



Exploring Settlement Life in Australia

FINAL REPORT
September 2022





Settlement Services International and its subsidiaries acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Ancestors have walked this country, and we acknowledge their special and unique place in our nation's historical, cultural and linguistic identity.

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Background	6
Project aim	6
Advocacy priorities	6
Key themes	9
Reflections from NSP members and frontline staff	28
Impact	33
Exploring Settlement in context	34
Where to now?	34
Acknowledgements and thanks	35
Appendix – the process	36

Executive Summary

Exploring Settlement: Life in Australia is a collaborative project of the New South Wales Settlement Partnership (NSP), commenced in 2020. The heart of the project has been the design and facilitation of 56 listening conversations, where clients were invited to share their story of building a life in Australia. Nearly 300 clients participated across 56 listening conversations. The findings from these discussions inform this report.

The NSP is excited to be sharing the voice of clients and inviting the settlement sector more widely into exploring ways we can respond together.

The project was collaboratively designed in stages:

- a toolkit was developed with input from frontline NSP staff to guide the listening conversations.
- fifty six listening conversations were held across NSW with people who have settled in NSW.
- data from conversations was analysed for key themes.
- a preliminary report was developed.
- a reflection forum with nearly 100 participants was held to share the preliminary findings.
- advocacy priorities based on the listening conversations were developed.
- deep dives with stakeholders and interagencies were taken into the data.
- the final report was developed and a launch event prepared.

The results from the project exceeded our initial expectations - both in terms of the number of listening conversations held and, more importantly, in the depth and quality of what people shared in conversations. The NSP now has a great treasure trove of client perspectives to help shape the work we do with recently arrived migrants and refugees.

People spoke meaningfully about their hopes, dreams and fears. Key themes that emerged included:

- gratitude for support received, and some difficulty in navigating systems in Australia. The Australian education system and healthcare system were appreciated.
- getting a desired job, not just any job.
- the challenges of navigating life in an English-speaking country, including learning to speak English itself.
- the practical needs of life, such as buying a house, getting a driver's license and navigating their new homes.
- a strong sense of safety in Australia, feeling at peace, respect for women, equality and human rights, appreciating the natural beauty of Australia, and Australian multiculturalism.
- settlement requiring inner strength and resilience, and learning to ask for help.
- the importance of family and community.

The NSP has developed a range of advocacy priorities based on the listening conversations with clients. Advocacy priorities relate to the wide range of agencies and sectors that clients connect with while making a new life in Australia.



It was valuable for TAFE to undertake a deep dive of the Exploring Settlement research to hear the customer voice and get a better understanding of their experiences and thoughts regarding TAFE, employment, education etc.

TAFE NSW CALD Coordinator



The Exploring Settlement consultation process was one of the most comprehensive. A large number of clients participated. Service providers deliberated on the data collected from clients. A diverse range of service providers participated in the data deliberations producing a report that is grounded in clients' own voices and infused with service providers' excellent understanding of clients' experiences of settlement. What I found uplifting and refreshing is the acknowledgement that local government plays an important role in settlement. Council staff and multicultural advisory committees were consulted. The outcome, the report, is an exciting action packed document aimed at improving the settlement experience and outcome of recently arrived humanitarian entrants.

Atem Atem, refugee researcher



The presentation from SSI 'Exploring Settlement Life in Australia' provided useful insights into the unique challenges of settlement. It identified both the strengths and the gaps in the settlement process through quality in depth conversations with people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Importantly more work needs to be done to provide meaningful employment and education outcomes.

Vanessa Zanotti, Sutherland Shire Multicultural Network Member

Background to Exploring Settlement

In 2020, the NSP began the collaborative project, known as Exploring Settlement: Life in Australia. The heart of the project has been the design and facilitation of 56 listening conversations, where clients were invited to share their stories of building a life in Australia.

Nearly 300 people participated in 56 listening conversations. Their challenges, hopes, dreams and experiences form the core of this preliminary report.

The NSP is excited to elevate the voices of migrants and refugees. We offer this report to the settlement sector more widely as an invitation to consider the ways we can collectively respond to these insights.

Project aim

- To strengthen relationships and collaboration with clients, community partners and frontline workers across the NSP.
- To surface collective insight into a client-centred view of settlement that:
 - clarifies priorities for advocacy
 - highlights possibilities for change and innovation
 - identifies opportunities for service improvement and increased collaboration.

Advocacy priorities

Based on what people shared of their needs, hopes and dreams, the following are advocacy priorities that have been developed in key areas. The advocacy priorities have been developed with consideration given to the scope and nature of the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) funding as this is the program under which the NSP is funded. Advocacy priorities are oriented to a wide range of areas including government (both federal and state), other agencies and the community. This is reflective of the wide range of sectors and services newly arrived people in Australia connect with during their settlement journey.

The NSP has also responded at a local agency level to the clients' conversations. For example, some NSP members have set up programs to help people learn to drive and get their driving license - a commonly voiced concern in listening conversations. These include Advance Diversity Services, Community Northern Beaches and Accessible Diversity Services Inc. These NSP organisations built on an existing driving program delivered by one NSP member – Gymea Community Aid and Information Services. Other new innovative initiatives include a Multicultural Youth Employment Workshop (Sydney Multicultural Community Services), and a podcast series with young people (CORE Community Services), to name a few.

Social connection/ community welcome

- Foster active participation and cultural exchange in communities – especially in regional areas that are under-resourced – with more funding for community events and activities under the SETS-CCB stream.
- Expand existing programs and implement new ones to enable peer mentoring and connect newcomers with volunteering opportunities.
- Formally acknowledge and value the importance of driving skills in strengthening connections to host communities, increasing independence, and gaining employment opportunities.

Culture

- Promote and encourage greater and more positive representations of migrants, refugees and people from CALD backgrounds in mainstream media.
- Support people from CALD backgrounds to participate in creative arts programs and access grants and scholarships to tell their stories and showcase their skills, talents, and strengths.
- Support development of leadership skills and greater representation of migrants, refugees and people from CALD backgrounds in local, state and federal government and parliament.

Self-agency

- Remove the five-year time limit and expand the types of visas that are eligible for settlement support under the SETS program.
- Advocate for a permanent reduction to Centrelink waiting periods to support newcomers on their path to financial security and independence.
- Expand financial literacy programs for women to mitigate the risk of financial abuse.

Economic participation and employment

- Prioritise and provide adequate resources and support for newcomers to gain meaningful and stable employment so they can participate in the economy.
- Improve and expand pathways for skills recognition and acknowledge transferable skills to increase opportunities for newcomers to gain local experience, grow their professional networks, and increase their confidence to interact with the local job market.

Health

- Help newcomers to navigate through the health system and services, including access to specialists.
- Expand support for mental health and trauma services to all newcomers, recognising the benefits of this for a newly arrived person navigating a new system.
- Expand and extend culturally appropriate mental health services.

Language and digital literacy

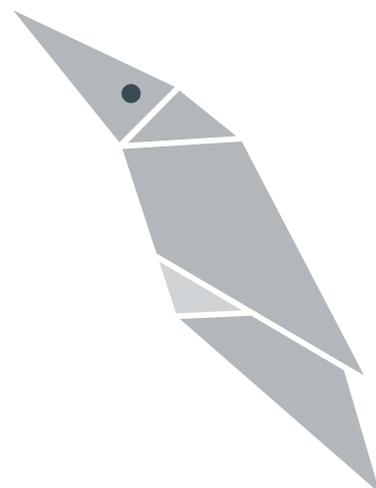
- Improve access to and funding for translation technology, interpreters, and bilingual workers.
- Work with educational providers to develop flexible mechanisms for learning English that can be adapted to different needs and learning styles.
- Incorporate a digital literacy component in the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), Intensive English Centers (IEC) and high school curricula.

Education

- Implement holistic school programs that engage parents and caregivers so that children can receive more educational support at home and families have a better understanding of young people's educational challenges.
- Expand access to childcare and increase creche services at educational campuses to allow people to participate in classes fully.
- Create tertiary alumni networks led by students from migrant, refugee, and CALD backgrounds.

Housing

- Recognise that housing is a core issue that underpins stability across many areas of life, including health, safety, and security, and it is therefore linked to a range of settlement outcomes.
- Fund housing subsidies for humanitarian entrants at different stages of settlement, including on arrival through the Refugee Transitional Housing Subsidy (RTHS).
- Permanently remove or reduce the waiting period for newcomers to access Commonwealth Rental Assistance and improve access to homelessness services for people from CALD backgrounds.



Key themes

The Exploring Settlement project was an exercise in listening to clients. Through what they said, we learnt a great deal about what we do and about what clients really need.

People articulated their passions, their worries, and their hopes with great integrity and vision. People spoke about their experiences in building their new lives in Australia. They expressed great appreciation for the support they had received and clearly articulated some of the areas where they needed more support. Conversations ranged quite widely, covering much ground in people's lives and hopes.

We have grouped responses into key themes from the conversations. There was naturally overlap and interconnections in what people shared. The conversations covered both practical settlement issues and support, and the deeper inner resilience work involved in settling in a new country. People also spoke about human rights, equality and the position of women in Australia, though it was not covered in great depth due to the public nature of the forum. In conversations in some key areas, people had differing views, such as in relation to family and community relationships. Where this occurred, it is reflected in the summaries and quotes that follow.

Participants in the conversations were predominantly within their first five years of arrival in Australia. The SSI Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) team was able to conduct a few listening conversations with clients also, which was reflected in comments about the welcome received on arrival, and challenges experienced in the first days. The NSP purposefully did not exclude people who have been in Australia longer than five years, which can be seen in the participant table. It was helpful for the project to have this breadth of responses to broaden the range of perspectives shared.

Support from the system

People spoke about their experiences in receiving government support and their gratitude for both this support and the support received from case managers. Having bi-cultural and bi-lingual settlement workers made a huge difference to people in their settlement journey.

Navigating the system was complicated for people. Our systems did not necessarily intuitively make sense, and people needed, and continue to need, help navigating systems. Practical support with forms, translations, and appointments was needed. This was also greatly appreciated.

People spoke about the financial pressures they experienced. While income support was greatly appreciated, managing finances on a fixed limited budget remains a challenge.



To let go of relationships and connections and have to rely on the support systems. The support from the government is great but in a way it makes you lonely. You get help online or on the phone, there is not much human contact.



To replace fears and distrust with confidence and trust in the fairness of the system, and the impartiality of those responsible to implement it.



The system in Australia is very organised in term of rules and regulations so I had to learn it.



I was surprised to be able to open my bank account for the very first time in my life. Also I was surprised with the welfare system and support.



Case manager is always available, providing us with different information and advice about lifestyle, work, education, health system etc. even beyond her job responsibility.



Better communication system. It takes a long time to connect to services on the phone even with an interpreter.



Improve my finances as it is expensive to live in Sydney and own my own house one day.



The fact that we are not working when we first arrive in the country, the expenses are too high. The Centrelink allowance can barely support the daily basic expenses. Financial burden due to lack of employment is a big stressor. So if I had a mentor, my settlement journey would have been much easier. I heard people used to get mentors before which has stopped now.

There is lots of paperwork for everything! I didn't know English, so filling forms for everything was impossible for me. I went to the agency and they filled out the forms for me.



I came as a child. With the support my family and I had from services, the community and the schools we made a good life for ourselves. I study hard, now I'm 28 years old, I have two uni degrees and I'm starting my own business. I'm sure that if we didn't have that support my story would be very different. I think that it is also important to be appreciative of the support we have, it is painful to admit it, but some members of my community take things for granted or become very complacent.



Client mentioned lack of understanding and knowledge of the system as well as lacking confidence in accessing complicated Australian systems such as Centrelink or housing.



The hard thing we faced was the weekly rent that was too expensive, and no one in the family was working. The leftover from the government wages is very little. We face difficulties in paying the bills online and we always need someone's help.



Lack of family and friends around to support you especially during the weekend. I could call my case manager and report some issues during weekdays but if something during the weekend happens, there is no support around. I had an issue where my stove was broken on Friday night. I couldn't cook all weekend. I had to wait till Monday because I don't have anyone who can help during the weekend.



Employment

People shared their challenges in finding employment. People expressed frustration in getting their skills, qualifications and prior experience recognised. There was a strong desire to find meaningful work – a desired job, not just any job.

Some expressed challenges in relation to discrimination and lack of support. System navigation issues in relation to employment were also mentioned. People shared experiences of being linked to employment that was not suitable and their frustrations with this.



I wanted genuine opportunity to gain full-time employment according to my skills and qualifications, which enable me to actively participate and contribute to Australian society and become totally independent, and if I could change the way, I wouldn't miss the opportunity for better life and income for me and my family, and I wouldn't deprive this great country to benefit from my skills, and creative contribution.



Create a new system which gives all newly arrived persons the opportunity to work in their fields of skills, and make free options widely open to them to work and succeed in their life in Australia.



Centrelink payment is helpful as a new arrival where you have no income. The Centrelink support is a great system in Australia, although I have the skills/ experience back home I still can't use these skills because of the difference in the system.



Assessment of overseas qualifications put me in good steps towards my goals. The education system is quite flexible in Australia, and you can choose any pathways to take you to higher education.

A simple example that comes to mind is areas of unfair employment. I have seen and witnessed many cases where women working in the aged care sector have been unfairly treated because of their lack of English language skills and, in addition, because they are not familiar with the system they are told to work on shifts that are at times not permitted. It is really timely that the aged care inquiry has been put in place to deal with this very serious systemic issue. As for some of the community members specifically not being given the opportunity for a job that they applied for due to favouritism/nepotism. But they were able to access various support from agencies, and we were greatly supported and advocated for. We think having the right support network and caseworkers who are determined does play a critical role.



Getting proper training and referrals to jobs related to my skills, or at least suitable to do, this wasn't to happen. There are systematic problems with government choices of private providers, this training and employment should be government or community based organisations, not for-profits, the job seeker system. Its procedures and regulations, to me, were not there to help me to get a suitable job. It was just to intimidate, threat to get people to comply, with no real possibilities for me to gain employment and become self-reliant, and provide for my family out of my paid work.



Difficulty finding jobs, employment issue for example "I used to work as volunteer and one of the schools promised me a job, however due to funding issue, they apologised and could not honour their promise"



I think I might do job (I hate to be a housewife)

To get a permanent job was very important. It is not my ideal job but I feel good to go to work and provide for myself and my family.



English

Language barriers and challenges with English - speaking English, learning English, understanding the Australian accent - were raised consistently in conversations. Successfully communicating in English was understood to be very helpful for building a life in Australia; however, it remains a challenge for many.



Lack of proper English teaching system to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities so they have to study a long time to learn English, which is disappointing.



When I came to Australia, I started changing and accepting and learning Australian culture. Especially in language, like watching television, movies, reading newspapers, and books in English, even using mobile and message and chatting still in English.



Undertaking English language classes at TAFE, learning cert three in individual support and taking good care of my health. Even though I have faced difficulties in learning these, but I have pushed on. I am happy now.



When I came to Australia I was invited to a dinner at a mosque during Ramadan. None of the attendees spoke Arabic and I was not able to understand them. At some point a lady asked me in English to close the door as I was close to it. Unfortunately, I did not understand her and she went and closed by herself. I felt so ashamed and disappointed with myself. That's when I decided to learn English and make it a priority.



The most valuable of support and helpful was English class, there was speaking talking and writing in the class, it helped me to overcome language barriers, and my husband help my English as well so they are very help me improve my language.



The most difficult thing is language, working hard to learn English.



The most difficult part is language. In order to overcome this, I try my best to learn English every day.



The biggest challenge for me I faced is my lack of English for communication, and because of that, I look like someone who doesn't know anything. My children are the ones who are doing everything for me, reading, booking appointments, communicating



Our main struggle area was language; hence our focus point would have been ESL classes for newly arrived individuals. Also, more awareness about schooling systems for the parents.



Services assist by breaking down language barriers and mental health barriers. For example, when you want to go look for work, most have barriers with English language, so with training they assist with teaching the language to support us with communication.



Education

People shared both their appreciation for the Australian education system and the support they have received from teachers. They also discussed their difficulties in finding a school that meets their needs. Children coming from a trauma background can experience difficulties in navigating school. Aged-based school enrollment was also mentioned as a challenge.



Study to gain a good professional job in Australia, learn English, look for a good support system and seek advice from those who have been living here before.

We think that involvement from year advisors, school councillors, learning support and ESL teachers was a very important aspect in overcoming challenges for newly arrived students in the schools. But I also think that focusing on educating parents about the schooling system could also be beneficial in the development of kids.

One of the participants mentioned he was amazed with the school system, as it encourages students to find their passion and support them to achieve what they are really interested in. He also really likes driving rules and the process of getting a licence, which is very safe, reasonable and achievable.

The admission of young people to school on age-base has significant impact on young people of refugee and migrant background. It increases discrimination towards them, it made them feel sad in the class, which impacts them psychologically, and many early school leavers of these cohort were because of this reason.

Schools understand our situation and have special programs for refugees as well as language support.

Reflecting on my personal achievements like becoming School Captain, being a part of the youth committee, volunteering and pursuing acting opportunities.

Our kids attend Arabic language school on Saturdays.

My daughter was 17 when we arrived in Australia. She wanted to get to HSC but the worker didn't pay more attention to her request and we were waiting for assistance but the worker went for annual leave and by the time she returned back to work my daughter became 18 and lost her chance to enroll in school. She was very disheartened and felt her precious time was wasted by the worker. My daughter had no other choice but to attend TAFE.

I was very lucky that the school who accepted my application supported me for three years when I first started with studying and provided me with any assistance needed, e.g. given free uniform.



I was surprised that I had a right in this country and I was surprised that I could study and go to school.



I thought it was easy to get into school. Applying to school was quite hard, especially when it came to accepting newly arrived migrants.



Big change for me is to stop having a smoke and going to school.



All clients explained that their children faced racism and discrimination in schools. Children labeled as having behavioral issues. E.g. six-year-old who grew up in an outdoor environment without rules and was thrust into a structured learning environment or playground. It will be a gradual process for that child to fit in. Solution is not sending lots of letters or “yellow cards” to parents for this issue but teachers taking the lead and working together as a team to support the child. Families are suffering and they asked the question why they came to Australia.



A client explained that her child was repeatedly asked, “to clean their face” by other children and not to play with them and this made the child sad and not want to go back to school.



Health

People in conversation appreciated the Australian healthcare system, commenting on its difference from the healthcare systems they are familiar with. Poor health in general, dental health and mental health were mentioned as specific barriers.



The most amazing thing for me has been the Australian welfare system, we couldn't even imagine anything like this. I can believe that I can go to a doctor without having to save the money to pay for the consultation before that.



When we first came, my brother got very sick, he has been hospitalised many times, he has been diagnosed with mental health. Since coming to this country he has had strong support from our case manager, mental health unit, police etc. For me, the most important thing was to access other organisation services.



Excellent health system for elderly.



I agree with financial support and, to add on regarding my situation, the health care support in Australia. I had to do several operations for my health in Australia and thank God. The healthcare system was helpful assisting with medicine



Supporting about mental health.



My favourite opportunity was going to the gym for health and wellbeing, which led me to feel inspired to pursue a career in health and fitness (personal training).



More health workers who speak the same language. It will be very helpful for new arrivals.



Mental health support had a positive impact on the whole family members in reducing the trauma.



Mental health services need to be improved, long time to seek mental health support.



Learning English was challenging, it was barrier as I couldn't communicate with my doctor and explain my health concerns, also I couldn't travel from place to place due to not knowing the areas.



Health service was free for me and my family members. This is my story: I'm from Syrian background and we fled to Lebanon, and during our time there my mum felt unwell and we took her to hospital. The hospital there did not give us any assistance and refused to admit my mum, despite having money to pay for it, because we did not have legal and citizen rights.



Health and the services of how to take care of kids [are great], my wife and me; as well as follow the GP for our needs and health, that was never found in my country and above all it is free, under Medicare.



Recent mindfulness session conducted by agency in partnership with Primary Health Network has helped them to understand the difference between mental health and mental illness.



For me it was the access to medical support whenever I or my family needed it. Before we arrived seeing a doctor was a privilege.



Mental health and wellbeing was low due to being newly arrived in the country and leaving our families and loved ones behind.



In public health, there is medical services such as GP and partly subsidised specialist doctors from Medicare, while in my country you have to pay the full amount.



I tried very hard to find a Farsi-speaking family doctor.

Housing

Housing and finding secure, affordable accommodation was a challenge for people. It is expensive, and finding housing appropriate for larger families can be difficult.

People shared their dream of having security; many shared a dream of owning their own home.



Well, housing is, above all, the most crucial basic need when resettling in a new country. If I have a proper place to live, I can have time to engage in other daily activities and look towards starting English training, job finding, etc, otherwise my whole time is spent worrying about where to find suitable accommodation. Although I got some support, it would have been much easier if this was organised at an earlier stage. Also, most of the community friends who helped me were here not long ago themselves, so they too were not sure of certain things. If we got support from Australians or people who knew the system here, well would have been a big relief off my shoulders.

When I came, I did not know how to rent houses or get all the documents for houses, and Centrelink information helped us so much to settle and get to build a new living. I was happy that help was available.

We want to buy a house.

The house rent is too expensive and the government covers very little. That is why it is hard to pay the rent and pay the expensive bills.

Some things took longer than what we originally thought, for example, buying a house, buying a car.

Help in housing for new arrivals is very needed.

My biggest challenge to date is our accommodation. Service provided me with an old house that has lots of issues such as rats, leaking roofs and painting. It is a really old house. I was unable to communicate with the landlord or agency. I was afraid to report, thinking that if I report they will take me as a bad guy. One day my friend came to visit me and told me that it's my right to complain and report any issues. After reporting, things have been fixed.

It would help if housing help is offered by the department of housing or government. It is very hard to get accommodation.

I went to so many house inspections and filled out application forms but no success. I understood that networking with the local real estate agencies is important – if you know someone, they will help you lease the property. I asked family and friends living in Australia for a long time to introduce me and speak to them.

Helping renting a house will make a difference in the settlement of family and feel like home.



Goal to buy my own house for my family.



For me, a house, a place to stay. I have been waiting for over two years but I'm still waiting.



Firstly, not knowing the English Language complicates the simplest of things. Secondly, the lack of knowledge of the costs in different suburbs caused me to have very little to myself as the housing rent in Dee Why (northern Sydney) is too high compared to other suburbs. Had I known better and known there were services available, I would have moved.



Transport

Getting around – both in terms of managing public transport, and in terms of driving (including learning to drive, getting a licence, and buying a car) were challenges mentioned in conversation.



The traffic system is more complicated, with fines, rules and laws compared to back home.



If I have a magic wand, I will change the system of driving from right to left because I feel difficulties in learning how to drive here in Australia



What really surprised me was the driver is on the right side of the car and everything in driving is the other way



The biggest challenge I faced is transport. On arrival, my case manager helped my family with public transport orientation but I was very new to Australia and it was hard for me to understand things because I couldn't read or ask for help in English. For a long period, I preferred walking long distances with my adult children to go to the mall. I did not catch the bus as I was afraid to get lost in this new country.



Having different age children and taking them to two different schools with no car was a big issue for me.

To obtain a drivers licence: Driving test, difficult to learn driving lesson. Poor financial condition to afford driving lesson.

Through walking and driving with community members, we are getting educated about how to read to traffic lights and cross the road.

[They were] able [to] practise their driving through the help of the local community.

Applying for driver's licence was very difficult and confusing for me but after joining driving knowledge test support class with agency and a few attempts was able to obtain it.

[I needed] assistance to learn driving, the agency initially linked me but I required more hours.

Attending the Driving class sessions were very beneficial as it made me feel independent and as though we would aim for anything. Driving class didn't simply mean driving from A to B for me. It meant we were now able to work, study, take my children to school, freely shop for groceries, rather than feeling like a burden and relying on others or worrying about public transport. As a woman, it has also made me feel a sense of empowerment and more hopefulness in the new place we call home.

Getting driver's licence, too expensive to practice driving

I failed seven times before I passed the driving test.

The challenges were getting a driving license, driving lessons are expensive.

The most surprising thing for me was to see how people respect and value each other. For example when you are driving, people let you in in the line and there are pedestrian crossings so people can cross safely. We didn't have that before.

Getting a public transport from every road.

I would help by guiding them where to go and how to do things and with bus transport.

Public transport – when we don't know the country well.

Public transport concession cards are great. It helps save on public transport till I owned a car.

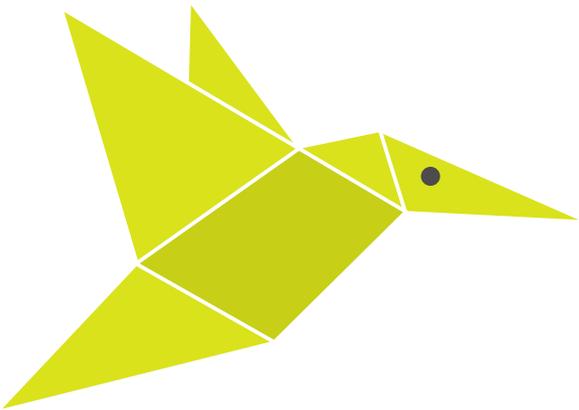
Shopping was very difficult, and catching public transport was hard.

The community supported me through transport when I needed to go to the shop [or] hospital. There was always someone from the community that came and assisted me.

Traffic and public transport were hard to understand in a short period of time.



So many cars. Nearly everyone has a car in Australia. I know a family that has five cars!



Equality/respect/human rights/freedom

People in conversations spoke about respect for human rights and equality, particularly gender equality, in Australia. People felt safe, and commented on the peace and respect for law and order they observed since coming to Australia. Respecting Australian laws was another theme that emerged in the conversations.



The most important thing is education, employment, the access to a good and advanced health system and most importantly safety and equal treatments. We believe for us to maintain the harmony we have as a community, we need to challenge ourselves. All new arrivals like to continue engaging with the service providers and the wider community on issues that resettle them quickly in Australia. Families like to see the community in general living in a country where no one is unfairly treated because of their race, religion or colour of their skin.



One thing that has intrigued us about Australia is the freedom to afford the various settled communities regardless of the time of their arrivals. The notion of “fair go” amazed us – simple and easy to understand but very powerful. Australia is the best multicultural society in the world and this needs to be protected at all cost. In addition, what has amazed us is the humble welcoming treatment of the society, which can be concluded by providing extra special services in every aspect of our life. The system in Australia as a country makes the new arrival feel the hope of reconstructing his/her life with only paying little effort like learning the language and joining the available courses at different institutional organisations.

Client mentioned the freedom of speech, great education system as well as equality between woman and man in this county is great.

Client mentioned she feels safe in Australia, the health system is bigger and much supported. The client enjoyed freedom in Australia.

Client mentioned equal opportunity for man and woman, better social security system and this will improve the rights between man and woman and easier social security system.

There are equal opportunities and there is no difference in age or discrimination of any kind. In other words, we can get many opportunities in the field of study and work.

In Australia, there is no war, we do not see war ('Hatuoni vita') but there is invisible war of racism and discrimination. Adults can cope and move on but not children.

To my surprise, if the robber breaks into your house, you can't hurt him. That's what I learned from the law class.

Dealing with government and non-government organisations was natural in all cases because in this country, people are respected despite the difference in religions, skin colour or cultures.

Equality in Australia. There is no discrimination. They respect gender and equality. It's something I really appreciate, because in my culture, it doesn't exist.

Learned to adapt to the Australian culture and respect everyone and their differences, and obey country law/rules.

My relatives have informed me that first of all you have to obey laws and have a mutual respect with all other communities in order not to fall in mistakes, which will not be an excuse for breaking a law such as “sorry I did not know, or I am new in this country”.

People treat everyone equally– cleaners, doctors everyone is treated the same. Very different to where I come from. Doesn't matter what your job or position is, no shame about what your job is. Respect all the jobs. Everybody paid equally.

Respect one's dignity, be optimistic and help anyone in his/her daily life.

Respect the law of the country, get active and participate socially. And learn to adapt.

In our home country, men are leaders of the family, but in Australia men and women are the same. We hope and pray that our children will take advantage of the freedom and opportunity and access to resources they have in Australia and become citizens of this country and give back to their community.

In Australia, women are protected, [there is] less of domestic violence. In my home country, we are still struggling with domestic violence everyday.

The thing that I found most interesting was the women's rights and equality between women and men.

I left my husband, got counseling and I understood that being a woman is not a curse in Australia. It was in my home country.

Some changes are good – you can talk to anyone, man or woman. Women can speak to a man. You can say hello to anyone (at home you cannot). Be easy and talk to everyone. Can go places on your own as a woman but at first [it is] uncomfortable as [we] couldn't do that at home. More freedom, you can do anything, even simple things like buying clothes for yourself. No constraints. Way you raise your kids, my choice (at home all family has a say) and can take kids places by yourself.

General Australian culture

Conversations included mentions of the natural beauty and cleanliness of the environment in Australia. People appreciated the peace, safety and security of the country. Our Australian lifestyle was appreciated as relaxed, diverse and casual in its approach to dress.

People participated in the life in their new home in a variety of ways – volunteering, community life, work, friendships, fun activities.

People were surprised by public greetings – people hugging and kissing on the street elicited comments.

People mentioned their interactions with Australians were helpful, caring, welcoming and friendly.



As my family is safely in Australia, we are already overjoyed. As we received all different kinds of support, I am thinking what to give back to Australia?

[I'm] trying to understand the Australian norm and practice system as it is complicated. I had time to adapt for the first year or two.

Another participant said that the system here is very different from where he came from, everything is far from each other, places are far from other places, there is distance between people, location, etc. and it makes it hard for people to become familiar with new things, places and people.



The systems in Australia that exist in general make life easier – for example when you wait in a queue you stand in line and wait – here you are getting your rights – not like back in our country where it's push in and power struggle – this is an example. This is the right way to better life – systems like these.



Way to talk – we talk with respect and politely. But here we speak very openly with office staff.



I liked the driving system and the beauty of the trees.



Australians look after the environment very well, including managing their trees, and places are clean. In our overseas experiences, trees are always cut down and there is not much respect for nature.



Cleanness of the roads and public amenities.



I was amazed how kind and beautiful people were. Everyone was caring and lovely.



The quiet life. The beautiful parks and the beaches,



The weather was so nice and beautiful. Everywhere was full of flowers.



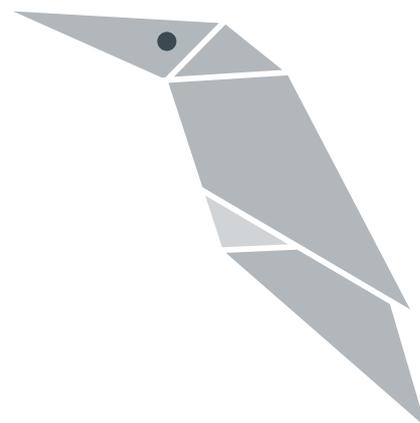
For me, it was the clean environment and blue sky. I lived in India for many years before coming to Australia, there was always pollution there, I thought that I would never see blue sky like the one in Tibet again.



One of the participant's was quite amazed to see meat on display. "the butchers were displaying the meat as jewelries."



Kindness and support of my Australian neighbors impressed me. They supported me by providing our family with children toys, kitchen appliances, and clothes.



Inner resources

It was clear from conversations that it takes a great deal of inner resources, resilience and personal confidence to settle successfully. This was expressed by people both positively and negatively. People commented on how difficult it could be asking for help, and needing to learn to do this (and also offering help).

People found belonging in food and cooking. People spoke about the work of adjusting (there was a specific question on this), saying by and large, they did not have to change to fit in (some exceptions mentioned conversation style and clothing).

A range of personal issues were identified as barriers to settlement, including confidence, embarrassment, age (and its impact on the capacity to learn), and culture shock.

Time was mentioned – both in terms of punctuality (appointments, bills), and in terms of it taking time to get used to life here.

Some personal inner resilience qualities people mentioned as important supports in the work of settlement included: self-belief, gratitude, perseverance, and open-mindedness.



Respect the country and its people, punctuality – a lack of punctuality led to some people lack success, respect the law and the road rules. Just like the country resected us as people and migrants – we should return the favour and respect the country with its rules and systems



Every new arrival to a new culture and country will experience lack of confidence at the beginning which might stop him/her from approaching the community in getting help. I would say the three things that stop most of the new arrivals from getting the right support are: lack of confidence, English is another key barrier, understanding of the system. Time is a crucial factor in resolving these three issues. Joining the educational courses helps boost the confidence as well as improve the language and create a sort of assertiveness to be better and compete with other people in the educational system and work.



The first months in Australia were a nightmare. I was nervous all the time. I didn't know what to do or what to expect. I feel ok now, even when my English is still not good!.



Embrace opportunities. E.g. at church group, [there are] lots of craft things I have never seen before, we never had anything like this back home. As a child I never had toys, I saw my first doll at 16. I left school at year 10 in Australia to study at TAFE or university.



From arriving in Australia, my mental health felt drained but it's not the same feelings as being drained [in my] overseas home. They differ, however [since] the first month of arriving I felt really good and safe, then once the demands of Centrelink, studies and job started I felt drained. Upon arrival, I felt safe because there were no threats of death and violence – however here in Australia the pressures exist just different – here there is a force or duty on individual



For me, I wish I had housing support in terms of finding accommodation. I also wish that I was mentally prepared about having to find work in Australia in about a year's time so that I could have learnt a skill while I was back in India. Because way of life and living is very different where I come from and a little bit of preparedness prior to arrival would have helped much



Boost confidence and self-esteem, and respect commitment to give back to the community for the support and dignified services they received.



I would have studied well to become a priest, rather than marrying.



I missed my family.

Family and community

People spoke about choosing Australia for its better opportunities and chance for family reunion, and their happiness in finding safety for their family.

Family and community support was important – which people expressed in many different ways. People found family and community support was mostly positive, but some expressed disappointment, or did not get support from family or community. Missing family was also a factor for people.

People highlighted an important source of support were religious connections forged through their church or faith communities.

People expressed they are connected to the community, both their own and in Australia, through events and community connections.



When I first arrived, I did not feel I was in a foreign place. Because it's known that when people arrive in a new country or place it's typical that they feel uncomfortable in an unknown place and those are the hardest feelings. Here, for example, the local church welcomed us, and we saw friends and family from our community attend the same church, so we felt we weren't in a foreign land.



Community and family support helped reduce the cultural shock and boost my confidence and morale. Without it, I would not have overcome the trauma.

[I] came with my boyfriend, no family support. Not understanding much English, I felt on my own. Neighbours do not talk to me, only my partner's family. Food was very hard, I was not used to the food, and ate water and biscuits for a long time. My partner is with his family a lot, and I am lonely. I found the hospital (social work) women's refuge, I found the church and settlement service, she helped me learn a lot of things and she explained to me a lot of things.

Mentoring was very helpful; you need to be mentored by someone who has been in the country for a longer time. I achieve big milestones through mentoring, anything I need, I would just ring them, and the answer will be present, because you are linked with someone who knows how the system works.

These local communities assist us with understanding and learning about the systems and adapting to Australian life. This also helped because then we do not feel like we are foreigners or don't belong here – here we feel we belong. Adding on to what I said earlier about the local church – he welcomes us with a visit or with a welcome gift – this at the beginning is important. One thing the church helped is with citizenship forms – this was very helpful. The church sometimes helps with confronting local issues of their community – this is very good.

The most helpful was that I have found a lot of mums from my community here and they explain me everything about where is better to buy food, where I can go with my child and others, and my husband, [and where to find] English lessons.

When migrants and refugees come to Australia, they face changes in family dynamics and gender roles, loss of cultural identity and traditional social networks, they need to be educated to alleviate the difficulties they face while settling in the new country. The aim of this program is to help improve their health, understand the legal system, ability of family cohesion, parental control, and parent-child relationships.

[I have had] no family support since I arrived. I was shocked to hear from family members who had been here longer that we could not rely on them for long and even the short term because of their very busy daily lives.

My own cultural community gave me the chance to speak my first language, to share my cultural background, to share those feelings when you are away from your family and old friends.

My brother and his family were here before us, so they helped us to find a house and access services.

Hopes and dreams

People's hopes and dreams were for their family, their future – a good stable job of their choosing, their own home, education for them and their family, and health and happiness.

People want to be reunited with their family.

Citizenship and freedom to travel, particularly to visit friends and family is a dream people shared.

People dreamed of life being easier, with less stress, more financial security, where they owned their home, and had security, with meaningful work, not just any job.



I have simple dreams and one of them was feeling safe, unlike in my country where fear dominates our life and even I could not protect my children. In Australia I can say I am satisfied, my kids and my wife are under safe hands.

When I first came to Australia I didn't have any goals or dreams but now I do.

One of my hopes and dreams is to have my husband and my brother move to Australia and we live together.

My hopes are very basic now: to feel well physically and emotionally, to find an affordable unit for renting and feel secure when retired. [I want to have a] safe environment for my family and friends

If I had a magic wand, I will assist bringing all the refugee to Australia.

[My dream is] to work hard and buy a house – having a sense of financial stability.

If I had a magic wand, I would give good health, know English – or learn it very quickly – and [have] a good job

I could enjoy nature, cafes, I could make some friends, we could buy a house, we could start our family.

Acquire a university degree for myself and higher education for my kids, become a citizen of Australia, work full time to save money to buy my own house soon.

If I would have a magic wand, I would like to assist my family members to be released from ISIS.

Safety, and security is very important for me and my family. For example, my daughter used to be scared from hearing plane noises and had trauma from car bombs.

If I had a magic wand, I would like to see companies spread out more evenly across the country, so families could choose where to live based on their needs or likes, avoiding horribly long commutes or expensive houses.

Reflections from NSP members and frontline staff

NSP Members and frontline staff

From the beginning, Exploring Settlement was about shaping change. The original idea was to bring together settlement stakeholders for a conference. When we thought more deeply about what might be gained from hosting a conference we realised that listening to the true experts, our clients, would be more valuable.

As part of Exploring Settlement, we surveyed NSP members and frontline staff to gather their feedback on the initiative. The following reflects excerpts from these responses.



What has been your experience of this journey from the conference to where we are now?

It was a long process; however, I feel that the outcome will have a longer and wider exposure than a one-off conference.



I have experienced collaboration, adaptability and flexibility with time and space



It has been an interesting journey, which has developed as we've gone on. Hearing the unfiltered perspectives of the clients has been very powerful and humbling.

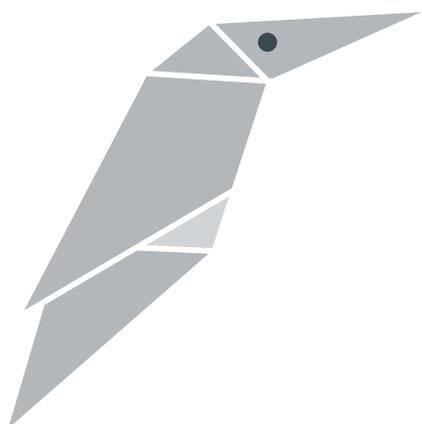


In your view, what is the main message of Exploring Settlement?

Settlement is multifaceted and means different things for different people – it is not static, can not be measured in time, ever evolving, never ending.



The need to keep in touch with the ever-changing settlement needs, adapt them to the different cohorts.



Explore client's voice in relation to settlement experience, service approach and delivery and then adoption of recommended change/s.



The main message of Exploring Settlement has been to highlight the resilience of people settling in Australia. Settling in a new country is a complex process with practical and emotional components. People shared their challenges and successes with great openness. It was lovely to read about what surprised people about Australia – it made me see things from a fresh perspective.

What is one thing you learned through being behind the scenes of Exploring Settlement?

People want to be positive, have gratitude and want to be connected and be listened to. We have so much to learn so need to listen, to further appreciate and value our consortia expertise.



That there is more than one factor that influences one's experience of settlement. People experienced settlement differently, but in terms of outcomes there are more commonalities.



It was great to see what we could do when we worked together on a collaborative project. The collaboration strengthened the connections and relationships within the NSP. It was a bit eye opening to see what we could achieve when we had a clear common purpose.



Exploring settlement is all about activating change through client voice.



In what ways has exploring settlement changed your professional practice?

More client voices are needed – involved at all levels of practice.



It reinforced and validated the practices already in place in our service. In addition, it increased the communication between services and the sharing of successful work practices.



Listening to clients' voices, experiences and aspirations reinforced the view that settlement needs to be seen to be a multi-factor approach and dynamic process.



Exploring Settlement has helped me center the client's perspective in my work – much of what people shared was familiar to me, but it is so instructive to hear it in people's own words. The nuances of the challenges, surprises and what people valued about Australia really came through.



Dor Akech Achiek

Group Head of Settlement Services, SSI

When we set out to work on the Exploring Settlement project, there was at the time a lack of sector coordination and visioning. More so, our hope was to set off on creating a blueprint for settling new arrivals coming into NSW.

Since then, what has come off this project is a genuinely collaborative piece of work that has brought together the NSP, clients and the service sector.

I saw a group of people dedicated every step of the way to ensuring our clients are listened to, heard and their key concerns are actioned.

I note a particular resource the NSP used is that of Naomi Nash from New River consultancy. She has been the independent voice, facilitator and courageous leader in getting us to our intended goal. A fresh voice and style of facilitating this piece of work got us together and reaffirmed to us the need for unity of purpose and ensured checks and balances on our collaboration efforts. Naomi helped the NSP “stay true to their North.”

A lot may want to know, what did you find as one positive out of this project? What is so different to any previous initiatives that sets Exploring Settlement apart? Well, to me it is a lot of things, but if there is one thing that I genuinely feel strongly about the Exploring Settlement piece of work, it is definitely the realisation of the power of little things. The little things that the newcomers found useful to them in arriving in Australia, the little things that the service sector overlooked in supporting a newcomer, the little

things that shape the journeys of newcomers and so on. You get the picture really.

More specifically, it is the reality in the absence of a voice of newcomers in current policy and program planning. The NSP has confirmed strongly, in my belief as a person of refugee background, that the power of being listened to and done so genuinely is the beginning of hope for any newcomer.

It shook me to remember a process I was part of a few years ago at an international level. A group of advocates and humanitarians whom I was part of and led through SSI’s international work in the international NGO space were undertaking a major youth project. I remember we did our debrief at the end of the event. I heard and looked across the room and a sense of fulfilment was awash in the stakeholders faces.

People drew a sigh of relief, believing that the job was done now that we were able to consult young people across the globe. I was uneasy and in disbelief, as I strongly believed that the job had not finished, in fact it was the beginning of the tasks.

This is the point the NSP is at right now, having come to the end of the project. However, for me this is actually the beginning of the work.

It gives me the pleasure to challenge and call on my colleagues, the whole sector and those outside the sector to take the next step. It is now over to us to reflect on how we can ensure that client-voice is central to all our policy and program development both now and into the future.





Clement Meru

Community Engagement & Disability Services Manager, SydWest Multicultural Services

From the beginning, Exploring Settlement was about shaping change. The original idea was for a conference but we decided to focus on hearing what our clients had to say as a priority, in the end we arrived somewhere different.

What has been your experience of this journey from the conference to where we are now?

This has been another exciting and interesting journey for the NSP as a consortium, which is often exploring innovative ideas in responding to issues.

The NSP was established because we thought of a different way of responding to funding reforms, and here we are again contributing leadership – shaping policy by presenting an alternative on the future of settlement in NSW.

I don't think we knew what the Exploring Settlement project would look like, the process was organic from idea to engaging with service users. We started with the service users, a genuine co-design approach. Service providers, especially allies who became involved at a later stage, were informed by the participation and voices of service users and their community. There are advantages to having a clear roadmap with time frames because you can monitor and measure achievement but the Exploring Settlement process was different.

There is still a long way to go, you cannot achieve change in a short time because we need to engage stakeholders at different levels. By developing this report, I hope that we can continue to use this, alongside deep dives, to check in with different stakeholders and their areas of interest, frontline staff, community, allied service providers, government and service users. They need to be involved at every stage and to check in with them to make sure that the change we are trying to achieve is effective.

Exploring Settlement also reveals how we might look at our own work as a consortium, our service model, engagement with allied services and community services, as well as government, and how we use data.

In your view, what is the main message of Exploring Settlement?

The main message is that it is important to consider the client's voice, it came across very strongly. If the sector is to be effective, then it is client voice that should be informing service delivery. That is not only a message to the sector, but a message to the government. It is important to design programs to meet the needs of the group, but without engaging with the services as well, it is very hard to ascertain the effectiveness of any program. Community consultations often involve service providers, not service users. Even looking at effectiveness, with this exercise the client voice is very strong and that is its uniqueness.

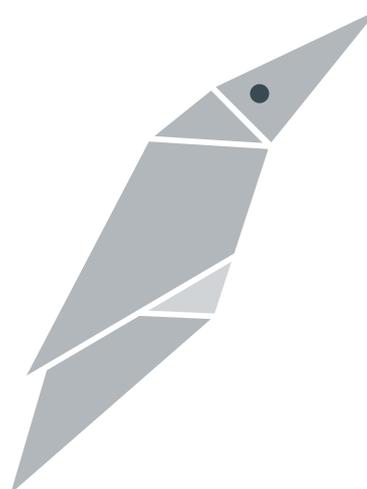
What is one thing you learned through being behind the scenes of Exploring Settlement?

What I have learned and appreciated is the fact that for us to achieve change, it's not a quick fix. It will take time. Identifying stages, scoping, designing, engaging, then collaborating with community and allied services through events and workshops. It all informs change, it's important. You can't just change things.

Exploring Settlement is all about activating change through client voice.

In what ways has Exploring Settlement changed your professional practice?

This is a complex exercise because it involves the sector at different stages. You've got strategic leaders in the sector, with influence. Then you've got frontline staff, who might not have influence over policy but could be involved in advocacy at a different level. But the need to understand what change we need to achieve is important. So in my meetings, I try to keep the settlement services team updated about what we are trying to achieve and next steps. There is another stage and that is the community and they need to be involved and updated as well, then they can also be involved in advocacy, by making presentations to politicians and decision-makers. For me, that's very interesting. Exploring Settlement has refocused me on communication and relationships. Communication is important, change needs to be articulated right from the leaders in the sector all the way to service users. Maybe the next steps for us would be developing communication strategies that will assist the consortium in the future.



Impact

The impact of the Exploring Settlement project has been felt in many ways.

The project was implemented as a collaborative endeavour within the NSP. Consultation on questions and processes occurred throughout the project. This resulted in consultation across the NSP at key project milestones, such as developing the listening toolkit. The project was supported by a team of NSP members who contributed invaluable to the project - helping shape both process and outcomes. The questions were tested with frontline NSP staff, who gave feedback in a series of workshops designed to equip them to hold listening conversations.

A consequence of this deep engagement has been that the NSP has collectively learnt a great deal about client engagement and client voice at multiple levels across the partnership.

The listening conversations themselves also had positive impacts for the participants and facilitators. Being truly listened to and heard, placing their experience as central, was beneficial for the clients. Staff conducting listening conversations also gained fresh insight and perspective - even staff who have lived experience of the refugee and settlement experience.

In tracking the outcome ripples, it is clear the project has had a positive impact. The data from the listening conversations has been shared through 'deep dives'. These have to date been held with:

- Fairfield Council
- TAFE key CALD staff
- St George Multicultural Network
- Sutherland Shire Multicultural Network

More deep dives are being planned, as the tools and information are now readily accessible to share client perspectives. The NSP has been able to share client voice in general engagement with related sector agencies such as the Department of Education and the Department of Transport. This has resulted in deeper sharing of client experience, which has been valuable.

The NSP hosted a reflection forum that was a great opportunity to engage with clients and the sector on our preliminary findings in the Exploring Settlement project. Clients shared eloquent stories at the reflection forum.

Youth Speaks

The NSP identified that although young people had been included in listening conversations when the data was being analysed, the youth perspective was not identifiably present or distinct. The absence of a clear youth voice has been taken as an opportunity to do a focused series of youth listening conversations – Youth Speaks – which are being done this calendar year through the Youth Workers Network within the NSP.

Exploring Settlement in context

The Exploring Settlement project naturally did not occur in a vacuum. In developing the Exploring Settlement project, the NSP was aware of and informed by current practice in settlement. For example, the National Settlement Outcome Standards (NSOS), developed by SCOA, inform the practical work settlement workers perform and so were one of the lenses that the NSP used in framing the questions for the listening conversations.

During the period of the Exploring Settlement project, developments that took place in the sector included:

- SCOA settlement blueprint.
- DHA discussion paper Next Steps.
- DFV service component was added to the SETS program.
- DHA conducted a survey on support for settlers beyond five years.
- The NSP received a contract extension to June 2024.
- The wide range of shifts in practice and implications of the pandemic.

Since the listening conversations took place, Australia also has a new Federal Government.

These changes naturally are relevant to the advocacy priorities articulated; however, much of what people shared of their concerns, hopes and challenges goes beyond program boundaries and eligibility criteria. It speaks rather to supporting the emotional labour involved in feeling at home in a new place.

Where to now?

The advocacy priorities identified from the listening conversations have and will continue to guide and shape NSP engagement and advocacy.

The NSP is using client voice to assist in informing service delivery and developing projects. The NSP will continue to seek out opportunities to share the findings from the Exploring Settlement project within and beyond the sector.

The project has developed some key resources, such as the toolkit and the preliminary report, which are available and can be accessed here:

<https://nsp.ssi.org.au/exploring-settlement>

The NSP will continue to hold deep dive conversations where the opportunity arises, as that remains a very effective strategy to share client perspectives.

The NSP invites you to join us – to support the advocacy priorities, hold a deep-dive conversation, or get in touch to learn more about the Exploring Settlement project.

NSP Partners

MRCs and multicultural services



Community organisations



Acknowledgements and thanks

- Dor Akech Achiek
- Sky de Jersey
- Naomi Nash and New River Leadership
- NSP frontline staff
- The people we interviewed
- Jenny Tang
- Amborica Saikia Baruah
- NSP event team: Clement Meru (SydWest), Priscella Mabor (CMRC), John Buraho (CORE), Debbie Carstens (NSS), Rachel Haywood (WSMRC), Raquel Aldunate (IMS)
- SSI NSP team
- SSI HSP team

Appendix – the process

Introduction to the Exploring Settlement project

Exploring Settlement: Life in Australia is a collaborative project of the NSP (New South Wales Settlement Partnership) commenced in 2020. At the heart of the project is the design and facilitation of 56 listening conversations, where clients were invited to share their stories of building a life in Australia.

Nearly 300 clients participated across 56 listening conversations and the findings were made accessible across the sector, including verbatim quotes and common themes. A summary of the findings is available in the preliminary report, and the NSP can facilitate interactive deep dives into the data on request.

The NSP continues to be informed by the voice of clients in their partnerships, advocacy and local initiatives.

Project aim

- To surface collective insight into a client-centred view of settlement that:
 - clarifies priorities for advocacy
 - highlights possibilities for change and innovation
 - identifies opportunities for service improvement and increased collaboration
- To strengthen relationships and collaboration with clients, community partners and frontline workers across the NSP.

How did we get there?

Listening

By listening to clients, community and frontline workers as they shared their experience of settlement. Reflecting together with NSP staff, managers and industry partners to identify insights.

Responding

Responding collaboratively through open forums, workshops and discussions with industry partners to move to action based on insights.

What is the NSP?

A unique consortium of 21 providers of settlement services who implement 85% of SETS funding in NSW.

Who are the NSP Partners?

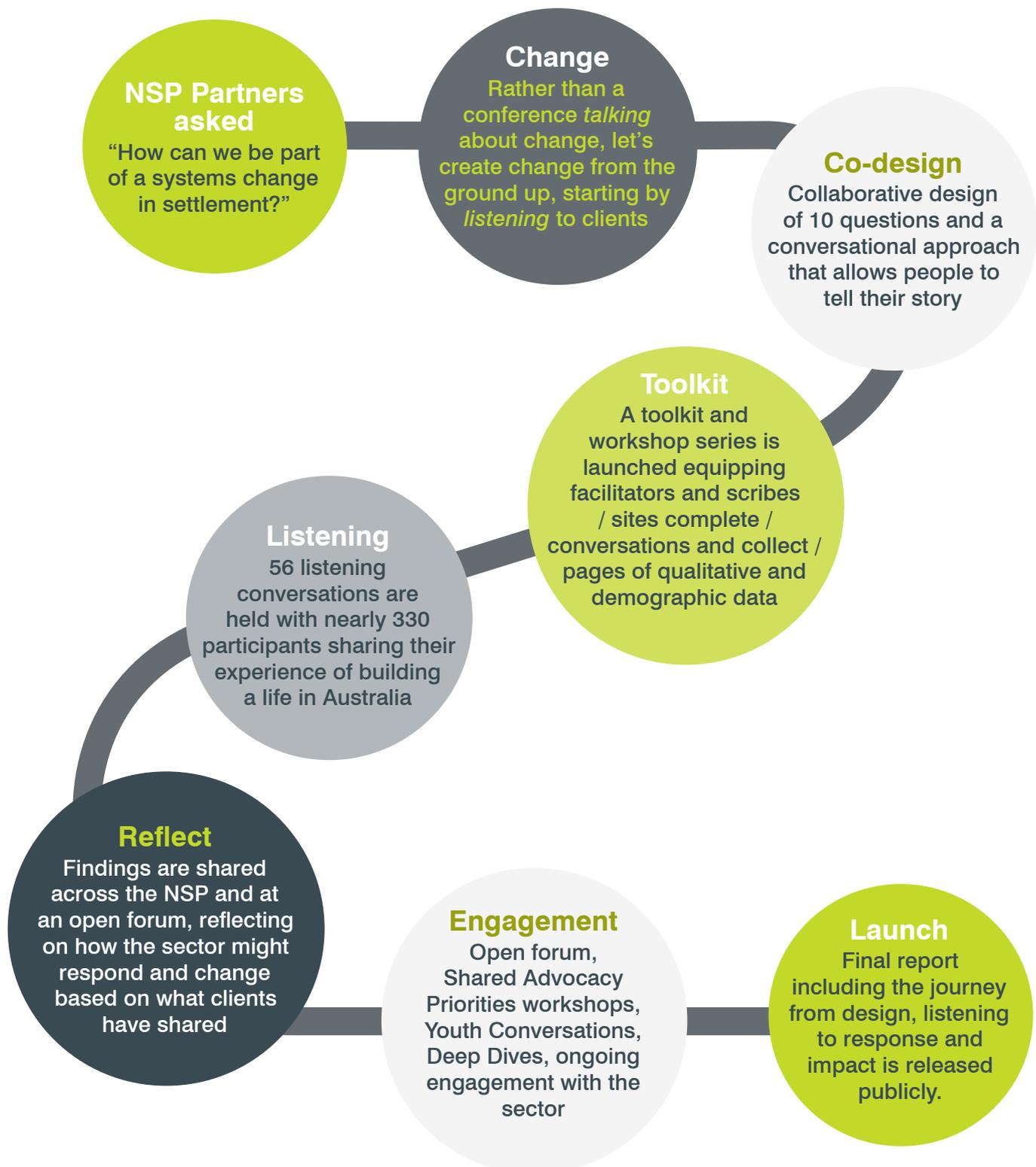
Staff at the following partner organisations actively designed the listening campaign, facilitated conversations and responded locally to insights as they emerged.

- Accessible Diversity Services Initiative Limited
- Advance Diversity Services
- Cambodian Australian Welfare Council of NSW
- Community Migrant Resource Centre
- Community Northern Beaches
- Connecting Community Services
- CORE Community Services
- Focus Connect (until June 2022)
- Gymea Community Aid & Information Service
- Illawarra Multicultural Services Inc.
- Lebanese Community Council of NSW
- Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services Inc.
- Melkite Charitable Foundation
- Metro Assist
- Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency
- Nepean Multicultural Access Inc.
- Northern Settlement Services Ltd
- Settlement Services International
- Sydney Multicultural Community Services
- SydWest Multicultural Services
- Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre

Collaboration supported by Naomi Nash, New River Leadership.

The journey of listening

Source: Exploring Settlement Preliminary Report



What questions did we ask clients?

Source: Exploring Settlement Preliminary Report

Question 1.

To get us started, I'm curious to hear from everyone about one thing that has surprised or intrigued you about life in Australia?

OR alternative question for easing in, welcoming your particular audience, helping them get to know each other briefly.

Question 2.

Looking back across all your time in Australia, and all the supports you have had, what support has been most valuable/helpful to you?

OR

What were the three things that helped most?

Follow up: What made it so? with listing formal services, encourage them to also think about ways they were informally supported

Question 3.

Can you talk to us about the support you have received from your local community, be that of your own culture or the local surrounding community?

OR

What about support from your own cultural community?

Follow up: If supported, what impact do you think this support had? If not – how might your experience have been different if you had received support?

Question 4.

In what ways have you had to adjust yourself to access help?

OR

Have you needed to change your cultural way in order to access support?
How so?

Follow up: What are some of the things you have done for yourself that have been important?

Question 5.

Now that you have been in Australia for a while, what are the most important things to you and your family?

OR

What do you want for yourself in life here in Australia?

OR

What are your hopes/dreams for yourself and your family?

Follow up: How has this changed since your first months in Australia?

Question 6.

Could you share with us what have been some of the challenges you have had to overcome? Is there a particular story you are able to share about a challenge?

Follow up: What enabled you to overcome? What support might help another person in a similar situation?

Question 7.

What have been three difficult things that stopped you getting help?

OR

In what ways have you seen others struggle to get help? Or made accessing it complicated?

Question 8.

8a. If you had a magic wand, what support would you want others to be able to have?

Follow up: What difference might this make for others?

8b. If you had a magic wand for yourself and could go back in time, what support would you have wanted more of?

Follow up: What difference might this have made for you?

Question 9.

Based on all you have learned about life in Australia – what are three pieces of advice you would give to someone just arriving?

Follow up: How have you / would you like to support others?

Data integrity and confidentiality

At every stage in this process, the NSP has sought to respect the privacy, and confidentiality of clients who have chosen to share their stories. This involved ensuring participants were aware of the information we were collecting, how it would be shared, how it would be used and their opportunity to withdraw their contribution at any time prior to publication.

Furthermore, we are committed to continuing to partner with clients in responding to what has been shared, informing them not only of findings but also of how they have influenced and contributed to change.

Confidentiality

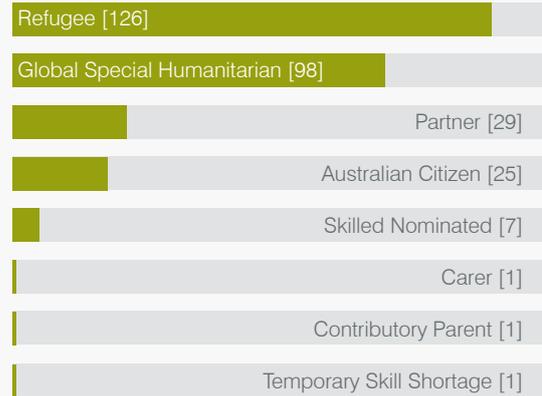
Listening conversations applied the following approach to confidentiality with clients:

1. Every participant could choose to share or not share, was not coerced or disadvantaged for not participating.
2. If a participant asked for an aspect of a conversation, or the whole conversation not to be recorded, the host complied to this request.
3. Confidentiality was discussed at the start and end of each conversation.
4. Group participants could not share information heard in this group in an identifiable way.
5. Documented notes did not include names or other identifiable information.

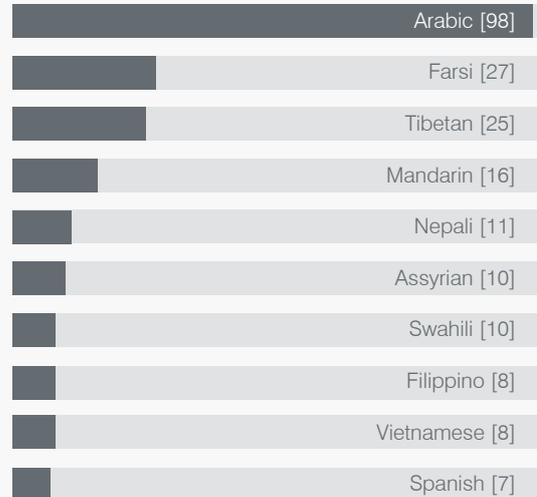
Who participated?

Source: Exploring Settlement Preliminary Report

Top visa categories of participants

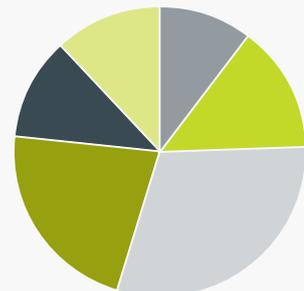


Top 10 languages of participants

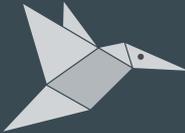


Age of participants

- 0–24 yrs
- 25–34 yrs
- 35–44 yrs
- 45–54 yrs
- 55–64 yrs
- 65+ yrs



Exploring Settlement



NSW
Settlement
Partnership

SSI 
settlementservices
international