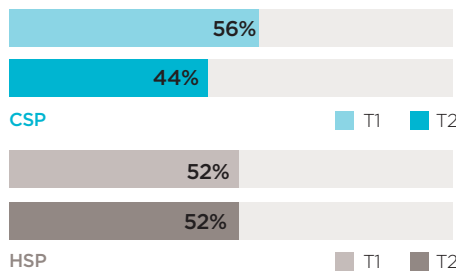
proficiency (PO 26) decreased over time. For CSP entrants, this change could be due to their efforts to enter the workforce and increased independence, resulting in them reassessing their proficiency

Overall, the percentage of CSP entrants who perceived their **English language proficiency** as good (i.e., ability to understand, speak, read, and write English 'well' or 'very well') decreased over time. The percentage of HSP entrants who perceived their English as good also decreased over time, but more HSP entrants perceived their English proficiency as good compared to CSP.

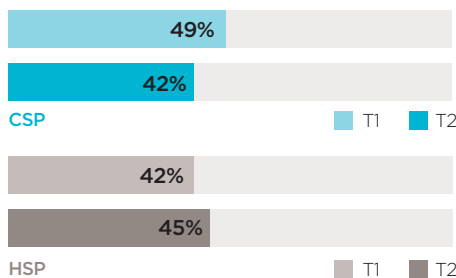


Compared to HSP, CSP entrants' perceived English proficiency was similar at T2, but this had decreased over time for CSP in terms of being able ('well'/'very well') to:

understand spoken English

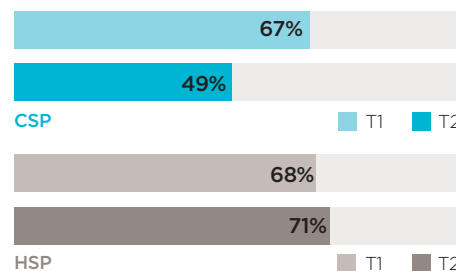


speak English.

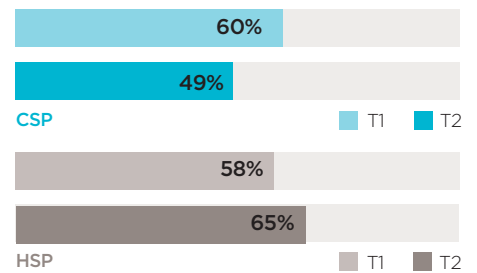


CSP entrants' perceived English proficiency was lower* than HSP at T2, and this decreased over time in terms of being able ('well'/'very well') to:

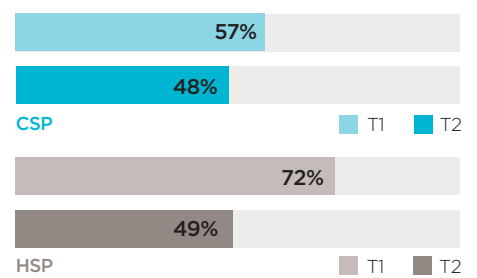
read English*



write English.



The percentage of CSP and HSP entrants who required **at least some¹ assistance from interpreters** (outside the home) decreased over time.



Of those who required assistance, a greater percentage of HSP entrants responded that they **'always' received interpreting assistance** when they needed it.



Apart from one CSP entrant who said they did not receive interpreting assistance when they needed it, the remaining CSP and HSP entrants received this support 'some of the time'.

¹Includes those who responded they require interpreting support 'some of the time,' 'most of the time,' and 'all the time'.

In the **in-depth interviews**, CSP interviewees' conversational English proficiency had improved considerably over time, and many noted how it had transformed their daily, informal interactions. Initially, interviewees reported feeling anxious when communicating with staff at grocery stores, doctors, or others in their community due to their limited English. With consistent practice, they gradually built their language skills and gained the confidence to interact more comfortably in English to complete day-to-day tasks, which also boosted their self-esteem. CSP interviewees mentioned that they consciously tried to speak English, even with those who share their native language, to enhance their abilities further.

Despite this progress though, a lack of advanced or technical English (and Australian work experience) remained a major obstacle in finding employment in their desired professions or commensurate with their skill level. This made achieving financial stability challenging, particularly since they cannot access working age income support payments during the first year in Australia. Here, language barriers were seen, not only as a personal struggle

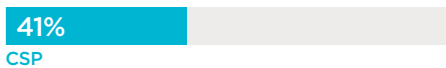
but also a structural constraint that delayed individuals' social integration and financial independence. Similarly, while most CSP interviewees had obtained a level of English which allowed them to make some appointments and access services independently, some still required support from interpreters in certain formal settings, such as specialist medical appointments or more complex formal processes. These more formal interactions, increased independence, and challenges with securing employment in their desired field because of their English language proficiency, may have resulted in CSP entrants reassessing their perceived English skills due to the higher standards and greater demands in these contexts. An example shared by an Australian Supporter in the **in-depth interviews**, exemplifies this. They described that the CSP entrants who were working in their business, were proficient enough in English to hold basic conversations and to do day-to-day tasks when they arrived. However, once they started working and needed to deal with store customers, they realised they were often not able to communicate as effectively as needed to answer questions or provide assistance to customers, and would need to call fellow staff members to assist.

Compared to CSP, HSP interviewees had lower levels of English proficiency at timepoint 1, and though all expressed a strong desire to improve their English, there were some who felt disheartened by the pace of their progression and still worried about their ability to integrate socially and economically at timepoint 2. In these cases, HSP interviewees often felt stuck as they were feeling significant financial pressures to work but felt that their English proficiency was still a barrier into even entry-level positions. Further, as HSP interviewees were still building up their basic conversational English, they expressed frustration in not being able to accurately express themselves to others. For example, interpreting services were reportedly variable with some noting that interpreters could often be disengaged or uncooperative. Similarly, some HSP interviewees found that when using Google translate and limited English to communicate with customer service staff, they might be dismissed. Overall, there was a sense that English language was improving over time, but for some the pace was slower than they had hoped.

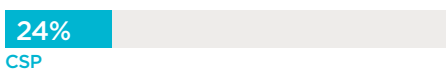


CSP entrants were less likely to have **studied English** since arriving in Australia (PO 26) compared to HSP entrants. For many CSP entrants, this was due to work commitments. However, CSP entrants were able to practice their English in informal settings (e.g., with friends), whereas HSP entrants relied on English classes

Compared to HSP, CSP entrants were less likely* to have **studied English** since arriving in Australia.



CSP entrants were less likely* to **still be studying English** 10–12 months after arriving in Australia compared to HSP.



CSP and HSP entrants who needed it, received **support to register** for English classes from their Australian Supporter or HSP caseworker, respectively.



CSP entrants predominantly **practiced their English** by:

watching video content (e.g., TV, movies, YouTube)



speaking with family and friends.



Whereas HSP entrants predominantly **practiced their English** by **attending English language classes.**



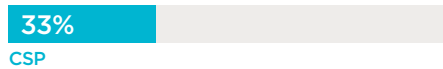
Some CSP and HSP entrants were asked questions about the English classes they attended.¹

Of those who had attended classes, compared to CSP entrants, a greater percentage of HSP entrants reported that they:

had attended classes for more than 6 months



spent 16 hours or more attending English classes per week.



CSP and HSP entrants were similarly likely to report that they had **not missed any classes.**



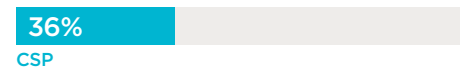
For the 4 HSP entrants who had not studied English since arriving in Australia, all had studied English prior to arriving and 2 already spoke English fluently.

Of those CSP entrants who had not studied English, the most common reasons were:

work hours made it hard



studied English before arriving in Australia



caring responsibilities made it hard.



CSP and HSP interviewees all expressed a strong interest and motivation to improve their English language skills as a means of better integrating into Australian society, in the **in-depth interviews**. The few CSP interviewees who had attended English classes, found them effective in helping improve their language skills. Though, as discussed further in Section 7, work commitments (and the need to prioritise work for financial stability) meant many CSP entrants were unable to take advantage of the free English classes available through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

Most HSP interviewees found that attending English classes was helpful for enhancing their language abilities, with many obtaining certificates II and III, or working towards these at TAFE. Many also wanted to get additional TAFE qualifications once they had their certificate III. However, as previously mentioned, some felt discouraged by their lack of progress and one HSP interviewee mentioned that they wanted to work more as a ride-share driver rather than continue studying at TAFE, as the interactions with customers were more helpful than classes.

¹ The new questions were included in the survey partway through fieldwork thus not asked of all entrants. CSP n=15 and HSP n=21.

² The AMEP is a free service to help eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants improve their English language skills and settle into Australia.

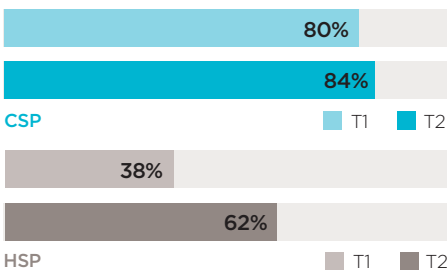
8. To what extent did CSP support the social integration of entrants compared to HSP? (KEQ 1)



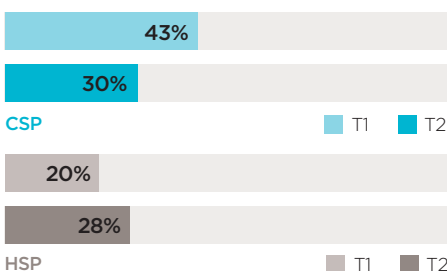
CSP entrants were more likely to have **social networks** (friendships) (PO17),

to be **building trust** with their local community (PO 11), and have a higher overall **sense of belonging** (PO 19) compared to HSP. Both groups **felt connected** to people in Australia and that **their culture is valued** (PO 14), however, some did recount experiences of racial discrimination

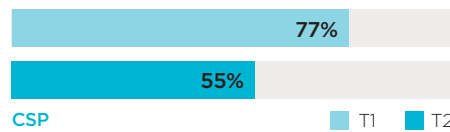
CSP entrants were more likely* to have found it **easy to make friends** with people in their local community **with different backgrounds** to them at T1, compared to HSP. However, this did increase for HSP over time.



At T1, CSP entrants were more likely* to have **attended sporting or leisure activities** with other people **at least once** in the previous 4 weeks, compared to HSP. However, this decreased over time and at T2, less than one-third of CSP and HSP entrants had attended these activities with other people.



More than half of CSP entrants continued to report that they had **spent time with their Australian Supporter socially 'at least once a week'** in the previous 4 weeks, such as sharing a meal or going to the park, indicating these relationships were informal and flexible (PO 16). Though this did decrease over time.



At T2, CSP entrants', whose Australian Supporter was a family member, were more likely to report that they had **spent time with their Australian Supporter socially 'at least once a week'** in the previous 4 weeks, compared to those whose Australian Supporter were an employer or another individual ('Other').

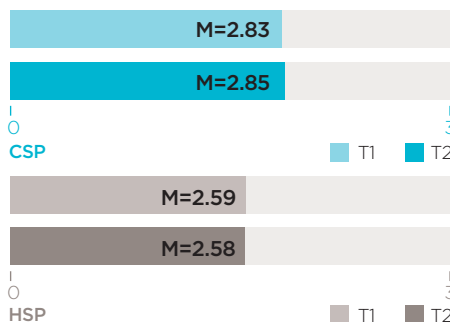
Family member



Other



On average, CSP entrants continued to report a higher* **sense of belonging**,¹ compared to HSP.



Compared to HSP, CSP entrants were more likely* to **'agree'** that **it has been easy to settle in Australia**.



A similar percentage of CSP and HSP entrants felt:

welcome in their local community



connected to people in Australia



that their children have found it easy to make friends at school



that their children have found it easy to settle into school



their culture is valued by others in the local community.



Compared to HSP, a greater percentage of CSP entrants **'agreed'** that **they could trust others in their local community**.



¹ Index of 8 survey items that measure sense of belonging, for example, 'feeling welcome in the local community' and 'feeling part of the local community'. Measured on a scale: 1='Disagree'; 2='Neither'; 3='Agree'.

Overall, CSP and HSP interviewees found the welcoming nature of Australians helpful in their adjustment, making them feel more at ease as they settled in. CSP interviewees described successful relationships with landlords, housemates, and colleagues, which provided valuable social support. Community groups played an important role in fostering a sense of belonging, offering practical help and cultural knowledge that eased the interviewees' integration into Australian society. These networks were essential in improving their experience and helping them feel more connected.

HSP interviewees similarly reflected on transitioning from feeling displaced to belonging, often contrasting it with past experiences of marginalisation. HSP interviewees also shared that they felt they were treated with respect by others, even when their English-speaking accents were different.

Strong family connections in Australia also facilitated both CSP and HSP interviewees' feeling welcome, and eased their settlement journey. Although not explicitly indicated by CSP and HSP interviewees, nor Australian Supporters, the findings suggest that having an existing familial relationship, in addition to sharing a similar ethnic background and speaking the same language, facilitated feeling comfortable. This shared background and language may provide entrants with respite from the constant navigation of language and cultural barriers.

However, while many CSP and HSP interviewees experienced friendliness in their communities, classrooms, and workplaces, forming deep connections remained difficult. CSP interviewees were especially stretched in their daily activities, with the amount they were working presenting a barrier to deepening connections in the community for some. Although the workplace environment was welcoming, the lack of time for meaningful social engagement made it hard to form stronger bonds. For some, the absence of strong social networks led to feelings of isolation, contributed to emotional strain, and hindered their integration into the community. Similarly, HSP interviewees spoke of friends that they visited outside of a shared context like English classes or a religious community, though the busyness of life was seen as a barrier to forming deeper relationships.

English language proficiency could facilitate opportunities to connect with the community as skills progress, but this remained a barrier for both CSP and HSP interviewees with lower proficiency. Even those with good conversational English acknowledged that they could not always express themselves as fully as they would like to, which impacted the depth of social connection possible. The opportunity to speak in their language also varied, as not all locations had a migrant community with a shared language, but for those

with the opportunity, it offered them an easier way to socialise and build cultural connections that bolstered their sense of belonging.

Lastly, compared to the timepoint 1 interviews, more CSP and HSP interviewees shared experiences of racism and discrimination during the timepoint 2 interview, which they believed was in response to their clothing, limited English skills, or physical appearance. For example, one CSP interviewee described being fined on the spot for not having their transport card with them, which may not have happened had they been able to better communicate their misunderstanding of the rules. Some reported uncomfortable experiences with customer service staff ignoring them when they were trying to speak, or uncomfortable Uber rides. In one extreme case, a driver reportedly talked about there being bombs at the destination, in response to their presentation as women wearing hijabs. For some, discrimination occurred when accessing services where cultural dynamics caused conflict with interpreters, HSP caseworkers, or Centrelink staff. These examples highlight how different types of discrimination could exclude people and create unequal treatment. Discrimination based on culture, ethnicity, appearance, or language skills could affect individuals' feeling safe or comfortable in their community.



Both CSP and HSP entrants' **support network** was still more likely to be

their Australian Supporters/HSP caseworker, than people in or outside their co-ethnic community (PO 15)

CSP entrants were more likely* to **agree** that it had been **easy to get help from others** in their local community, compared to HSP.



CSP and HSP entrants felt that, if they needed help with for example, looking after children or taking them to the doctor, they **could ask for help from their Australian Supporter/HSP caseworker.**¹

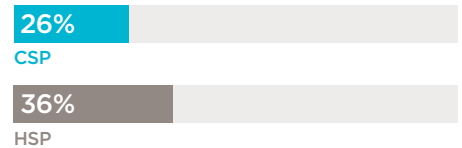


Fewer CSP and HSP entrants felt they **could ask for help** from:

friends or people they know **in their cultural community**²



family members not living with them²



friends or people they know **in their religious community**²



3%
HSP

friends or people they know **outside their cultural or religious community.**



¹ Entrants were asked who all they could ask for help from (multiple choice question). This did not include APO caseworker as a response option.

² This likely excludes Australian Supporters.

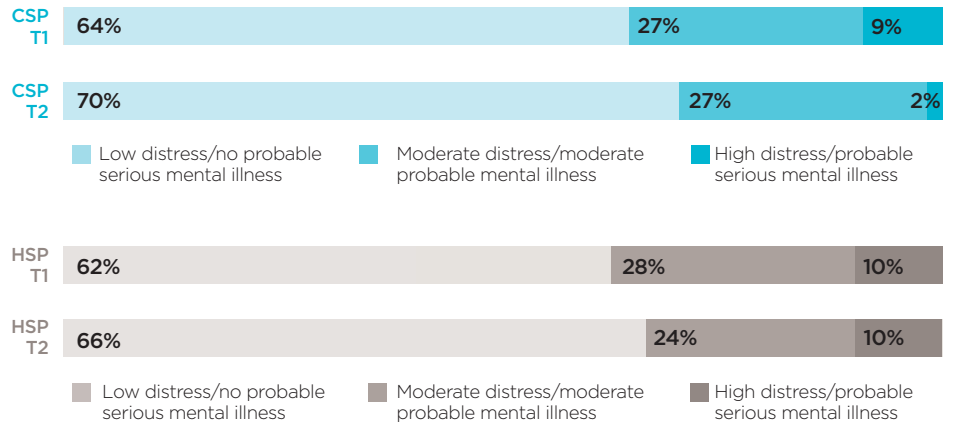


The majority of CSP and HSP entrants had **low levels of self-reported distress** or mental ill health, and few felt this impacted their day-to-day lives (PO 12). However, for some CSP and HSP entrants, financial concerns and social isolation due to poorer English were still a concern 10-12 months after arrival

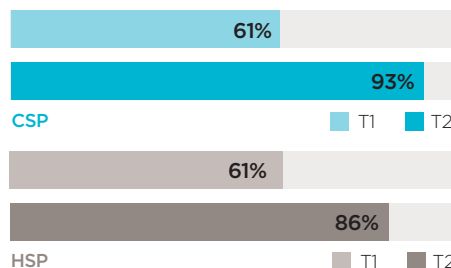
On average, levels of **psychological distress**¹ among CSP and HSP entrants were similar at T2.



However, approximately one-third of HSP and CSP entrants were considered as having **moderate or high mental distress**,² signalling the need for mental health support. This was similar at both timepoints.



At T2, a similar percentage of CSP and HSP entrants reported that their physical or emotional health **had not impacted their work** (including e.g., housework) in the previous 4 weeks. This increased over time for both groups.



Both the CSP and HSP interviewees reported challenges related to social and emotional wellbeing initially (in the timepoint 1 **in-depth interviews**). For HSP interviewees, feelings of isolation, loneliness, and anxiety were particularly acute, which were exacerbated by a lack of familiarity with their surroundings and the absence of a support network. Though CSP interviewees also reported feelings of loneliness and worry, this was somewhat buffered by their Australian Supporter(s) when they had close or familial bonds. A timepoint 2, most CSP and HSP interviewees reported feeling more settled, however, financial insecurity and the pressure to work were still a source of anxiety for both CSP and HSP entrants. Furthermore, HSP entrants in particular, who had lower levels of English or who had not improved as much as they had hoped, still felt socially isolated.

¹ Used K6 scale (see Kessler, R.C., Andrews, G., Colpe, L.J., Hiripi, E., Mroczek, D.K., Normand, S.L., Walters, E.E., & Zaslavsky, A.M. (2002). Short screening scales to monitor population prevalences and trends in non-specific psychological distress. *Psychol Medicine*, 32(6), 959-76. doi: 10.1017/S0033291702006074. PMID: 12214795)

Used AU Trinary cut-off scores (see Biddle, N., Gray, M., & Rehill, P. (2022). *Mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 period in Australia*. ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods. <https://csmr.cass.anu.edu.au/research/publications/mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-covid-19-period-australia>)

² Entrants with a sum score of 11-18 out of 30 are categorised as experiencing moderate psychological distress. These entrants are likely to be struggling with mental distress and in need of mental health support, but are not at risk of clinical levels of mental health problems like those in the more serious category (scores of 19 or more). See Prochaska, J., Sung, H-Y., Max, W., Shi, Y., & Ong, M. (2012). Validity study of the K6 scales as a measure of moderate mental distress based on mental health treatment need and utilization." *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 21(2): 88-97



Almost all CSP and all HSP entrants had **accessed healthcare services**, and most had a positive experience of using these services

Almost all CSP and all HSP entrants had **accessed healthcare** since arriving in Australia, having attended a medical appointment or presented at a hospital.



Of the 3 CSP entrants who had not accessed healthcare, 2 reported that they had not needed to access healthcare. One CSP entrant reported at T1 that they needed to but didn't as they had not received their Medicare card yet, but at T2 reported they had not needed to access healthcare since arriving in Australia.

At T2, CSP and HSP entrants similarly found it **easy to access:**

a general practitioner (GP)



hospitals



other health professionals (e.g., specialists, dentists, psychologists).



Overall, CSP and HSP entrants had a positive **experience of accessing and using healthcare services.**¹



CSP entrants were more likely* to **agree** that it was easy to **book an appointment or go to the hospital.**



Both CSP and HSP entrants felt **confident to attend** their appointment or the hospital.



Initially, at timepoint 1, CSP interviewees reported widespread delays in receiving Medicare in the **in-depth interviews**, which hindered their ability to access subsidised healthcare. APO staff members had raised similar concerns in the **focus group**, perceiving that many CSP entrants were avoiding necessary medical care because they were waiting for Medicare. APO staff felt that CSP entrants were treated differently to HSP entrants by Services Australia, as they were not prioritised in the same way.² In contrast, almost all HSP interviewees shared that they received adequate support from their HSP caseworkers to gain access to Medicare, and did not report any delays with accessing these services.

As reported in the **survey** results at timepoint 2, almost all CSP and all HSP entrants indicated that they had accessed healthcare. A few CSP and HSP interviewees, noted in the **in-depth interviews** that they had accessed specialist medical appointments, which were facilitated through their APO and HSP caseworker respectively.

A few HSP interviewees also noted that they had accessed psychological support soon after arriving in Australia, such as a psychologist or counsellor, and most no longer needed this support. One CSP interviewee intended to seek psychological support due to ongoing financial and health stressors but had not spoken to their GP about a referral yet, as they were receiving care for another medical concern.

¹ Experience of healthcare services used an Index of 5 survey items including how easy it is to book appointments, feeling confident to attend the appointments, having access to an interpreter, understanding everything the health professional said, and having received the help they needed. On a scale from 1-'Disagree' to 3 'Agree'.

² CSP entrants are not eligible for the Refugee Service Offer which provides priority processing for HSP entrants.



Both CSP and HSP entrants felt **optimistic about their future** (PO 13)

On average, CSP and HSP entrants continued to **feel optimistic**¹ about their and their family's future. This was similar over time.



At T2, most CSP and HSP entrants were **hopeful** about their and their family's future in terms of their:

life in Australia



employment and job stability



housing.



Of those CSP and HSP entrants with children, all (100%) felt **hopeful** about **their children's future** at both timepoints.

¹ Index of 5 survey items on a scale of 1-3: 1='Hopeless'; 2='Neither'; 3='Hopeful'. For example, 'Your life in Australia' or 'Your financial situation'.

9. To what extent did CSP support the economic integration of entrants, compared to HSP? (KEQ 2)

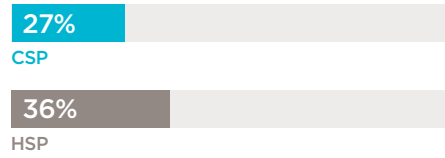


CSP entrants were more likely to be **participating in the labour force** (PO 24), compared to HSP. Of those working, more than half of CSP entrants had worked the equivalent of being full time, and many had been employed for 7 months or more. CSP entrants predominantly found this work through their close networks

CSP entrants were more likely* to have **worked for pay** in the previous 4 weeks, compared to HSP.



Of those not working, few CSP and HSP entrants had **looked for work** in the previous 4 weeks.



CSP entrants were more likely* to have **participated in the labour force¹** in the previous 4 weeks, compared to HSP.



Of the entrants who had worked in the previous 4 weeks (as at T2) (n=31 CSP; n=5 HSP)²

More than half of CSP who had worked in the previous 4 weeks, had **worked 35 hours or more** per week, the equivalent of working full time.



Almost all (95%) CSP entrants reported that they held one job in the previous 4 weeks.

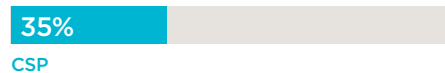
The **types of occupations** that CSP entrants self-reported as freetext in the survey, were predominantly lower-skilled or entry level jobs, and included for example, building and trades work (e.g., bricklayer, tiler, painter, wrecking yard worker, or factory machine operator), employed in retail (e.g., shelf packer or grocery shop assistant), or restaurant and food service work (e.g., chef). In addition, a few were employed as office/shop assistants or working in customer service.

CSP entrants **found this work** through their close networks as opposed to other channels, such as employment agencies or advertisements:³

family or friends



Australian Supporter.



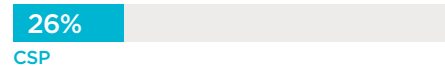
Analyses of the demographic characteristics of those CSP entrants who had worked compared to those who had not worked, showed that **male** CSP entrants and **main applicants/income earners** were more likely* to have worked in the previous 4 weeks. A greater percentage of CSP entrants **without young children** (under 6 years) worked compared to those with young children, though it was not significant.

Percentage of CSP entrants working:

Male



Female



Main applicant/income earner



Dependant/non-main income earner



No children under 6 years



Have children under 6 years



Female CSP entrants without children under 6 years old were more likely to be working compared to female CSP entrants with young children. However, the numbers are small and should be interpreted with caution.

There were no associations between whether CSP entrants had worked or not and their: age, English language proficiency, nor years of Education.

¹ Includes entrants reporting that they had worked or looked for work in the previous 4 weeks.

² As only 5 HSP entrants had worked in the previous 4 weeks, only results for CSP entrants are presented.

³ One CSP entrant found this work through an 'Employment agency', one through 'Internet/social media', and two through the 'employer directly'.

Worked since arriving in Australia (as at T2) (n=32 CSP; n=23 HSP responded)¹

At T2, some¹ entrants were asked whether they had worked for pay **since arriving in Australia**, even if they were not currently employed.

Of those who were asked, CSP entrants were more* likely than HSP entrants to report having done **any paid work since arriving in Australia**.



The majority of CSP entrants who had done any paid work since arriving in Australia reported the **total amount of time** they had been paid for work was **7-12 months**.



Three of the 6 HSP entrants who had worked since arriving in Australia, reported that they had worked **less than a week for pay**.

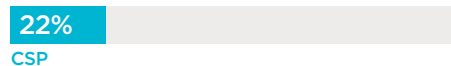
At T2, some entrants were also asked about the **type of paid or unpaid work** they had done since arriving in Australia.

Of the CSP entrants who responded, the most frequent responses were:

regular casual work (e.g., working regular shifts in a shop or a restaurant)



occasional or temporary casual work (e.g., working as a painter or in construction for a few days)

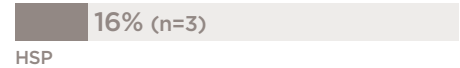


permanent or ongoing work.



A couple of CSP entrants were self-employed or did seasonal work (e.g., picking fruit on a farm). No CSP entrants reported in the **survey** that they worked in a friend's or family member's business. However, some CSP interviewees and Australian Supporters did mention in the **in-depth interviews**, that they were working in a business owned by family. For example, one CSP interviewee mentioned that a family member owned the restaurant where they worked.

Compared to HSP, CSP entrants were more likely to report that **at least one other adult over the age of 18** who had migrated with them **had worked for pay since arriving in Australia**.



Overall, compared to HSP, CSP entrants were more likely to be in **employment, education, or training** (not including English language classes) 10-12 months after arriving in Australia.



Including English language classes though, most CSP and HSP entrants were in **employment, education, or training**, highlighting that HSP entrants were predominantly attending English classes rather than working at this stage.



Both CSP and HSP entrants experienced **barriers to work**,

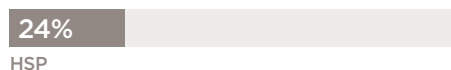
including English proficiency or lack of Australian experience

Approximately one-third of CSP entrants reported the following **barriers to getting paid work** (regardless of whether they had worked or not):

level of English



lack of Australian experience

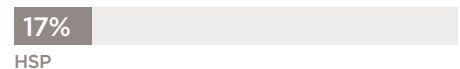


transport difficulties.



For CSP and HSP entrants who had not worked nor had looked for work, the most frequently cited reasons for this were:

home duties or childcare



studying (which could include English classes).

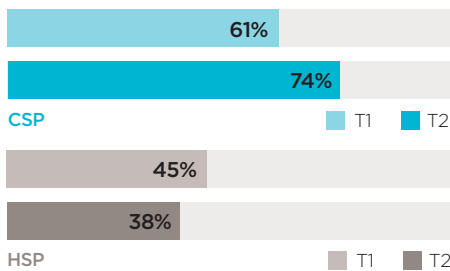


¹ New questions were added to the survey to explore: whether the survey respondent had done any work since arriving in Australia; whether anyone in the household (adult over 18 years) had done any work since arriving in Australia; and the type of paid or unpaid work they/other adults in the household may have done. As these questions were added partway through fieldwork, not all entrants were asked these new questions.

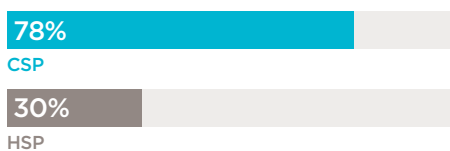


Few CSP and HSP entrants **had studied** or had done on-the-job training to **improve their job readiness** (PO 21). For CSP entrants, work commitments was the primary barrier, whereas English proficiency was a barrier for HSP. CSP entrants were, however, more **confident to apply for work** or to access information about study opportunities, compared to HSP

CSP entrants were more* likely to feel **confident ('a little' or 'a lot')** to **apply for a job** without help from other people at T2, compared to HSP, and this increased for CSP entrants over time.

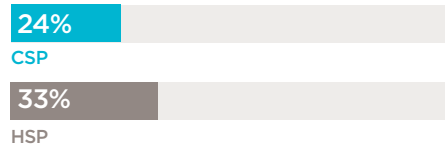


Of the entrants who needed help, CSP entrants were more* likely to report that they **received help** from their Australian Supporter to **apply for jobs or education opportunities** at some point since arriving in Australia, compared to HSP.



Twenty-three percent (23%) of CSP entrants reported that they also received **help from their APO caseworker to apply for jobs or education opportunities**.

About one-quarter of CSP and one-third of HSP entrants had done **job training or studied** something other than English since arriving in Australia to increase their job readiness.



Of the CSP entrants who had done job training or study, 4 had completed an **apprenticeship/traineeship** or **work experience internship** shortly after arrival. At T2, 2 CSP entrants were completing an **undergraduate university degree**, and 2 were completing a **certificate/diploma or a short course**. HSP entrants were mostly completing a **certificate/diploma** (n=6) or a short course (n=4).

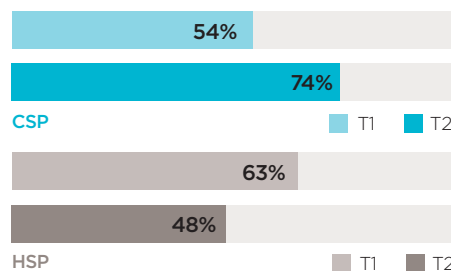
HSP entrants were more likely* to report that they **intended to study** something other than English in the next 12 months, compared to CSP.



Just over half of CSP and HSP entrants reported that another adult who migrated with them to Australia **intended to study** or do job training in the next 12 months.

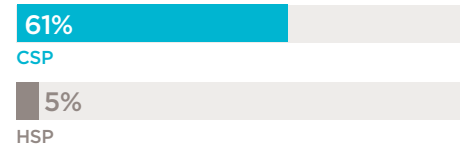


At T2, more CSP entrants felt **confident ('a little' or 'a lot')** to **access information for study or training** without the help of others, compared to HSP. This increased for CSP, whereas it decreased for HSP over time.

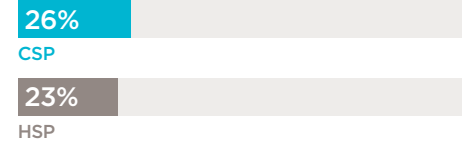


Work hours was the most common **barrier** for CSP entrants to **undertake study/job training**, while caring responsibilities was a barrier for some CSP and HSP entrants:

work hours made it hard to study



caring responsibilities made it hard to study.



In addition, HSP entrants indicated that their **English language proficiency** made it hard to study.

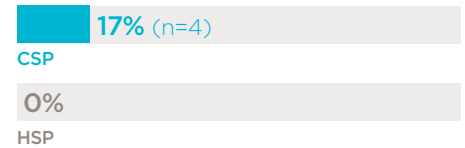


A greater percentage of CSP entrants held a **post-school qualification** that could/needed to be recognised in Australia, compared to HSP.¹



At T2, of those with post-school qualifications:

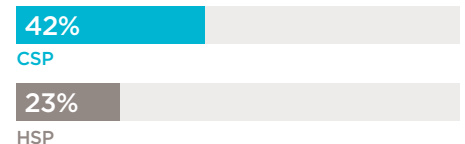
had **these fully or partly recognised**



intended to have these assessed



did not plan to have these assessed.



¹ Includes those who already had their qualifications assessed and recognised.



Overall, CSP entrants were more likely to be working compared to HSP. However, the pressure to work may have come at the **expense of advancing their English language, studying further, or working in jobs commensurate with their skills and aspirations.**

CSP and HSP entrants could benefit from more assistance to get into employment that complements their interests and skillsets, and having a greater awareness of their rights in Australia and ways to self-advocate when conditions are unfair

In the **in-depth interviews** at timepoint 2, many CSP interviewees continued to express the pressure they felt to be employed due to being ineligible for working age income support payments from the Government in the first year. For some, this placed a considerable burden on them that hindered their ability to integrate in other ways. For example, needing to work in the first available job resulted in not having enough time to start studying English at TAFE, or reducing their hours at TAFE. Working long hours in low-paying jobs left little time to devote to improving their English or to enrol for further education, delaying their progress towards achieving their preferred careers, as the jobs they aspired to require higher levels of English proficiency and/or additional qualifications. Some CSP interviewees expressed wanting to sign onto Centrelink as soon as they could after the one year, to give them more opportunity to study. Others though, did note that they were financially independent at this point and did not want to rely on government assistance.

CSP interviewees also sensed subtle discrimination within the employment sphere. This perceived systemic discrimination often manifested in wage suppression and unfavourable working conditions, where it was felt that those with less social capital or fewer local connections could be systematically undervalued. Such disparities can reflect deeper societal biases, where employers may consciously or unconsciously favour individuals with more local knowledge, resulting in inequitable treatment for newcomers.

HSP interviewees on the other hand, were more focused on study, particularly English, during the first year, as fewer could secure jobs right away due to their English proficiency. It is possible that HSP entrants were more able to take advantage of the free AMEP, compared to CSP, due to having access to Jobseeker payments from Centrelink. Most HSP interviewees reported progressing with their English certificates at TAFE, and some had also completed TAFE certificates in subjects such as aged care and disability, which were recommended by their HSP caseworkers. However, for some, English language acquisition was taking more time than they hoped, which was distressing as they did not have many choices to better their financial wellbeing. Many expressed

how they urgently needed to improve their English in order to access the employment market to afford everyday expenses, as Centrelink was not enough. Some mentioned that they had accessed foodbanks and other charities to help obtain everyday basics. As a result, many HSP interviewees had adjusted their career aspirations, settling for more accessible pathways than they originally aspired to. Many were thinking of getting whatever job was available. Some were still thinking of working towards their desired professions as a long-term goal, but expressed that it would take much more time to get qualifications and Australian work experience than they thought. A minority had achieved work at timepoint 2 (for example, as a ride-share driver).

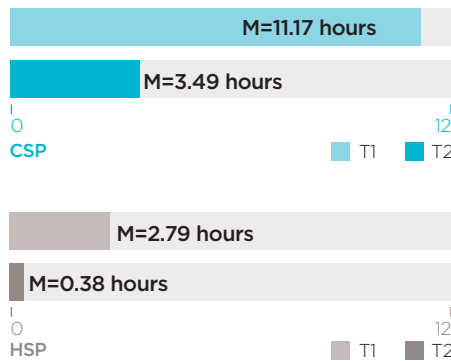
Overall, both CSP and HSP interviewees were feeling the pressure of financial insecurity in Australia, and for many it was still their primary concern. Both groups emphasised the importance of English acquisition in advancing their career aspirations. At timepoint 2, there was more discussion around the structural barriers of finding work in Australia. For those with prior experience and qualifications, most had trouble working in the same occupation (e.g. due to qualifications or experience not valued by prospective employers, or no Australian experience) and adjusted their aspirations to something more achievable in a shorter timeframe. Some still held these aspirations for the future, for example once English proficiency was better, or they re-qualify through further study, while others expressed that they would settle for any jobs available to them. For those who had good conversational English, and prior experience, some still expressed the challenge of finding work with no Australian experience or said that they would be offered less money to do the same job as an Australian. These varied challenges with finding suitable employment highlight the potential underlying structural barriers and implicit bias faced by new entrants in the job market. CSP and HSP entrants could benefit from more assistance to get into employment that complements their interests and skillsets, and having a greater awareness of their rights in Australia and ways to self-advocate when conditions are unfair.

10. To what extent did CSP improve entrants' self-sufficiency, compared to HSP? (KEQ 4)



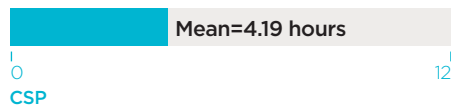
The number of **hours and frequency of receiving support** from Australian Supporters/HSP caseworkers decreased over time (PO 32). Though, CSP entrants were still receiving more hours of support compared to HSP at T2

The average number of **hours of support per week** that CSP entrants received from their Australian Supporter or HSP entrants received from their caseworker in the previous 4 weeks, respectively, decreased* over time. Though CSP entrants were still receiving more hours of support than HSP.

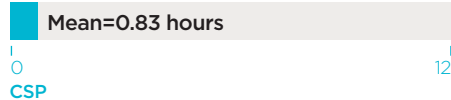


At T2, CSP entrants whose Australian Supporter was a **family member** received **more hours of support** on average each week in the previous 4 weeks, compared to those whose Australian Supporter was an employer or another individual not family ('Other').

Family member



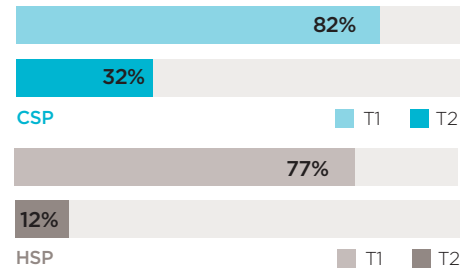
Other



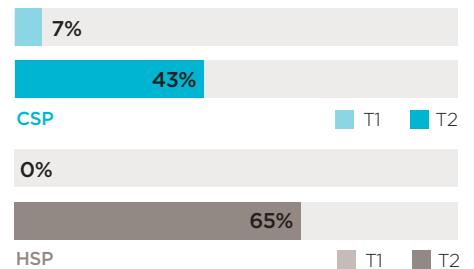
Only one CSP entrant reported receiving 6 hours of support from their APO caseworker in the previous 4 weeks. The remainder said they received 0 hours.

Both CSP and HSP entrants had seen or talked to their Australian Supporter or HSP caseworker, respectively, to receive support, **less frequently*** over time.

Once a week or more



Not in the last 4 weeks



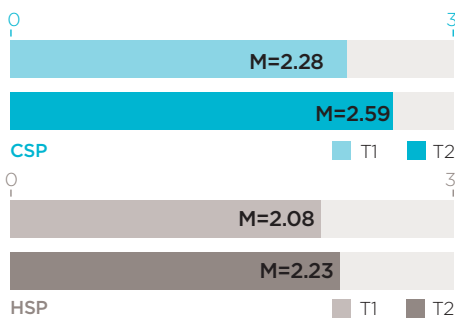


Compared to HSP, CSP entrants were more **confident**

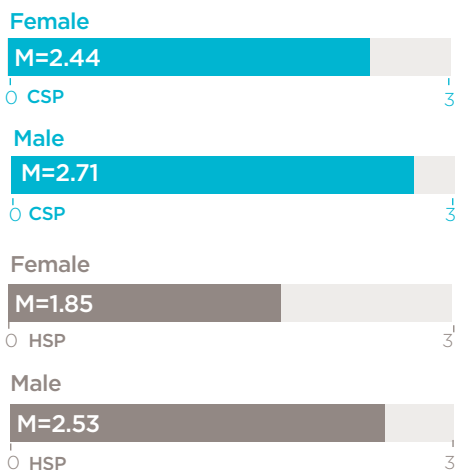
to navigate systems

independently (PO 20) and this developed more over time, particularly to access healthcare or get help from the police. CSP entrants had more confidence to apply for a job, compared to HSP

Overall, CSP entrants **confidence** to do a **range of tasks independently**¹ increased* over time, and continued to be higher* than HSP at T2.

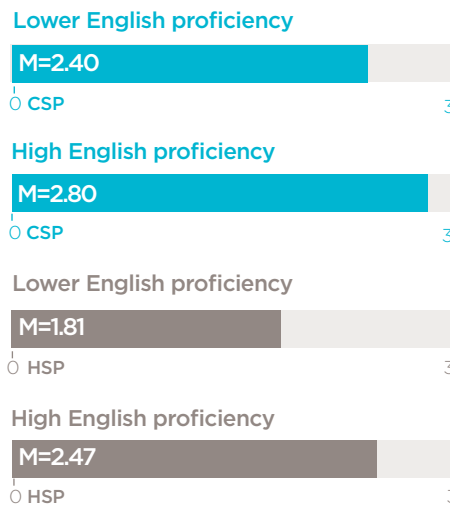


At T2, **male entrants** were on average, more* **confident** to do a range of **tasks independently**, compared to female entrants, within groups.



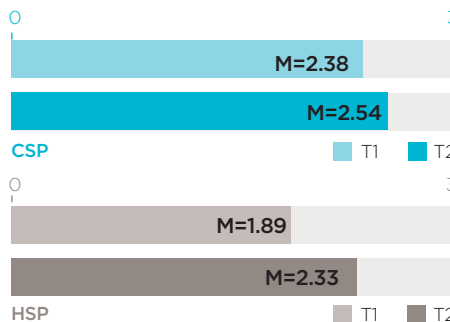
(Though, female CSP entrants had, on average, only slightly lower levels of confidence compared to male HSP entrants.)

At T2, entrants who were more **proficient in English** were on average, more* **confident** to do a range of **tasks independently**, compared to those less proficient in English, within groups.

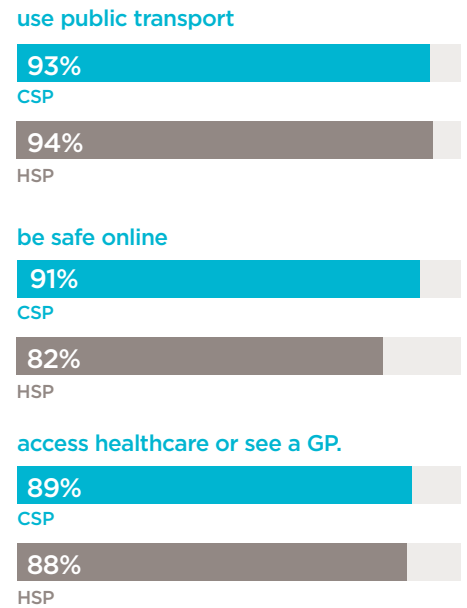


(Though, CSP entrants with lower English proficiency had, on average, only slightly lower levels of confidence compared to HSP entrants with high English proficiency.)

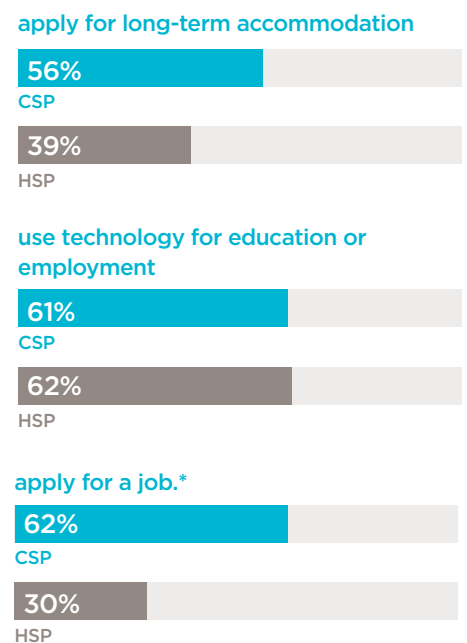
CSP entrants had higher* levels of **digital literacy**² on arrival. Although CSP entrants still had higher levels of digital literacy at T2, the difference between CSP and HSP entrants decreased over time.



The 3 activities that the **largest** percentage of CSP entrants reported having **'a lot' of confidence** to perform independently at T2, were to:



The 3 activities that the **smallest** percentage of CSP entrants reported **'a lot' of confidence** to perform independently at T2, were to:



¹ Using an index of 8 survey items. Entrants were asked to rate their level of confidence to do tasks independently on a scale of 1-3: 1='no confidence'; 2='a little confidence'; 3='a lot of confidence'. For example, 'Apply for jobs' or 'Apply for accommodation'.

² Using an index of 4 survey items. Entrants were asked to rate their level of confidence to do tasks independently on a scale of 1-3: 1='no confidence'; 2='a little confidence'; 3='a lot of confidence'. For example, 'Use the internet to access essential services (e.g., banking, Medicare, Centrelink)' or 'Use technology for education or employment (e.g., apply for a job, use a computer at work, study online)'.

The activities that saw the **largest change in levels of confidence** over time for CSP entrants were to:

access healthcare or see a GP



use public transport



get help from the police



be safe online.



The activities with the **greatest difference in levels of confidence between CSP and HSP entrants at T2** were to:

apply for a job*



access information for study or training.



The majority of CSP and HSP entrants had **access to transport**,

either through using public transport or obtaining an Australian driver licence (PO 30). However, some reported financial barriers, such as the cost of driving lessons or buying a car

Most CSP and HSP entrants had obtained an **Australian driver or learner licence** 10-12 months after arriving in Australia.

Driver licence (O or P)



Learner licence



Most CSP entrants had **received support to learn to drive** since arriving in Australia, compared to only one-quarter of HSP entrants.



At T2, most CSP and HSP entrants reported that they, or someone in their household, **owned a car**.



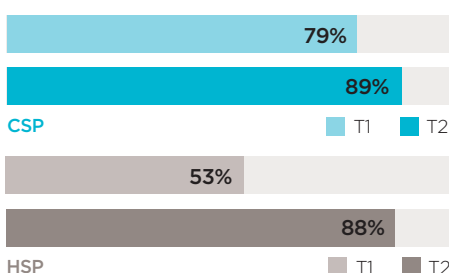
As previously noted, most CSP and HSP entrants were **confident ('a lot')** to **use public transport independently** at T2.



All CSP and most HSP entrants reported that **they or someone in their household had a current Australian driver licence**, at T2.



There was an increase in the percentage of CSP and HSP entrants who **received support to use public transport** or other transport methods, over time. Though, there was a greater* increase for HSP entrants.



In the **in-depth interviews**, transport independence was considered important for greater self-sufficiency and increased access to employment. CSP interviewees generally had higher levels of transport independence compared to HSP interviewees, as many had their provisional or open licence, and owned a car. A few relied on their Australian Supporter or family connections to drive them to specialist appointments but were generally independent to get around for everyday essentials. Barriers to transport independence were mainly financial for example, the cost of driving lessons and the cost of purchasing a car. Some had decreased confidence as, for example, one CSP interviewee received a fine from police for not having their transport card. This made them fearful that they could get fined at any time by accident and requested more training about Australian laws for new arrivals.

Compared to CSP, fewer HSP interviewees were driving independently at timepoint 2. However, some had made progress with driving and obtained their learner or provisional licence. Similar financial barriers were experienced by HSP interviewees, such as the cost of driving lessons and purchasing a car. A few HSP interviewees noted that they were made aware too late that they had been eligible for concession rates, so were unable to access the discounted driving lessons that could have been available to them.



Overall, CSP and HSP entrants were **more independent** 10–12 months after arriving in Australia, and required less support from Australian Supporters or APO caseworker, or HSP caseworkers respectively. For some though, the pressure to work to ease financial strains may have limited their **choice and control** (PO 31)

Overall, approximately one year after arriving in Australia, most CSP and HSP interviewees reported feeling confident in their ability to be self-sufficient in the **in-depth interviews**. Improvements in English gave some increased confidence in navigating everyday interactions and accomplishing tasks themselves. Most had decreased their involvement with the Australian Supporters and APO caseworker, or HSP caseworker over time, as they increased their knowledge of Australian systems and felt more comfortable navigating them independently.

Some CSP interviewees had managed to leverage support from their Australian Supporters and other social networks early in their settlement journey to access housing and employment, thus were quite autonomous at timepoint 1 already. By timepoint 2, all CSP interviewees were less reliant on their Australian Supporters and APO caseworkers. Many had a close personal relationship with their Australian Supporters though, and, especially where they were family, spent time together socially. Even though these interactions were less out of needing support, most felt like they could still reach out when needed. Some did, however, reflect on how busy the Australian Supporters were with their own lives, so they wanted to be as independent as much as possible.

Similarly, most HSP interviewees continued to be self-reliant at timepoint 2, with minimal contact from HSP caseworkers and increased confidence in navigating services like Medicare and Centrelink. Many had also expanded their social networks, which increased their independence from government services through increased informal support.

However, when it came to making significant decisions and planning their lives in Australia, many CSP and HSP interviewees indicated that their financial situation imposed limitations, resulting in stress and uncertainty about the future.

For CSP interviewees, there was still an overwhelming sense that they had to work very hard to make ends meet, and this stressful position could make them feel stuck with fewer choices. This included having to adjust or forgo career aspirations to settle for any available work, and for some this was at the expense of studying English language at TAFE, which decreased their opportunity to integrate socially and economically.

Financial insecurity also hindered HSP interviewees' sense of choice and control in their lives, as many felt it was taking a long time to learn English and access the job market. Many emphasised their ongoing concerns about securing affordable housing in Australia, often describing it as an aspect of life that felt unpredictable and difficult to control. Some expressed that continued formal support in this area would be beneficial.

11. What impact did participating in CSP have on Australian Supporters? (KEQ 8)



All the Australian Supporters were motivated to participate in CSP **out of a desire to support family or friends**. Almost all had **been humanitarian entrants themselves**, or had significant experience of working with refugees

Most Australian Supporters who participated in the **in-depth interviews** had arrived as **refugees or humanitarian entrants themselves, and/or had experience working with refugees** (e.g., through volunteering or having worked as migration agents). Australian Supporters were either supporting family members (n=6) or friends/acquaintances (n=7). Most Australian Supporters were formally the sole supporter, however, where CSP families exceeded 5 members, Australian Supporters sought additional supporters, typically relatives, to comply with the pre-reform program requirements.¹ Five Australian Supporters were supporting single individuals, and 8 were supporting families of which 7 had children under 18.

In all cases, **the decision to participate in the CSP was personal, driven by a desire to assist family members or friends**, and to support others in need

more broadly. Where the CSP entrant(s) was an acquaintance, they participated as a favour to a close friend who was unable to do it themselves (e.g., due to lack of funds, visa type, or length of time in Australia).

Australian Supporters drew on their personal (and diverse) experiences and leveraged their professional and personal networks to support CSP entrants. These networks, comprising family members, friends, and colleagues, some who had previously participated in the CSP, were instrumental in offering guidance, job opportunities, making referrals, and sometimes connecting with APOs. Their prior knowledge of migration processes and networks was instrumental in navigating CSP. Although the application process was often handled by the Australian Supporters and the APOs, especially in later stages, initial guidance from their support networks was crucial.



The **pre-arrival stage was considerably more arduous** for Australian Supporters than post-arrival, specifically due to the extensive preparatory tasks required for the application, the overall high costs, and prolonged wait times when family members were in dire circumstances

While a review of the application processes were not in scope for the CSP evaluation, the experiences and challenges shared by Australian Supporters in the in-depth interviews, indicated that the pre-arrival stage was considerably more arduous for them, and provides useful context to their experiences after the CSP entrants arrived.

The visa application process typically took around 2 years, though for some this was prolonged due to COVID-19 restrictions. This excluded the years prior to submitting the application, where Australian Supporters and the CSP entrants were often looking for alternative pathways before becoming aware of CSP. Although Australian Supporters were informed of the usual processing times, **the uncertainty of the outcome and prolonged waiting periods were still a source of great concern for some**. Many acknowledged that a lot of the delays and complexities were due to organisations and processes outside Australia, and thus beyond the control of the APOs or the Australian Supporters. Nevertheless, these experiences were distressing, particularly when family members or friends were in precarious or even dangerous circumstances.

Although the APOs provided substantial support, particularly early on in the application process, Australian Supporters recounted **the significant time and effort required to prepare or gather all the necessary documentation**, and in some cases, raise the necessary funds to pay the APO and Government visa application fees, and other associated costs (e.g., medical exams and flights). Four Australian Supporters, citing time constraints or difficulty completing the application forms, consulted migration lawyers or opted to hire migration agents to handle the process instead, which reduced their direct involvement with APOs.

The overall cost of the process was also noted as significant by almost all the Australian Supporters. Of the 13 Australian Supporters interviewed, 10 lodged the application prior to the changes to CSP introduced in July 2022.¹ Irrespective of the government visa cost though, many noted what they perceived as high APO fees, in addition to paying for flights, medical exams, and acquiring all the necessary documentation for the CSP entrants (e.g., trying to arrange identification documents where they may have been lost after fleeing their home country).

¹ See Background section '2.1 Community Support Program' for information about the reforms to CSP.

The financial cost was more often borne solely by the Australian Supporters. Although there were cases where other family or community members in Australia contributed funds towards the costs. One case involved family members raising the necessary funds, but the Australian Supporter needed to sell jewellery to contribute their portion. In 2 cases, the Australian Supporter was only listed as the supporter for the purposes of the application and AoS¹ but did not fund any part of the process—other family already in Australia took on this responsibility instead. In one case, it was possible that the entrant contributed funds, but the Australian Supporter was

not aware of the financial arrangements.

One Australian Supporter recounted that he and his family members had effectively been ‘extorted’ by an agency in another country tasked with purchasing flight tickets and preparing exit documents. This agency increasingly demanded more money, which the Australian Supporter felt obligated to pay, but he did not believe the APO could have assisted in any way.

Australian Supporters were aware of their obligations under the AoS, but did not appear to be troubled by the responsibility of providing the AoS for the entrant(s). They were aware that they

might need to offer financial assistance if necessary to avoid the need for Government assistance, but considered this as part of their role. Furthermore, some were confident that the entrant(s) would secure employment, as they perceived the Australian labor market as robust.

In only one case did the Australian Supporter acknowledge discussing the financing of the application with the CSP entrant. The CSP entrant mentioned their intention to repay them once they started working in Australia, however, the Australian Supporter stated that they did not expect it.



Australian Supporters were **broadly satisfied with the assistance provided by APOs**, particularly pre-arrival (KEQ 7).

Post-arrival, Australian Supporters assumed the role of providing most of the support, perceiving it as their responsibility rather than the APO’s. However, many **questioned the high fees** given the level of support from APOs post-arrival

The selection of an APO was quite straightforward and quick. In some cases, the Australian Supporters had previous knowledge of the APOs, either because they had worked with them before or someone from their community had. In 4 cases, Australian Supporters hired migration agents to handle the process, reducing direct interaction with APOs. In these instances, the relationship between Australian Supporters and APOs was mediated by the agents, limiting the Australian Supporters’ involvement with the APOs.

During the application process, most APOs were consistently involved, facilitating interviews with both Australian Supporters and CSP entrants, requesting and managing the submission of necessary documents, and ensuring the application was complete before proceeding. **Australian Supporters generally expressed satisfaction with the APOs’ involvement during this stage.**

There were, however, mixed reports about APOs’ communication—some felt they were unresponsive and slow to communicate during the application process, often citing unanswered emails or delayed replies. Despite these challenges, Australian Supporters attributed this to the APOs’ heavy workloads, understanding that they were processing a large volume of applications.

The level of support provided by APOs post-arrival was generally limited.

Australian Supporters assumed the majority of the responsibility for helping CSP entrants settle in Australia, except for a few cases where other relatives already established in Australia took the main support role. Half of the Australian Supporters reported that they, nor the CSP entrants, had little to no support from the APOs, apart from an induction session delivered immediately after the CSP arrived and brief check-in interviews approximately 6- and 12-months post-arrival.² Where APOs did provide support, this was for specific and discrete tasks that the Australian Supporter and/or CSP entrants were struggling to manage, such as navigating and gaining access to Medicare. In one notable case,

an APO, together with the Australian Supporter and other family members, helped the CSP entrants find permanent accommodation, likely because the APO was embedded in the local community, being referred to as ‘the church’ by the Australian Supporter.

Most Australian Supporters believed that these tasks were their responsibility, rather than the APOs’ (e.g., assisting with housing, accessing services such as Medicare, Australian Tax Office, and banks), which might explain why many were still satisfied with the APOs despite receiving minimal post-arrival assistance. However, **many believed the APO’s post-approval settlement support³ charges were not fully justified** and were disproportionate to the amount of work they felt the APO caseworkers completed, post-arrival. Several recommended lowering the APO fees, noting that, even after the reforms to CSP reduced the Government visa costs, the APO service fees remained unchanged, which was a common source of frustration among the Australian Supporters. This may have been exacerbated by the actual or perceived lack of choice of an APO, either due to where they were located or the timing of when APOs accepted expression of interests owing to the predetermined number of CSP visas granted each year.

Overall, while Australian Supporters generally appreciated the role APOs played during the application process, the level of support needed and received varied greatly and many questioned the value of APO services, particularly post-arrival.

¹ See Background section ‘2.1 Community Support Program’ for information about the AoS.

² See Background section ‘2.1 Community Support Program’ for information about the Deed of Agreement APOs enter with the Department of Home Affairs.

³ APOs have a fee schedule for each stage of the visa application, which includes a fee that is required once a CSP entrant’s visa is approved for post-arrival settlement support.



Australian Supporters **provided support for a range of settlement activities**, notably, being able to house and employ CSP entrants themselves. For the latter, this seemed vital for meeting eligibility criteria, by mitigating the challenges of uncertain arrival times

As previously outlined, Australian Supporters reported that the majority of post-arrival support was provided by them, or by the CSP entrants' relatives. **This involved all aspects of settlement** including assisting with housing, employment, opening bank accounts,

financial support, navigating services like Medicare and the Australian Tax Office, obtaining driver licences, and linking CSP entrants to a broader social community.

Few spoke of these tasks as being particularly challenging, rather, many simply recounted the tasks they undertook impassively, noting that it was a necessary duty they were more than happy to provide. However, some noted that it was time consuming and at least one Australian Supporter noted that they needed to take leave from work to provide initial support, and expressed doubt that individuals without such flexibility would manage, potentially finding it challenging to offer the required assistance.

Notably, **almost all Australian Supporters played a vital role in securing accommodation for CSP entrants**. Of those who were supporting family members, most resided with the Australian Supporter upon arrival, who then helped them secure longer-term accommodation. This included securing a lease by being a guarantor or even purchasing a house where the CSP household could remain for as long as needed. The ability to house CSP entrants in their own, or other family members' homes initially, seemed to be a significant benefit, as it provided CSP entrants with a comfortable and/or

familiar environment to acclimate when they first arrived.

Similarly, **almost all Australian Supporters played a crucial role in assisting CSP entrants to secure employment**, either before or post-arrival. Some drew on their existing professional connections in the community to find this employment. Others were either able to employ the CSP entrants in their own or other family members' businesses. These connections or the ability to employ CSP entrants themselves was invaluable, without which, it may have been challenging for CSP entrants to meet eligibility requirements to have a job offer or pathway to employment. As one Australian Supporter described, it was fortunate that they had a personal connection with an individual who was able to provide suitable employment, as their own career and work circumstances were too dissimilar to the CSP entrant's needs and skills. Similarly, some noted that, due to uncertain arrival times, many potential employers were unable to guarantee a job offer, as they could not leave positions unfilled indefinitely. Consequently, **without the option to employ CSP entrants themselves, meeting the eligibility criteria could have been infeasible**.



While CSP entrants were largely self-sufficient 9–11 months post-arrival, most **Australian Supporters were committed to providing ongoing support**, viewing it as their role for as long as needed

While Australian Supporters continued to provide a 'safety net', most acknowledged that **CSP entrants had achieved a significant level of independence 9–11 months after arrival**, with the frequency of support decreasing

considerably after the first 6 months. Most Australian Supporters reported that CSP entrants were employed, which facilitated their independence, and were able to navigate daily activities comfortably. Support more often took the form of ad hoc meetings, where Australian Supporters assisted only when explicitly needed or as part of casual or social interactions. For example, one Australian Supporter described that they met weekly to play soccer as part of a shared social activity. During these interactions, the CSP entrant may seek occasional advice on administrative matters or government communications.

Nevertheless, many Australian Supporters observed that English language proficiency was still an obstacle for some CSP entrants. Those who only had conversational English proficiency, still depended on assistance from the Australian Supporters for language-related matters and navigating formal systems, for example, administrative tasks or communication

with government agencies. Some noted that CSP entrants whose children's language skills had developed or improved more quickly due to attending school were able to assist their parents with translation or interpreting tasks. Furthermore, those employed by Australian Supporters, other relatives, or in jobs that did not require a high level of English proficiency were somewhat insulated from the challenges of limited English skills. However, it was recognised that improving their English, including finding time to attend English classes, should be a priority to facilitate their settlement in Australia.

Regardless of relationship type, **Australian Supporters were prepared to continue their assistance indefinitely**, perceiving their role as integral to the CSP entrants' long-term settlement. This support, while diminishing over time, remained crucial to reinforcing CSP entrants' confidence in navigating Australian systems independently.



Overall, **Australian Supporters felt fulfilled** and grateful for participating in CSP, and most would support (or already were) additional CSP entrants in the future. Most perceived the support they provide as a natural extension of familial/affinitive duties, rather than a burden, and **existing relationships, and shared cultural background and language** seemed to contribute to a more comfortable and supportive relationship

The experience of the Australian Supporters interviewed was marked by a profound sense of fulfilment, as they felt they were genuinely helping those in need. Regardless of whether the CSP entrants were family, friends, or acquaintances, they commonly expressed personal satisfaction, with the meaningful impact on their and others' lives encapsulated by phrases such as, 'I've made a difference'.

However, the journey was not always easy. As previously outlined, one of the primary challenges identified by Australian Supporters was the financial cost associated with the application and other pre-arrival requirements. In addition, for many Australian Supporters, long waits and uncertainty of visa outcomes were difficult. Family separations and logistical complications further heightened the urgency, and many called for more efficient and streamlined procedures that would facilitate a more rapid process.

Beyond the emotional highs and lows, **Australian Supporters reported substantial learning from their participation in the CSP.** They gained insights into the Australian refugee and humanitarian legal system and developed skills in managing complex application processes. It was felt that this newfound knowledge would equip them with the tools necessary for future engagement in similar initiatives.

Many perceived the support they provided as a natural extension of their familial or affinitive duties, rather than expressing it as a burden. Though not explicitly recognised by the Australian Supporters, this intrinsic support role may mitigate feelings that providing support was an additional responsibility or job, which could make the experience feel more demanding and challenging.

The pre-existing relationship could make the support process inherently easier, as opposed to the effort required to develop new relationships.

Similarly, apart from one, all Australian Supporters shared a similar ethnic and cultural background, and language with the CSP entrants, which may also have served as a mitigating factor. Although the main CSP applicants are required to have some level of English proficiency for the visa, the ease of communication and cultural familiarity may have contributed to a more relaxed and supportive relationship, regardless of any pre-existing relationship. Further, **the shared cultural background and the ability to revert to their home language when needed could reduce the difficulties associated with communication and cultural navigation.**

In conclusion, the overall experience of participating in the CSP program had a positive impact on Australian Supporters. It fostered a deep sense of purpose, simultaneously highlighting the systemic challenges faced by refugees and entrants.

Importantly, none of the Australian Supporters expressed reluctance to engage in the program again. Instead, **several indicated their willingness to assist future entrants**, and some already were. This reflects not only their resilience in the face of challenges but also a commitment to supporting individuals seeking safety and a new beginning in Australia. The program enhanced their awareness of the complexities surrounding refugee and humanitarian settlement, and strengthened their resolve to contribute positively to the lives of others. All were very grateful that this settlement pathway was available for them to support family and friends, who otherwise may not have had this opportunity.

12. What were APOs' perspectives of the CSP?



APO participants were supportive of the CSP program but identified several concerns and opportunities for improvement

APO participants **voiced support for CSP** and felt that it was producing successful outcomes for CSP entrants. However, there were several gaps that APOs felt needed resolution, for example, slow access to essential services, including Family Tax Benefit and Medicare.

Some highlighted the need to establish a 'community of practice' where they could share common challenges and practice tips. A community of practice would also **allow them to identify common issues or structural barriers that may require group advocacy** to resolve, such as the challenges with Medicare that they were all struggling with.

To support this, some APO participants felt it necessary for the **Department** to enhance communication with APOs by **proactively facilitating opportunities where these common challenges could be raised and resolved**. Some recalled that the monthly meetings that used to be in place were ceased, as the program matured and 'everyone [became] quite confident now, they know exactly what to do'.¹ However, they saw the need for such opportunities to be reinstated. Additionally, APOs felt it would be **beneficial if other relevant departments or entities (e.g., Services Australia) were included in such discussions**, as relevant, to resolve issues directly and more quickly.

There was also a need for **more timely communication about the program**, including about any changes or updates. This was demonstrated by the APOs' misunderstanding of CSP entrants' (in) eligibility for the Services Australia Refugee Service Offer (RSO). At the time of the focus group, APOs were unaware that Services Australia had identified and rectified discrepancies in their servicing of entrants, including over-servicing CSP entrants who were not eligible for the RSO. Instead, the APOs perceived this correction as a change to CSP entrants' eligibility for the RSO, which they felt was not communicated to them. Though it may have been a misconception, it serves as an example of information the APOs felt was not communicated to them in a timely fashion, and the need to ensure all are abreast of program specifics and requirements.

Though not directly related to the settlement processes, concerns were raised over **the cost of CSP**, including the perception of 'double charging' of CSP entrants (Government visa application fees and APO fees), and the program being perceived as a money-making venture. Similarly, APOs worried about the CSP being **too selective of eligible countries**, particularly when the humanitarian situations change so rapidly.

Some APO participants felt that the improvements to the program would be better informed by an evaluation that focused on CSP, rather than as part of the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) evaluation.²

Overall, APO participants said that the CSP offered an alternative pathway to resettling entrants, and **diverse avenues for resettlement enabled diaspora communities to contribute in this regard**.

¹Information received from the Department noted that the monthly meetings (primarily focused on visa application issues) were replaced with a formal quarterly meeting and regular ad hoc engagement.

²Originally the evaluation was phrased as The CRISP Evaluation to APOs, but APOs were subsequently advised that the evaluation was of CSP and CRISP.

Appendices

Appendix A—Key Evaluation Questions and Program Outcomes

The CSP evaluation was guided by the Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ) and the intermediate Program Outcomes (POs) identified in consultation with the Department and other relevant stakeholders. Table A-1 presents the KEQs and associated POs measured to answer the KEQs that were included in the CSP Evaluation Program Outcomes report.

Table A-1 KEQs and Program Outcomes

Key Evaluation Question	Program Outcome#	Intermediate Program Outcome
To what extent did CSP support the social integration of entrants compared to HSP? (KEQ 1)	17	Increased relationships and friendships (social networks)
	15	Increased network of mentors that can assist humanitarian entrants to problem-solve or provide advice (support networks)
	16	The relationship with the Australian Supporter is informal and flexible rather than transactional
	14	Perception that cultural identity is respected and valued by the local community
	19	Improved sense of belonging
	11	Increased trust and connection with the host community
	12	Improved social and emotional wellbeing
	13	Increased optimism about their and their family's future
To what extent did CSP support the economic integration of entrants, compared to HSP? (KEQ 2)	21	Improved job readiness (goals, aspirations, professional networks)
	24	Increased workforce participation
To what extent did CSP support the English language acquisition for entrants, compared to HSP? (KEQ 3)	26	Improved functional English proficiency
	27	Decreased use of interpretation services (TIS)
To what extent did CSP improve entrants' self-sufficiency, compared to HSP? (KEQ 4)	32	A reduction in Australian supporter over the 12 months as the humanitarian entrant becomes more self-sufficient
	20	Increased confidence and skills to navigate Australian systems independently
	31	Increased capacity (skills & confidence) in humanitarian entrants to exercise choice and control
	30	Increased support to access transport and/or obtain driving license
How appropriate was the support provided by the Australian Supporters to meet the needs of the entrants? (KEQ 6)	33	Appropriate access to everyday essentials (e.g., household goods, school resources, personal care) on arrival
	18	Increased access to appropriate social support and essential services
	28	Increased access to stable housing
What impact did participating in CSP have on the Australian Supporters? (KEQ 8)	35	High self-reported fulfilment from participating in a settlement program by community supporters
	38	Greater understanding & valuing of other cultures by community supporters
	43	Increased relationships & friendships (social networks) for community supporters
	41	Increased understanding of community supporters of the settlement landscape (e.g., opportunities, challenges and support required to settle)
	42	Greater understanding of the refugees' experience by community supporters
How appropriate was the support from the Approved Proposing Organisations (APOs) to the Australian Supporters? (KEQ 7)	n/a	n/a

Appendix B—Additional methodology

B-1 Ethics

The CSP evaluation underwent an ethics review by The University of Queensland's Human Research Ethics Committee and received approval (Ref ID 2022/HE001057).

B-2 Methods

B-2-1 CSP and HSP entrants' survey

Survey mode, sampling, and recruitment

A survey was designed to collect information from CSP and HSP entrants about their experiences of settling in Australia at 2 timepoints, including the level of support received and data on the key Program Outcomes identified for the evaluation.

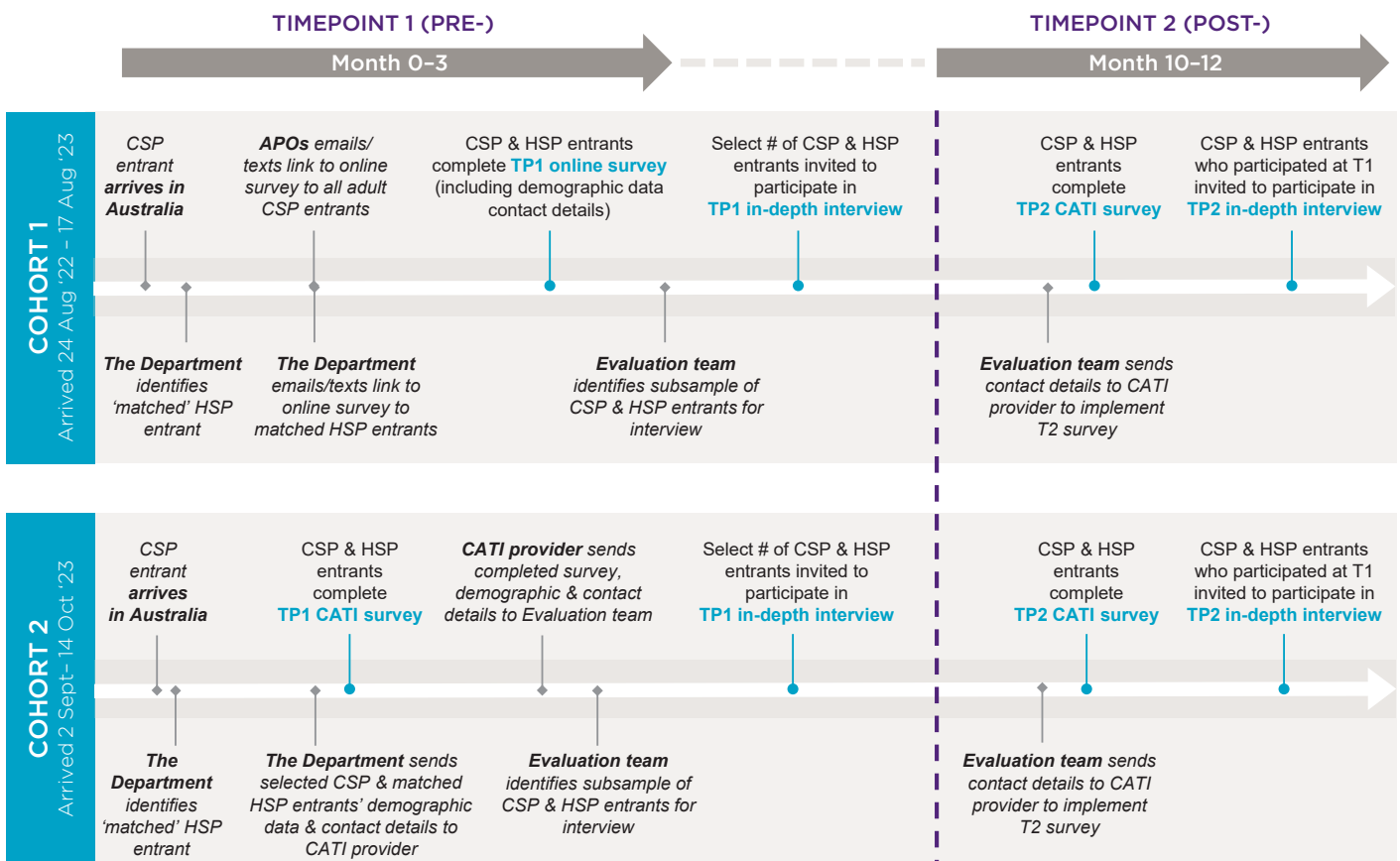
The survey was initially designed as an online survey to be distributed to CSP and HSP entrants via email and/or text. The rationale for using this mode was based on the assumption that CSP entrants would be more digitally literate in their own language or have a higher level of English proficiency due to the visa requirements. Further, as many CSP entrants were likely to be working, the online survey mode would allow them to complete the survey in their own time. However, this mode of data collection did not yield the desired sample. The Department was subsequently able to fund a limited number of CATI surveys for CSP and HSP. CSP and HSP entrants are referred to as Cohort 1 or Cohort 2 based on the survey mode at T1. Table B-2 outlines the differences in survey mode, sampling, and recruitment, for each cohort. Figure B-1 visualises the fieldwork implementation for each cohort.

Table B-1 Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 survey mode, sampling, and recruitment

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Survey mode	An online survey was developed for T1 and was translated from English into the 4 most common languages of entrants settling through the CSP.	The survey was implemented via CATI by an external provider, using interpreters if required.
Sample & sampling	All adult CSP entrants who arrived between 24 Aug 2022 and 17 Aug 2023 ¹ were eligible to complete an online survey at T1. The Department identified a roughly equal number of adult HSP entrants who arrived within 3-months of the CSP entrants, and selected those who had known links in Australia and spoke one of the 4 languages the online survey was translated into or had adequate English language skills. Where possible, HSP entrants between 18-50 years were prioritised, and HSP entrants' country of origin was also considered when identifying an appropriate match for the CSP entrants.	One adult from each CSP household that arrived between 2 Sept and 14 Oct 2023 was purposively sampled by the Department, ensuring a mix of primary and dependent applicants and gender. One adult from a similar number of HSP households who arrived within 1 month of the CSP entrants were identified by the Department. HSP entrants were purposively selected if they had known links in Australia and were between 18-50 years. Where possible, HSP entrants with adequate English were selected, and their country of origin was considered when identifying an appropriate match for the CSP entrants.
Recruitment	A generic, anonymous online survey link was sent by email and/or text message to eligible CSP entrants by their APO. The Department sent the generic online survey link to the matched HSP entrants. The email/text also included a link to the Participant Information Sheet, available in multiple languages in written and audio form, and hosted on a dedicated evaluation website.	The Department sent the contact details and demographic data of the selected CSP and HSP entrants to the external CATI provider, who in turn contacted entrants to complete the CATI survey. Prior to being contacted to complete the CATI survey, selected entrants were sent a text/email by the Department informing them of the survey and included a link to the Participant Information Sheet, available in multiple languages in written and audio form, and hosted on a dedicated evaluation website. At the start of the CATI survey, participants were asked to confirm they had read the information sheet, and to provide verbal consent.
Timepoint 2 survey	The T1 survey asked entrants to provide their name and contact details if they consented to participate in the T2 survey. Those who provided their contact details were contacted to complete the T2 survey: the majority were contacted to complete the survey via CATI; a small number were sent the T2 online survey link.	The de-identified survey data and linked demographic data of those who completed the T1 survey, were securely sent to ISSR. Those who completed the T1 survey were recontacted by the external CATI provider to complete the T2 telephone survey.

¹The original online survey method relied on APOs distributing the survey link to CSP entrants. As a result, it is possible CSP entrants who arrived after 17 August 2023 were sent the survey, but did not respond.

Figure B-1 CSP and HSP entrant data collection (survey and interview) process, by cohort



Survey questions

The CSP and HSP entrant survey was designed to understand entrants' experiences of settling in Australia, particularly to measure the settlement or Program Outcomes identified for the evaluation, over time.

As previously outlined, the CSP Evaluation followed a developmental approach, which allowed adaptations to be made to the methods and data collection tools as new insights were gained over the course of the Evaluation. As such, new questions were added to the surveys over the course of fieldwork.

For the **T1 survey**, the key difference between those from Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 was the source of demographic information. As the Cohort 1 online survey was distributed as a generic survey link, entrants were asked to self-report information such as their age, gender, date of arrival, and role in the household. For those CSP and HSP entrants in Cohort 2 who were purposively selected to complete the CATI survey, the Department provided the demographic information of those who consented and participated in the T1 survey. The benefit of this was that the survey length could be shortened, reducing the burden on entrants.

The **T2 survey** mirrored the T1 survey, however, new questions were introduced partway through the T2 fieldwork related to 1) any paid work entrants had done *since arriving in Australia*, 2) additional questions about English language classes entrants attended, and 3) for CSP entrants, any support they received from the APO caseworker for a range of settlement activities.

Throughout the report, footnotes indicate where results were derived from the new survey questions, as well as the corresponding number of CSP and HSP responses included in the analyses.

Survey analyses

At the end of fieldwork, all the survey (including demographic) data were combined and cleaned by removing those who only completed a T1 survey and those who did not complete at least 30% of the survey questions.

Bivariate analyses were conducted to examine differences between CSP and HSP entrants' survey responses, and between T1 and T2. Additional bivariate analyses were conducted to examine if 2 independent categorical variables were related, for example, gender and work force participation. The threshold for statistical significance was a p value of less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). However, where the sample size was less than $n=30$, for example, questions that were not asked of all entrants, significance testing was not conducted due to the potential for unreliable results.

Indices were derived to create an overall measure based on a series of questions or statements included in the survey that were measuring a similar construct (e.g., sense of belonging). An Index was derived by calculating the average of the non-missing responses for each participant within the group of questions.

B-2-2 CSP and HSP entrants' in-depth interviews

The T1 survey included a question asking whether entrants would be interested in taking part in an in-depth interview. The Evaluation aimed to select 12 CSP and 12 HSP entrants from those who provided consent to be followed-up with for an interview. Selected entrants were contacted by ISSR researchers, with assistance from an interpreter if needed, and invited to participate. Entrants were sent an Information Sheet and Consent form to review prior to the interview, and verbal consent was again sought at the start of the interview. Entrants were asked whether they had a gender preference for their interviewer, which was accommodated.

Interviews were conducted at 2 timepoints, shortly after the respective T1 or T2 survey was completed. Interviewers were approximately 60 minutes in duration and followed a semi-structured guide broadly covering the following topics:

- settlement needs and goals
- social, cultural, and economic integration
- access to services and support
- services and support received.

The nature of in-depth interviews means that interviewers while exploring these broad topics, could ask follow-up questions relevant to the discussion, thus each interview is unique. Entrants were also made aware that they did not need to share anything they did not want to.

Entrants were provided a \$40 gift card as remuneration for taking part in each interview. Audio-recordings from the in-depth interviews were transcribed, and all identifiable information removed. The qualitative data were analysed using the Framework Approach to thematic analysis. Coding frameworks were developed to ensure consistency among the coders. Data were analysed thematically, guided by the KEQs and Program Outcomes. A classification sheet was used to organise the data for example, the interview timepoint, program type (CSP or HSP), and other attributes of the entrants.

B-2-3 Australian Supporter in-depth interviews

APOs contacted Australian Supporters who were supporting a CSP entrant(s) from Cohort 2 (i.e., arrived between 2 September and 14 October 2023) and informed them of the opportunity to participate in an in-depth interview. APOs sent the contact details of those who consented to having their details shared, to ISSR researchers. ISSR researchers selected Australian Supporters to ensure most APOs were represented, as well as a mix of their relationship to the CSP entrant(s) (e.g., family, friend, employer). ISSR researchers also attempted to get a mix of Australian Supporters who lodged the CSP visa application before and after the reforms to the CSP.

The selected Australian Supporters were contacted by ISSR researchers to invite them to participate in the in-depth interview, and were sent an Information Sheet and Consent form to review and complete. The interviews were conducted approximately 9 months after the CSP entrant(s) they were supporting, arrived in Australia. Interviews were conducted at a time convenient to the Australian Supporter via Zoom/ Teams or telephone, depending on the Australian Supporter's preference. Australian Supporters were provided a \$40 gift card as remuneration for taking part in the interview.

The interviews were approximately 60 minutes in duration and followed a semi-structured guide covering the following broad topics:

- motivation for becoming an Australian Supporter/ participating in CSP
- support received from the APO, pre and post arrival
- experience of providing support to the CSP entrant
- perceptions of the CSP entrants' settlement journey and outcomes
- enablers and barriers to providing support/participating in the CSP.

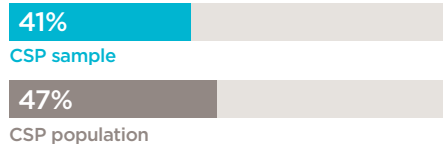
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Appendix C—Additional demographics

To examine whether the CSP entrants in the sample were broadly representative of the CSP population, the demographic characteristics of the CSP entrants (n=46) who completed the survey at both timepoints (**sample**) were compared to all adult CSP entrants who arrived between 24 August 2022 and 14 October 2023 (n=922) (**population**).

Broadly, **the demographic characteristics of CSP entrants in the sample were similar to the CSP population**. However, a larger percentage of CSP entrants in the sample had higher levels of English language proficiency, compared to the population. It should be noted though, that English language proficiency was collected at different points in time. For the CSP sample, entrants self-reported their perceived English language proficiency 1-2 months after arrival (T1). For the CSP population, English language proficiency was self-reported by CSP entrants as part of their visa application (possibly with assistance), before entrants arrived in Australia.

Gender—Female



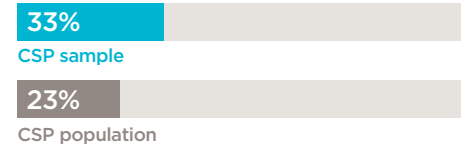
Age—18–29 years



English proficiency—speak 'well' or 'very well'



Education level—Tertiary education



Current citizenship—Afghanistan





The evaluation was undertaken by the Institute for Social Science Research, The University of Queensland in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Family Studies

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