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and Population Research**

Murray Bridge:
A blueprint for good migrant settlement

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Executive Summary

The aim of this project was to achieve a better understanding of the factors leading to long-term successful settlement outcomes for new migrants in the Rural City of Murray Bridge, with a focus on active citizenship and social participation in community life. The study sought to understand the types and extent of migrants' civic and social engagement in Murray Bridge, by asking migrants' themselves about their experiences, as well as drawing on the observations of stakeholders in migrants' settlement and long-term integration. This report presents the findings of this research, which are then applied to a blueprint for migrant settlement that can be used by other regional communities.

Murray Bridge is an excellent example of a region that provides new migrants with jobs, housing, education, services and a welcoming community. While these factors are critical for successful settlement, this project investigated the often-overlooked role that civic and social engagement can play. The research found positive signs of migrant engagement within the broader community, however overall levels of widespread community engagement were weak and heavily reliant on 'community champions'. There is, therefore, tremendous scope for greater two-way interaction and engagement between migrants and the broader Murray Bridge community, which can build upon current efforts and the significant goodwill and enthusiasm for migrant settlement demonstrated by local government, businesses and individuals.

In order to create positive outcomes for new migrants and communities in rural and regional Australia stakeholders need to work together to create a good settlement experience. Bringing key community leaders together with employers, community groups and organisations, local government, and other key stakeholders such as schools and health services enables a holistic and coordinated 'whole of community' approach to settlement.

Champions within the migrant communities of Murray Bridge play a crucial role in supporting migrants. It is vital that support is also given to these shining examples of good settlement, so that they can continue to provide pathways to positive settlement experiences for others. This includes valuing the experiences and guidance of previous waves of immigration, including those post-war migrants who are long term settlers in regional areas.

There is a great deal of value in stakeholders working together to ensure that migrant settlement is considered in a holistic way. Good settlement experiences should be viewed as more than just a job opportunity but more as a golden lifetime opportunity – for both the migrant and the local community.

Chinese dancers at the Murray Bridge All Culture Fest, 2017

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1. Introduction and background

Overseas migrants in non-metropolitan Australia

There is a long history of migrant settlement in regional Australia, though the size and composition of these flows has varied across time and geography. In some cases, targeted government policies have sought to encourage population, especially new migrants, to relocate to regional areas. After World War II, for example, Eastern European migrants were channelled into zones of labour shortage, particularly in regional and remote Australia (Hugo et al. 2006). More recently, since the mid-1990s, the Federal Government has offered a suite of visas through its Regional Migration Scheme (RMS) which grant migrants entry to Australia on the condition they settle in a non-metropolitan area for a minimum period, and with the hope they will stay there longer (Hugo 2008). Although these programmes have traditionally been aimed at skilled migrants, visas such as the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) enable humanitarian migrants to stay in Australia if they intend to live and work in regional areas, among other criteria, while other policies seek to directly settle humanitarian entrants in regional Australia (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2017; Gołębiowska 2012; McDonald et al. 2008). The rationale for all these schemes is to address major demographic challenges faced by regional areas, including long term population decline due to population ageing and youth outmigration, resulting in labour market shortages.

In contrast to these centralised efforts, there are numerous examples of initiatives undertaken by proactive local governments, non-government organisations and businesses to attract people to their part of regional Australia (Regional Institute Australia 2016; Rural Councils Victoria 2013). Strategies adopted include marketing and promotion, targeting specific groups within the population (for example, professionals or families), and providing incentives ranging from rent subsidies to building infrastructure (Connell and McManus 2016; Kenyon and Black 2001a, 2001b; SCORD 2004). These initiatives have been aimed at both the general population and migrants, specifically. Of course, there are also migrants who move to regional areas of their own accord, attracted to jobs, the environment or lifestyle, and often because they are accustomed to living in a rural or regional zone in their origin country. Other times, migrants are part of a chain or network migration system, and are following a well-worn path laid by family and friends or other migrants who have gone before them and reported back about opportunities that exist in a location (Boyd 1989; Massey et al. 1998).

The Rural City of Murray Bridge is an interesting case study because it has not been designated an area of planned migrant settlement. Rather, migrants tend to move to Murray Bridge for jobs, most often at local meat processing plants, or in manufacturing and primary production. Local employers, particularly the meat processing plants, have actively recruited migrants for decades resulting in well-established migrant networks that appear to be sustaining, if not increasing, the flow of migrants to the area. In combination with initiatives like coining Murray Bridge a "Refugee Friendly" city and adopting the term "new neighbours" to refer to migrant arrivals, Murray Bridge has cemented itself as an attractive location for migrants to settle. However, it is widely recognised in the academic literature that attracting migrants is only part of the issue; retention is equally important if regional areas are to accrue any economic (and other) benefits from migrant settlement (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2014; Hugo 2008; Miles et al. 2006; Wickramaarachchi and Butt 2014; Wulff and Dharmalingam 2008).

The literature suggests that migrant retention depends not just on access to jobs, affordable housing, education and other amenities and services, but on their social connectedness and

satisfaction with lifestyle which support migrants' integration into the community (Hugo 2008; Wulff and Dharmalingam 2008). However, true integration can take generations to be fully achieved and relies on both the migrant and host community finding common ground (Jiménez 2011). Findings from a recent study of migrant settlement in the Limestone Coast region of South Australia (Feist et al. 2014) stressed the importance of a two-way process towards successful integration of migrants, whereby new migrants are seen to actively participate in local community events while at the same time the local community are accepting of new and different ways of doing things.

Outline of report

This report began with a brief background of overseas migration to non-metropolitan Australia and now moves on to provide an overview of the study, including outlining its aims and objectives, and the research methodology.

Section Two introduces the Rural City of Murray Bridge and provides important background information on the town with a focus on its history of migrant settlement. This section includes an analysis of secondary administrative data from the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing, conducted in 2016, which provides insight into the demographic makeup of the Murray Bridge population, again with a focus on the Overseas-born cohort. Key economic indicators are also analysed to build a picture of the local economic setting.

The study findings are presented in Section Three, which introduces the study population before exploring commonly-used measures of 'successful' settlement and how participants in this study fare in relation to these. Consideration is then given to the types and extent of participation and community engagement demonstrated by study participants, including participation in formally organised groups, informal social connections and other points of community engagement.

Finally, the discussion moves to the notion of a blueprint for success, with recommendations for regional communities to further engage migrants, enhance their settlement experiences and maximise their potential contributions.

Study overview

This study was funded by the Scanlon Foundation through its Community Grants program, and carried out by researchers at the Hugo Centre for Migration and Population Research, University of Adelaide. The project partners included the Rural City of Murray Bridge, Regional Development Australia Murraylands & Riverland Inc., and the Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC), each of whom had input in the initial framing of the project and assisted with data collection by connecting researchers with potential interviewees (stakeholders and migrants). The project partners also provided important feedback on the final report.

Employment is widely understood to be a critical factor in the successful settlement of migrants (Khoo and McDonald 2001; OECD 2007; Richardson et al. 2001), providing obvious economic benefits to them and their families and to individuals' physical well-being (Khoo and McDonald 2001). Moreover, employment can be an important first step in a migrants' social integration, serving as a point of contact with the wider community and facilitating engagement with 'locals' (Richardson et al. 2002). It was understood at the outset of this project that employment is a key driver of migration to Murray Bridge, and a major reason for the relatively high levels of long-term settlement in the area. The research team and their project partners therefore wanted to look beyond employment to interrogate, chiefly qualitatively, other factors that influence successful settlement, focussing particularly on civic and social engagement.

To that end, primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with 20 community stakeholders, plus focus groups or interviews with 23 migrants from a variety of backgrounds living in the region. Fieldwork was conducted in the Rural City of Murray Bridge, South Australia, between November 2016 and July 2017. Data collected for this study combined with observations made in the field offer important empirical insight into migrant regional settlement, while the blueprint that these findings underpin highlights opportunities for the project partners to facilitate further social engagement with migrants, thus maximising their potential to contribute to the Murray Bridge community.

Aims and objectives

The overall aim of this project was to achieve a better understanding of the factors leading to long-term successful settlement outcomes for new migrants in the Rural City of Murray Bridge, with a focus on active citizenship and social participation in community life. Given Murray Bridge is already relatively successful at providing migrants with jobs, housing, services and a welcoming community attitude, the project partners were asking, what is the next step? They wanted to know: how can the Rural City of Murray Bridge enable and assist new migrants in creating good long-term settlement outcomes with active citizenship and social participation in community life? Indeed, this was considered crucial for ensuring migrants want to continue making a life in Murray Bridge.

To answer these questions this study sought to understand the existing types and degree of migrant civic and social engagement in Murray Bridge, and what could be done to grow and deepen these connections, by asking migrants about their experiences, and drawing on the observations of stakeholders in migrants' settlement and long-term integration. It aimed to capture the views of migrants who had settled in Murray Bridge in the last ten years, thus including the experiences of very recent arrivals through to the more permanently settled. Furthermore, this study was concerned with the settlement experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) migrants (who comprise most recent migrants) because it is known that this cohort can face greater barriers to successful settlement than arrivals from culturally similar countries (Colic-Peisker 2009), particularly people from refugee backgrounds (Olliff 2010). A key objective was to apply the findings to a blueprint that included practical recommendations for enhancing migrants' long-term successful settlement, for Murray Bridge and other rural and regional areas.

Research methodology

This study took a two-stage approach, the first was to explore the existing literature on migration to regional and rural areas of Australia and, specifically, to Murray Bridge. This review informed the background sections of this report, and provided a framework within which to view the findings of this study. The first phase also included analysis of secondary census data (recently updated with data from the most recent 2016 Census) from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing to build a profile of the Murray Bridge community, both migrants and non-migrants, and understand their key demographic and economic characteristics. Together, the literature review and secondary data analysis were critical to informing the research design and contextualising the Murray Bridge case study throughout the data collection phase.

Stage two of this project involved the collection of primary qualitative data to explore in depth the ways in which migrants engage with the Murray Bridge community. In the first instance, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Murray Bridge stakeholders with an interest in, or knowledge about, the migrant community in the region. A total of 20 stakeholder interviews were conducted with employers, representatives from local government and community groups, school leaders, and volunteers in migrant support services. These were critical for understanding how

different groups and organisations in the region support migrant settlement and identifying some of the opportunities and challenges when it comes to engaging migrants and the broader community to support long-term successful settlement. Stakeholders also played an integral part in identifying migrants to participate in interviews and focus groups with migrants living in and around Murray Bridge.

In total, 23 migrants participated in either focus groups or interviews. As well as collecting background information about participants, for example age, family structure, English language ability, marital status and so on, interview and focus group questions covered a range of themes including:

- Reasons for moving to Australia, and Murray Bridge
- Experience of moving to Murray Bridge
- Community participation and engagement
- Reception from Murray Bridge residents
- Access to services
- Employment
- Future plans

Overall, the research team experienced substantial difficulties recruiting migrants to be involved in interviews or focus groups for this study. In some cases, attempts to contact migrants went unanswered, while in other cases it proved too logistically difficult for potential participants to meet for an interview. Where migrants were successfully recruited, stakeholders and community leaders were integral to this process. The result was a study population with several biases, the most major of which is along gender lines, with overwhelmingly more females recruited to the study. Similarly, while a good range of birthplaces were included in the study population, in some cases only one participant from that country was recruited. Another source of bias was the fact that most participants were recruited through their ethnic group (e.g. Murraylands Filipino Australian Association) or an activity they were involved in (e.g. English language classes). This meant migrants who are isolated or do not participate in these groups/activities were not included and their experience of engagement is almost certainly going to be different.

Although the study population is not a representative sample, it provided a good snapshot of the current migrant population in Murray Bridge in a couple of key ways. Firstly, a range of birthplace groups were represented in the study population, including key Asian and African countries which have experienced significant growth among the Overseas-born population in Murray Bridge in recent years. Secondly, it included migrants who moved to Murray Bridge for a range of reasons, including employment, partnership, family reunion, and factors such as lifestyle and lower cost of living. Finally, the study population included migrants whose length of residence in Murray Bridge ranged from less than a year to just over ten years.

Filipino dancers at the Murray Bridge All Culture Fest, 2015

2. Study site

Murray Bridge is located on the banks of the River Murray, 75km south-east of Adelaide, South Australia (see Figure 1). It is the largest city in the Murraylands region and forms part of the Rural City of Murray Bridge local government area (Murray Bridge RC) which comprises 20,862 people and covers a land area of 183,176 hectares (ABS 2016). Murray Bridge has three public primary schools, one public high school, two private schools, a TAFE campus, a hospital, library, information centre and shopping centre. The town serves as the centre of a major agricultural district, though its main industries of employment are manufacturing, retail and health care, while the town and the Murray River are a tourist attraction. The proximity of Murray Bridge to the capital city of Adelaide – just one-hour driving time - makes it an attractive location for people to take advantage of low cost housing within commuting distance of a major business district, a point of difference from other rural and regional areas in Australia.

More than three quarters of the people in Murray Bridge were born in Australia. However, there is a history of migrant settlement in the region, which began in earnest in the 1950s when farmers and agricultural workers arrived from Eastern Europe. More recently, skilled and humanitarian migrants from a diverse range of countries have settled in Murray Bridge. Over the years, Murray Bridge has been considered several times by the Federal government as a location for direct regional settlement of humanitarian entrants, but has never been selected[1]. Rather, migrants to Murray Bridge are 'self-settlers' in the area, having taken a range of pathways to get there (Taylor-Neumann and Balasingham 2009). Since 2001 several distinct waves of migrants have settled in the area, primarily driven employment opportunities. These waves have included Afghani's on Temporary Protection Visas in 2001-2002, Sudanese migrants relocating from Adelaide in 2005 having been recruited for work, and Chinese 457 visa-holders recruited directly from China to work in Murray Bridge, also in 2005 (Taylor-Neumann and Balasingham 2009). Historically, the trend was for migrant workers to arrive in Murray Bridge on their own (Taylor-Neumann and Balasingham 2009), to be followed by their families at a later point. As migrants from different places have arrived, family reunion has been an important driver of migrant settlement in the area.

In the absence of any centralised direct funding to support new migrants in Murray Bridge there has been, and continues to be, a strong reliance on local community organisations, including the local council, schools, employers, health providers and migrant support agencies, to come together to support new migrants in the town for the mutual benefit of all. Sadly, this co-operation was instigated by a tragic incident involving the suicide of an Afghani refugee in Murray Bridge in 2003, which served as a 'wake-up call' to the community that migrants in the area needed more support[1]. In 2005, when a large number of Chinese 457 visa holders were due to arrive directly from China to work at the meat processing plant, the Murraylands Multicultural Migrant Settlement Committee was established[1]. The Committee worked to bring community stakeholders together to facilitate successful settlement experiences for this group. Unfortunately, funding to support this and other community driven initiatives and organisations has been unreliable.

While some inland rural and regional areas in Australia are suffering depopulation and labour shortages (Argent et al. 2007; Hugo 2008, 2013), the Murray Bridge region is experiencing growth (Strathearn 2017). For local businesses, the main barrier to further growth, particularly in primary industries, including meat processing and agriculture, is ensuring an adequate workforce. Low

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[1] This information was provided anecdotally to the Research team by the project partners.

skilled jobs in these industries are often characterised as DDD (dirty, demeaning and dangerous), and struggle to attract local labour. The availability of migrant workers willing to do this type of work therefore helps to sustain and grow local industry in the region.
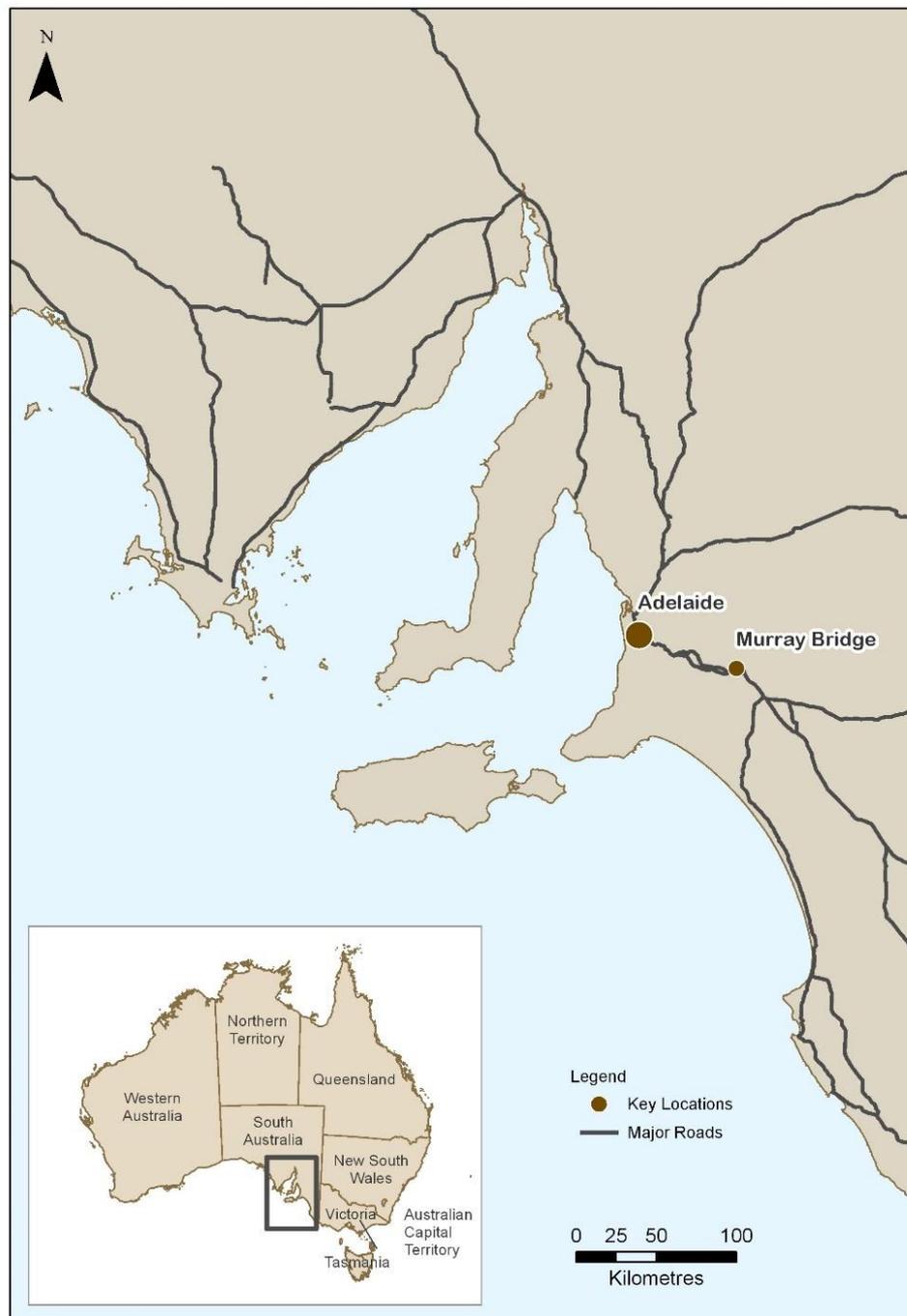
Figure 1: Map of the Murray Bridge study area and proximity to Adelaide

Demographics

Age and sex

Overall the age structure of Murray Bridge closely resembles that of the greater Adelaide metropolitan area (Table 1), although Murray Bridge has a slightly older population. In 2015 the

median age of persons living in Murray Bridge (RC) was 41 compared with 40 for South Australia and 38 for Australia's total population (ABS 2017a).

Table 1: Population age structure, Murray Bridge (RC), Greater Adelaide*, 2016

Age range	Murray Bridge (n=20,862)	Greater Adelaide (n=1,295,712)	South Australia (n=1,676,653)
	%	%	%
<20	23.5	23.6	23.5
20 - 39	25.0	27.1	25.6
40 - 59	25.8	26.4	26.6
60 - 79	20.6	18.1	19.4
80+	5.1	4.9	5.0
Total	100	100	100

Source: ABS, Census 2016 (Note: all Census data from ABS, 2017d unless stated otherwise)
*Greater Adelaide is the area defined by the ABS as a Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA) and represents the functional extent of the capital city of Adelaide. Populations living outside of this boundary are included in the ABS geographical classification 'rest of state'.

While the numbers of males and females living in Murray Bridge are roughly equal, there is a greater concentration of males in the mid-workforce age group of 30-39 (Figure 2). This is likely to be because the manufacturing industry and nearby Mobilong state prison are key employers in the region, and because male-dominated occupations such as labourers, technicians and trade workers employ more people than any other in Murray Bridge. The overall sex ratio of Murray Bridge (RC) is 101 (that is, 101 males for every 100 females) compared to a sex ratio of 97 for the state of South Australia.

Figure 2: Sex ratio by age, Murray Bridge (RC) and South Australia, 2016
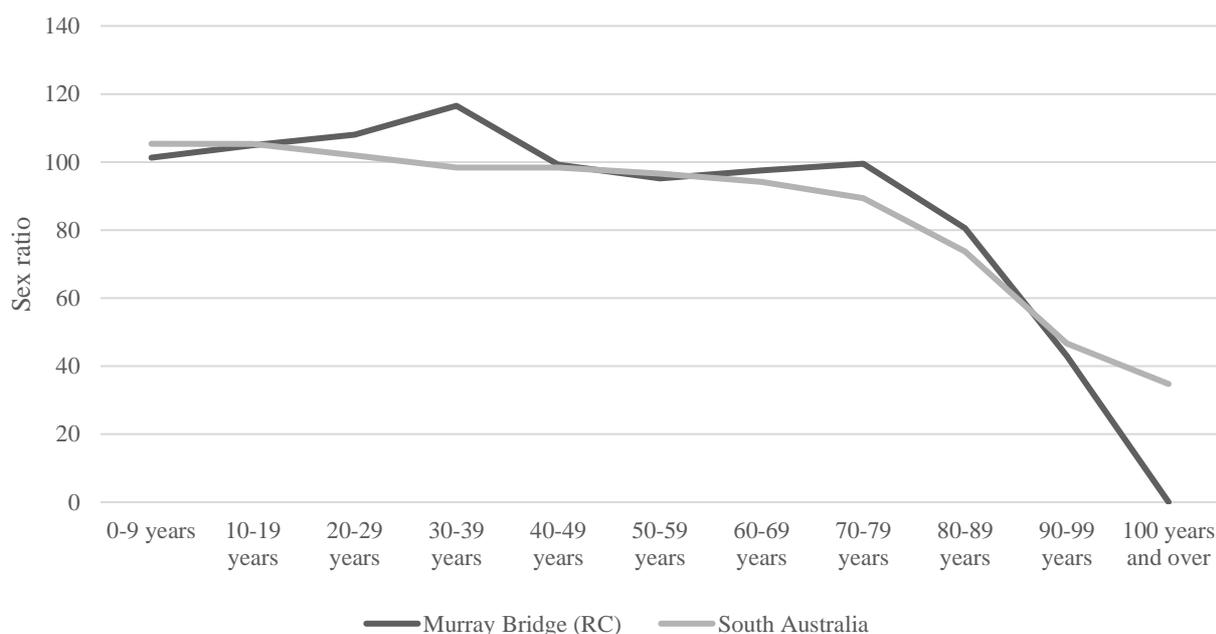
Source: ABS, Census 2016

Employment, education and cost of living

In 2016 there were 960 businesses in Murray Bridge, mainly in construction (17.7 %), agriculture, forestry or fishing (12.7 %), and retail trade (10.6 %) (ABS 2017c), while Table 2 shows the main industries of employment are retail trade, manufacturing and health care and social assistance.

Table 2: Industry of employment, employed persons, Murray Bridge (RC), 2016

Industry	n	%
Retail Trade	1,088	12.9
Manufacturing	1,025	12.1
Health Care and Social Assistance	992	11.7
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	734	8.7
Construction	605	7.2
Wholesale Trade	542	6.4
Education and Training	484	5.7
Accommodation and Food Services	479	5.7
Public Administration and Safety	469	5.5
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	374	4.4
Total employed	8,454	100.0

Source: ABS, Census 2016

Table 3 shows selected employment, education and housing statistics for Murray Bridge compared to South Australia. It is clear from these that the Murray Bridge workforce is more 'blue collar', while there are also higher rates of unemployment, lower incomes and lower levels of post-school qualifications in Murray Bridge compared to South Australia as a whole. The top two occupations in Murray Bridge are labourers and technicians and trade workers, whereas professionals and clerical and administrative workers are the top occupations for the State overall.

Table 3: Selected employment, education and housing statistics, Murray Bridge (RC) and South Australia

	Murray Bridge (RC)	South Australia
Unemployment rate (2011)	7.3%	5.7%
Median employee income (2013)	$39,429	$46,050
Main occupations of employed persons (2011)	Labourers (23%) Technicians and trade workers (14%)	Professionals (20%) Clerical and administrative workers (14%)
% persons aged 15+ with a post-school qualification (2011)	43.5%	51.9%
Average monthly household rental payment (2011)	$753	$994
Average monthly mortgage repayment (2011)	$1,267	$1,627
Median house sale price (2014)	$240,000	$370,000

Source: ABS Regional Statistics by LGA, 2016, Murray Bridge RC; ABS Regional Statistics by ASGS, 2016, South Australia (ABS 2017b)

In terms of housing, the cost of living in Murray Bridge is less than South Australia, with substantially lower rent or mortgage repayments and house prices compared to the state average. The low cost of housing in Murray Bridge, combined with its proximity to Adelaide (one hour on a freeway) is a key factor in attracting some residents to live there.

A final characteristic of the Murray Bridge population that should be noted, is the high proportion of Indigenous people who live there. In fact, in 2016, 4.5 percent of the total Murray Bridge population have an Aboriginal background compared to just 1.9 percent of the South Australian population and 2.5 percent of total Australian population (ABS 2017d).

A view of the Rural City of Murray Bridge

Migrant population in the region

Australia is increasingly a culturally diverse society. Indeed, the most recent Census in 2016 showed more than a quarter of the population were born overseas (26.3%). Most migrants settle in the metropolitan zones of our Capital cities, which are home to a higher proportion of the Overseas-born population than rural and regional areas (Hugo 2008). Table 4 shows 14.6 percent of the total Murray Bridge population were born overseas, an increase from 10.1 percent of the population in 2006. However, the rate of growth of the Overseas-born population between 2006 and 2016 was a massive 71.3 percent, compared to a rate of 18.2 percent for the total Murray Bridge population in the same period.

Table 4: Total and Overseas-born population of Murray Bridge (RC) 2006, 2011 & 2016

| Murray Bridge (RC)	2006	2011	2016	% change 2006 - 2016
Total population	17,648	19,742	20,862	18.2
Overseas-born population	1,775	2,382	3,041	71.3
OS-born as % of total population	10.1	12.1	14.6	

Source: ABS Census, 2006, 2011, 2016

Figure 3 and Figure 4 illustrate other important points about the Overseas-born population in Murray Bridge. Figure 3 shows that Murray Bridge experienced a greater increase in its proportion of the Overseas-born population than other sections of the State, and that while the proportion of Overseas-born in Murray Bridge is less than in metropolitan Adelaide it is greater than other areas of the State. Figure 4 again shows the rate of change in the total and Overseas-born populations for various sections of South Australia, highlighting the massive growth in the Overseas-born population in Murray Bridge, which has increased by 27.7percent between 2011 and 2016.

Figure 3: Percentage of total population born Overseas, Murray Bridge (RC), Rest of South Australia, Greater Adelaide and Total South Australia, 2011, 2016
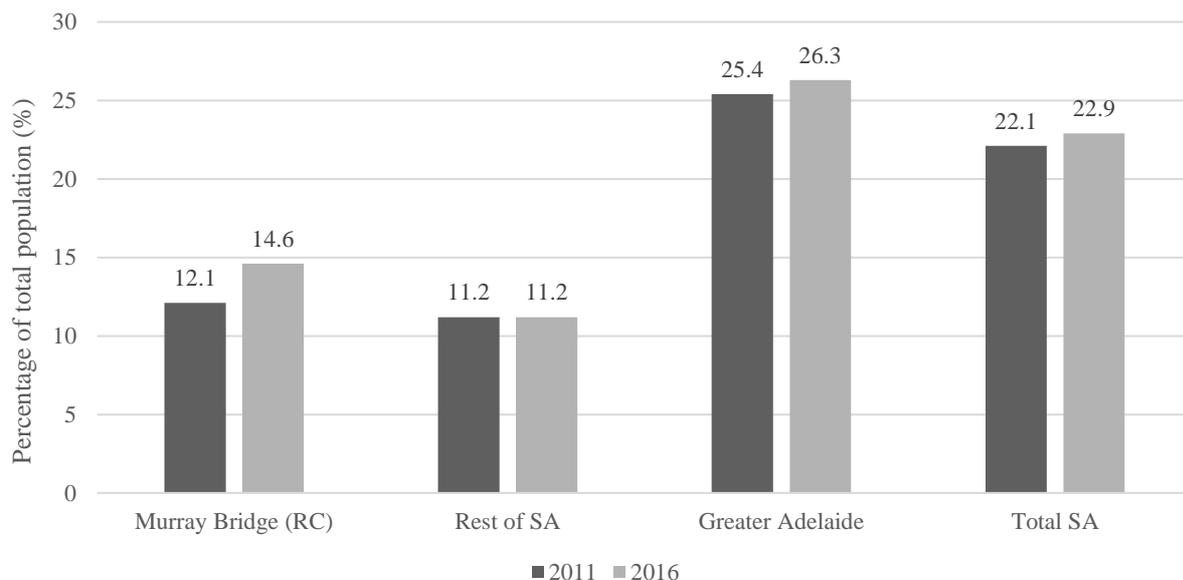
Source: ABS Census 2011, 2016

Figure 4: Percent change in total and Overseas-born population groups, Murray Bridge (RC), Rest of South Australia, Greater Adelaide and Total South Australia, 2011, 2016
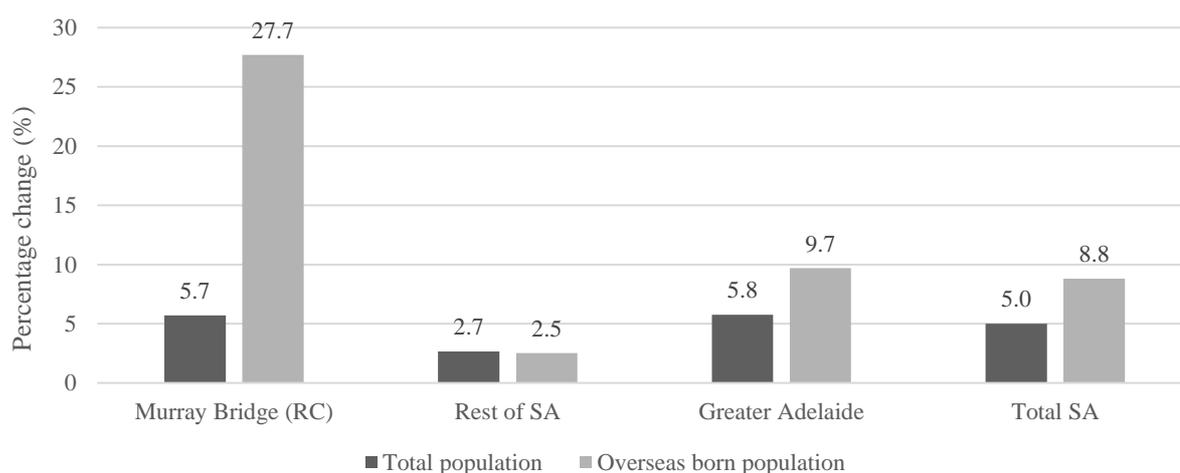
Source: ABS Census 2011, 2016

Table 5 shows the top 20 Overseas-born groups at the 2011 and 2016 Censuses. England remains the largest Overseas-born group in Murray Bridge, although numbers are declining with only a small proportion arriving in the last ten years. People born in the Philippines and China comprise the next

two largest Overseas-born groups in Murray Bridge, though they are newer arrivals with more than 80 percent of their respective populations arriving in the last ten years.

Table 5: Overseas-born top 20 Countries of birth, Murray Bridge, 2011 and 2016, with intercensal change, and number and proportion arrived within past 10 years

	2011	2016	Change 2011-2016	Arrived in past 10 years	Arrived in past 10 years
	n	n	%	n	%
England	590	569	-3.6	25	4.4
Philippines	132	398	201.5	329	82.7
China	236	312	32.2	252	80.8
New Zealand	230	239	3.9	115	48.1
Taiwan	36	187	419.4	127	67.9
Vietnam	27	139	414.8	105	75.5
Italy	126	126	0.0	4	3.2
India	80	124	55.0	111	89.5
Netherlands	105	92	-12.4	9	9.8
Germany	97	79	-18.6	6	7.6
Scotland	75	64	-14.7	5	7.8
South Africa	43	44	2.3	29	65.9
Bangladesh	15	37	146.7	33	89.2
United States of America	27	34	25.9	16	47.1
Afghanistan	41	31	-24.4	22	71.0
Zimbabwe	24	30	25.0	20	66.7
Turkey	39	29	-25.6	0	0.0
Sri Lanka	31	27	-12.9	25	92.6
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	6	26	333.3	9	34.6
Wales	23	25	8.7	4	16.0
Total		**3,041**		**1,465**	**48.2**

Source: ABS Census, 2011, 2016

Overall, arrivals from Asia are more recent, while the decline of traditional European source countries is evident in the percentage change between the two censuses. Migrants from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) countries of birth, where more than half of the population arrived in Australia the past 10 years, are highlighted in Table 5. Interestingly, three of the top ten countries had populations where more than 80 percent had arrived in the last ten years, in a further two cases more than 65 percent had arrived within the past ten years. Although these data are indicative of the cultural diversity in Murray Bridge and how the composition of the Overseas-born population has changed over time, it must be remembered that migrants from humanitarian-refugee backgrounds can be under enumerated due to difficulties completing census forms. They are also a highly mobile group and may have moved in and out of the area between censuses.

Evidence of early waves of migrants to Murray Bridge can be seen in glasshouses (operational and decommissioned) surrounding the town

3. Study population

Demographics

It has been noted that the study population was not representative of the total migrant population in Murray Bridge, but took a purposive approach to recruitment to ensure it provided a good snapshot of regional migrant experiences, including recently arrived migrants who had moved to the area for a range of reasons. These characteristics and others are explored briefly here before the results of the study are discussed.

All study participants were aged in the prime working ages, between 25 and 55 years old, with the majority aged in their 30s. Among the challenges encountered recruiting participants for this study, the research team experienced significant difficulties recruiting men. The resulting gender composition was three male and 10 female interview participants, and two all-female focus groups. The most common reason given by men for not being able to participate was work commitments; either because they were at work during the day when interviews were carried out or, for shift workers, because they rested then. The uneven gender composition of study participants represents significant bias that must be considered throughout the ensuing analysis and discussion.

Country of origin and length of residence

Table 6 shows the country of origin of study participants. Most come from Asian countries, which 2016 Census data showed are among the fastest growing and most recent migrant groups to Murray Bridge. Indeed, China and the Philippines are the second and third largest migrant groups living in Murray Bridge so it is important that they have been captured here. Participants not from Asia were from African countries. Although neither Sudan or Rwanda are among the top migrant groups in Murray Bridge there is a well-established Sudanese community in Murray Bridge, with settlement of this group dating back to the early 2000s (Taylor-Neumann and Balasingham 2009). Not captured here are long-term settlers from traditional migrant-sending countries such as England, New Zealand, Italy and Germany, however some community stakeholder interviews did include migrants from this era of settlement.

Table 6: Study participants, country of origin

Country of origin	Interview participants	Focus group participants	Total
Vietnam	2		2
China	5		5
Malaysia	1		1
Sudan	1	5	6
Rwanda	1		1
Thailand	1		1
Pakistan	1		1
Taiwan	1		1
Philippines		5	5

Source: Murray Bridge fieldwork

Most interview respondents had lived in Australia for five years or less (nine out of 13), three of them for less than a year, while three had lived in Australia for more than 10 years. Of these longer-term migrants, two had been in Murray Bridge for five years and one of them for just two years. In the focus groups, the Sudanese migrants had been in Australia for as little as four months and as many as 11 years, while no Filipino focus group participants had been in Australia for more than five years. Interestingly, eight of the 13 interview participants moved directly to Murray Bridge from their home country, highlighting the strong degree of network migration. Two of the longer-term migrants interviewed were Australian citizens, while four were on temporary visas. The remainder had permanent resident status.

Reasons for moving to Australia - and Murray Bridge

Most interview participants moved to Australia either for work or for marriage/partnership, while the main reason for moving to Murray Bridge was work, with at least five people moving specifically for job opportunities at the meat processing plant. However, study participants raised a range of other factors in their decision to move to Murray Bridge, including: cost of living, a good place to raise children, quiet lifestyle within commuting distance of a capital city, easy to buy a house, and/or easy to find farming work.

An interesting finding from this study was evidence of significant and long-standing migration networks, with many having moved to Murray Bridge to join partners or family, or because they had been made aware of Murray Bridge, particularly job opportunities there, through their hometown networks. In two of these cases, the networks extended from Murray Bridge to migrants' hometowns in China and Taiwan, with migrants already in Murray Bridge sending home information about jobs in Murray Bridge and providing support to new arrivals. In the Chinese case, we were told this network had been operating for at least ten years. Among Sudanese migrants, the network extended to Adelaide with Sudanese migrants already in Murray Bridge serving as the bridgehead for the wider community in Adelaide. Some of the first Sudanese migrants arrived in Murray Bridge more than 10 years ago. Again, the Sudanese community rallied around new arrivals, providing assistance with everything from transport and housing, to emotional support.

Successful settlement

This study sought to understand successful settlement in terms of civic and social engagement, with a view to informing a blueprint for successful settlement. What constitutes successful settlement is an inherently subjective line of enquiry and difficult to measure. It nevertheless forms the basis of many studies and remains a live issue in migration studies. One frequently used typology is offered by Khoo and McDonald (2001), who identify four dimensions of immigrant settlement and a range of indicators within them for which positive outcomes indicate a level of success. The dimensions are: social participation, economic participation, economic well-being and physical well-being.

The idea for this project began from the premise that the Rural City of Murray Bridge is an excellent example of providing new migrants with jobs, housing, education, services and a welcoming community. The extent to which this is the case for some of these factors is briefly tested here with reference to three of Khoo and McDonald's (2001) categories - physical well-being was not canvassed in this study.

Economic participation and well-being

Jobs

For Khoo and McDonald (2001), successful settlement through economic participation can be measured using the following indicators: labour force participation rate, employment and unemployment rates, occupational status and job satisfaction, while they measured economic wellbeing by level of income, home ownership and dependency on government welfare.

Employment is a key driver of migration to Murray Bridge, and a factor in the long-term settlement of many people in the area. In this study, more than half the interview participants moved to Murray Bridge for employment (seven), either for themselves or their partner, often at the meat processing plant. Certainly, another indicator of the high rates of employment, at least among migrant men, was the under representation of this cohort in the study population. Although, of the three men that were interviewed only one was employed full-time, the other two were unemployed.

Furthermore, there was evidence of under-employment among the females in this study. That is, more of them wanted to be in the workforce than currently were, or they wanted to work more hours. Of the interviewees, only two females currently worked, both part-time. However, a further three had previously worked before stepping out of the workforce after they were married or had children. Indeed, seven of the women had children, six with children under 16 years of age, four of them with children aged under five years.

Of the women interviewed, four said they did not find it hard to get work, citing employers such as the meat processing plant and mushroom farm. However, three hadn't looked for work yet, while three said it was hard to find work. Focus group participants told a similar story. Among the Sudanese women, two of the five had previously worked at the meatworks before taking a break from work for one reason or another. Three of the five Sudanese women were currently looking for work but having difficulty finding a job, particularly jobs that fit with caring for children, despite exhausting all the employment options they were aware of.

In fact, a complicating factor regarding employment for many migrant women in this study who already face barriers to employment (lack of local work experience, issues with skills recognition, lack of English etc.), is the need to fit work in around childcare and other family commitments. Of course, this challenge is well known to all young families struggling to balance work and family life, and the blueprint gives some recommendations to deal with these issues.

Women in the Filipino focus group also struggled to find work but not because a lack of jobs, rather they reported difficulties having their skills and qualifications recognised in Australia. As a result, three were studying, all of them doing an Aged Care Certificate III course. Overall, the study data did show that employment is a major driver of migration and a reason to settle in Murray Bridge, although it was common for only one member of the household to be employed, again a function of age and the family formation stage of life.

This study supported previous research which has found migrants, particularly refugee-humanitarian entrants, often end up working in niche, secondary labour market jobs which locals do not want to do, and are often characterised by the three D's (dirty, dangerous and demeaning) (Chiswick and Miller 2008; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006; Olliff 2010). Certainly, it has already been noted that the meat processing plant is a major migrant employer in Murray Bridge, but so are other labour-intensive jobs in primary industries. The Sudanese women agreed that they were willing to do any work, although they raised cleaning as a suitable work option for them. Filipino women, on the other hand, tended towards roles as carers and in aged care. A community stakeholder said:

> *"The employment that they [migrants] obtain is largely unskilled, it's heavy, its long hours and a number have complained to me that they are being underpaid. There are stories of exploitation from major employers"* [Community Stakeholder]

Several study participants also raised the difficult nature of this work, with some feeling they have little choice in where they can work. For some the physical nature of the work was hard:

> *"It is very difficult work, hard work to earn this money, especially in the meat works…The work is not for me. But most of my friends working in meat works they find it very hard work. But then have no choice."* [Filipino focus group participant]

Others struggled with the shift work:

> *"It is very difficult. But we have families working in the meatworks that are shifting. They don't have a choice. So if husband is working [night shift] the wife is working the day shift. So it is hard."* [Filipino focus group participant]

Finally, this study showed significant disconnect between migrants reporting a desire for more work and employers and business claiming a need for more workers. For example,

> *"All of the primary industries are in growth mode over the next 18 months – we already struggle to keep employee numbers up at times of little to no growth attracting people to work as employees, regardless of whether they are migrants or not, is a challenge here at the moment."* [Local Farm Manager]

> *"There is a lot of effort underway by industry who are screaming for workforce based on the needs of industry…We've got the jobs. We've recently done a forecast over the next four years and there is real dollars here, they want to build they want to expand. But what is their biggest barrier? Workforce. They struggle daily with the confidence to grow because of workforce."* [Regional Development Australia Representative]

The inability of employers and migrants to connect warrants further research, while also highlighting opportunities for improved communication between them, which form the basis of another blueprint recommendation.

On the positive side of employment, there was evidence of several small businesses in the community that had been started by migrants. Some of these also employed other local community people – both migrant and non-migrant residents. Migrants have been recognised as having strong entrepreneurial tendencies (Collins 2003, 2016; Hugo 2011; Samaratunge et al. 2015) and support for new businesses in the region would help to not only provide the sort of services and goods that appeal to a migrant population but also add to the variety of businesses in the township.

Housing

Housing, especially home ownership, is a commonly-used indicator of successful settlement (Ager and Strang 2004; Khoo and McDonald 2001). By this measure, participants in this study were highly successful. Indeed, eight of the 13 interview respondents had purchased their own home, the remaining five were in rented accommodation, in one case social housing. The high rate of home ownership was reflected in the focus groups, too. One Filipino participant noted,

"Lots and lots of Filipinos are buying houses. You go to some pathways here, in Murray and it's an all Filipino street. Murray Bridge is very good because it's like an hour going to Adelaide. And you can still feel that you are safe." [Filipino focus group participant]

Among the interview participants, 11 stated that their housing met their needs, with the exceptions finding their accommodation too old or too small. Difficulties finding adequate housing for large families was an issue raised in the Sudanese focus group, and one participant reported living in substandard rental accommodation. Despite these issues, the overall high rate of home ownership among migrants in Murray Bridge is an indicator of successful settlement and, moreover, demonstrates an intention to settle in the area for the long-term. One big advantage of rural and regional settlement is the cost of housing. In South Australia, quarterly median house prices for metropolitan Adelaide were $455,000 in June 2017 and $263,600 in the non-metropolitan zone, which includes Murray Bridge (South Australian Government 2017).

Social participation

The main indicators of social participation for Khoo and McDonald (2001) are proficiency in English, participation in education by young adults and Australian citizenship. This study did not investigate the participation of young adults in education, although it did find education facilitated social participation in other ways, including providing opportunities for children and their parents to engage with the broader community through schools and childcare (discussed in the next section). In terms of citizenship, only two interview participants were Australian citizens, and focus group participants were not asked about this. However, low rates of citizenship conferral are to be expected among newly arrived residents who need to first satisfy several criteria including minimum lengths of continuous residence, which makes this a complex measure of success.

Citizenship Ceremony, Murray Bridge 2016

The level of English proficiency among migrants in this study was also not systematically measured, suffice to say that all participants could speak and understand English a little bit or well. Furthermore, all participants expressed a desire to improve their English ability and many of them were proactive in trying to do this through both formal and informal English lessons. Of course, English classes were one method of recruiting participants which will account for the high rate of participation in them, although volunteer English teachers interviewed for this study observed a strong demand for and take-up of their services generally.

Participation and community engagement

The research team did not anticipate the significant challenges they encountered in recruiting migrants to participate in this study. Although the team approached multiple places for recruitment – the local Migrant Resource Centre, employers, schools, community centre and community groups, churches, stakeholders, and cultural events - there was a low response rate to requests for interview. Indeed, the small study population is testament to the difficulties the team faced locating and connecting with migrants in Murray Bridge. There was a distinct sense that the migrant community in Murray Bridge, though sizeable, is a 'closed' community. This view was corroborated by several stakeholders:

> *"It is hard to get that first contact…If people don't come to us and it doesn't go through some level of government, then it can be really hard to find out what's going on in non-English speaking communities" [Local journalist]*

> *"[Migrant groups] have been notoriously difficult to engage with…it took more than two years of me badgering to get [migrant group] to participate in the All Culture Fest, so there has been some small improvement but there is still great difficulty in getting the [group] to access AMRC services…they might not need it, they may have services within their own cultural group that we are not aware of, I don't really know" [Migrant Resource Centre worker]*

This observation from the resource centre worker raises another point about the migrant community in Murray Bridge, namely the tendency for migrants to stay within their own ethnic/cultural groups. Several stakeholders, and migrants themselves, reported strong and supportive, tight-knit ethnic community groups within the migrant population of Murray Bridge. For example,

> *"The local Vietnamese community looks after them [new arrivals]. So, when they arrive someone will help them find a house, they'll bring them down here [school] to enrol, they'll help them to connect, they'll get them to work and all that. So they look after themselves" [Primary School Principal]*

> *"Migrants learn how to get around the community through their migrant networks. When I interview potential staff and ask them what brought them to Murray Bridge it is often that they knew other people from their migrant community who were already living here" [Aged Care Provider]*

Where chain migration was common, the information and support that enabled migration in the first place continued after new migrants arrived in Murray Bridge, with long-term migrants continuing to provide information about living in Murray Bridge and practical support such as help finding accommodation.

While they aren't always viewed as such, strong and supportive migrant communities are a positive start for migrants, providing a safe and comfortable place for them nested within the broader

community. Within these tight knit community groups, migrants who have left family and friend support networks in their origin country can generate a sense of belonging as a first step to wider integration.

The Principal at one of the Murray Bridge schools gave an example of the crucial role of leaders within the Dinka community, who act as community liaisons for others who do not speak English well. He described the strong connections between these families and the crucial social support they provide one another, further stating that if these support networks did not exist the school community would find it hard to adequately support migrants and would therefore need to rethink their response to migrant children and their families.

Migrant children, Murray Bridge Primary School

The following stakeholder quotes discuss different aspects of the support that migrant communities provide for themselves, including how this can prevent them seeking support from outside their own group and how information is shared between migrants.

> *"There is lots of support for migrants within the migrant community, so the likelihood of them coming forward to use our services is low… It's not just about having services [for migrants] available it's about the connection, it's about the trust, it's about where you feel that you aren't going to be judged." [Charity Service Provider]*

> *"For comfort sake they [migrants from the same background] tend to group together and get together with their own ethnic group in the community and they'll get together and say 'oh I did training through MADEC and I did this…oh well then I can do that'. So word of mouth is how they find out about things." [Migrant Resource Centre Worker]*

Of course, connecting with one's ethnic/cultural community and with the broader Murray Bridge community are not mutually exclusive practices. One key to further integration is having links to the broader community, for example through the Migrant Resource Centre. It is a critical step in settlement that links are forged, perhaps through community champions within those tight knit migrant groups to foster stronger links to the wider community and its resources. Additional support

for migrant community groups – including funds for community activities, public meeting facilities, and social and civic information could also strengthen links between them and the wider community.

Social ties

Interview participants were asked about their friendships with people in the wider Murray Bridge community, including at work. It was common for study participants to regularly interact with a mix of people, including people from their own cultural group, other migrants and Australians. However, most reported that they did not have strong friendships with other people in Murray Bridge and any strong friendships were with people from their own ethnic group or migrants from elsewhere. Only four interview participants had close family in Murray Bridge. When asked if they have friends outside the Filipino community, one focus group participant replied:

> *"Yeah friends, but not best friends. Gatherings where we bring food are good for us, we bring spring rolls and I can say 'would you like to eat my spring rolls?'"* *[Filipino focus group participant]*

For most study participants, interactions with the wider community were facilitated through English classes (reflecting the bias in recruitment methods), as well as at their own or their partners' work place, children's schools, church and playgroup. As one stakeholder said,

> *"Kids have to go to school, so it's one place where the communities are mixed...you know the kids go to a playdate and all of a sudden the parents are interacting and that sort of thing"* *[Local government employee]*

Welcome to playgroup: the pin board at a Murray Bridge playgroup displaying flags of the children and their parents

Another important interface for migrants and the wider community was their immediate neighbourhood, with several migrants reporting they had regular contact with neighbours, although these interactions were often reported as being merely polite and superficial. In at least one case interacting with neighbours was a negative experience with the migrant family subjected to racial abuse.

Level of participation and community engagement in Murray Bridge

At the outset of this research, the researchers expected rates of formal civic and community participation among migrants in Murray Bridge to be below the broader Murray Bridge community, and this was confirmed during fieldwork. While this was expected, however, the research team were keen to identify where new or different engagement was occurring, for example, at the "fringes" of migrant communities and the broader community where interactions start to happen.

English classes were the most commonly reported group that migrants were involved in. While some migrants attended English classes at TAFE, most were taught in classes run by volunteers through community groups, chiefly the Migrant Resource Centre, but also church groups. Several Murray Bridge residents also volunteer time and resources to teach English one-on-one or in small groups, mostly from their own homes.

Beyond attending English classes, participation in non-religious community groups was low. Other formally organised community groups attended by migrants were playgroups, attended by mothers and their young children. The Murray Bridge Community Centre runs activity sessions aimed at migrants, though details are unclear because an interview could not be secured with a representative from the Centre.

The research team contacted several community groups who reported no migrants among their membership, including the Community Garden, Country Women's Association (CWA), and a Men's Shed Group. Given these are quintessentially traditional Australian organisations, this is not surprising. However, the President of the Men's Shed Group indicated any migrants wanting to join would be made welcome and described a lengthy campaign by the Migrant Resource Centre to involve an early cohort of Afghani arrivals in the group, although no migrants to date have taken up the offer. Similarly, the CWA Treasurer reported no migrants in their association but said the organisation was deeply concerned about dwindling membership, and thought the recruitment of migrants was a good idea to be raised at the next AGM. It may be that with support from migrant focused organisations, such as the Migrant Resource Centre and the local council, stronger links could be made to these more traditional Australian community groups.

On the other hand, many study participants were active members of religious organisations, though the degree to which migrants could integrate into the broader community through these was affected by the type of church and the composition of its membership. In some cases, migrants mixed with other migrants and Australians at church. In other cases, migrants worshipped only with members of their cultural/ethnic community. The Filipino case was interesting because, despite being a part of the broader Catholic Church they now reportedly comprise most of their congregation.

> *"More than half of the Catholic Church is Filipino. If you try to go on a Sunday only a few are Australian, or Italian but mostly Filipinos." [Filipino focus group]*

Members of the Murray Bridge Catholic Youth Group

Late into the fieldwork stage of the study, the research team learned of a mosque at the outskirts of Murray Bridge. The mosque is a good example of a place that is both literally and figuratively not visible to wider community, but is nevertheless a place to support migrants and a place for them to gain a sense of belonging. One Muslim participant in Murray Bridge described the Mosque as being a central place of worship and community for many migrant groups, with over 100 regular attendees.

Mosque on the outskirts of Murray Bridge

Another means of community engagement is the annual All Culture Fest hosted by the Rural City of Murray Bridge with the AMRC. A large turnout to the festival of over 130 people, both migrants and Australia-born local community members, during the fieldwork phase of this study showed strong support for celebrating cultural diversity among migrants and the broader Murray Bridge community. Still, when asked if they felt they could join in with community events, six interview participants said they did not feel they could, two stating they did not know what events they could become involved with. Of the seven felt that they could join community events, two were involved with the All Culture Fest, and one participants' children were involved in local sporting groups.

Most interview participants said the Murray Bridge community supported their cultural practices, though several interview and focus group participants mentioned difficulty accessing culturally appropriate food, and the need to drive to Adelaide for these. A participant from the African community also saw a strong need for a community meeting place for African migrants to gather.

The audience at the All Culture Fest, 2017

Welcoming and accepting community attitude

In recent years, successive Local Government leaders have sought to make migrants to Murray Bridge feel welcome. In 2003, the Rural City of Murray Bridge, through the council, declared itself 'Refugee Friendly' and adopted the inclusive term 'new neighbours' in favour of refugee or migrant (Refugee Council of Australia 2013). Positive and proactive leadership such as this can influence the views of the wider community and should not be underestimated in its ability to impact migrant settlement. Employers and business groups who see migrant settlement as critical to development in the region have also been vocal in their support of migrant settlement in Murray Bridge, particularly given the role of migrants in meeting labour demands, which support economic growth.

Generally, study participants reported a welcoming and accepting community attitude in Murray Bridge. All interview participants said that people in Murray Bridge were generally friendly towards them, although some recounted experiences of unfriendly behaviour, including one or two accounts of blatant discrimination.

Pioneers and champions

In this study, the research team came across two important groups of people critical to the successful settlement of migrants. The first of these were 'pioneers', or the first amongst a birthplace group to arrive in Murray Bridge and pave the way for migrants that follow. In many cases, the experiences of the early migrants smooth the way and make it easier for later migrants. It is particularly valuable for new arrivals with limited English, as the research team observed in a focus group when long-term Sudanese migrants rallied around the most recent arrival who spoke little English to give advice and advocate for her regarding substandard housing her family was living in.

> ### Case study 1: Pioneer
>
> **Hiba*** and **Yaya*** participated in a focus group for this study along with five other women from Sudan. They has separately moved with their families to Murray Bridge from Adelaide ten years ago after learning about work opportunities at the meat processing plan. As pioneers, they have taken up senior roles in the Murray Bridge Sudanese community, particularly among the women.
>
> Hiba came to the research team's attention through the primary school where she serves as an informal liaison between Sudanese families and teaching and administrative staff. She was critical for convening the focus group, encouraging women to participate and helping to arrange their transport.
>
> During the focus group, Yaya described the challenges she faced in her first years in Murray Bridge, particularly when her young son started primary school. When he began to have problems at school, Yaya was unsure of the protocol for approaching the school to seek help. When she did contact the school, Yaya said it was difficult to communicate and get her view across with limited English. She described these experiences as stressful, but pointed out that Sudanese parents today don't have to go through this because people like Yaya and Hiba are there to support them and share what they have learned over time.

*Pseudonyms used

The second group critical to the successful settlement of migrants are 'champions' for the migrants. Champions can include local leaders in government, business and in community groups who influence attitudes and effect positive change for migrants, and the region as a whole (Kenyon and Black 2001b).

This study found evidence of two types of champion. Firstly, there are 'community champions' or champions from within particular cultural/ethnic communities. These migrant leaders are sometimes also pioneers, while other times they are individuals with attributes that can help their community, for example, proficiency in English or leadership skills.

Community champions work hard to support their community and often act as a bridge between them and the broader community. The following quote highlights the role community leaders or 'champions' play in connecting their fellow migrants to the broader community, from the perspective of a service provider in the broader community:

> *"I think migrants settle in really well, but I do have a big question about how well migrants do integrate. I tend to think that migrants stay within their own cultural group…Knowing the right people [leaders within communities], and how to attract them, is key to bringing migrants to participate in broader community events." [Charity Service Provider]*

There are also 'external champions' or champions in the wider community. In Murray Bridge, the mayor and many councillors are such champions, as are employers, the migrant resource centre and the many volunteers giving generously of their time to help new migrants. Without these champions, the level of migrant social participation and engagement would be almost non-existent.

"Migrants to Murray Bridge have become expected by the community and the business community. It is not a matter of having to argue the proposal because we clearly understand the tremendous community capacity building that comes from increasing our migrant population. I cannot imagine Murray Bridge now, in the past, or more importantly in the future without continuing a strong growth in migration. The results speak for themselves and we are very proud of our solid and strong platform as a multicultural city." [Brenton Lewis, Mayor of the Rural City of Murray Bridge]

Case Study 2: Champion

Rosa*, a first-generation Italian migrant, was among the first migrant settlers in Murray Bridge in the post-War period. She has lived in Murray Bridge ever since, working and raising a family. When her son married a Filipino, it set off an interesting series of events starting with the chain migration of more Filipinos settling in Murray Bridge.

Faced with increasing numbers of new migrants and drawing on her experience growing up in the Italian migrant community, Rosa saw a need for the next generation of migrants to have a place to meet up, socialise and hold cultural activities and events. She set about to connect the new arrivals with the Italian club, organising for them to join in with Italian club activities and to have access to the venue for their own use.

This has spurned a range of interactions between two generations of migrants in Murray Bridge, as well as two different migrant groups. In addition to offering the new migrants a supportive community and place to go, it has been a source of rejuvenation and renewal for an ageing migrant group, with a declining population.

Case Study 3: Champion

Jane and Robert*, a married, Australia-born couple have lived in Murray Bridge for most of their lives. Since retiring they have been active volunteers in the Murray Bridge community. In particular, they give a lot of time to supporting migrant settlement through a range of activities from teaching English and giving driving lessons, to helping migrants fill in paperwork for their visas and other forms, and advocating on migrants' behalf at the Department of Immigration.

Their experiences highlight the rewarding cross-cultural friendships that are possible when connections are made across different communities. Both described the long-lasting friendships that have developed through their volunteer work, and which culminated with Robert travelling to Afghanistan to volunteer at a school with Afghani men he met in Murray Bridge.

Jane shared a story that demonstrated her generosity of spirit when she stopped her car to give a stranger a lift on a hot summer's day. The stranger - a Muslim woman dressed in hijab - remains a friend of Jane's to this day.

*Pseudonym used

Co-ordinating employment opportunities with settlement information

While not directly a part of this research, during the period of data collection a coordinated program of recruitment for employment opportunities at the local meat processing plant was trialled in Murray Bridge. This trial involved the Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC), the HR team at the local meat processing plant, the Local Government services team and the local Centrelink office in Murray Bridge working together to promote opportunities to live and work in Murray Bridge.

The trial began with several information sessions at the AMRC head office in Adelaide where information about the available jobs and the Rural City of Murray Bridge were provided (using interpreters as required). Detailed information about the types of jobs on offer at the meat processing plant (contracts, rates of pay, training, health checks etc.) were provided, as well as information about schools and other local facilities (hospitals, GP services, childcare etc.), housing options (typical rental and purchasing options), availability of migrant support services (such as English classes), and community services (such as shops, further education and public transport). These sessions generated a lot of interest, with over 50 new migrants to Adelaide attending.

Subsequent to the information sessions a register of those interested in further information was created by AMRC and interested parties and their families were invited to take part in a bus tour to Murray Bridge. Two busloads of potential workers and their families travelled to Murray Bridge, with potential employees attending a short tour and information session at the meat processing plant. This was followed by a tour of the town to view typical housing options, the schools, hospital, shopping precincts and lunch by the River Murray. The Mayor of Murray Bridge came to formally welcome the group over lunch and offer some insights about living in Murray Bridge, providing a warm welcome to all potential new residents. This was followed by a further information session at the Migrant Resource Centre from Centrelink and AMRC staff to answer any further questions.

Information session and tour of the Murray Bridge meat processing plant for potential new employees

The 12-month pilot program is now half way through and has had considerable success recruiting a number of new arrivals into permanent employment[2]. As with any trial, there have been lessons learnt along the way and these will form part of a handbook to be released on *Managing Cultural Diversity in the Workplace* and promoting cultural diversity in regional areas (AMRC 2017). What it has highlighted is the value in stakeholders working together to ensure that migrant settlement is considered in a holistic way – with settlement being viewed as more than just a job opportunity. Feedback from the AMRC suggests that this is considered an ideal way to approach regional and rural migrant settlement and create stronger links between employers of migrants and other community services and resources aimed at creating good settlement outcomes.

The Mayor of Murray Bridge greeting migrants as part of an information visit for potential new residents

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[2] For more information about this pilot project please view the information and video at https://amrc.org.au/gallery/amrc-pilot-project-with-thomas-foods-international-tfi-and-the-city-of-murray-bridge

4. A blueprint for success

The tremendous diversity and dynamism of the Overseas-born population in the Rural City of Murray Bridge brings many challenges to both the new migrant populations and longer-term residents of the area in achieving successful settlement and incorporation. Each migrant group brings different religions, languages, cultural norms and social and civic expectations that take time for all parties to acknowledge, understand and, eventually, accept and celebrate.

This study understood that some things are happening right in Murray Bridge in terms of the successful settlement of migrants, an ever-increasing group, but it asked: what is the next step? How can the Rural City of Murray Bridge build on its previous post-war successes of rural migrant settlement and enable and assist new migrants in creating good long-term settlement outcomes with active citizenship and social participation in community life?

While it has been noted that local government and business leaders are very proactive and visionary in recruiting and welcoming migrants to Murray Bridge, there is always more that can be done within the wider community and the point of this report is to try and identify places where this can occur.

By supporting and enhancing migrants' settlement, migrants are likely to have more fulfilled and positive experiences thus increasing the likelihood they will settle over the long-term. This has obvious social and economic benefits for towns like Murray Bridge, not least as existing migrants can play a role in increasing population through attracting other migrants.

Recommendations

Information for new arrivals

It is critical that new arrivals get the information they need about their new home. This includes comprehensive but easy to understand information about key services (hospitals, schools, council amenities etc.), as well as recreational opportunities and opportunities to engage with broader public life. It is important to consider the format of the information, so it can be readily accessed by new arrivals. Ultimately, as a council employee notes below, it should be a goal to have information transcribed into the main languages other than English spoken in the area.

> *"I feel a bit sad that we don't have more information available in different languages about the place, I would love to see more of that around... But even at the front desk of council there is some scope there to provide some more information. We try at events to make more connections...to make ourselves available to people." [Council employee]*

A surprising 10 of the 13 interview respondents said they knew nothing at all or only a little bit about Murray Bridge before arriving there, an experience shared by focus group participants. Some migrants arrived directly in Murray Bridge from overseas having had no experience of Australian culture or the way of life before. This experience, exacerbated by a lack of local knowledge, can be restrictive and isolating.

New arrivals are a prime place for intervention by the Murray Bridge community to set them up with information they need. Local government, employers, and the Migrant Resource Centre can play a key role in identifying new arrivals and making sure they get the information they need. Indeed,

there is an opportunity for these groups to work together with recent migrants to identify what information will be useful to them, the format it should take and the best way to distribute it. This may extend beyond written information to include welcome information evenings where new migrants to Murray Bridge could meet with settled migrants, community leaders and migration champions to learn more about their new home.

Collaborating on a project such as this would be an excellent opportunity for established but recent migrants to forge important links with local government and other stakeholders in their settlement process.

Resources for community groups and organisations

During this study, the research team were made aware of several community groups and initiatives aimed at supporting migrants in Murray Bridge that were forced to stop their work due to insufficient or unreliable funding. Certainly, more resources – information, training and funds – need to be made available from all levels of government to migrant community groups, local supporters and advocates in the community.

This study identified several places that are key points of contact for migrants, and it makes sense to direct additional resources here. For example, primary schools and the local library both serve as an important interface between migrants and the broader community. Moreover, in this study, these organisations, led by energetic and enterprising managers (champions), demonstrated an understanding of the needs of migrants, as well as a willingness to implement initiatives to support them from the limited resources they had available.

At the library, in recognition of increasing diversity in Murray Bridge the Librarians have undertaken several initiatives to include more people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and enhance their library experience. For example, they put up multilingual signs, subscribed to magazines in languages other than English, added non-English books to the main library and children's section, and invited migrant parents to bring their children to the weekly story and song session. Eventually the library manager hopes to employ a dedicated community liaison officer who can reach out to migrants and the Indigenous community in Murray Bridge.

Another example was provided at a primary school, where the Principal explained:

> *"We are about to start running a parent group with migrant parents and a couple of our teachers are going to be available for filling out forms and teaching some English to some of our parents... we're also inviting all of our EALD [English as an additional language or dialect] parents in...and then were going to have a talk about what the school can do to help them achieve the goals that they've got for their kids. So, we're trying to create more opportunities to listen to parents rather than just in the front office" [Primary School Principal]*

Support the supporters

This study found that champions within the migrant communities of Murray Bridge play a crucial role in supporting migrants. It is, therefore, vital that support is also given to the supporters. Research has shown that community leaders within migrant communities make substantial commitments of time to these roles which can place a heavy personal toll on them (Hugo 2011). In fact, some community leaders have cautioned against the overuse of migrant community members with good English and knowledge, fearing they may experience burn out (Hugo 2011).

The heavy expectation on those with good English language and leadership skills to stand up in and for their communities needs to be acknowledged and their contributions must start to be recognised. Some suggestions for how to do this include:

- a formal title,
- a position within local council or community organisations (formal or informal)
- financial compensation,
- training and education relevant to their community role,
- and/or a mentor or assistant who can be trained to help and/ or follow them.

Furthermore, community leaders should be better resourced to carry out the important work they do, for example, given training, access to spaces to meet, encouraged to join larger networks, kept up to date, and given opportunity to engage with other community leaders (schools, police etc.) and local government. A community champion who is well resourced and well connected is going to be a stronger and more resilient resource to their migrant community and to the wider local community.

Use local press to publicise migrant stories and successes

When asked if the local newspaper has a role in helping migrants to successfully settle and integrate in the Murray Bridge community, a journalist interviewed for this study replied "yes", that newspapers have a role to lay the groundwork for acceptance in the community, promoting stories that normalise the experiences of migrants. This is also another way to offer support and acknowledgment to community champions.

This reflects the findings of a previous study of refugee settlement in the Limestone Coast, South Australia, that members of the research team conducted (Feist et al. 2014). In this location, the local media started the conversation in the community and played an important role in informing them about new migrant arrivals, particularly in highlighting the positive contributions they are making. As the Murray Bridge Librarian so succinctly put it:

> *"I think that travelling the world is one of the greatest educations that anybody can ever have. You can see new cultures and experience new things. A lot of people here in this community probably will never travel so bringing the cultures to Murray Bridge is probably the next best thing. I think it's a great opportunity for people to open their eyes and discover how other people live" [Librarian]*

At the same time, local media have an important role to play in introducing migrants to their new home. For these reasons it is recommended that the local council and other stakeholders adopt a media strategy for communicating key messages about and to their migrant constituents.

Options for further education

Outmigration of youth and young people is a major factor in overall population decline in rural and regional Australia (Argent et al. 2007), with this cohort attracted to educational and employment opportunities in larger cities, as well as the lifestyle they offer. Migrants and stakeholders both raised the issue of migrants leaving Murray Bridge to pursue further education, particularly tertiary education. As one stakeholder put it,

> *"Access to further education opportunities is still a major Achilles heel for Murray Bridge." [Migrant Resource Centre worker]*

Another said:

> *"Unfortunately, things like tertiary education are things that take them away from Murray Bridge. And so, children either leave because the tertiary opportunities aren't here and the jobs aren't necessarily here. It's the same for the local children."* [Rotary member]

Likewise, Sudanese mothers also flagged in the focus group that while they are happy living in Murray Bridge when their children are young, they will want to pursue higher education when they are older which may mean the entire family relocates. This resonates with information provided by migrants in the Limestone Coast project (Feist et al. 2014).

It is therefore important that steps are taken to give young people in Murray Bridge access to as many tertiary and vocational education options as possible, not least because of the role education can play in successful settlement by facilitating social participation and building steps towards economic participation and well-being . But, this doesn't necessarily mean placing a university campus in the town. Communities and universities need to work together to find innovative solutions. For example, some universities offer tailored courses to rural and regional students so they can study while continuing to live and contribute to their home town (SCORD 2004). The Rural City of Murray Bridge is also exploring options for a 'virtual University Campus' facility, that would allow local students to remain living and working in Murray bridge while also pursuing higher education goals. One stakeholder also offered another practical solution that could work in the case of Murray Bridge given its proximity to a capital city:

> *"If we had really good public transport where kids could access services in other towns but could come back to their home, I don't think a lot of people would move out of Murray Bridge."* [NGO worker]

Facilitate a connected approach to settlement

Further to the points raised thus far, communities need to work together to create a good settlement experience. Bringing all community leaders together enables a holistic and coordinated 'whole of community' approach to settlement. This is being aptly explored in the Rural City of Murray Bridge through the current pilot program that involves employers, local government and the Australian Migrant Resource Centre in promoting a holistic approach to employment and living in Murray Bridge. Another example can be seen through many of the Church communities in the region, who are working to create stronger community ties – not only though Church-based services and events but also through social activities and settlement support (e.g. providing driving lessons, assistance with English, filling out forms). This research also showed that schools, kindergartens and playgroups were already bringing migrants and the wider community together. A stakeholder we spoke to saw scope to build on these foundations:

> *"...Schools and kindy's may be 'low hanging fruit'; you've got these groups that are already coming together there, maybe there is an opportunity to foster that more"* [Local government worker]

Another, more formal, way of bringing communities together to support the successful settlement of migrants are Local Area Committees (LACs) which bring all the necessary and interested stakeholders to the table. The LAC system was developed and successfully operationalised in the

Limestone Coast of South Australia, with the AMRC as a driving developer. Previous research in the Limestone Coast has found these to be incredibly effective in supporting migrants, businesses and other groups with an interest in migrants' productive and long-term settlement (Feist et al. 2014).

LACs involve regular round table meetings of all levels of government through relevant government agencies (education, housing, employment etc.); not for profit community organisations providing assistance to migrants, and representatives from schools, sporting groups, the police force, local employees and local migrant community leaders or elders. These meetings discuss and monitor regionally specific migrant assistance programs, trends in settlement (i.e. emerging migrant groups, shifts in population trends) and any emerging issues in a collegial and consultative manner.

At the time of this report the AMRC's Murray Bridge office, in conjunction with the Adelaide head office, were preparing to commence a similar LAC process in Murray Bridge. There was certainly a willingness among the community groups and stakeholders we spoke with to welcome new members, including migrants and these LAC meetings may create a sense of coordinated purpose to make this happen.

Through the LAC group and the local Council, connections between long-standing Australian groups such as the CWA, Rotary, and Men's Sheds and the established migrant communities could be facilitated; "sowing the seeds" for cross-fertilisation of memberships, improved settlement support, and opportunities for interaction and engagement on many different levels.

Summary

While local government and business leaders are very proactive and visionary in recruiting and welcoming migrants to the Rural City of Murray Bridge, there is always more that can be done within the wider community. By supporting and enhancing migrants' settlement with a holistic approach, migrants are likely to have more fulfilled and positive experiences thus increasing the likelihood they will settle over the long-term. This has obvious social and economic benefits for towns like Murray Bridge, not least as existing migrants can play a role in increasing population through attracting other migrants as well as defraying population loss from youth outmigration.

In order to create positive outcomes for new migrants and communities in rural and regional Australia stakeholders need to work together to create a good settlement experience. Bringing key community leaders together with employers, community groups and organisations, local government and other key stakeholders, such as schools enables a holistic and coordinated 'whole of community' approach to settlement.

Champions within the migrant communities of Murray Bridge play a crucial role in supporting migrants. It is vital that support is also given to these shining examples of good settlement, so that they can continue to provide pathways to positive settlement experiences for others. This includes valuing the experiences and guidance of previous waves of immigration, including those post-war migrants who are long term settlers in regional areas.

There is a great deal of value in stakeholders working together to ensure that migrant settlement is considered in a holistic way. Good settlement experiences should be viewed as more than just a job opportunity but more as a golden lifetime opportunity – for both the migrant and the local community.

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