

Summary Report

SETS Community of Practice (CoP) - State & Territory Best Practice Meetings (March – April 2023)

June 2023

Collaboration across the Community of Practice (CoP)

The Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Community of Practice (CoP) held **seven** State & Territory Best Practice Meetings across March and April 2023. The meetings were held in-person with hybrid call-in options and brought together SETS providers in each state and territory.

Queensland SETSCoP Workshop



The main objectives of the SETSCoP are to enable collaboration, shared learning, and the advancement of good practice across the SETS program and the settlement sector. This collaboration, in turn, aims to improve outcomes for people supported through SETS, along with the wider community. The State and Territory Best Practice Meetings were designed to align with these CoP objectives.

This *Summary Report* provides an overview of the round of meetings. The majority of the report outlines the results from the workshop activity, with SETS providers and other settlement stakeholders collaborating to reflect on 1) outcome aims, 2) key issues, 3) SETS strengths, and 4) recommendations for future settlement models and programs.

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State and Territory Meetings Summary

QLD

Wednesday 22 March
Social Policy Group, Brisbane

SA

Wednesday 29 March
Salisbury Community Hub, Salisbury

VIC

Thursday 30 March
Kathleen Symes Library, Carlton

NSW & ACT

Monday 3 April
Darling Square Library, Haymarket

TAS

Thursday 13 April
MRC Tasmania, Glenorchy

WA

Tuesday 18 April
Communicare, Cannington

NT

Thursday 20 April
Melaleuca Australia, Darwin

Each meeting was held from 10am – 12:30pm, followed by a catered lunch which offered attendees an opportunity to network in a less formal setting. The SETSCoP facilitator, the Social Policy Group, extends thanks all SETS providers who offered their facilities to help host the meetings and to all attendees for their participation and contributions.

Eritrean Lunch in Brisbane



Meeting outcomes: An overview

- **Connections** - The meetings offered a platform for connections between SETS organisations and staff, including for joint learning, referral pathways, and partnerships. The introductions in each meeting centred on a series of questions which revolved around the 'why' of settlement: What first drew people to the work and how people find meaning in - and contribute to – refugee and migrant settlement.
- **CoP Update** - The Social Policy Group provided an update on the SETSCoP, including reflections on 2022 and planned activities for 2023. This included high-level take-aways from consultations with SETS providers across the country.
- **Department of Home Affairs Update** - Officials from the Department of Home Affairs provided updates at several of the meetings. This included an overview of the Humanitarian Program, settlement statistics, estimated planning levels (EPLs), and perspectives from the Settlement Operations Network.
- **Workshop: Contributions to the independent evaluation of SETS** – Each state and territory included a workshop activity phase, where meeting attendees worked together formulating key reflections on SETS. These reflections fed into an external, independent evaluation of SETS commissioned by the Department of Home Affairs and conducted by Deloitte Access Economics.

Western Australia Workshop



CoP collaborative contributions to the independent evaluation of SETS

CoP contributions have been categorised under four overarching categories:

1. Outcomes being aimed for in SETS
2. Major issues and trends for refugees, migrants, and communities
3. Strengths of the SETS model
4. Recommendations for future models and programs

This high-level summary synthesises perspectives from SETS providers working in collaborative workshop groups across the seven state and territory meetings.

Victoria workshop



1. Outcomes being aimed for in SETS

1a) Outcomes are client-led and responsive to people's dynamic needs

Workshop participants across the seven state and territory meetings emphasised that **SETS outcomes and goals are client-led** – set by migrants and refugees themselves. Settlement supports that are responsive and flexible in meeting client-led outcomes is seen as one of the major strengths of the SETS model (outlined further below in 3. *Strengths of the SETS model*).

SETS staff noted that outcomes are distinct for:

- Different individuals
- Different cohorts
- Different age groups and other aspects of people's lives: For instance, youth outcomes can differ from other age groups, as can outcomes defined by LGBTQI+ clients.

People’s needs are also constantly changing. Hence, the settlement sector and SETS programs are also continually evaluating and adapting to serve the needs of people over time.

Workshop participants highlighted that this approach leans into settlement that is **strength-based** (along with culturally-responsive and trauma-informed). Workshop participants noted that strong relationships and high levels of trust are essential in identifying outcomes. It takes time to work out what clients see as their priorities and the barriers that are preventing them from achieving those priorities.

“Are we listening to what clients are saying? Or do we push our own agendas and timeframes?” – SETS provider

1b) Different domains of settlement

SETS outcomes are linked to national settlement priority areas, responding to identified settlement needs and categories.¹ SETS outcome areas discussed in the workshop – some of which align directly with national settlement priority areas and some of which vary - include:

Safety
Life skills – linked to independence in navigating systems
Social connections, reduced social isolation, access to community, and a sense of belonging
Finding and maintaining employment
Maintaining and enhancing physical health, mental health, and overall wellbeing
Education
English language skills
Secure and affordable housing – and not only finding a house, but keeping it
Strong families, including tackling domestic & family violence (DFV) and navigating parenting

“Settlement is also for communities, not just individuals.” – SETS provider

2c) Independence in navigating systems

A fundamental outcome for SETS is for people to be able to independently navigate different systems in Australia. This includes building capacity for clients and families to access support services themselves, including mainstream services (such as housing and healthcare). Workshop participants often remarked that these systems can be complex and challenging to navigate. If a client can understand how to navigate these systems and have the tools necessary in their settlement journey, this is seen as a key success.

¹ The National Settlement Framework identified nine priority areas: Language services; employment; education and training; housing; health and wellbeing; transport; civic participation; family and social support; justice. <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/the-national-settlement-framework.pdf>

Effective systems change

A key part of effective settlement is not just on the migrant and refugee side of the equation, but for mainstream services and the wider community to be able to adapt and be culturally responsive. Workshop participants spoke about disrupting the system, so it is not just an individual always struggling against it – for instance, tackling institutional racism. Other participants discussed it from the perspective of equipping mainstream services with the capacity and skills to be able to work with SETS clients (a notion also discussed in 4. *Recommendations for future models and programs*).

One workshop participant noted an aim of self-redundancy – **that a core outcome is for the client not to need SETS services any longer**. Another workshop participant noted that an outcome is not just for SETS clients to be financially independent, but “independent in every sense of the word”. **This includes clients that are confident, strong, empowered, exercise personal agency, and have choice and control in making decisions.**

One workshop participant linked the notion of freedom to independence: That a SETS client could simply pick up their keys or leave their house to go do something (thereby not requiring further support). Another workshop participant noted this outcome area is also tied to the self-advocacy model.

In practice, a SETS provider noted: *“It is wonderful to see clients that are notably different from the beginning of working with them in their settlement journey. To see them getting documents prepared by themselves, getting things translated themselves. They are no longer talking on the phone to their children. They are doing many different things themselves. It’s like seeing pieces of the jigsaw come together.”*

South Australia Workshop



2. Major issues and trends for refugees, migrants and communities

2a) Housing

- **Housing was highlighted as a most urgent issue.** With major shortages in housing and accelerating rental increases, many SETS clients are experiencing housing precarity.
 - More clients are at risk of homelessness or already homeless – sleeping rough or moving in with relatives or community members, leading to overcrowding and social tensions.
 - There are increasing levels of debt just to meet increasing rental obligations.
 - SETS clients are often putting up with poor housing conditions because there are so few viable accommodation alternatives.
 - People are also moving further away from community, areas with better services, and areas where they have felt settled in order to find affordable rent. This includes to outer-urban areas or sometimes being forced to move from regional areas, which is a loss for those communities.
- Some regional workshop participants pointed out that recent natural disasters, such as floods, have negatively impacted housing stock.
- Amidst the general lack of housing is also a lack of *suitable* housing. Some SETS clients live with larger families, and houses with multiple bedrooms are often very costly.
- SETS providers perceive underlying discrimination in housing. This includes against larger families; those on Centrelink income; and those with a lack of rental history. Though discrimination is hard to legally prove, many SETS staff are finding that refugee and migrant families are affected and facing major challenges in securing housing, for longer and longer periods of time.

2b) Cost of living

- Rapidly rising cost of living was also spotlighted as a major issue for SETS clients and communities. This was often linked with housing, but also extended beyond it:
 - **There are rising costs of essential goods, groceries, and utilities.**
 - There is also a **shortage of General Practitioners providing bulk-billing services**, which can mean that SETS clients delay or put off medical appointments.
- There are higher demands for emergency relief.

2c) Mental health

- Mental health concerns are increasingly important in SETS. Mental health issues partially stem from COVID-19 with **isolation and difficulties in accessing services during the pandemic**. The increasing area of concern was also attributed to issues beyond COVID-19 – **with links to trauma (including intergenerational trauma)**.
- **Young people's mental health**, social disengagement, and suicide ideation were discussed in several of the workshops as a particularly concerning problem.

2d) Domestic and family violence (DFV)

- **Women's safety and DFV** continue to be significant areas of concern.
 - Organisations find that people living in Australia on Partner visas can be at particular risk, facing increased isolation and lacking access to SETS services.

Interlinked issues

Workshop participants across the different states and territories pointed out that settlement issues are interlinked. Housing and cost of living issues have flow on effects to Domestic and Family Violence (DFV). DFV has implications for short- and long-term mental health, as well as other settlement outcome areas. Housing and cost of living also impacts mental health directly, and vice versa. **SETS providers discussed how this has policy and program implications – including that issues can rarely be tackled in isolation but must be understood in relation to the broader range of dynamic factors and issues occurring in settlement and the wider community.**

2e) Family reunion

- **The lack of clear processing times for family reunion and sponsorship visas is impacting people's settlement.** SETS clients who have applied to sponsor relatives are waiting extended periods of time – initial indications of 12 months can often stretch to 18 months, and then to 2 years, etcetera. The lack of certainty has several ramifications:
 - SETS clients who have experienced trauma are often intensely worried about their family members abroad in conflict zones or deteriorating humanitarian conditions.
 - **SETS clients struggle to engage with services and their settlement journey**, such as English language classes and other settlement opportunities. They may feel guilty for doing so while there is uncertainty about their relative's safety and prospects.
 - Relatedly, clients may focus solely on employment to remit money, with feelings of responsibility for family abroad. This focus can be at the detriment of other important facets of settlement such as English language skills.
- A workshop participant noted that it is **often the lack of clarity that is most damaging**. In some ways, even visa refusal for relations abroad can lead to increased engagement in people's own settlement, as it means mental closure and the knowledge that the person in Australia has tried the best they can to support their relations abroad.
- Settlement providers noted that when family reunion has occurred and relatives join SETS clients in Australia, the settlement outcomes can be phenomenal.

2f) Young people

- Youth issues were discussed as a major issue in settlement.
- Along with mental health (above), workshop participants noted that there is a **lack of tailored education supports for young people** after secondary studies. SETS participants studying at TAFE or university often lack dedicated tutors, English as an Additional Language (EAL) support, and other supports on their education pathways, which is hampering education progress and completion.

- Young migrants and refugees are taking on added responsibilities, such as banking, household organising, and family care. This impacts young people’s mental health, their settlement journey and their wider lives. It also impacts family dynamics, and can cause intergenerational issues and family violence. One workshop participant described this as: *“Young people are walking in two worlds. They want to do things that are on offer, but their parents have come from a different culture, with different styles of parenting.”*

Western Australia Workshop



2g) Aged care

- There is an aging population in Australia in general, but **aging is also an emerging issue for migrant and refugee communities.**
- This is an issue for community members who have been living in Australia for 10 – 15 years but it also affects SETS through family reunion and SETS clients having aging parents.
- **A SETS provider highlighted the lack of cultural-responsiveness and appropriate services in mainstream aged care for migrants** (discussed further below in 4. Recommendations for future models and programs - Capacity Building for Mainstream Services).

2h) Diverse needs

- SETS providers noted that there has been an increase in the number of LGBTQI+ refugees and vulnerable migrants, meaning the settlement sector must keep adapting and responding to different people's needs.

2i) Long-term English language learning and associated settlement programming

- One issue for SETS are clients who do not reach English language proficiency even after long periods of time taking classes. This cohort of people may have very low- or no-literacy in their own language and have missed out on basic education previously.
- SETS providers noted that this cohort do not have the English language proficiency necessary for strong settlement outcomes and will need more support and for longer periods of time, often approaching providers after 5 years with major needs.

2j) Digital literacy

- Digital literacy was identified as a pressing issue for SETS clients. Service access has migrated online, a trend which particularly accelerated during COVID-19. This includes government support and housing. **Online services creates barriers for many people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people with low-literacy, and people without strong digital literacy skills.**
- When clients are not proficient digitally, they need intensive and high time-consumption support to navigate online systems.
- **There is a lack of "Level 0" digital literacy education.** There are SETS clients who often cannot even enrol in digital literacy classes because the enrolment process itself is online. Many digital literacy courses require certain levels of digital proficiency which is problematic for SETS clients who have rarely previously used digital technologies.
- **SETS clients also face issues in access to digital devices.**
 - There is no set Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) or SETS funding for devices specifically. While there are no-interest loans (NILs), they are not unlimited in funding, and often families will face choices - such as between a car (needed to get to work) and buying laptops, computers, or phones.
- Digital literacy is also connected to other issues:
 - DFV, and lack of access to information, knowledge, and services.
 - The heightened number and risks of scams and cyber-security issues.
 - Youth-adult relations, with younger people accessing online banking.

3. Strengths of the SETS model

3a) Flexible, responsive, and holistic

- **Workshop participants highlighted that the SETS model offers flexibility in delivering services that are responsive to clients' needs** (linked to the notion of outcomes are client-led outlined above in: 1. *Outcomes being aimed for in SETS*). This includes both individual support and group sessions.
- **SETS is client-led, community-informed, and based on local needs** – allowing the space for activities which people find valuable. The model encourages **creativity, autonomy, and innovation** to meet needs.
- The model allows for **holistic support, with a wide breadth of responses and services**.
 - When discussing a specific example of work SETS do that mainstream services do not, a SETS provider noted they specialise in parenting in a new culture, linking religious leaders, community leaders, and new arrivals.
- SETS works well as part of a complementary suite of programs, for instance, with state-funded employment programs or local-funded programs. This benefits cross-referrals and powerful amplification.
- The **flexibility** in the SETS model was juxtaposed favourably to the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) model by some workshop participants. SETS providers noted it was helpful to not have SETS too claims-based; tick-box and over-quantified – dynamically responding to actual issues occurring for clients and communities, rather than a *"list of things that have to be done"*.
- **The case management component and approach are essential.**
- The localised model means that SETS providers can draw on **local knowledge and build an understanding of history, connections, and expertise with specific communities**.
- SETS focusses on **practical support, including guidance and empowerment of people**.
- There is encouragement and guidelines around **being on the ground and having presence in funded areas**, delivering **accessible services** to the community.
- **The model recognises that there is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach to settlement – that every settlement journey is different, and that responses can reflect this.**

*"The model is a reflection of considered policy and practice to settlement." –
SETS provider*

3b) Settlement over time

- One of the major challenges workshop participants discussed was the 5-year limit, outlined below in 4. *Recommendations for future models and programs*. (Official changes to the 5-year limit were outlined in the 2023 Australian federal budget after the SETSCoP workshops concluded.) Workshop participants noted that while there were issues with the limit, **a strength of SETS was recognising that settlement happens over time and extends beyond 12 months**.
 - Longer timeframes allow people to access services over different periods as their **circumstances change**.

- Longer periods of time mean that SETS providers can work with clients towards **achieving what they want to in life, rather than just solving immediate problems.**
- Time allows providers and clients to build shared histories and relationships.

What is something you value about the SETS model?

SETS Provider: "Seeing clients grow, develop their skills, and improve their strengths."

3c) Collaboration

- The localised aspect of the model meant that there was less duplication of programs in some areas.
 - However, some workshop participants noted that geographical limitations can also cause issues, for instance, if trauma services are bounded (e.g., in consortia).
- Collaboration between SETS providers has been emerging.
 - **One SETS provider explained that having other service providers to work alongside was especially beneficial in SETS. They pointed to specialised legal service and trauma recovery services who are experts at what they do, so they knew that their clients would have different domains covered and referrals would receive excellent service.**

South Australia Workshop



3d) Positive feedback on the Community of Practice

- Workshop participants expressed positive sentiment for the addition of a *Community of Practice* (CoP) for SETS with dedicated secretarial support. Participants highlighted that the CoP component brings SETS providers together and offers training and professional development opportunities for the sector.

3e) Eligibility

- While many visa types are not eligible and there were multiple recommendations for expansion (to include more vulnerable migrants), many visa categories are eligible for SETS services. This is important and workshop participants noted it would be detrimental to settlement and community outcomes to see cuts in eligibility.

3f) Workforce and recognition of bicultural workers and lived experience

- SETS draws people to the space who have clear commitment, understand needs and undertake good practice.
- **SETS recognises the value of lived experience and the contributions of bicultural workers** – including their expertise in cultural insights and community engagement.
 - Workshop participants noted that there is a need for increased wellbeing support and even further recognition of bicultural workers.

3f) Responsiveness from the Department of Home Affairs and funding

- Multiple workshop participants noted there were positive levels of responsiveness from the Department of Home Affairs to unfolding issues.
 - This included the additional DFV funding which was very constructive.
- Funding constraints were a key limitation area in workshops. However, workshop participants noted that the current model was better than shorter-periods of funding (such as a 12-month funding cycle). The length of the program meant that SETS providers had the opportunity to build up their systems and provide support over time.

Western Australia Workshop Groups



4. Recommendations for future models and programs

4a) An even more responsive and flexible model

- The responsiveness and flexibility of the SETS model was highlighted as a key strength. Workshop participants noted this could be enhanced yet further.
- Settlement would benefit from increased responsiveness to **changing demographics, community needs, and government policy reviews within contract and Activity Work Plan (AWP) periods.**
 - With continual, dynamic population changes, funding could be more flexible to allow SETS providers to quickly scale-up their programming.
- The future model(s) should be **community informed and should also allow SETS providers to work closely with and co-design programs with clients and communities.**
- A more holistic model would allow providers to deal with **more complex client cases** – so they are less “parcelled out” and caseworkers are given the capacity to hold more complex cases. Multiple workshop participants noted that the complexity of cases varies greatly – **some SETS participants need much more intensive case management** which does not come with additional funds.
 - SETS is no longer a “light-touch” support program, and providers are seeing increasingly complex cases that require further resources and staffing. This is important because **current caseload levels do not allow intensive support** – yet there is nowhere to refer clients to receive the intensive support they need.
 - **One suggestion included an intensive funding stream that allows practitioners to assess clients and make a call if more support is needed,** with screening through sets of key criteria.

Driving and licences in settlement

- There were widespread calls across the workshops for funding to help refugees and migrants obtain driver licences.
- **Driving is critical** in many locations and there would be **high impact-to-cost ratios** for the funding.
- **There are public transport gaps, especially for the types of jobs SETS participants hold,** which are often out of business hours, such as aged care, hospitality, nursing, and construction.

4b) Community Capacity Building (CCB)

- A plurality of workshop participants noted that **Community Capacity Building (CCB) is integral to settlement and to client services.** Expanding the funding beyond the limited number of organisations who receive it under the current iteration of SETS, to all SETS providers, would recognise this centrality of CCB to settlement and support better outcomes across the board.
 - CCB is crucial for positive settlement outcomes – **including building community networks and working with community leaders.**
 - **Increased CCB funding would recognise that not every issue can be solved solely by a service provider, and instead that communities, community organisations, and community leaders play central roles in settlement.**

4c) Capacity building for mainstream services

- **Dedicated resources and scope to promote systems change and to advocate and capacity build mainstream services to become more culturally responsive** would be a crucial lever in achieving better settlement outcomes.
 - Examples include advocating to - and building capacity of - **education (schools), the health system, the justice system, police, DFV services, and care services.**
 - One workshop group discussed the dire need for more culturally responsive **aged care**, across in-home care, residential care, and short-term respite care. An example was given regarding elderly migrants and refugees refusing to eat food they found culturally inappropriate or unappetising – going hungry instead. SETS providers are advocating for more culturally-appropriate aged care practices and hiring of care staff and cooks from different backgrounds.

4d) Reporting

- There is a need to improve the way **outcomes are recognised, recorded, tracked, and communicated.** This includes further recognising the value of **qualitative reporting** (such as case studies) and other flexible ways of communicating nuanced data and settlement outcomes. This would help more fully represent the work and effort SETS providers are undertaking.
- Data input and uploads under the current system can be cumbersome and administratively burdensome, taking away from time spent with clients.
- The level of data collection required can be problematic and very time-consuming when working on the ground – for instance, asking people their ethnicity if they have previous traumatic experiences relating to their ethnicity.
- **SETS providers would benefit from DEX provision of more useful information back to their organisations** – including better data and reports about the work SETS organisations are doing. The current feeling is that the data-flow is currently “one-way” into the system, which is then a black-box. Improved data and reporting from DEX to providers **would help SETS providers better learn from patterns emerging from their client and CCB data.**
 - SETS providers often hear they are not meeting particular requirements, but find it difficult to understand which areas are issues from the data that they see.

4e) More fit-for-purpose funding

- The workshop participants recognised that “more funding” is not always the answer for the settlement sector, but highlighted that funding constraints cause issues over time.
- Funding limitations and a lack of longer-term funding certainty (from the limited funding period) **hampers the ability for providers to plan, recruit, retain, and develop skilled staff and practitioners.**
 - **Short employment contracts leads to high staff turnover, which results in a loss of institutional knowledge and expertise,** with staff moving to sectors with higher long-term certainty and pathways.
 - A knock-on effect is that **new staff have learning curves** (including on basics such as assessment and engagement with clients).

- The increasing cost of living means that there are rising needs, but funding has not kept pace with the changes.
- Further funding for specialised services is needed – similar to the dedicated DFV funding. This includes for youth, alcohol and drug abuse, and mental health issues.
- Dedicated funding for brokerage fees, built into case management, would be helpful. Real-world examples were given: A cheap phone that would help a women in her settlement; payment for moving services after seeing a client make dozens of trips in a small car to move houses which was highly stressful and not a productive use of time.

Regional funding

- Rural SETS providers often face resource constraints – many often only have one full-time staff member. **This is despite many rural locations often lacking the same level of mainstream services as urban areas** (or the mainstream services that do exist lacking cultural-competency to support SETS clients). Enhanced funding would bolster better services and supports for refugees and migrants in rural areas.
- **Increased support is particularly pertinent given the benefits and policy impetus for settlement in regional areas.** Without appropriate support, SETS clients may feel pressure to move to urban areas.
- There are several **remote locations** around Australia with expanding numbers of migrants and SETS eligible clients where providers are not funded to service (i.e. Yulara, Tennant Creek, Katherine, and East Arnhem in the Northern Territory). Remote locations would be more costly to service, **requiring a very different costing and funding model** (whether that is to meet in-situ full-time or outreach costs).

4f) Relationships with government

- There is scope for an enhanced role of grant managers, **including increased interactions, visits, and closer working relationships.** Regular and meaningful interactions between providers and grant/contract managers would help **overcome disconnects, and would help provide two-way advice, support, and feedback.**

4g) 5-year limit

**The 5-year limit was an area of widespread discussion in terms of recommendations. The workshops took place before the 2023 Australian federal budget which included a note about changes to the limit for settlement. The discussion area is still included here to share perspectives that emerged during the workshops.*

- A 5-year limit is restrictive and changes to the limit would support better settlement outcomes. **The rigidity of the limit means those that have been in the country for longer with legitimate settlement needs often slip through the cracks.**
- **A 5-year limit is gendered,** with many women caring for family upon arrival. This often means that women face challenges accessing English language classes, education, and access to the workforce. When family responsibilities decrease and refugee and migrant women are ready to navigate systems (e.g., seeking employment; or navigating systems such as housing), they are no longer eligible.
- COVID-19 affected people's ability to access services, meaning people may have lost 1-2 years of their 5-year window to access supports.

- Settlement practitioners often find they are approached by people who arrived more than 5 years prior, with demonstrated needs (such as DFV). It is difficult and often impossible to turn these clients away (i.e., after a DFV disclosure). Mainstream services lack capacity and requisite levels of trust. Even where a referral is possible, there is a minimum time needed to assess the case, develop emergency plans, and undertake the appropriate referral, which is not recognised or covered by funding.
- Even where referrals to mainstream services are made, settlement providers often experience mainstream services referring people back to them, as mainstream services often lack the specialised, culturally responsive, trauma-informed skill-set and knowledge needed to work with refugees and migrants.
- It often takes more than 5 years for people to feel comfortable enough and develop a level of trust where they can share sensitive issues, such as DFV. DFV may also not be immediate after arrival but begin some years after first arrival – and occur over longer periods of time.
- 5 years is too short for some refugees and migrants to be completely “settled” and be able to navigate mainstream services, for instance, people dealing with trauma.
- **One recommendation was for a more discretionary model that was person-centred, based on a needs assessment.** This recommendation notes that **many people do not need support after 5 years and can navigate mainstream services after this time, but there are a number of people who need more support over different lengths of time**, in recognition that everybody’s settlement journey is different.

Eligibility issues: Particularly important for migrant women experiencing DFV

- Linked to but distinct from the 5-year limit is eligibility of different visas classes for settlement services. This is especially notable in DFV, where SETS providers continually receive referrals from women’s shelters or other mainstream DFV services, but many of the women are on bridging visas or student visas.
- Examples of “bounce-back referrals” or continual referrals of people ineligible for SETS highlighted gaps in the system. One workshop participant asked *“Where do mainstream services go to if not SETS/multicultural services, for people from a migrant background?”*
- **One recommendation was that eligibility should be based on vulnerability**, rather than visa type and number of years in Australia.

4h) Referral processes to SETS

- **The intersection of SETS with other settlement programs, especially the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP), should be strengthened.**
 - SETS and HSP should continue to work together on emerging trends and areas of concern.
 - Clearer and smooth referral processes should exist. This includes the importance of warm referrals, so that refugees and migrants can feel comfortable in seeking supports during their settlement journey.
- Strengthen the intersection with HSP providers on areas such as referral pathways, emerging trends and areas of concern.

Victoria Workshop with online participants in respective break-out rooms



4i) Publicising SETS to help preclude crises rather than only responding to them

- SETS providers find that there are **many people who are eligible for SETS who do not know about SETS services** (people who are on non-HSP visa categories).
- **Many of the people who are SETS eligible would benefit from settlement support, especially preventative and early support systems. Right now, these people will only present to SETS if there is a crisis** – when they need help regarding DFV, homelessness, loss of employment, or family breakdown, **rather than having support which may have helped preclude these crisis situations in the first place.**
- SETS providers are often reliant on word-of-mouth. Many organisations do not have the resources to communicate about their services.
- **One recommendation would be for further resources dedicated to communicate and publicise settlement services and SETS as a whole so that people eligible for SETS can connect earlier and receive appropriate settlement supports.**

4j) Collaboration

- There were calls for **strengthened mechanisms to build further collaboration** amongst SETS providers. **SETS works well when there are partnerships and constructive working relationships between SETS providers.**
- Workshop participants noted that while some competition is understandable, **too much competition can be detrimental to working together for the best outcomes of the people SETS is serving.**
- **A national repository of resources would be helpful.** A workshop participant gave an example of a digital literacy workshop – while respecting intellectual property and properly attributing where resources came from (noting the investments that are made into production), seeing how particular areas of settlement are done will mean that providers are not reinventing the wheel and can adapt and contextualise good practices to the locally-specific context.

Consortium models

- One workshop reflected on the consortium model specifically.
- **Strengths include increased collaboration and pooling of resources.**
- **Challenges include issues with funding and associated loss of expertise. Operational costs are high. The current model also meant some specialist agencies are more restricted, for instance, in other agencies they work with, referrals, and geographical coverage. The model can also increase competition.**
- One suggestion - if the consortium model were to continue in the future – was for **training and support for consortium lead agencies specific to their role as leads.**

4k) Free interpreter services

- **SETS would benefit greatly from free interpreter services**, addressing the current lack of free services under Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS). Settlement programs play a key role alongside other services which have free interpreting, such as General Practitioners (GPs), allied health professionals, and real estate, and **free interpreting is very important in effectively communicating with clients.**
- An adjacent recommendation would be for **further support to interpreters**, as there is often a lack of interpreters who are trauma-informed and responsive to diversity.

4l) More diversity in the sector is needed

- The diversity of organisations in SETS is a key strength of the program. Workshop participants noted that more refugee-led organisations are needed in the space.
- One recommendation is for a portion of funding to be distributed to refugee-led organisations. This is important because they can reach and support clients that larger organisations cannot.
- There should also be better collaboration overall. **There are important partnership roles**, as larger organisations can support refugee-led and grassroots organisations in many areas – so each can complement the other’s work.

South Australia SETSCoP Workshop close

