

August has been a turning point in Australian Immigration history with the recent changes to the Migration Act. These changes have been reported in detail in the Special Edition Newsletter published recently. This newsletter features Human Rights, Education and work, Multicultural news and it introduces Social Finance, a new alternate model of investment.

### Government delivers skilled migration on target

The government has delivered its 2011-12 permanent migration program on target and within two places of its planning level of 185 000, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Chris Bowen MP, announced recently.

Skilled migration accounted for over two-thirds of the total migration program, with a 2011-12 skill stream outcome of 125 755 places.

'While the government's first priority is always jobs for Australians, skilled migration is essential to support our economy and help overcome the challenges of an ageing population,' Mr Bowen said.

'Today's skill stream is highly targeted towards employer sponsorship, the regions and high value occupations, with over 60 per cent of skilled migration visas going to employer, government and regional sponsored places to help fill critical skills needs.'

There were 16 471 places delivered under the highest priority Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, with Western Australia accounting for 23.2 per cent of the outcome. State and territory sponsored visa classes were also delivered in record numbers, with the 22 247 places marking a 37.5 per cent increase on the previous year. The niche Special Eligibility stream delivered an outcome of 639 places.

The 2011-12 Migration Program report can be found on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship website.

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/cb/2012/cb188303.htm>

The Government carefully manages the program numbers, resulting in substantial processing delays for GSM applicants. For information see: [www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/24apriority\\_skilled.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/24apriority_skilled.htm) or contact Jack Li or David Bitel in our office.

### Delivering on our humanitarian commitment

Australia's humanitarian program of 13 750 places has been fully delivered in 2011-12, providing protection and resettlement for people fleeing violence and persecution, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Chris Bowen MP, announced recently. He said Australia was proud of its humanitarian commitment - resettling the third largest number of refugees of any country and more refugees, per capita, than any other nation in the world.

Included in the 13 759 visas granted in 2011-12 were 6004 offshore refugee visas, following referral by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

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The remaining places went to onshore arrivals - by air and boat, and to the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) of which there were 714 visas granted.

The government is also on target to honour its commitment to resettle an additional 4000 refugees from Malaysia over four years. During 2011-12, 1350 visas were granted to refugees mandated by the UNHCR in Malaysia and referred to Australia for resettlement.

'Under the offshore program, we have resettled people from Burma, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bhutan and Ethiopia, along with other countries in the Middle East, Asia and Africa regions,' Mr Bowen said.

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/cb/2012/cb188299.htm>

### Refugee Program increased to 20,000 places

Prime Minister Julia Gillard and the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Chris Bowen have announced that the government will increase Australia's humanitarian program to 20 000 places in 2012-13, in line with the recommendation of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers.

The government will also immediately allocate \$10 million for regional capacity building projects with a special emphasis on United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

We will be increasing our annual refugee intake from 13 750 to 20 000 places in this financial year. This is a more than a 40 per cent increase to our humanitarian intake and the biggest boost to Australia's refugee intake in 30 years.

As an immediate measure, the government will resettle an additional 400 refugees from Indonesia to underscore our commitment to offering safe alternatives to dangerous boat journeys.

The \$10 million boost to regional capacity building will assist the UNHCR and non-government organisations in the region, particularly operations in Malaysia and Indonesia - a further commitment from this government to safer and more orderly migration pathways.

The humanitarian program and capacity building increases follow the recent passage of legislation in the Australian Parliament to allow for regional processing of asylum seekers' applications.

Australia, along with the United States and Canada, has ranked consistently among the world's top three resettlement countries. Australia is the UNHCR's largest resettlement country on a per capita basis.

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/cb/2012/cb189459.htm>

### Government invites views on sponsorship pilot

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Chris Bowen MP, said Australia's humanitarian program was among the best in the world but the government was looking at options to augment the existing program through a community sponsorship pilot.

'Australians can be rightly proud of the fact that we resettle more refugees per capita than any other nation and provide much needed protection to people who have suffered persecution,' Mr Bowen said.

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'But we're always looking at ways to improve our humanitarian program, especially when there is a very high demand for visas that far exceeds the number of places available.'

Mr Bowen said public consultation would now begin on a proposed private sponsorship program, as announced at this year's Budget, with the release of a discussion paper. 'The government is seeking the views of the Australian community on the feasibility of introducing a private/community sponsorship program for people in humanitarian need,' he said.

'Such an initiative could provide an opportunity to increase the size of our humanitarian program without a significant cost impact.'

The government will make a final decision on the feasibility of a pilot program following community input and consultations with stakeholders.

[www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/cb/2012/cb187699.htm](http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/cb/2012/cb187699.htm)

### **India now Australia's largest source of permanent migrants**

For the first time, India is Australia's largest source of permanent migrants, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Chris Bowen MP, announced recently. Indian migrants comprised a total of 29 018 places or 15.7 per cent of the total migration program of 185 000 places under the 2011-12 permanent migration program.

'The Indian community has made a valuable contribution to economic, social and cultural life in Australia, and I know this will continue with more Indians choosing to make their home here,' Mr Bowen said

China and the United Kingdom were Australia's second and third largest sources of permanent migrants, with 25 509 and 25 274 places respectively.

Seven of the top 10 source countries in Australia's 2011-12 migration program are from Asia: India, China, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Vietnam.

The family stream had a final outcome of 58 604 places, representing 31.7 per cent of the total migration program.

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/cb/2012/cb188313.htm>

### **Working Holiday Visa holders lie to get second year visa extension**

Working holiday (Subclass 417) visas are being cancelled at the rate of one a day as young travellers lie to immigration officials and pay off bogus "employers" to extend their stay in Australia.

Rorting is allegedly rife across the working holiday visa (Subclass 417) program that grants travellers a second-year stay if they work for three months in rural areas - a scheme upon which labour-starved industries such as food-growing depend.

Figures supplied by the Department of Immigration show over the past three years, 1059 working holidaymaker visas have been cancelled - 38 per cent from South Korea, 22 per cent from Ireland and 20 per cent from Britain. A large number related to fraudulent information on first and second year visa applications, immigration officials said.

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The Department of Immigration began investigating rorts surrounding the second-year visa in 2009. It followed the discovery of internet advertisements offering to buy or sell fraudulent documents, which allowed "backpackers" to falsely claim they had worked in rural jobs to extend their stay.

One backpacker told the Herald she recently obtained a second-year visa by falsely claiming she had worked for three months on a farm south of Sydney. "It's quite well known. Some people don't like the idea of doing it because there has been a crackdown, but for people who have run out of time [before their visa expires], they all take advantage," the traveller said.

An Immigration Department spokesman said it was aware of such practices and was "targeting it as part of our fraud and integrity measures", but that the incidence of fraud was falling.

[www.smh.com.au/national/travellers-lie-to-get-second-year-visa-extension-20120812-242sf.html](http://www.smh.com.au/national/travellers-lie-to-get-second-year-visa-extension-20120812-242sf.html)

### Students caught in rorts for residency

Hundreds of overseas students are paying criminals for fake work references to get Australian residency in a racket worth millions of dollars.

The scam involving restaurant and small business owners has been described by officials as "an organised and lucrative criminal enterprise" which undermines the skilled migration program. It has been exposed in more than a dozen rulings by the Migration Review Tribunal, which has cancelled the temporary and permanent residency of students who paid up to \$3500 for fake documents.

The students bought references saying they had 900 hours of unpaid work experience in jobs such as cooks, bakers, mechanics and hairdressers. The references gave them half the required points towards residency.

The tribunal, which has heard 15 cases of students fighting the fraud allegations in the past year, noted that many migration agents touted baking and cookery courses as "a fast track to permanent residence".

The key man in one scam, Carmine Amarante, has been jailed in Melbourne for three years for the \$2 million rort.

Anyone contemplating using false documents should think again. It is a serious criminal offence, and when discovered Regulation PIC 4020 may apply. For more information contact David Bitel.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/students-caught-in-rorts-for-residency/story-e6freuy9-1226448715527>

### Fast-tracked citizenship for defence families

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Chris Bowen MP, and the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon MP, recently announced the government will fast-track Australian citizenship for family members of Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel.

Under proposed changes to the Australian Citizenship Act 2007, family members of ADF personnel will now be able to gain access to the same reduced residence requirement which currently applies to ADF members and their children aged under 16 years, enabling them to apply for Australian citizenship after 90 days of

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service.

'The government recognises that families who support ADF members serving Australia should be able to enjoy all the benefits of Australian citizenship while their family members are settling into Australia,' Mr Bowen said.

'The amendment will help these families access employment opportunities and education assistance, as well as aid them in building a close and continuing relationship to Australia.'

Mr Snowden said the fast-tracked citizenship would be available to both current and future ADF overseas lateral recruits granted a specific visa on or after 1 July 2007.

'This amendment will also assist Australia to attract personnel to highly specialist roles within the ADF.

The amendment will specify that 'relevant defence service' includes required attendance of at least 90 paid service days in the Naval, Army or Air Force Reserves, instead of the current six month service requirement. Importantly, the government's Bill ensures eligibility for citizenship for the family members in the event that the ADF member dies before becoming eligible.

[www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/cb/2012/cb186805.htm](http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/cb/2012/cb186805.htm)

## Education

### Repairing the road to Oz

After violent attacks on Indian students some years ago, the damage to Australia's reputation is improving, albeit slowly.

Street crime once had little to do with Australia's international reputation, or its export performance. But the globalisation of education has changed that.

Australia learnt this the hard way in 2009 and 2010 when a series of attacks on Indian students received blanket media coverage on the subcontinent. The crisis damaged Australia's standing in India, strained relations between Delhi and Canberra, and plunged Australia's education system into turmoil.

A major restructuring of the international education program followed. But the lingering sensitivity was underscored when two Chinese students were bashed on a Sydney train in April, sparking fears of another "Indian situation". Officials went into damage control when Chinese media started reporting the incident.

Most Australians don't comprehend how much the attacks on students dominated public discussion in India from mid-2009 to early 2010.

Young Indians - a crucial market for Australia's international education sector - have voted with their feet.

"The crisis has cost Australia billions of dollars and thousands of jobs in associated industries," the report says.

Australia's reputation in India is improving. Polling for the *Beyond the Lost Decade* report found Indians now rank Australia eighth among 38 countries in terms of overall favourability, which is up from 35th in 2010.

A former Indian High Commissioner to Australia and co-author of the report, Gopaldaswami Parthasarathy, says relations between Australia and India might benefit from the student crisis because "we understand each other better now".

But the report warns swift action is needed to protect and build on the gains, including a rating system to improve delivery of international education services by the states and changes to immigration rules for foreign students.

[www.smh.com.au/national/education/repairing-the-road-to-oz-20120729-2365d.html](http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/repairing-the-road-to-oz-20120729-2365d.html)

### Quality courses the key to Asian market

Australia's higher education sector has been challenged to focus on quality if it is to regain its position as a major destination for Chinese students.

David Finegold, the senior vice-president for Lifelong Learning and Strategic Growth at Rutgers University, said Australian institutions needed to accept they had lost their dominance of the Asian market, with the US, Canada and Europe increasingly important as education destinations.

"There's a huge hunger for high-quality opportunities at all levels - TAFE, higher education and graduate degrees," Professor Finegold said. "But the question is going to be whether Australia can recover and really reassert its position where it was an early leader."

Total overseas student numbers are down 22 per cent from a peak in 2008-09 yet the number of students leaving China is growing by more than 20 per cent a year.

China and India remain the key markets, home to 35 per cent of the global workforce.

"The focus has to shift to quality and value," he said. ... "Are we delivering high-value education? Are we placing these students in good jobs?"

This view is echoed by the general manager, sales and marketing, of UTS:Insearch, Belinda Howell. "Whereas Australia was accessible and well priced, it is now considerably more expensive than study in the US."

As a lure, lifestyle will not work, Ms Howell emphasised. "Chinese parents and students are much more goal-oriented. They are much more focused."

An overseas education remained a huge expense for Chinese families, said Professor Finegold. But what has changed is an increasing desire to develop skills that can be used in their home country rather than hoping their degree will be a pathway to permanent residency.

"Students want things that are really powerful on their CV because they are all focused on what's going to differentiate them from millions of other students," Ms Howell said.

"Australia needs to be much more at the forefront of promoting educational quality and the value of its education - not just to operate in Australia but to operate in any relevant environment."

[www.smh.com.au/national/quality-courses-the-key-to-asian-market-educators-told-20120712-21yvb.html](http://www.smh.com.au/national/quality-courses-the-key-to-asian-market-educators-told-20120712-21yvb.html)

## Human Rights

### 'Racism, it stops with me'

In launching Australia's National Anti-Racism Strategy, *Racism, it stops with me* Attorney-General Nicola Roxon and Minister for Multicultural Affairs Senator Kate Lundy said everyone has a responsibility to stamp out racism when they see it.

"It's not cool to laugh at a joke that just isn't funny - you can speak out for others," Attorney-General Nicola Roxon said.

"Comments like 'I'm not racist, but...' aren't okay and we all need to step in and pull people up ...  
"Tackling racism head on is something we all have a stake in so everyone can enjoy the uniquely Australian, fair go.

"*Racism, it stops with me* sets out a 3 year plan for Government to work with community partners to combat racism across schools and higher education, the media, government service providers, workplaces and the internet."

"Racism discounts people's contribution, locking them out of social and economic opportunities and entrenching disadvantage.

"The tagline: '*Racism. It stops with me*' makes it absolutely clear that the strategy starts at a grassroots level and everyone in Australia can work to combat racism when they see or experience it. By addressing racism in the community we are ensuring we can continue to leverage the strength of our diversity and prosper as a nation."

The launch of the Strategy is the culmination of an extensive public consultation process, led by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Almost 700 people participated in consultations held across the country. In addition, around 1,600 online surveys and over 120 submissions were received by the Commission to inform the Strategy.

Federal Race Discrimination Commissioner Dr Helen Szoke said "I was really moved by some of the stories I heard at some of the community consultations. We should never underestimate the impact of racism. For example, when one person was asked how racism affects the Australian community they answered – 'It creates a divide. Australia is one country but it doesn't feel like it'."

A recurring theme that resonated through the consultations was that in order to build a fair and inclusive community, Australians need to take action against all forms of racism, intolerance and prejudice when they witness it.

The first step of the implementation of the Strategy will be a public awareness campaign with the tagline ***Racism. It Stops With Me***. The exciting initiative has already attracted a high level of public interest and support.

More information on the National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy is available at [www.hreoc.gov.au/racial\\_discrimination/racial\\_discrimination/index.html](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/racial_discrimination/racial_discrimination/index.html).

[www.attorneygeneral.gov.au/media-releases/pages/2012/third%20quarter/24August2012-RacismItStopsWithMe.aspx](http://www.attorneygeneral.gov.au/media-releases/pages/2012/third%20quarter/24August2012-RacismItStopsWithMe.aspx)

[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media\\_releases/2012/67\\_12.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2012/67_12.html)

## Australian delegation to APEC Women and Economy Forum

The Australian Government has taken its commitment to advancing gender equality to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Women and the Economy Forum in St Petersburg, Russia.

"The forum is an opportunity to focus on the role women play in the economies of our region and what we can do to remove the barriers to women's economic potential," Senator Jacinta Collins, head of an Australian delegation at the forum, said.

"This is the only APEC forum dedicated to gender issues and the Australian delegation will take part in the development of a set of recommendations on actions APEC can take to enhance economic participation of women in the Asia-Pacific."

"Central to a strong economy is the quantity and quality of its workforce - and quality is strengthened through investment in diversity," Senator Collins said.

“A strong economy has to be underpinned by a robust legal framework, by investment in skills education and training for women and girls, by supporting women in employment and in business and by providing infrastructure to enable women and girls to achieve their full potential.”

<http://www.ministers.deewr.gov.au/collins/australian-delegation-apec-women-and-economy-forum>

### Respect and choice integral to health and aged care

Age Discrimination Commissioner, Susan Ryan, recently released the Australian Human Rights Commission’s paper, *Respect and choice: A human rights approach for ageing and health*.

“Australia’s health system and aged care sectors are about to expand dramatically, to take account of the longer lives we are living,” said Commissioner Ryan.

“Our position paper outlines a human rights approach for the implementation of the federal government’s new aged care reform package, *Living Longer Living Better*.

“By adopting a human rights approach, we will be able to expect services that are available, accessible, appropriate and of good quality,” Commissioner Ryan said. “We also want to see effective monitoring mechanisms and ensure accountability.”

The Respect and choice paper is available on the Australian Human Rights Commission’s website at: [www.humanrights.gov.au/age/ageing/](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/age/ageing/)

[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media\\_releases/2012/60\\_12.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2012/60_12.html)

### Economic Potential of Senior Australians

The Government recently announced its initial response to the Final Report of the Advisory Panel on the Economic Potential of Senior Australians (EPSA).

The Government’s response to the EPSA Report includes \$10 million for new Jobs Bonuses to help tackle age discrimination and encourage businesses to employ older Australian who want to stay in the workforce.

The Government commissioned the EPSA report because it understands that the ageing of the population brings great opportunities for Australia and its economy if it better harnesses the skills and experience of older Australians.

The EPSA report – also entitled “Turning Grey into Gold” – found that as a community we need to provide greater choices to older Australians as to how they spend their golden years, and better opportunities to stay engaged with the workforce and the broader community.

The Government’s response includes a way forward on all recommendations and includes a package of new initiatives that builds on the Government’s comprehensive agenda on ageing.

These initiatives include:

- \$10m for a new \$1000 Jobs Bonus for employers who recruit and retain a mature age job seeker for more than 3 months.
- \$15.6m to extend the very successful Corporate Champions program to provide support to employers who wish to promote mature aged employment at their workplace.
- \$3.9m to extend the Career Advice service by two years to ensure mature age people have access to free, professional career advice.
- \$4.8m to promote lifelong learning by expanding education opportunities by adult and community education providers and community organisations to older Australians.

- Expanding the More Help for Mature Age Workers initiative, to now be called the “Investing in Experience – Skills Recognition and Training program, to allow industries to benefit from improving the skills of their over 50’s workforces.

[www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr12-mb-mb030.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr12-mb-mb030.htm)

## Education and Employment

### Building Australia’s Future Workforce

The 2011–12 Federal Budget was headlined by the Building Australia’s Future Workforce package, a major investment in workforce development to address workforce skills and participation rates. The package provides a \$3.02 billion investment over six years to deliver the skilled workers the economy needs and ensure more Australians, including the most vulnerable job seekers, can take advantage of new opportunities and can share in the nation’s prosperity.

Building Australia’s Future Workforce:

- rewards work; provides new opportunities to get people into work through training, education and improved childcare and employment services;
- introduces new requirements for the very long–term unemployed, disability support pensioners, teenage parents, jobless families and young people; and
- takes new approaches to address entrenched disadvantage in targeted locations.

From 1 July 2012 important new measures introduced as part of the \$3 billion Building Australia’s Future Workforce package will come into effect.

Broadly, these measures relate to:

- People with disability
- The very long-term unemployed
- Youth and early school leavers
- Job seekers
- Tackling entrenched disadvantage

The Building Australia’s Future Workforce package is a major investment in workforce development to address Australia’s workforce skills and participation rates. It aims to deliver the skilled workers the economy needs and ensure more Australians, including the most vulnerable job seekers, can take advantage of new opportunities and can share in the nation’s prosperity.

[www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/LatestNews/Documents/BAFW\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/LatestNews/Documents/BAFW_factsheet.pdf)

[www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/LatestNews/Pages/BuildingAustralia'sFutureWorkforce.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/LatestNews/Pages/BuildingAustralia'sFutureWorkforce.aspx)

## Social Finance

### Investing for good: Senate recommends Social Finance Taskforce

Social Finance is an alternative model of investment, which differs from conventional models in one key respect: it demands that investments produce both a social and a financial return. Social Finance delivers resources to communities and enterprises overlooked by conventional outlets and ensures that all investments produce a social gain or benefit.

The Senate Economics Committee (SEC) has recommended the establishment of a Social Finance Taskforce that would help to foster a "robust capital market" for charities and not-for-profit

organisations across Australia. The Taskforce must have a high-level advisory role, similar to that which has operated successfully in the United Kingdom and Canada.

The SEC recommended that "influential members of the mainstream finance sector" should work in close partnership with key individuals from the social, superannuation and philanthropic industries and academia.

<http://www.clanncredo.ie/default.aspx?m=22&mi=172&ms=0>  
[www.socialtraders.com.au/news/2011/12/senate-recommends-social-finance-taskforce](http://www.socialtraders.com.au/news/2011/12/senate-recommends-social-finance-taskforce)

### **The Social Enterprise Development and Investment Fund**

Social enterprises are organisations that trade in order to fulfil their social mission. Social enterprises come in a variety of legal forms and operate across a range of industries such as hospitality, manufacturing and retail. Social enterprises often provide training and employment opportunities for job-seekers in addition to creating other forms of social or environmental benefit.

The Australian Government has provided \$10 million in seed funding to Social Enterprise Finance Australia (SEFA) with a further \$10 million being invested by a range of corporate and individual investors, to seed the \$20 million SEFA Loan Fund.

SEFA manages the Social Enterprise Development and Investment Fund (SEDIF) which is an innovative impact investing approach designed to improve access to finance and support for Australia's social enterprises to help them grow their business, and by doing so, increase the impact of their work in their communities.

As part of the process, the fund managers were required to match the Government's funding on a 1:1 basis thereby increasing the total pool available for loan finance. The fund managers have attracted investment from a range of private and institutional investors including a bank and superannuation fund.

[www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/Programs/SocialInnovation/SocialEnterprise/Pages/SEDIF.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/Programs/SocialInnovation/SocialEnterprise/Pages/SEDIF.aspx)

### **Social Impact Bonds**

Social Impact Bonds are a form of outcomes-based contract in which public sector commissioners commit to pay for significant improvement in social outcomes (such as a reduction in offending rates, or in the number of people being admitted to hospital) for a defined population.

Through a Social Impact Bond, private investment is used to pay for interventions, which are delivered by service providers with a proven track record. Financial returns to investors are made by the public sector on the basis of improved social outcomes.

<http://www.socialfinance.org.uk/print/8>

### **Australian banks embrace social bonds**

Westpac and the Commonwealth Bank will help develop UK-style social bonds to attract private funds into preventive programs aimed at reducing the need for taxpayer-funded foster care.

NSW Treasurer Mike Baird said the government had been "overwhelmed" by interest in the bonds, which were announced as a cost-cutting measure in the government's first budget. He announced the two banks and the community sector groups have been selected to develop pilot bonds aimed at reducing foster care and preventing young criminals from returning to prison.

The first of their kind in Australia, the social benefit bonds are modelled on Britain's social impact bonds, which were introduced by the David Cameron-led coalition government after the 2010 UK election.

Investors make a return if the community programs they fund deliver improved social outcomes, providing savings to government.

The Benevolent Society, backed by Westpac Corporation and the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, will develop a \$10 million bond to support 550 families over five years to reduce the number of days that children spend in foster care.

A second \$10 million bond will involve UnitingCare Burnside working with children up to five years of age and their parents over seven years to achieve similar results.

[http://afr.com/p/national/westpac\\_cba\\_embrace\\_social\\_bonds\\_myi01zs3Mzr2EVCbFTJrkM](http://afr.com/p/national/westpac_cba_embrace_social_bonds_myi01zs3Mzr2EVCbFTJrkM)

## Multicultural Affairs

### Creative communication for migrants wins top award

Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator Kate Lundy, recently congratulated Moreland City Council for its community initiative to teach new migrants and refugees about life in Australia, which was honoured with a National Award for Excellence in Local Government.

The Council was recognised for its CALDCOM (culturally and linguistically diverse communication) project which uses storyboards to visually communicate information about Australian society to new arrivals, helping them to settle and establish a new life.

'I wish to commend Moreland City Council on winning this fantastic award and for finding a creative way to communicate on issues such as water safety, cyber-bullying, aged care, and voting in Australia,' Senator Lundy said.

'CALDCOM will greatly assist new migrants and refugees to adjust to life in Australia. In addition, this will also support Victoria's existing migrant population, which represents communities speaking more than 132 different languages.'

[www.minister.immi.gov.au/parlsec/media/kl/2012/kl187775.htm](http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/parlsec/media/kl/2012/kl187775.htm)

### A little care for refugees goes a long way

A new childcare company in Sydney's west has transformed the lives of 100 refugee and migrant women, 80 of whom have found paid work for the first time in their lives as family day care providers to others in their community.

Amazing Family Day Care was established just over a year ago by a former community worker and Somali refugee, Deeqa Omar, who had counselled many female victims of torture and trauma from eastern Africa. They had arrived in Australia traumatised by war, without family or husbands, and often with three or four children in tow.

These women, Ms Omar said, were trapped at home without jobs, without English and without affordable childcare with which they felt comfortable.

"These women needed to work, and often were required to work by Centrelink. But they couldn't find work to fit their needs or experience, or that they had confidence to do," she said.

Ms Omar's business developed when she realised that these women did have unique work experience. "Who knows better to protect a child than a refugee woman who has been through a war, where her first and foremost job was to protect her children?" Ms Omar said.

Ms Omar, whose business is based in Mt Druitt, started with six family day care centres run by former refugees. One year later, her company has opened 100 family day care centres caring for 400 children in the homes of women from Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Kenya, the Middle East and Papua New Guinea.

Her business received a grant from the federal government's National Workforce Development Fund to train these women in the Certificate 3 in childcare.

Ms Omar recently won the Humanitarian of the Year Award for Business from the NSW Refugee Council. She now plans to recruit childcare workers from other ethnic communities and expand into other cities, including Canberra, where she recently opened a new office.

[www.smh.com.au/national/a-little-care-for-refugees-goes-a-long-way-20120823-24ouz.html](http://www.smh.com.au/national/a-little-care-for-refugees-goes-a-long-way-20120823-24ouz.html)

### **Collective leadership essential for an inclusive Australia**

Race Discrimination Commissioner Dr Helen Szoke has focused on the importance of effective leadership in achieving a viable Australia that is culturally diverse.

"We are a country that's built from people of many different cultures. Strong leadership across all sectors of public life in Australia is imperative to promote acceptance of a culturally diverse society. What really matters is that we are proactive about addressing the issue," said Dr Szoke.

"There are many benefits for Australia in having new and emerging communities productively engaged in education and employment. For this to occur, we need to build 'bridges of cultural competence' which facilitate equality of opportunity in these areas. We also need to fight the systemic racism which creates barriers to the full enjoyment by everyone of the rights to education and employment," Dr Szoke said.

[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media\\_releases/2012/44\\_12.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2012/44_12.html)

### **Access and Equity Inquiry Panel**

The Race Discrimination Commissioner has welcomed the report and recommendations of the independent Access and Equity Inquiry Panel.

The Access and Equity policy has been an important policy that defines Government services obligations to culturally diverse communities.

Dr Helen Szoke said, "The Access and Equity policy is an important focus for government departments in all interactions with Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population. A focus on cultural responsiveness is an investment in ensuring that all people in Australia can participate equally in the community and receive the services and responses that they need to be part of the broader Australian community."

The Australian Human Rights Commission's research conducted with African Australian and Arab and Muslim Australian communities has identified that often members of these communities are reluctant to report on negative experiences when dealing with programs and services due to a lack of knowledge about the law and complaints processes, or the perceived difficulty in making complaints.

Dr Szoke said, "The panel's recommendation to review the accessibility of complaints mechanisms, in consultation with communities, will help to address some of these barriers and make the process of providing feedback both easier and more effective."

The full report of the Access & Equity Inquiry is available at [www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-multicultural-australia/government-approach/government-services/AandEreport.pdf](http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-multicultural-australia/government-approach/government-services/AandEreport.pdf)

[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media\\_releases/2012/51\\_12.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2012/51_12.html)

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