

# OMI Employment Consultation Summary

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) held the first of four consultations scheduled per annum on 23 March 2010. The consultation was undertaken in response to the OMI Strategic Plan 2009–2013, as part of a statewide community engagement strategy.

The aim of the strategy is to facilitate engagement of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds in government decision making processes, policies and programs and to provide information, skills and opportunities to support settlement integration and citizenship.

OMI invited ethnic community members, service providers and government agencies to participate in the consultation on employment issues for people from CaLD backgrounds.

Employment is the single most important aspect of migrant and refugee settlement. It is vital for the economic and social wellbeing of the individual and the broader community. Statistics show that recent migrants are more likely to be employed compared with Australian-born residents.<sup>1</sup> However, employment outcomes vary widely according to factors such as English language proficiency, age, gender, length of residence in Australia, skill level and visa type. Available data indicates that unemployment and under-employment is more widespread among refugee communities in Australia. For example, 18 months after arrival the unemployment rate for humanitarian entrants is 43 per cent, compared to no unemployment among business entrants and seven per cent among 'independent' (skill-based) arrivals.<sup>2</sup>

Many humanitarian entrants hold tertiary qualifications and have experience in professional occupations. However, research and statistics show that they are the worst affected by economic restructuring and are at greatest risk of social exclusion due to unemployment, welfare dependency and poverty. Gaining stable, adequately-remunerated, fulfilling employment is a significant contributor towards successful resettlement for refugees and humanitarian entrants. Once successful integration has occurred, refugees are able to quickly make permanent cultural, social and economic contributions into the communities into which they are resettled.<sup>3</sup>

Given this background, the consultation focused particularly on identifying barriers to employment for humanitarian entrants and promoting their full participation in economic life.

A discussion paper highlighting key issues that impact on employment outcomes for people from CaLD backgrounds was posted on the OMI website and distributed to invitees prior to the consultation. The paper touched on six major areas and included 18 questions relating to employment.

Approximately 100 people attended the consultation at the Herb Graham Recreation Centre, Mirrabooka, on 23 March 2010. The consultation was organised in two parts:

- an information session about possible career pathways to people from migrant and refugee backgrounds which included guest speakers from the Public Sector Commission, the Department of Training and Workforce Development, and Apprenticentre
- facilitated discussion in small groups of approximately eight participants per group in which OMI sought input on issues affecting employment of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Feedback from participants following the consultation indicated a high level of satisfaction (over 90 per cent) with the quality of the presentations and facilitated group discussions.

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<sup>1</sup> 68 per cent of recent migrants were employed compared with 66 per cent of the Australian-born population, from: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Catalogue 6250.0. *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Recent Migrants*, 28 May 2008. See also DIAC, Fact Sheet 14: Migrant Labour Market Outcomes, 19 August 2009.

<sup>2</sup> *Val Colic-Peisker and Farida Tilbury (2006) Refugees and Employment: Investigating the Effect of Visible difference on Discrimination Research Project Final Report, Dec 2006.*

<sup>3</sup> Refugee Council of Australia, *Economic, Civic and Social Contributions of Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants*, February 2010.

## Key issues

The responses from participants broadly addressed the six key areas:

1. lack of information about employment options and lack of local experience
2. access to apprenticeships and traineeships
3. skills recognition
4. cross-cultural issues and discrimination
5. English language proficiency
6. other issues (including English language proficiency and transport).

Priority issues for CaLD communities identified by participants were:

- recognition of overseas qualifications and skills
- cross-cultural issues and perceptions of discrimination in employment
- the impact of language difficulties on employability.

Participants recommended that government agencies and service providers address these issues through various measures including:

- using ethnic community leaders and networks to facilitate more effective information exchange between CaLD job seekers and employers, job service providers and government departments responsible for employment and training
- creating more opportunities for direct contact with potential employers through job expos
- promoting mentoring, work experience and networking opportunities for people from CaLD backgrounds in the public sector and private industry
- highlighting role models from new and emerging CaLD communities to promote apprenticeships and traineeship opportunities to newly arrived migrant and refugee communities
- clarifying assessment processes for recognition of overseas qualifications for people from CaLD communities
- delivering cultural competency training to employers in the public and private sector to address stereotypes and prejudice before they manifest as discrimination.

## Future directions

OMI is developing a series of recommendations and an action plan in consultation with relevant agencies<sup>4</sup> to address the key issues raised in the consultation. These recommendations will be presented to the Minister of Citizenship and Multicultural Interests for his consideration by 31 May 2010.

The recommendations will form the basis for ongoing advocacy with relevant agencies and the support of the Minister to promote full participation of people from CaLD backgrounds in economic life and address and remove barriers to equity in employment. OMI will monitor outcomes and report on the progress of implementation of the recommendations via its website on an ongoing basis.

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Maria Osman, Executive Director

Office of Multicultural Interests

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<sup>4</sup> Relevant agencies include the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; Department of Immigration and Citizenship; Department of Training and Workforce Development (WA); non-government organisations responsible for service delivery in employment and training as well as relevant industry bodies.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) held the first of four consultations scheduled per annum on 23 March 2010. The consultation was undertaken in response to the OMI Strategic Plan 2009–2013, as part of a statewide community engagement strategy.

The aim of the strategy is to facilitate engagement of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds in government decision-making processes, policies and programs and provide information, skills and opportunities to support settlement integration and citizenship.

OMI invited ethnic community members, service providers and government agencies to participate in the consultation on employment issues for people from CaLD backgrounds.

Employment is the single most important aspect of migrant and refugee settlement. It is vital for the economic and social wellbeing of the individual and the broader community. Statistics show that recent migrants are more likely to be employed compared with Australian-born residents.<sup>5</sup> However, employment outcomes vary widely according to factors such as English language proficiency, age, gender, length of residence in Australia, skill level and visa type. Available data indicates that unemployment and under-employment is more widespread among humanitarian entrant communities in Australia. For example, 18 months after arrival the unemployment rate for humanitarian entrants is 43 per cent, compared to no unemployment among business entrants and seven per cent among 'independent' (skill-based) arrivals.<sup>6</sup>

Many humanitarian entrants hold tertiary qualifications and have experience in professional occupations. However, research and statistics show that they are the worst affected by economic restructuring and are at greatest risk of social exclusion due to unemployment, welfare dependency and poverty. Gaining stable, adequately-remunerated, fulfilling employment is a significant contributor towards successful resettlement for refugees and humanitarian entrants. Once successful integration has occurred, refugees are able to quickly make permanent cultural, social and economic contributions into the communities into which they are resettled.<sup>7</sup>

Given this background, the consultation focused particularly on identifying barriers to employment for humanitarian entrants and promoting their full participation in economic life.

An invitation to participate in the consultation together with a brief discussion paper highlighting some key employment issues for CaLD communities was sent to approximately 260 CaLD community members and representatives from non-government organisations (NGOs) and government agencies.

The discussion paper highlighted key themes and questions in relation to several areas: knowledge of employment options and links to employers and industries; ways to obtain local experience; access to apprenticeships and traineeships; skills recognition issues; cross-cultural issues and discrimination and other potential barriers to employment such as English language proficiency and transport.

The Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests, the Hon John Castrilli, addressed the consultation expressing his strong commitment to building capacity in employment for people from CaLD backgrounds.

OMI's Executive Director Maria Osman introduced the three keynote speakers and facilitated the general group discussion.

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<sup>5</sup> 68 per cent of recent migrants were employed compared with 66 per cent of the Australian-born population, from: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Catalogue 6250.0. *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Recent Migrants*, 28 May 2008. See also DIAC, Fact Sheet 14: Migrant Labour Market Outcomes, 19 August 2009.

<sup>6</sup> *Val Colic-Peisker and Farida Tilbury (2006) Refugees and Employment: Investigating the Effect of Visible difference on Discrimination Research Project Final Report, Dec 2006.*

<sup>7</sup> Refugee Council of Australia, *Economic, Civic and Social Contributions of Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants*, February 2010.

## 1.2 Presenters

The consultation began with a one-hour information session about possible career pathways to people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. The speakers were:

- Mr Peter Ridge, representing the Public Sector Commission, presented information about employment opportunities with the WA State Government, including details of the public sector recruitment test
- Mr Gordon Duffy, representing the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD), presented information about the department's career development services, specifically its CaLD specific Workforce Development Centre administered by Mercy Community Services Inc
- Ms Charmaine Bose, representing the Apprenticentre (DTWD) presented information about access to and the benefits of apprenticeships and traineeships. The presentation included information on the average length of time to complete apprenticeships and traineeships, areas of demand, average hourly salaries for apprentices and where to find out more about apprenticeships and traineeships.

## 1.3 Participants

Approximately 100 participants attended from 19 ethnic community groups (approximately 40 community participants), 15 NGOs (approximately 23 participants in total) and 11 government organisations, (22 participants in total exclusive of OMI staff).<sup>8</sup>

The following communities and organisations were represented:

Community groups:

- Mozambique Society of WA, African Professionals of Australia, Central African Republic community, Krahan Association of WA (Liberia), Congolese Community of WA, Mauritania Community of WA, Burundian community, Sudanese community, Habarimana Rwanda Community, Burmese community, Cambodian Buddhist Association, Thai Australia Association, Damayang Filipino Community, Afghan community, Iranian community.

NGOs, peak bodies and representatives from private industry:

- Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre, Centrecare Migrant Services, Mercy Community Services, Community First, Australian Asian Association, Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS), ISHAR Multicultural Women's Health Centre, National Council of Women of WA, Koondoola Integrated Service Centre, Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre (EDAC), Child Inclusive Learning and Development Australia, Murdoch University, Phoenix Academy, Paradigma Solutions, Ethnic Youth Advocate of WA (EYA); Edmund Rice Centre and the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre.

Government:

- Local: City of Stirling
- State: Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) (Balga); Department of Education: Balga Senior High School and Polytechnic West; Department of Commerce; Department of Environment and Conservation; Department of Workforce Development; Public Sector Commission; Multicultural Advisory Group members; WA Police.

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<sup>8</sup> Note: No personal information was collected from approximately 15 participants who did not RSVP and did not register at the door.

## 1.4 Group discussion

Following the presentations, participants were seated in small groups (eight to ten participants per table) to discuss in detail key issues identified in the Consultation Discussion Paper. Interpreters were used in four of the ten discussion groups. Each group had a facilitator and scribe who identified the key issues raised by participants at each table. The facilitators were representatives from government agencies, the Minister's Multicultural Advisory Group (MAG), EYA and non-government organisations who were briefed prior to the discussion. Comments were generally brief and were recorded by OMI staff who acted as scribes at each table. A more detailed written submission was received from a Settlement Grant Program Worker representing an NGO at the consultation.

## 1.5 Evaluation

Following the consultation, participants were asked to provide feedback on the presentations, quality of discussion and overall organisation.

Ninety per cent of respondents considered the presentations to be good or excellent.

Ninety seven per cent of respondents found the discussion relevant and 89 per cent of respondents believed their views were heard.

Eighty eight per cent of respondents valued the consultation program as 'good' or 'excellent'.

Qualitative feedback indicated participants appreciated the breadth of information provided by speakers, but would have preferred more time to discuss the issues in their specific working groups. Participants also expressed the wish for OMI to conduct effective follow up on the issues raised. Comments included:

*This community consultation is timely. The private sector should also be engaged with regards to this community consultation.*

*Needed more time allocated to consultation with large groups ...*

*Thank you for emphasising the need to hear directly from communities rather than just service providers.*

*It's good to know people are aware of the situation that migrants are facing ...*



## 2. FEEDBACK ON QUESTIONS

### 2.1 Information about employment options

Most participants expressed a need for more targeted information about employment options. Participants felt this information was most effectively provided through community organisations and community leaders working with government and employment service providers.

*Employment service providers with specialised contracts have an abundance of information to share with community organisations. Hence more links between these organisations would help.*

*Information could be disseminated through various groups coordinated through Centrelink Multicultural Service Officers.*

*Use community leaders as a medium of communication. They may be able to understand and speak English well and can share information with their community members.*

With regard to the medium and form in which the information could be conveyed to people from CaLD backgrounds, many participants felt there was currently an over-reliance on the internet by some employers and government agencies. Participants expressed consensus about the need for information to be presented in a variety of languages and written and audiovisual formats (community newspapers, DVDs, ethnic radio programs) and via word of mouth through community networks, community leaders and job forums.

*Not all people have access to the internet or knowledge of how to use it so information needs to be more than web based.*

*Many do not have access to the internet. For those 'new' and still struggling to learn English, information is best distributed through community meetings or via community leaders.*

*Use DVDs to produce and communicate information in more languages*

Participants were supportive of job forums or career expos specifically targeting migrants to enable them to forge personal contacts with employers and provide information sharing and networking opportunities.

*A jobs expo would be useful.*

*Hold career expos in the school holidays and get out into the suburbs ...*

## 2.2 Local experience and contacts

Lack of local work experience was widely acknowledged by participants as a barrier to employment.

Many employers do not recognise overseas work experience and require applicants to demonstrate they have had Australian work experience. However, humanitarian entrants struggle to get the entry-level jobs that will allow them to gain that experience.

*The lack of local experience for those with qualifications is a problem. Those who lack WA experience and are unsuccessful in job applications become disillusioned.*

*Skills (or lack of skills) are used as an excuse for not getting jobs in WA. Some migrants and refugees have a Masters degree but are knocked down because they have no relevant local experience. They are told they are overqualified but also 'underqualified' and told to go back to University.*

*No work experience, no references, no way forward ...*

To address this barrier, participants suggested a range of solutions from encouraging employers (particularly government) to post information about work experience and mentorship opportunities on websites, to encouraging CaLD job seekers to participate in volunteer programs enabling them to obtain local character references. Participants were generally positive about the benefits of doing unpaid work experience to help establish local contacts and gain experience.

*Work experience placements would be useful but information needs to be provided on how to get such work experience.*

*Create a local register of work experience interns and promote it to employers.*

*Yes (I would do work experience) but it depends on how long it would take and what I would learn.*

However, participants also stressed that care should be taken that voluntary work placements do not exploit migrant workers and offer genuine work opportunities that take into consideration workplace safety and insurance issues.

*We have got the skills and can walk into jobs then why should we work without pay or work on a voluntary basis?*

*Migrants are willing to do trial work, but you would need to find rules and policies to stop exploitation.*

*Unpaid work experience could be a way for employers to exploit young people to work for free.*

It was also noted that employers may need encouragement to take on people from CaLD backgrounds in work experience placements.

*Policies also need to be developed to encourage employers to take on those migrants.*

## 2.3 Apprenticeships and traineeships

Group discussion in relation to apprenticeships and traineeships focused on the three following areas.

### 2.3.1 Raising awareness

Participants stressed the need to raise the profile of apprenticeships and traineeships among CaLD communities, particularly those from new and emerging communities.

*Some communities need to be educated about traineeships and apprenticeships.*

*Encourage migrants to enter apprenticeships and traineeships—there is a lack of knowledge of them in migrant communities ...*

*Organisations who work with community groups need to help more and educate leaders and youth about the benefits.*

### 2.3.2 Overcoming cultural barriers

Addressing parental attitudes was seen as the key to overcoming cultural barriers to young people from new and emerging communities entering into apprenticeships and traineeships.

*(There is) need for a campaign to educate parents about apprenticeships and traineeships to help them overcome a preference for their children to attend university instead of doing apprenticeships*

*African parents believe university education is best, they need to be educated on the benefits (of apprenticeships)—being paid and studying at the same time.*

Another important barrier to participation in apprenticeships and traineeships identified was age. Several participants argued that additional incentives were required to encourage young humanitarian entrants to take up apprenticeships, many of whom graduate older than their Australian school peers due to delayed schooling and having to make up grades in Australia. Some participants also argued the case for more general incentives to encourage mature age migrants and humanitarian entrants with family responsibilities to take up apprenticeships and traineeships.

*The age barrier is an issue, mature age apprentices need additional incentives.*

*Family pressures make it difficult for mature age people with family responsibilities to contemplate apprenticeships because of the low rates of pay (\$7 per hour) and long periods of indenture.*

There was a misconception among some participants that apprenticeships and traineeships were only available to young people.

*The State Government talks about apprenticeships and traineeships to under 25s, it should be opened up and not just restricted to under 25s.*

### 2.3.3 Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

Participants had numerous constructive suggestions for promoting traineeships and apprenticeships among CaLD communities. Some suggested that direct and personal forms of information sharing involving successful role models from particular ethnic communities would be the most effective way to raise the profile of apprenticeships and traineeships among new and emerging communities.

*Promote information sharing and mentorships from successful migrant apprentices run by the Apprenticentre.*

*(There is a) need for role models and mentors for apprenticeships among African communities. It would have been useful to have someone like that speaking tonight.*

*Apprenticentre needs to work more with CaLD families. Some families would welcome their kids in apprenticeships and traineeships to get them off the streets and into the workplace. Employers need to be educated on how to work better with communities and religious leaders.*

*Talk with someone who has gone through an apprenticeship or traineeship to get a better idea of what will follow ...*

Participants also made several more general suggestions relating to pay and length of indenture to increase the attractiveness of apprenticeships for all.

*(Make) shorter periods of indenture.*

With regard to traineeships, participants highlighted the importance of training being linked to viable employment opportunities. Particular concerns were raised by several participants who had undertaken training in the aged care industry with the expectation of employment upon completion of their traineeships but who had since been unable to secure employment in the industry.

*Ensure training is linked to real jobs. Sometimes expectations of employment are raised by traineeships without guaranteed employment at the end ...*

## 2.4 Skill recognition

Recognising the skills, qualifications and prior learning of people from CaLD backgrounds was identified by participants as the most significant and complex employment barrier confronting migrants and refugees.

### 2.4.1 Experience of skill recognition

Many community participants relayed first- and second-hand accounts of problems encountered in having overseas skills and qualifications recognised in Australia.

*Mature aged skilled migrants are held back as their skills are not recognised.*

*People with higher overseas experience are not given the opportunity.*

Specific examples included:

A qualified librarian from Tripoli came to Australia as a humanitarian entrant and was unable to secure work as a librarian. She found work instead as a library assistant for a government department. After struggling to have her employer recognise her qualifications, she lodged a complaint of discrimination with the Equal Opportunity Commission and won a pay increase (which was back-dated to when her position commenced).

An electrician from Liberia came to Australia as a humanitarian entrant two years ago. Aged in his fifties, he had worked for over 20 years as an electrician in Liberia. Initially he wanted to do electrical work in Australia and applied to do so, but as he had no official documentation he was told that he would have to do a four-year apprenticeship to qualify as an electrician in Australia. Instead, he decided to do a traineeship in aged care as it would be quicker way to earn money to support his family. However, despite completing a three-month traineeship for a Certificate III in aged care, he has been unable to secure employment. (*"The Government brought me here, I should be able to work here and be independent. They brought me here and I depend on Centrelink."*)

Particular industries and professions singled out for comment in relation to skills recognition issues included engineering, accounting and medicine (doctors and nurses). Participants also discussed the consequences of not having their skills and qualifications recognised in Australia.

*There are difficulties having to spend time and money to do the same kind of course to gain recognition in Australia amidst family pressures ...*

*The consequences of not having skills recognised include depression; the family feels disempowered, domestic violence ...*

*There is a service gap where people are not being able to find jobs in their area of qualification and often work in other areas and therefore do not think they are eligible for employment services assistance because they are already working.*

*They are de-skilled by lack of recognition, the psychological impact is degrading.*

Participants suggested various improvements to address barriers to recognising overseas skills and qualifications of migrants and refugees from CaLD backgrounds including:

- provide more information about the Overseas Qualifications Unit and assessment processes through community organisations and leaders
- streamline skills and qualification assessment processes and introduce more government subsidies to help migrants and refugees pay the fees for professional assessment of their qualifications and skills
- promote competency-based assessment that tests on-the-job skills for those with prior experience

- introduce more bridging courses to enable skilled people from CaLD backgrounds to work in their area of expertise and fast track their pathways to obtaining Australian qualifications
- engage industry partners to promote mentoring and on-the-job training for skilled CaLD employees who wish to gain local experience in their field of expertise while working towards recognition of their qualifications in Australia
- promote cultural competency training to employers in the private and public sector to address misconceptions about the value of skills or qualifications of potential employees from CaLD backgrounds.

#### 2.4.2 Experience with Overseas Qualification Unit

While several participants had direct contact with the Overseas Qualifications Unit, there was a general lack of awareness among participants about where to apply for recognition of overseas qualifications and skills.

*The system for skills recognition through Overseas Qualification Unit for some occupations and professional bodies for others can be confusing and needs to be streamlined. If applicants fail to get professional accreditation, more assistance is needed in helping people figure out the next step forward.*

Participants identified that clearer information about skills assessment processes prior to arrival in Australia is needed along with practical guidance on pathways to obtaining Australian qualifications for those migrants and refugees whose skills are not recognised.

A humanitarian entrant from Mauritania gave a specific example of how additional information may assist migrants and refugees plan pathways back into skilled professions. After applying unsuccessfully to the Overseas Qualifications Unit to have his nursing qualifications recognised in Australia, he was advised to do a three-year Bachelor Degree to requalify in Australia. Unable to commit to three years of study without income, he undertook a traineeship in aged care, but was unaware until recently that his Certificate 3 in aged care could be used as entry into a nursing diploma which could then be used for credit towards a university degree.

#### 2.5 Cross-cultural issues and discrimination

While many participants relayed beliefs that their name, appearance or accent was a barrier to securing employment or impacted on the security of employment, proving such discrimination was difficult.

*I cannot find a job in aged care and I don't know why. Maybe it is my colour. They can tell on the phone from my voice I'm African ...*

*My son is autistic. He tried to get employment in a supermarket and was told by Manager, "We can't employ people like you". I don't know whether it was because he was ethnic or disabled.*

*English and our accent is still an issue when applying for jobs ...*

Participants were generally reluctant to complain citing fear of recrimination or mistrust in the complaints process. Most believed that issues of discrimination were best addressed through anti-racism training and compulsory cross-cultural awareness for public sector employers and staff working with CaLD clients.

## 2.6 Other issues

Other factors identified by participants that impact on employment outcomes for people from CaLD backgrounds include expenses relating to child-care and housing.

*Rental fees are skyrocketing at the moment. New families are struggling desperately to make ends meet. Some parents with many children are not decisive at job seeking as the dole is not much different to the salary. Mothers of the young families are passing the time to take their kids to and from school. Even though they want to join the workforce it is terribly hard for them to get the shift work that suits their lifestyle.*

### 2.6.1 Culturally appropriate service provision

While participants commented generally on the importance of job service providers working with community organisations and leaders to promote information exchange, only one participant commented specifically on service provision for CaLD job seekers.

*I'd like to suggest that we should implement an employment recruitment agency that assists the clients with CaLD background. It must educate the jobseeker thoroughly about the nature of the job, expectation of the employer, hazards and workplace safety, workplace agreement, benefits, superannuation, opportunity and obligations in their native languages. The agency should prepare and update the resume for the client. It should even run a role play session to go through the interview procedure ...*

### 2.6.2 English language issues

Most participants recognised English language difficulties as a significant barrier to people from CaLD backgrounds securing employment in Australia. Participants argued the need for English language training that is geared towards employment and effective oral communication in the workplace.

*AMEP is doing its best at local TAFE Colleges. They offer speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and even sign reading skills to new migrants. Speaking skills should be on priority. For blue collar jobs very few migrants need to write. I'd like to suggest the TAFE to evaluate its strategy to educate new migrants. For illiterates, it's very hard to start writing at the old age. Most of the refugees from Burma do not have the opportunity to read or write in their own languages ...*

While some participants argued for a relaxation in English language standards for particular jobs, others urged greater flexibility in the application of testing procedures for particular qualifications that may discount people from CaLD backgrounds. For example, two participants who are in the process of starting a small business coordination unit to match CaLD carers with CaLD children discussed how WA is the only State in which CaLD carers need to pass a test (in English) to be licensed as home child carers by the government. Applicants can sit the test three times but must wait six months before reapplying if they fail. There is no sample test enabling CaLD applicants to practice and no feedback on results, which is particularly unhelpful for CaLD applicants.

### 2.6.3 Transport

Several participants identified the lack of a driver's license as an impediment to employment.

*Almost in every job application, a driver's license is a must. Sometimes employers even demand transport for each employee (it is understandable as public transport is not reliable for shift workers). At present driving lesson fees are up to \$45 an hour which is too much.*

*Some agencies are assisting the jobseekers of over 40 years of age who get learner's permit and health care card ... Without driver's license they are greatly disadvantaged ...*

### 3. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Priority issues in employment for people from CaLD backgrounds, particularly those from new and emerging communities, identified by participants were:

- recognition of overseas qualifications and skills
- cross-cultural issues and perceptions of discrimination in employment
- the impact of language difficulties on employability.

Participants recommended that government agencies and service providers address these issues through various measures including:

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OMI is developing a series of recommendations and an action plan in consultation with relevant agencies<sup>9</sup> to address the key issues raised in the consultation. These recommendations will be presented to the Minister of Citizenship and Multicultural Interests for his consideration by 31 May 2010.

The recommendations will form the basis for ongoing advocacy with relevant agencies and the support of the Minister to promote full participation of people from CaLD backgrounds in economic life and address and remove barriers to equity in employment. OMI will monitor outcomes and report on the progress of implementation of the recommendations via its website on an ongoing basis.

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<sup>9</sup> Relevant agencies include the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; Department of Immigration and Citizenship; Department of Training and Workforce Development (WA); non-government organisations responsible for service delivery in employment and training as well as relevant industry bodies.