

THE NATIONAL SETTLEMENT FRAMEWORK

THE FRAMEWORK

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL SETTLEMENT FRAMEWORK?

The National Settlement Framework is a high level structural blueprint for the three tiers of government, Commonwealth, State and Territory and Local Government, to work in partnership to effectively plan and deliver services that support the settlement of migrants and new arrivals in Australia.

The Framework sets out focus areas for the three tiers of government to regularly engage and work together in partnership on, and to collaborate with stakeholders.

Governments and stakeholders will be guided by the structures and initiatives in this Framework to make planning decisions on the provision of settlement and support services and to deliver coordinated, client-centric services, informed by research and evaluation.

The Framework is a starting point for stronger, more effective collaboration across all these groups to address gaps or barriers in service delivery.

WHY DO WE HAVE A NATIONAL SETTLEMENT FRAMEWORK?

The Framework reflects the commitment of the three tiers of government to enhance inter-governmental collaboration, information sharing and coordination to improve settlement outcomes for migrants and new arrivals in Australia.

Australia is recognised for having world-class settlement services which have been built up over the last few decades. The Framework is an important mechanism to ensure Australia retains this success in connecting migrants and new arrivals with the wider Australian community.

The Framework provides a strong foundation for a commitment to:

- the effective and efficient use of existing resources for mainstream and targeted settlement services
- driving service delivery improvements by identifying and responding to gaps and barriers
- integration of migrants and new arrivals into the broader community through a smooth settlement process
- government funded services that translate into successful settlement outcomes
- ongoing engagement with the non-government sector, business and industry, and the broader community.

WHAT IS SETTLEMENT?

Migrants come to Australia for various reasons and for different lengths of time.

The first five years of permanent residence in Australia after arrival is generally considered the settlement period. This is a time of adjustment as migrants and new arrivals seek to become oriented, established, integrated and independent in their communities. A large number of temporary migrants also come to Australia. These temporary migrants will also seek to become oriented and established in Australia and may go on to acquire permanent residence during their stay in Australia.

Settlement is multifaceted and complex. With the right support targeted to need, people coming to live in Australia can become active community members benefiting themselves and the nation as a whole. They bring valuable skills and experiences, which can help to meet labour force needs and contribute to the nation's productivity and development.

Settlement and support services are an important part of Australia's commitment to providing a path and a means for eligible migrants and new arrivals to achieve full participation and adjust to their new society. Such services are critical, particularly in the initial years. A large number of stakeholders are involved, including the three tiers of government, service providers and other non-government organisations.

Effective collaboration and coordination between these stakeholders ultimately leads to better service-delivery to migrants and new arrivals and helps to smooth their transition into Australian society. Australia's approach to settlement is based on mutual benefits. The Australian community benefits as a whole both economically and socially from migration which brings different skills, perspectives and knowledge. Migrants benefit from joining one of the world's most stable, democratic and welcoming societies.

WHAT SERVICES DO PEOPLE NEED TO SETTLE?

The Australian social services sector provides an extensive range of services that benefit many Australians, including welfare and support for vulnerable people in the community. The sector provides a range of services to migrants and new arrivals. In addition to mainstream services, specialist settlement services are also available to eligible migrants and new arrivals.

Social services, from both the government and non-government sectors, provide migrants and new arrivals with support, knowledge and skills that enable them to establish a life in Australia. In particular, government-funded services focus on supporting the early acquisition of English language skills, active participation in the workforce, and access to education. These aspects are critical to successful settlement as they assist migrants and new arrivals engage economically, socially and culturally in Australian society.

Settlement is non-linear and migrants and new arrivals do not necessarily progress through services sequentially. They may access services concurrently and/or may leave a service and then reengage at a later date.

The needs and the barriers faced by migrants and new arrivals vary considerably and require a range of mainstream and targeted settlement support and services. Additional services may be required during the settlement process for those facing particular vulnerabilities, including refugees due to their often difficult pre-arrival experiences, children, young people, women and the elderly. Services should be available, accessible, timely and culturally appropriate. Settlement and support service requirements for migrants and new arrivals are predominately in the following nine priority areas¹:

Language Services	Employment	Education and Training
Housing	Health and Wellbeing	Transport
Civic Participation	Family and Social Support	Justice

A summary of key services delivered by the three tiers of government against the nine priority areas is provided in the [Appendix](#).

TARGET GROUPS

Many people who enter Australia as migrants or longer-term temporary entrants are eligible to receive settlement and mainstream support provided by Commonwealth, State and Territory and Local Governments. This includes:

- Permanent migrants - people arriving under a range of visa subclasses within the Humanitarian Programme (including refugees who require specialist settlement and support services that recognise their often-difficult history prior to arriving in Australia) and within the Skilled, Family and Special Eligibility streams of the Migration Programme.
- Longer-term temporary entrants (this category includes visa subclasses for international students, workers/business people and NZ citizens on special category visas).

Not all migrants and new arrivals need special support or services from governments to settle in Australia. Many migrants arrive with good English language skills, formal education and/or employment qualifications.

Eligibility for government services is dependent on criteria such as visa subclass, period of residence in Australia and the migrant's personal circumstances.

ASSISTANCE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

Asylum Seekers are people who have either arrived lawfully in Australia on a temporary substantive visa or people who have arrived in Australia by sea or air without a valid visa. Australia provides protection from refoulement to asylum seekers during their status determination process, and provides protection to those who engage Australia's protection obligations in line with Australia's international obligations under the Refugee Convention and other human rights treaties to which Australia is a party.

¹ Areas identified by the former Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (MCIMA) Working Party on Settlement Issues.

In addition, the Commonwealth is responsible for providing assistance to asylum seekers through support services delivered by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and some mainstream social services while they wait for their protection claims to be assessed and their status to be resolved.

SHARED COMMITMENT

The three tiers of Government aspire to improve migrants' and new arrivals' settlement experience and economic, social and cultural integration and engagement in Australian society. Together we commit to enhance inter-governmental and cross sector collaboration, information sharing and coordination of services.

FOCUS AREAS

The Framework identifies focus areas that are sufficiently flexible to respond to the unique and emerging needs of individuals, communities and each State and Territory. The Framework also provides each tier of government with the opportunity to develop more detailed, tailored implementation actions.

Parties to the Framework are committed to the three focus areas and the activities set out below.

- 1) Planning – supportive and collaborative settlement and support service planning structures and processes, including information-sharing
- 2) Delivery – coordinated client-centric services eliminating gaps and duplications
- 3) Evaluation and Review – a robust evidence base for assessing and better understanding settlement and support service delivery and outcomes.

The Framework does not provide additional resources and the three tiers of government deliver on commitments as part of their agency business as usual activity.

1) PLANNING – SUPPORTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE SETTLEMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICE PLANNING STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES, INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING

Effective processes and structures for planning settlement and support services are essential at the national, state/territory and locals levels to ensure that governments are well-informed and able to make effective planning decisions. Collaboration between the three tiers of government, as well as with service providers and the non-government sector, is key to the delivery of high-quality, culturally appropriate and inclusive services that ensure new arrivals are able to participate in Australian society.

Collaboration and coordination, including through regular information-sharing, through a range of mechanisms improves the ability of the three tiers of government to better understand the sector and respond to future change. This will also enable governments to work more closely with stakeholders and to be responsive and flexible in service delivery. Clarity on Commonwealth planning levels and arrival data and national, regional and local level priorities will ensure that the three tiers of government are able to work together more effectively.

Information-sharing between the three tiers of government will also enable further analysis of trends, projected impacts and an understanding of individual and community needs.

Effective planning of settlement and support services would generally include the following activities, noting it is for jurisdictions to determine how best to give effect to these at the local level:

- collaborative and coordinated settlement outcome structures including:
 - participation in regular meetings of the Senior Officials Settlement Outcomes Group
 - reinvigoration of state and territory Settlement Outcomes Planning Committees
- development of a high level Settlement Outcomes Plan to be shared annually by each jurisdiction's Settlement Outcomes Planning Committee
- collaborative engagement on priority settlement issues
- timely data and information collection and sharing, including policy changes, best practice and research and evaluation findings, between the three levels of government through a range of mechanisms in a timely manner
- active engagement with the non-government sector, in particular service providers and communities as well as with industry and business.

It is expected that each jurisdiction will prioritise their efforts to suit their particular circumstances and resources, in discussion with stakeholders.

2) DELIVERY – COORDINATED CLIENT-CENTRIC SERVICES ELIMINATING GAPS AND DUPLICATIONS

Effective service delivery ensures that migrants and new arrivals are readily able to access the relevant services for their circumstances and needs from mainstream services and specialist settlement services, in order to fully participate in Australian society. Services are delivered by agencies across the three tiers of government, as well as by government-funded service providers and the non-government sector. The services provided by each tier of government vary according to the responsibilities outlined subsequently.

The Framework supports service delivery that complements and draws from existing strengths and capacities. Coordinated service delivery will minimise gaps and avoid duplication.

Effective service delivery includes:

- Informed resource decisions that address priority areas of need and barriers to service access
- Alignment of access to mainstream and specialist settlement services
- Fostering strengthened working relationships between settlement and mainstream service providers
- Consultation and collaboration with stakeholders on the design, delivery and evaluation of services and policies
- Flexible and adaptable services delivered within a deregulated environment
- Enhanced strategies to attract migrants and new arrivals to regional areas and assist with their integration into regional communities
- Targeted activities, where feasible, that build sector capacity and core competencies
- Implementing, where feasible, the recommendations of research and evaluation activity to improve services.

3) EVALUATION AND REVIEW – A ROBUST EVIDENCE BASE FOR ASSESSING AND BETTER UNDERSTANDING SETTLEMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICE DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES

A robust evidence base assists in the measurement of settlement outcomes and helps to identify the settlement and mainstream policies and programmes that are working well as well as where improvements can be made.

The existing body of knowledge about successful approaches to settlement needs to be further developed and refined through research.

More thorough monitoring and evaluation of current services will enhance the ability of the three tiers of government to provide accessible and effective services.

Monitoring of national, community and client level outcomes requires:

- Regular review and evaluation of services and outcomes
- Improving data collection (including consistent baseline data), linkages and integration
- Collection of consistent baseline data, qualitative information and longitudinal data
- Research and evaluation on identified priority areas, including service delivery

GOVERNANCE

Responsibility to oversee the Framework rests with a national Senior Officials Settlement Outcomes Group. The Group will include senior officials representing the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, each State and Territory Government and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and be attended on an ex-officio basis by senior representatives of key Commonwealth Departments.

In terms of its workplan, the SOSOG will

- ◆ consider plans and reports (for example service pressures, new initiatives, research and best practice) prepared by state/ territory Settlement Outcomes Planning Committees
- ◆ consider data and information, particularly from the Commonwealth, on policy and programme settings
- ◆ determine high-level priority national issues requiring joint attention.

SOSOG will also informally review and make changes to the National Settlement Framework on a consensus basis and direct an evaluation of the National Settlement Framework at three-yearly intervals.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Framework complements existing policy in jurisdictions and does not override any existing legislation, programmes or initiatives. All tiers of government are responsible under existing access and equity obligations to ensure that settlement and mainstream services are accessible to eligible migrants and new arrivals. All tiers, as well as the non-government sector, have an important role to play to promote social cohesion, cultural diversity and participation in civic society.

The three tiers of government have an individual and collective role to implement and progress the focus areas and report to the Senior Officials Settlement Outcomes Group.

The respective responsibilities of each are detailed below:

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT	STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has Constitutional responsibility for administering the Migration and Humanitarian programmes and asylum seeker policy. • Provides key specialised settlement services to eligible migrants and new arrivals during the early years of settlement. • Provide a range of mainstream services, delivered by a number of Commonwealth agencies, to meet the on-arrival and longer term needs of migrants and new arrivals. • Provides funding to State and Territory Governments for a range of other mainstream services. • Asylum Seeker support services. • Funds some initiatives to address barriers to settlement (such as racism and discrimination) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides accessible and equitable mainstream services to the Australian community. • May also fund complementary support services for migrants and new arrivals whom they consider to be a priority to settle, or to encourage settlement in a particular locality. • The type and level of support varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and community to community.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	NON-GOVERNMENT SECTOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides information to the other tiers of government regarding the needs and issues for particular community groups. • Provide a range of services and infrastructure to the local community, including, where relevant and depending on financial capacity, specialised services to migrants and new arrivals and initiatives to encourage settlement in a particular locality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages with migrants and new arrivals at a grass roots level and plays a key role in advising all tiers of government on community and client groups, settlement needs and social policy issues. • Contribute to effective planning and delivery of settlement and support services based on considerable experience and knowledge. • Provides a link between mainstream services and the settlement sector, and communities. • A broad range of supports and interventions to meet particular needs (eg volunteer run programmes, emergency relief, industry initiatives, community cooperatives, ethnic associations, etc).

An outline of the services provided by each of the government sectors is provided in the [Appendix](#).

The following table provides an indication of services against the Framework's nine priority areas that may be provided by the Commonwealth Government, State and Territory Governments and Local Governments.

FRAMEWORK PRIORITY AREAS	COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT	STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENT	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English language and literacy programmes for adults, the elderly, youth and children Early childhood, youth, and adult education and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English as an Additional Language (EAL) programmes in schools and a variety of complementary programmes Early childhood services such as Maternal and Child Health and Kindergarten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifelong learning and partnering and supporting local community Local libraries as knowledge and learning hubs
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and training programmes for the workforce Workplace and job assistance programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State-funded employment and training programmes Economic development initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local economic development initiatives Community based volunteer programmes
Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted community care programmes Specialised settlement support programmes Assistance for Asylum Seekers Specialised health/medical/disability assistance programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of mainstream/targeted health services and interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventative health programmes, community gardens, walking groups, community recreational activities
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing assistance and homelessness prevention programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public housing programmes including social housing, affordable housing and homelessness programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community housing and affordable housing programmes
Language Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translating and interpreting services Targeted access and equity policies facilitating communication in languages other than English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreting and translating services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community language service programmes Resident information kits in multiple languages
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects under settlement grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transport Driver education and mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community transport services

FRAMEWORK PRIORITY AREAS	COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT	STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENT	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Civic Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of settlement and multicultural services and community engagement • Australian Citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of programmes and initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to the Community Kits, community festivals, events, ceremonies, Australia Citizenship ceremonies
Family and Social Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income, family and child support programmes • Family relationship and support programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and initiatives to support and protect children, youth and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community centres, recreational activities, aged and childcare services
Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects under settlement grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted initiatives for agencies to work with specific groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on for example, dispute resolution, fines and local by-laws

Note: Eligibility for all services listed in the table is dependent on criteria such as visa subclass and status, period of residence in Australia and personal circumstances of a migrant. There are also variances in eligibility across jurisdictions and between agencies.