PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND HEALTH & WELLBEING FOR WOMEN FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS

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PAID EMPLOYMENT HAS LONG BEEN RECOGNISED AS A PATH TO HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION.

Women from refugee backgrounds who are building a new home in a resettlement country often have few pre-existing networks and little support. As such, securing appropriate paid employment can be especially critical for providing income, community, support and wellbeing. However, unemployment is high amongst refugees both globally and in Australia. For refugee women, the challenges in accessing and sustaining paid employment are more entrenched and systemic than for refugee men, or for other cohorts of migrants.

There is very little research examining the experiences of women from refugee backgrounds in relation to their employment, social inclusion and health and wellbeing.

This three-year research study conducted by Flinders University and the University of Adelaide (2018-2021) in Adelaide, South Australia (Kaurna land) investigated pathways to employment for social inclusion, health, and wellbeing for women from refugee backgrounds. Supported by a Reference Group of service providers and Community Advisory Group of members of refugee communities, we conducted interviews and focus groups with refugee women, service providers and employers, as well as analysing data from the Building a New Life in Australia longitudinal study of refugees in Australia.

Together, these strands enabled us to build a compelling and rich understanding of the experiences of women from refugee backgrounds in the Australian labour market and to develop key recommendations for how to better support refugee women in their employment journeys.

We are very grateful to the women who shared their experiences with us over three years, and the service providers and employers for their highly valued contributions. We would also like to acknowledge the project Reference Group and Community Advisory Group who helped to guide the project. We are also grateful for the input of Professor Alexander Reilly and for research assistance from Erin Green and Peta Callaghan.

This project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS - see www.dss.gov.au) and used unit record data from the Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA) study conducted by DSS/AIFS. The findings and views here are those of the authors.

The research was undertaken on Kaurna land, and we pay respects to Kaurna elders past, present and emerging as traditional custodians with an ongoing spiritual and cultural relationship with this land.
• There are low rates of employment for refugee women and when employed, there is an overrepresentation of refugee women in lower skilled and lower paid insecure part-time work.

• Myriad substantial barriers prevent refugee women from entering employment in Australia and sustaining meaningful involvement in the labour market over time. These include challenges arising from literacy and English language proficiency, recognition of prior skills and qualifications, childcare responsibilities, discrimination and exploitation, temporary visa status, mental and physical health issues, and limitations to existing job network supports and employment support services.

• A range of facilitators exist for refugee women in securing employment. These include a strong work ethic and motivation to work, significant engagement in education and training, social networks, access to mentoring and volunteering opportunities, provision of personalised tailored support, and employers with an ethos of employing refugee women and supporting them in the workplace.

• Women from refugee backgrounds need targeted support into employment so that they do not permanently remain unemployed or become entrenched in low skilled employment which does not reflect their skills, experience and aspirations. Support is also needed to ensure they are not exposed to exploitation such as wage theft and discrimination.

A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS WERE FORMULATED WHICH REFLECT THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY (SEE PAGE 8). THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE AIMED AT SERVICE PROVIDERS, EMPLOYERS AND GOVERNMENT AND PROVIDE A TEMPLATE FOR REDUCING THE BARRIERS AND EXPANDING THE FACILITATORS THAT ENABLE WOMEN FROM REFUGEE BACK-GROUNDS TO REALISE THEIR LABOUR MARKET POTENTIAL IN AUSTRALIA.
Analysis of the Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA) longitudinal dataset

Data from the BNLA study (2013-2018) were analysed as part of the project. The BNLA study was commissioned by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to trace the settlement journey of humanitarian migrants to better understand the factors that influence people’s settlement processes.

The study collected information from 2,399 people (1,307 men & 1,092 women) who arrived with, or had been granted, a permanent humanitarian visa between May and December 2013. The respondents were followed each year for five years (or ‘waves’) with 1,881 people (995 men & 886 women) still in the study in the final ‘wave’.

Qualitative three-year longitudinal study of refugee women

The study included a longitudinal focus on women’s experiences via qualitative interviews conducted in three waves over a two-year period (2019-2021). Forty-two women from Africa (N=6, Middle East (N=17), South Asia (N=8) and Latin America (N=11) participated in the first wave of interviews, with 30 women participating in all three waves of the longitudinal study. Interpreters were available if required.

Service provider and employer interviews

Additional data were collected via individual interviews with 14 employers (10 women, 4 men) and 12 service providers (10 women, 2 men) working with women from refugee backgrounds.

Workshop consultation

Preliminary findings from the project were presented to workshop attendees, who were invited to take part in focus group discussions regarding findings and recommendations. Thirty-five individuals participated, including refugee and non-refugee focused service providers, community organisations, state and federal government representatives, employers of women from refugee backgrounds, and community members.

NUMBERS OF QUALITATIVE PARTICIPANTS IN EMPLOYMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1 (N=42)</td>
<td>Sixteen</td>
<td>Twenty-six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2 (N=38)</td>
<td>Thirteen</td>
<td>Twenty-five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3 (N=30)</td>
<td>Thirteen</td>
<td>Seventeen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

unemployed | employed
**Employment rates**

- Employment of refugee women rose from 1% in the first year (12 women) in Australia to 12.5% (111 women) 5 years later. However, each year the rate was lower than for refugee men and much lower than the general Australian population (Figure 1).

**Employment type and income**

- Most refugee women employed in Wave 5 were community and personal service workers (33%) and labourers (27%). Technicians/trades workers represented 9% of women's employment, and 7% were employed as professionals. Employment for women was concentrated in lower-skilled occupations than was the case before migration.

- In Wave 5 only 36% of the employed refugee women worked full time compared to 64% of employed refugee men. On average refugee women earned less money per week than men - 23% of employed women reported earning less than $300 per week in employment income in Wave 5. In Wave 5 only 16% of employed women earned more than $800 per week from employment compared with 45% of employed men.

**FIGURE 1: REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT (% , BNLA)**

- % employed men
- % employed women
Contract type

- For those employed the majority were employed casually, though men and women had higher rates of permanent or ongoing employment in Wave 5 (Table 1).

- In wave 5, 30% of those women employed were employed on a permanent or ongoing basis and 16% had a fixed term contract. There was also a growth in self-employment for both men and women between Wave 1 and Wave 5. These changes in contract of employment indicate that refugees may be able to seek more varied employment opportunities after living in Australia for longer and after obtaining more experience in the Australian labour market (Table 1).

Employment, health and settlement outcomes

- Almost a quarter of refugee women reported that job opportunities in Australia were worse than they expected before arriving in the country.

- Knowing how to look for a job in Australia improved over time but even after 5 years 38% of women still felt that they would not know how to look for a job at all.

- Health was associated with employment outcomes. In Wave 5 those reporting worse health were less likely to be working - 19% of refugee women who were in good/very good/excellent health were employed compared to 5% of refugee women who were in fair/poor/very poor health. In Wave 5, less than six per cent of refugee women in paid work had probable serious mental health illness, compared to over 21% who were not in paid work.

- 25% of women reported that difficulties finding work had made settling in Australia more difficult, even after five years of settlement.

### TABLE 1: CONTRACT IN JOB/MAIN JOB, FOR THOSE EMPLOYED (%; BNLA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MEN</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WAVE 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed-term</td>
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<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanent/ ongoing</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/Missing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WAVE 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed-term</td>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual</td>
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<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFUGEE WOMEN HAVE DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS IN TERMS OF THEIR PAST EMPLOYMENT HISTORY, EDUCATION AND SKILLS AND CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS AROUND WORK.

The interviews and focus groups with refugee women, service providers, and employers found a range of key barriers and facilitators to securing work and ongoing employment that were varyingly relevant for different groups. The longitudinal qualitative analysis of participants’ experiences identified that these barriers and facilitators could also vary over time and that employment experiences were interrelated with other life circumstances. Around half of the women had improving employment experiences where they either gained employment over the course of the study or were progressing along employment pathways through education; almost a third had generally negative or worsening experiences seeking work or being in work that was damaging for health and wellbeing; and the remainder had a mixture of positive and negative experiences.
Barriers

- English language proficiency was crucial for employment, and barriers to developing English language skills included challenges accessing sufficient language tuition due to caring responsibilities, inadequate length or flexibility of classes, or additional work required for pre-literate learners.

- Skills, education and qualification requirements were a barrier, where employers required certification for particular jobs. Those women who had overseas work experience and qualifications encountered difficulties getting these recognised in Australia. Lack of local experience and referees was a barrier and meant many women without Australian work experience had no way to get this experience.

- Women with children were keen to find work that suited their families. There was a perceived lack of jobs to fit with care responsibilities and study commitments (including English lessons). Racial and religious discrimination in seeking work was noted by women, and discrimination and exploitation within jobs was also frequently mentioned, with some women experiencing work environments that placed them in physically challenging or risky situations. Reporting mechanisms were insufficient to manage these situations.

- Temporary visas limited access to employment services, as well as limiting other support services available. These visas at times restricted women’s ability to seek work (when visas explicitly barred this) and also placed a large ongoing mental health burden on women who were concerned for their futures.

- Some women had caring responsibilities for family members with disabilities, which limited their options for study or for work. Others had their own health needs and although many were accessing health services for physical needs more generally, some were increasingly facing mental health challenges. Stressors affecting mental health were exacerbated by multiple layers of challenge including unemployment, discrimination, worry due to insecurity, or a range of pre- and post-migration difficulties.

- Limitations to existing job network supports and mixed experiences of other employment support services were reported. Employers said that job providers often assigned them workers that were not right for the job and did not provide ongoing support.

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"I don't know how to start and with who to talk. You know not everybody can – can talk that kind of stuff. So, you need people like more to support you and guide you more and be with you till you know, until you get a job.

Refugee participant"

"Communication would be a big one, more so just for their own safety. There’s a lot of things that they have to sign and understand when they come on site [...] we can’t be confident that they’d be very safe on the floor.

Employer, Food production"

"I worked a lot with the Muslim community, and it was just oh women, oh yeah childcare, oh cleaning and personalised care. Some of these women are standing there with Master’s Degrees and we’re sort of like, come on, you know, at least try to find something somewhere in between [...] I think there’s a big gap of advocacy for them.

Service provider"

"A lot of people, you know, they’ve been working cash. You see a lot of employers, for example, abusing the migrants and refugees.

Service provider"
**Facilitators**

- Women were very motivated to work and had a strong work ethic which was noted by women themselves as well as service providers working with women from refugee backgrounds.

- Women who lived with family members or who were in close contact with their broader community had good supports for wellbeing.

- Many women were studying and had clear goals for pathways to employment. Access to English language courses were important first steps for those learning English, and following on from that access to other types of study provided both a mechanism for improved employment prospects as well as an avenue to build wellbeing through hopes for the future.

- Social networks were key facilitators for information sharing, and women learned about potential jobs through these social connections. Social networks also helped women to learn where to go for emotional and practical support once they secured a job.

- At a service level, access to volunteering opportunities and mentoring, and key relationships between services and employers were also important. Women in close contact with services discussed how these services helped them to access social networks, to develop understanding of Australian systems, to connect to education pathways, or to link to volunteering work or paid work in some instances. Services providing support for other settlement issues such as housing or health care were important as these factors intersected with employment pathways.

- Personalised tailored support that addressed pre- and post-migration stressors including mental health issues helped to assist women into employment and those that continued to support women (and their employers) after a job was acquired were most successful in securing sustainable employment outcomes.

- Employers with a strong ethos to help refugee women into employment were particularly successful in facilitating good employment outcomes, and workplace practices such as the provision of buddy shifts, the use of interpreters and translating important documents into key languages, creating open lines of communication between workers and employers/management and appropriate supervision and direction were all also identified as helping women once in work

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**“Having relationships with employers, that’s a number one […] Not just any employer – employers who are accepting of migrants or refugees, who are willing to support them to help them grow in their new life that they are creating for themselves.”**

*Service provider*

**“Because of [employment support service] they’ve come ready, prepared for the interview […] we find [with] [service], they come with all their clearances, so we don’t have to chase.”**

*Employer, disability care*

**“Through our nonaccredited training, a bit of mentoring, we just gave that confidence boost that they needed. Now they’re engaged in employment, they’re very happy doing the work.”**

*Service provider*

**“I met some good friends through [community organisation]. I made a friend that they are really good to us now and they have a publishing company […] I’ve done some projects for them.”**

*Refugee participant*
SIXTEEN RECOMMENDATIONS WERE FORMULATED TO ALIGN WITH KEY FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY.

Although in some cases these recommendations are capable of broad application across all migrant groups, they are particularly important for women from refugee backgrounds given the multifaced and specific barriers to employment they face, as well as their unique health considerations.

The recommendations for facilitating health promoting employment for refugee women are divided into three sections:

• adjustments to the various forms of services available to refugee women;
• ways for employers to create and manage employment opportunities for refugee women, and;
• policy and regulatory reform to address the systemic barriers facing refugee women from engaging in paid work.

RECOMMENDATIONS, SECTION 1: REFORMING SERVICES

This section focuses on adjustments to the various forms of services available to women from refugee backgrounds. Many of our recommendations build on existing initiatives and services, which require ongoing and sustained funding. Others require more wholesale reform. Implementing these recommendations will require cooperation between government and service providers.

1. Our research found that there were a range of service providers providing employment assistance, and those providers whose work was informed by holistic, wrap-around approaches with ongoing support were more effective in helping women into work. This was because these services typically understood the need to address the mental health and personal circumstances of individual refugee women as essential building blocks to ensuring transition into work and the sustainability over time.

Sustained funding should be provided for well-publicised, accessible and personalised refugee-specific employment services that provide wrap-around services to address the individual needs of women from refugee backgrounds, and have inclusive eligibility criteria including for those on temporary visas. This includes but is not limited to:

• in-house support for mental and physical health issues
• where necessary, appropriate referrals with follow up for mental and physical health issues
• addressing other barriers to employment where women with refugee backgrounds often face particular challenges, including transport, childcare and housing (e.g. supporting women to obtain a driver’s licence, including assisting with access to bi-lingual driving instructors)
• traditional employment development and support through assisting with resumes and cover letters and interview preparation
• ensuring access to interpreters in support services

2. There are substantial complexities in the background, experiences and trajectories of refugee women. Many women in our study reported pre-settlement experiences of exposure to traumatic events, post-settlement stressors, family separation, domestic and family violence and stigma in accessing health services. All services working with women from refugee backgrounds should be trauma informed and recognise specific needs around gender. In some cases it might be more appropriate to have specific women’s sessions/services but more generally a person-centred approach should have awareness of gendered barriers and facilitators to employment and the impact of the refugee experience.

3. Refugee women come from diverse backgrounds and it is essential that this diversity is captured in the way that services engage with refugee women. Services working with refugee women must have processes for community involvement in service design and ensure a broad range of community voices are included and consulted.

4. English language proficiency is a key driver of labour market success for migrants. Refugee women are no exception but typically are less proficient in English than other categories of migrants upon arrival in Australia and face additional challenges in becoming proficient. Our analysis of the BNLA data found even a small increase in oral language ability had a substantial impact in improving access to employment. In our qualitative study we observed many barriers to refugee women becoming proficient in English, including basic literacy, limited access to classes, childcare and other family responsibilities which made class attendance difficult, transportation constraints, which prevented getting to class and the costs associated with learning English, as well as the financial impediments to move immediately into employment.

Building on existing service provision, it is important that refugee women are given access to tailored English language support and training which prepares them for working in the Australian labour market, and is flexibly delivered to address barriers and reflects varied literacy and education levels. English-language training options should include work-focused language development and modules around norms for workplace expectations in Australia.

5. Our study found that refugee women, despite often having academic and professional qualifications and work experience in their home country, were typically employed in low-skilled, low-wage work in Australia in industries such as hospitality, cleaning and aged care. Women from migrant and refugee backgrounds should be provided opportunities to develop relevant skills and professional experience and to have their overseas-gained experience, skills and qualifications valued and recognised. Although there have been examples of successful programs to develop pathways for some refugee women to pursue a professional career, the approach to date has been piecemeal and there needs to be a more consistent and comprehensive approach to recognising prior experience, skills and qualifications and supporting refugee women to develop meaningful and sustainable careers.

6. Mentoring provides an alternative recruitment opportunity for women from refugee backgrounds as it allows them to develop important connections and networks which can assist their entry into the labour market. Participants in our study highlighted mentoring
as a critical element in assisting women to build confidence and gain employment and/or health promoting pathways to employment. Mentoring is particularly vital for refugee women who typically lack local networks and contacts.

Women from refugee backgrounds should be provided with support to enter into tailored and targeted mentoring relationships and build networks that could lead to employment.

7. Humanitarian migrants are the most entrepreneurial people in Australia, with 10 per cent of their income coming from business earnings. Participants in our study reported that connections to services that provided advice and practical assistance on how to start a small business were critical in understanding how to access a loan, grants and other support in Australia.

Women from refugee backgrounds with entrepreneurial aspirations should be able to access practical and financial support for establishing a small business. This support needs to encompass childcare support and access to the childcare subsidy in the business development stage, mentoring in setting up a small business and concrete advice and assistance in securing financial support, setting up a business, applying to register a business and complying with tax and other regulatory requirements.

8. Women from refugee backgrounds are often unaware of their workplace rights under Australian law. We observed that refugee women in our study experienced workplace exploitation and discrimination, including underpayment, excessively short or long shifts, overwork, harassment at work and a limited awareness of work rights and avenues to report grievances. Our interviews with service providers confirmed this power imbalance and the vulnerability of refugee women in the workplace.

Service providers should be given funding to provide an induction to refugee women on their workplace rights, entitlements and available support services such as the Fair Work Ombudsman and unions. Once placed in employment, refugee women should be allocated a support person within the service provider or an external professional mentor outside of the employer who can provide ongoing support and assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS, SECTION 2: IMPROVING AND BUILDING EMPLOYERS’ CAPACITY AND PRACTICE

Employers have a critical role in providing opportunities for women from refugee backgrounds into the labour market and ensuring that this cohort are able to access meaningful and sustainable work. We recommend a number of changes to the practice of employers in creating and managing employment opportunities for women from refugee backgrounds that we believe employers can, and should, implement themselves, along with the support and funding of government and service providers.

9. Providing incentives and supports to employers so that they can assist refugees through a range of alternative recruitment strategies is essential for ensuring there are pathways into employment for women from refugee backgrounds.

Employers should be provided with support to recruit women from refugee backgrounds (including for appropriate volunteering opportunities that enhance employability). Ongoing support is also required to assist the employer and the employee after an employment relationship has been formed. Employers should be provided with information on the challenges faced by refugee women and the types of structural and substantive supports that employers can provide to assist women with their transition into the workplace.

10. Our study found that both during the recruitment phase and once in employment, women participants had experienced instances of exploitation, in particular in relation to racism and discrimination. There is a need for employers to develop positive workplace cultures which promote diverse ways of facilitating the inclusion of women from refugee backgrounds at all levels.
Employers should be provided with training to assist in the recruitment and employment of refugee women from diverse backgrounds and to address exploitation, racism, discrimination and unconscious bias both in recruitment and ongoing employment, including for volunteers.

11. Our study found that women from refugee backgrounds may need additional workplace and mental health support once in paid employment. Employers who developed policies and practices for integrating women from refugee backgrounds into the workplace and providing them with additional support reported better outcomes and more sustainable employment.

Employers should be supported to develop concrete inclusion strategies for women from refugee backgrounds including buddy shifts, the use of interpreters, translating important documents into key languages, appropriate supervision and other supports to enable employees to upskill or develop their skills. This may also include flexible working policies which allow women to work from home or work short shifts in tandem with school hours, and access to culturally-safe wellbeing programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS, SECTION 3: ADDRESSING REGULATORY AND POLICY CONSTRAINTS

Third, we propose policy and regulatory reform to address the systemic barriers facing women from refugee backgrounds from engaging in paid work. Implementing these recommendations is the responsibility of government, as they would require legislative amendment and/or changes to public policy and practice.

12. Although there is general acceptance amongst policymakers that employment is an important aspect of the integration of refugees in Australia, there is no overall strategy on how to achieve this in practice. As our study and other research attests, refugees face substantial barriers in accessing paid employment and remaining in employment over time.

Federal and state governments need to work together to develop a national refugee employment strategy which addresses the barriers to employment for refugees and provides strategic funding and support for initiatives that facilitate entry into the labour market.
This strategy needs to account for the particular challenges faced by refugee women and develop specific plans to address this.

13. In our study, women participants and service providers reported that Jobactive providers gave inadequate support that failed to overcome the myriad barriers facing women from refugee backgrounds in accessing work. They said that employment providers needed to provide individualised and personalised support that took into account their circumstances, including pre- and post-settlement factors and gender and culture-related issues.

The Australian government should ensure that the New Employment Services Model (NESM) provides enhanced support to women from refugee backgrounds and that employment support service providers for refugees are experienced, culturally-safe organisations, and have appropriately trained staff and small enough case load numbers to ensure a personalised wrap-around service can be provided. Disincentives for providers in facilitating women into self-employment and for women in picking up small amounts of work need to be addressed. The new model needs to be evaluated, including from the perspective of refugee women and employers.

14. Understanding where job vacancies exist, and which employers have a track record of successfully recruiting and employing women from refugee backgrounds is important for matching employers and prospective employees.

The Federal government should fund the development of processes for facilitating connections between women from refugee backgrounds and prospective employers through creating and maintaining a database of refugee-friendly employers that might have positions available.

15. Our study found that temporary visas were a key barrier to employment, particularly because of limited and contingent work rights for those that arrived in Australia without a valid visa and restrictions on eligibility for employment support services, but also indirectly through impacts on mental health which subsequently affected employment options.

The Federal government should review all visa arrangements for refugees and asylum seekers and should remove time limit restrictions and work conditions that restrict the ability of refugees and asylum seekers to engage in the labour market. The Federal government should provide clear pathways to permanent residency independent of employer sponsorship or periods of work.

16. Women participants in our study faced various barriers to accessing work, including stemming from their role as the primary carer for dependent children, difficulty in obtaining recognition for prior skills, qualifications and experience, and limited periods of eligibility for employment support.

The Federal government should address structural impediments to securing meaningful and sustainable employment for women from refugee backgrounds. These include but are not limited to:

- improving skills and qualifications recognition from overseas jurisdictions
- providing access to appropriate social security supports to ensure women have the opportunities to pursue education and training that will expand their future employment opportunities
- providing flexibility in any Centrelink obligations to seek employment to ensure that it is reasonable, considering the language, literacy and technological skills of the client and does not compromise the opportunities for refugee women to engage in education and training
- ensuring that clients of NESM providers are correctly classified to receive suitable levels of support, or where relevant are supported to access an appropriate Disability Employment Service (DES) provider
- facilitating greater access to childcare by improving access to childcare and out of school care places and reducing the cost of childcare for women from refugee backgrounds
- extending eligibility for support programs, which is not time-bound and open to all refugees and asylum seekers
WITH REFUGEES FORMING SUCH A CRITICAL PART OF AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY, IT IS CLEAR FROM THE RESEARCH THAT THIS IS A TIME OF TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS AS AUSTRALIA REBUILDS ITS ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE AFTER THE UPHEAVAL OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

However, there is also a risk that they will be left behind without an explicit focus on supporting their participation in the workforce. A national refugee employment strategy and a range of other improvements to service provision, employer capacity building and regulatory and policy reform is required to build comprehensive, targeted, and personalised support for women from refugee backgrounds in all facets of their lives to ensure they can access genuine pathways to sustainable employment and wellbeing in Australia.
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR FOR A COPY OF THE FULL RESEARCH REPORT PLEASE CONTACT THE STUDY’S CHIEF INVESTIGATORS:

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