



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

MC16-007414

Mayor Troy Pickard
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

ALGA MAIL
ITEM No:
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Dear Mayor Pickard

Thank you for your letter of 29 August 2016 to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, regarding the integration of migrants and refugees into local communities. Your letter was referred to the Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon Zed Seselja, as this matter falls within his portfolio responsibilities. The Assistant Minister has asked me to reply to you on his behalf.

I acknowledge the central role of the Australian Local Government Association in representing local governments across Australia. I was encouraged to note the Australian Local Government Association's interest in enhancing the social integration of migrant workers, refugees and members of other minority groups.

The Government's approach to the settlement of migrants and refugees is based on several key principles, including providing support based on need, fostering participation in Australian society as soon as possible, fostering welcoming communities and drawing on the valuable skills and expertise of civil society to provide services and support. This approach has played a key role in the success of our multicultural society, supporting productive diversity and maintaining high levels of social integration.

The Government is committed to policies and programs to support settlement and community integration. The Department of Social Services (DSS) has invested \$660 million over four years from 2015 for a range of settlement and multicultural programs including:

- *Humanitarian Settlement Services* which provides practical support to humanitarian entrants in their first six to twelve months of life in Australia;
- *Complex Case Support* which delivers specialised and intensive services to people settling in Australia on humanitarian grounds and who have multiple and complex needs which are beyond the scope of other settlement services;
- *Settlement grants services* which provide funding to organisations to assist humanitarian entrants and eligible migrants in their first five years of life in Australia, to become self-reliant and participate equitably in Australian society. This includes the Government's commitment to support young refugees and other vulnerable young migrants to build skills and confidence to equip them to participate in education and work;

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- *A Career Pathways Pilot* which will provide targeted support to help humanitarian entrants find employment in jobs that match their skills;
- *A Youth Transition Support Pilot* which will help young humanitarian entrants and other vulnerable migrants under 25 stay engaged in education and make successful transitions to employment;
- *Community Hubs* which help migrants and humanitarian entrants connect with their communities;
- *Diversity and Social Cohesion grants* which support projects that build the long-term capacities of higher need and at-risk communities;
- *Multicultural Arts and festivals grants* which provide community organisations with assistance to host arts and festival projects. These help Australians of all backgrounds to come together and experience different cultural traditions; and
- *Translation and Interpreting Services* which supports non-English speakers to settle in Australia and access certain essential services.

These targeted services complement a diverse range of mainstream services.

I would encourage local governments to continue to direct people to relevant mainstream services or suitable grant providers. DSS has a Grants Service Directory that can assist people to identify funded services, by program, state, postcode, region or a combination of these (<http://serviceproviders.dss.gov.au/>). New opportunities to apply for funding are also advertised on the DSS website (www.dss.gov.au/grants). Organisations interested are encouraged to subscribe to receive alerts on this page.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely



Leo Kennedy
Branch Manager
Settlement Support Branch

21 September 2016