

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Further to MT15/0150/NSC of 23 November 2015, we recommend that the Committee note that Australia:
 - (a) has a long-established, world class humanitarian resettlement programme that facilitates positive economic and social integration; and
 - (b) performs favourably compared to other OECD countries against key indicators of successful migrant integration such as employment, education and English language outcomes, as well as civic engagement and the uptake of citizenship (Attachments A and C refer);
2. We recommend that the Committee further note that:
 - (a) migrant integration across all streams (Skill, Family and Humanitarian) can be a long process and is largely dependent on pre-migration background, skills and individual circumstances;
 - (b) humanitarian entrants, in general, have lower labour market participation, are less highly educated and have lower rates of English language proficiency than other migrant cohorts or the Australia-born population and require specialised support to overcome barriers to integration;
 - (c) where humanitarian migrants are successfully integrated, their children have comparable social and economic outcomes to children of the Australia-born population across key OECD indicators and, in particular, they are less likely to be unemployed and more likely to be highly educated;
 - (d) the risks of unsuccessful migrant integration extends beyond poor social and economic outcomes and may make affected individuals more vulnerable to extremist/radical elements;
 - (e) factors that can lead to radicalisation are multi-faceted, difficult to quantify and vary between individuals;
 - (f) recent overseas examples and Australia's historical experience with the Sunni Lebanese community illustrate potential community safety and national security risks associated with unsuccessful integration; and
 - (g) evidence shows that successful migrant integration is mainly determined by individual circumstance and settlement support, rather than solely by nationality;
3. To mitigate risks to the community and consistent with existing Cabinet authority, we recommend that the Committee note that in the first half of 2016 the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection will bring forward proposals to:
 - (a) reform the visa framework and remove direct access to permanent residence to better align visa and citizenship decision-making with national security and community protection outcomes, and support economic growth and innovation; and
 - (b) introduce a visa risk assessment tool that establishes an intelligence-led threat identification and risk profiling capability incorporating immigration as well as national security and criminality risk for visa applicants.

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4. We recommend that the Committee agree that to further mitigate risks and support successful resettlement and integration outcomes, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection will:

- (a) apply additional screening criteria to the 12,000 Syrian intake and extend this, where possible and on a risk basis, to the Humanitarian Programme (Attachment XX refers); and
- (b) conduct research into social cohesion issues and integration prospects associated with the Syrian cohort to inform any future reforms to Australia's humanitarian resettlement arrangements.

SUPPORTING ARGUMENT:

1. The National Security Committee of Cabinet (the Committee) asked that we report back with advice on Australia's humanitarian resettlement services, including a comparison of Australia's performance internationally and an examination of what factors contribute to successful resettlement and integration (MT15/0150/NSC of 23 November 2015 refers). Recent terrorist attacks in foreign countries by radicalised elements have provoked public debate and the need for consideration of social cohesion and integration issues, within the national security context.

Settlement in Australia:

2. Australia is a migrant nation with a resilient economy and a cohesive society. With 26 per cent of our population born overseas, we are culturally diverse – this diversity is a central feature of modern Australia and a key element of our prosperity in an increasingly globalised world. Our economic prosperity, cultural diversity and stable and democratic society continues to make us a highly desirable destination for migrants from a range of backgrounds.

3. While there is a broad level of community support within the Australian community for cultural diversity, maintaining and building on this support will be essential to realise the social and economic benefits of migration into the future.

4. Settlement programmes for migrants generally cover a five-year period post-arrival. These programmes remain a central feature of our approach to migrant integration and provide specialist support to migrants, particularly humanitarian entrants, who require assistance to overcome barriers to integration. They aim to provide the skills and knowledge that migrants need to build a new life in Australia and provide linkages to mainstream social services. Reciprocally, a commitment to learning English, gaining a quality education and securing sustainable employment supports migrants to fully participate in society and gain a sense of belonging.

5. Strong and effective civil society involvement is also critical to migrant integration in Australia. Whether through government-funded programmes, community initiated projects or community-business partnerships, civil society is both the face of welcome and the hand of support. In a community context, civil society involvement enables place-based interventions to suit the needs of different client cohorts, instead of a one-size-fits-all approach.

6. Settlement programmes are delivered across all tiers of government. The Australian Government invests over \$450 million per annum in direct settlement services, which are covered in greater detail at Attachment B.

Australia's settlement performance:

7. There is a solid foundation of international work defining and comparing indicators of migrant integration, notably from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). The OECD defines the key indicators of successful migrant integration as: labour market performance (including high participation rate and low unemployment); job quality (including hours worked, skills recognition or qualifications level, self-employment); cognitive skills (including host-country language literacy, education and training); household income (including reliance on welfare); housing availability; health; civic engagement (including uptake of citizenship); and social cohesion (including perceptions of discrimination, acceptance and impacts).

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8. Across these indicators, Australia performs favourably compared to other OECD countries. Migrant settlement outcomes are equal to, or better than, the outcomes for migrants in other developed countries when considering all streams of migration (see further analysis of outcomes and policies at Attachments A and C).

9. Australian policy-making has a strong focus on English language proficiency, education and employment: the 'three Es', along with targeted programmes for civic engagement. Support in these areas reduces the risk of long-term and inter-generational unemployment; increases productivity, innovation and access to potential new markets; enhances social cohesion; and reduces welfare dependency.

10. Migrant integration can be a long process and is largely dependent on pre-migration background, skills and circumstances. In Australia, Skill stream migrants are selected to be well-equipped with the above three indicators, allowing this cohort to quickly become economic and social contributors. Other cohorts, such as Family stream migrants, secondary visa holders (the spouses and dependent family members of primary visa holders) and humanitarian entrants, are not selected on an economic basis. These cohorts generally take longer and require more settlement assistance to become integrated into society.

11. Humanitarian entrants face significant settlement challenges as a result of their experience of persecution and discrimination. They may need to overcome educational and English language barriers, as well as mental and physical health problems. In general, they have lower labour market participation, are less highly educated and have lower rates of English language proficiency than other migrant cohorts or the Australia-born population. Research indicates that 46 per cent have never undertaken paid work, 25 per cent have a long-term disability or illness, 20 per cent are illiterate in their own language and 15 per cent have never attended school. They are twice as likely to struggle with housing payments and more than three times as likely to go without meals as other Australians.

12. In addition, settlement locations for humanitarian entrants are often determined by existing community connections, which result in concentrations of communities in particular areas and sometimes limits prospects for settlement in regional Australia or areas of greater employment opportunity. Indicators of social cohesion in areas of high humanitarian migrant concentration and low socio-economic status are significantly below the national average.

13. However, research also shows that the second generation (children of humanitarian migrants) perform strongly against integration indicators, with labour force participation, educational outcomes and incomes above the Australian average. Humanitarian entrants also show:

- a high level of entrepreneurship and reported higher median incomes from their own unincorporated business than Skilled or Family stream migrants; and
- high levels of citizenship uptake, which is an indicator of integration and social cohesion and demonstrates a migrant's commitment to and understanding of shared societal rights and responsibilities.

Radicalisation of humanitarian entrants:

14. In the wake of terrorist attacks in Paris and social unrest in Cologne and elsewhere in Germany, it is prudent to examine Australia's potential exposure to the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation of migrants including humanitarian entrants. France, Germany and a number of other European nations have experienced a recent uncontrolled influx of asylum seekers from conflicts in Syria and Africa. France and Germany both have large numbers of asylum seekers and irregular migrants, and only very small managed

humanitarian programmes of a kind comparable to Australia's. Although they both offer compulsory civic orientation courses and some language training, it is apparent that there are cohorts which are not benefitting from these initiatives.

15. France's non-humanitarian migrant intake is dominated by the family stream and therefore much less focused on economic selection, with professional categories making up only nine per cent of total intake. In addition, the concentration of low-skilled migrant arrivals in poor housing and areas with low socio-economic indicators appears to have led to inter-generational disadvantage, high levels of youth unemployment, and subsequent disengagement and radicalisation.

16. Factors that can lead to radicalisation are multifaceted, difficult to quantify and vary between individuals, but may include settlement and integration outcomes. Some humanitarian entrants bring beliefs, issues or associations that may lead them to advocate or engage in politically motivated violence and many face significant social, economic and cultural challenges once onshore. These factors may make humanitarian entrants more vulnerable to radicalisation, even with stringent security checking in place, and underline the importance of successful settlement programmes.

17. Many humanitarian entrants in Australia also maintain close and enduring ties to their communities offshore and are strongly influenced by events there, evidenced by the significant number of Australians who have attempted to support or join the conflict in Syria.

18. They also tend to co-locate in areas with diaspora communities, notably in larger capital cities (Sydney and Melbourne). While there is no clear causal relationship between the size of a migrant community and the number of Islamist extremists that emerge from that community in Australia, settlement in regional areas that provide employment opportunities and display a level of community cohesion may reduce the potential for future radicalisation.

19. In Australia, the extremism landscape has been significantly influenced by our refugee intake and subsequent related migration from relatives and spouses (chain migration). The most prominent ethnic group amongst Australian Sunni extremists are the Lebanese. The majority of this cohort can be linked to the wave of humanitarian migration to Australia as a result of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), as well as their extended families and Australia-born descendants.

20. Australia's intake from this conflict was largely from the poorer and uneducated Lebanese Muslim population in northern Lebanon who fled to neighbouring Syria. Australia established a diplomatic presence in Syria to help facilitate the migration of displaced Lebanese; however, there were a number of key factors that differentiated this intake:

- as the displaced Lebanese were not declared refugees by UNHCR, the Australian Government relaxed visa requirements for migration and treated this cohort as 'quasi-refugees' allowing Lebanese migrants who reached the Australian Embassy in Syria to apply to enter Australia, conditional on sponsorship from relatives;
- the criteria were further relaxed to expand the categories of people eligible for entry, resulting in greater chain migration of new Lebanese communities to Australia;
- security and character checking was a challenge as much of the Lebanese Government ceased to function during the war;
- the majority of Lebanese migrants to Australia chose not to return home after the war, but maintained strong and enduring ties to their communities in Lebanon, including complex religious, political and ethnic loyalties; and

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- this wave of migrants introduced new Lebanese communities to Australia (Australia's Lebanese population up to this point was largely Christian).

21. Consequently, this led to the transportation to Australia of a Sunni community which included elements who already held extremist beliefs, or who were more highly receptive to extremist messages. While there have been instances of extremist violence from within this community, most activities relate to the provision of ideological or political support and/or fundraising.

22. Settlement services at the time the Lebanese cohorts were arriving were of an informal nature and often provided through community and diaspora networks. Since this time, delivery of settlement services has been improved through use of service providers, in part as a response to lessons learned around the Lebanese experience.

23. The vast majority of humanitarian entrants have integrated into Australian society without national security concerns. However, it has been established that there are links between recent onshore terrorist attacks and the humanitarian intake. The perpetrator of the Martin Place Siege (Man Haron Monis) arrived as a refugee from Iran. Recent shootings in Parramatta and Melbourne were perpetrated by individuals who arrived in Australia as dependents on a parent's Global Special Humanitarian Programme (subclass 202) visa:

- Farhad Khalil Mohammad Jabar arrived from Iran as a dependent on his mother's visa granted 10 October 2006 – his father arrived as an IMA in January 2001 (processed in Tehran); and
- Abdul Numan Haider arrived from Afghanistan as a dependent on his father's visa granted 19 May 2003 (processed in Islamabad).

Measures to mitigate radicalisation risks:

24. Successful settlement and integration outcomes are a key contributor to social cohesion and may reduce the risk of radicalisation. It is also equally important that the Australian public's confidence in immigration and cultural diversity is maintained to ensure continued acceptance and integration of migrants into the community.

25. To mitigate risks and build public confidence, I (Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) will be bringing forward a package of reforms to simplify Australia's visa framework and create stronger controls over access to permanent residency and citizenship. This new framework will introduce additional decision points along the immigration continuum including: an enforceable integration framework to assess aspiring migrants' suitability for life in Australia; a revamped Citizenship Test and Citizenship Pledge to strengthen accountability for commitments made at Citizenship conferral; and enhanced access, use and protection of sensitive information to strengthen intelligence-led, risk-based decision making across the continuum, from pre-visa stage through to post-citizenship conferral. These measures will further strengthen Australia's selective managed migration streams.

26. In relation to the planned intake of 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, in collaboration with UNHCR, is putting in place more stringent checks to review character, identity and security. These checks exceed those put in place by European countries to manage the irregular movement of people across continental Europe. In addition, Australia is prioritising family groups who have been registered with UNHCR for lengthy periods to further reduce the potential for deliberate extremist infiltration. [more info required from ref and hum branch]

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27. Nonetheless, it is expected that some refugees from this conflict will bring with them issues, beliefs or associations that lead them to advocate or engage in politically motivated or communal violence. Close attention to the delivery of health, education, employment services and infrastructure that positively influence successful integration and social cohesion may assist to mitigate, but will not eliminate, the ongoing prospect that a small number of refugees will be susceptible to criminality and radicalisation. Social alienation, lack of opportunity and uncertain identity will be contributing factors, as has been observed in earlier humanitarian cohorts. A more detailed assessment of the threat posed by the Syrian and Iraqi cohort is at Attachment XXX.

28. It is proposed that, where possible, these additional screening criteria be applied to the entire Humanitarian Programme to help ensure that we accept individuals with a high probability of successful integration.

29. To further build Australia's evidence base on settlement and integration outcomes over the longer term, our Departments will conduct a longitudinal study on the 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugee cohort. This study will inform any proposed future changes to Australia's settlement programme.

Implications:

30. There are no financial implications from the recommendations of this Submission. Any costs associated with the additional screening of the Humanitarian programme intake and the longitudinal study will be funded from within existing resources [tbc – need to check with external budgets and Syrian TF]

31. There is no regulatory or compliance impacts from this Submission.
[PRS – need to call OBPR and Regional to confirm that they are happy with “no impacts”]

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