



**REGIONAL  
AUSTRALIA  
INSTITUTE**

# **LIMESTONE COAST MIGRATION PROJECT**

**WORKFORCE ATTRACTION  
AND RETENTION STRATEGY**

**March 2020**

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Independent and informed by both research and ongoing dialogue with the community, the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) develops policy and advocates for change to build a stronger economy and better quality of life in regional Australia – for the benefit of all Australians. The RAI was established with support from the Australian Government.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, commissioned by the Primary Industry and Regions, SA (PIRSA), and undertaken by the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) seeks to develop a migration attraction and retention strategy for the towns of Naracoorte in the Local Government Area (LGA) of Naracoorte Lucindale and the towns of Bordertown and Keith in the Tatiara LGA. Both of these districts are located in the Limestone Coast Region of South Australia. To inform the strategy, a review of available services for migrants has been undertaken and recommendations made. It is envisaged that the recommendations will address current gaps as well as support and enhance service delivery. The report also seeks to identify State-wide factors for attracting and retaining migrants.

The region is experiencing extremely low population growth. The trend for both LGAs has been for more Australian residents to move out than move in. As is the case for most regional areas around Australia, both Tatiara and Naracoorte Lucindale are witnessing an outflow of young people, and inflows of older people. The region's aging demographic means that filling its workforce needs is an ongoing challenge. Both LGAs show high rates of churn of younger workers and especially those in low and semi-skilled occupations. Naracoorte in particular has seen a sizeable loss of the semi-skilled community and personal service workers. Given the high churn rates and the net loss of Australian residents in both LGAs, migration is a critical part of a sustainable future for this region.

The main employers in these towns rely on migrant workers to fill labour shortages and keep their businesses running. The proportion of migrants in the larger towns of Naracoorte and Bordertown is significant and means that the decline of resident population is being offset by people coming from overseas to settle in the LGAs. Most have arrived in the past five years and a significant number have been single men, some of whose families have now joined them.

Based on desk research and numerous interviews with key stakeholders in the towns undertaken from August to December 2019, this report looks at the following aspects:

- Council services
- Migrant resource centres
- Employment and Centrelink
- Education
- Health
- Transportation
- Language and interpreting services
- Cultural, sporting religious services
- Services for women migrants.

This report finds that the Tatiara Council is playing a leadership role in the region in its approach to welcoming and settling new migrants into its community. It has recognised the importance of community development and is proactively developing strategies and partnerships to be able to improve the migrant experience and encourage new arrivals to settle and stay. The Lucindale Naracoorte Council also actively supports and promotes cultural activities to connect migrants and the local community and to celebrate diversity. It is well-placed to develop a deeper role in ensuring that social cohesion and the settlement experience of new arrivals is strengthened in Naracoorte.

The work being done by the Limestone Coast Economic Development Group, a subcommittee of the Limestone Coast Local Government Association, is comprehensive and well-planned. Accompanying its 2019 Regional Growth Strategy is an Action Plan and a more recent Workplan 2019-2020. To ensure that the key players in the region are participating in the further development and implementation of the migration strategy, it is recommended that a Migration Subcommittee or Working Group be formed. This would also allow key stakeholders and migrant “champions” with long-standing expertise in settlement success to share experiences and ideas on workable strategies for the region and best practice from other areas. A suggested structure is presented in this report.

The report also identifies a number of key factors relevant to migrant attraction and retention which are applicable more broadly to other regional areas of South Australia. These include a significant focus on welcoming new arrivals in ways that support inclusion, respect for diversity and enhancement of social cohesion. Settlement assistance is important, particularly for more recent arrivals and those who may have particular vulnerabilities. The existing community also have an active role to play in welcoming and assisting new arrivals and mechanisms to support this should be put in place.

**The recommendations from this project are as follows:**

1. The Limestone Coast Economic Development Group form a Migration Subcommittee involving key stakeholders and sector experts to look strategically at migrant attraction and retention issues at the regional level. It should take forward elements of the Growth Strategy and Action Plan and to ensure the implementation of report recommendations.
2. Naracoorte Lucindale Council should consider ways to more actively support migrant integration and social cohesion in Naracoorte. Specifically, it should look at strengthening community development activities, potentially through the creation of a dedicated Community Development Officer position. It should also consider joining the Welcoming Cities network.
3. An event or workshop on migration including Councillors from both Councils should be held, with an independent facilitator, to discuss successful settlement, explore additional ways for the Council to be involved as leaders, share knowledge and compare approaches and best practice.
4. Consideration should be given to developing a staffed Community or Neighbourhood Centre in both Bordertown and Naracoorte, which includes the Migrant Resource Centre, where any member of the community can go to take classes run by volunteers, get assistance or advice with paperwork, referrals to government services and other service providers and be part of community activities. While continuing to provide necessary specialised services to migrants this will ensure connection with the wider community allowing further opportunities for integration.
5. The Naracoorte Lucindale Council, the Migrant Resource Centre and community members should meet to identify a new interfaith prayer space. This could be done through the Connecting Settlement and Community Services network meetings.
6. To develop an online job-matching mechanism, contact should be made with enterprises who have started work on developing online tools, specifically designed to match migrants and refugees with jobs.
7. The main employers of migrants in the region, including the meatworks in Murray Bridge, should be invited to attend a forum on best practices in migrant attraction and retention in regional employment. This forum could be held in the context of the furtherance of a migration strategy and could be an opportunity to showcase some best practice from around the country in relation to how to support the migrant experience in the workplace, and thereby improve job satisfaction and retention. It can also be an opportunity for employers to consider what support and information they may need and where

they can collaborate. It should be facilitated by an independent expert or organization and include the relevant local business associations and the Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast.

8. It is recommended that the Migration Subcommittee monitor the impact of the River Murray Study Hub to determine if it contributes to increasing retention of young people and, if so, consider a feasibility study of establishing a similar hub in the Limestone Coast.
9. It is recommended to organise a migrant small business expo in both Naracoorte and Bordertown, to explain what support is available for migrants who are interested in starting a business. A business mentoring model, matching local business owners to migrant entrepreneurs could also be considered. The Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast could take the lead.
10. A mechanism should be established where employers communicate to the Migrant Resource Centre, schools and Council about new migrant employees with families, to ensure there is sufficient support and welcome plans in place, ideally before they arrive. This could assist the school with teacher and class planning, as well as ensure that there is contact for the new arrivals with the Migrant Resource Centre.
11. A buddy system between new family arrivals and local families should be trialled by the schools, to promote welcome and cross-cultural integration, thereby promoting social cohesion.
12. Information forums on worker entitlements, contractual provisions and Workcover should be held in Naracoorte and Bordertown regularly, ideally in the evening or weekend when workers can attend. This could be hosted by the community legal centre or another independent agency.
13. A Migrant Health Subcommittee or Working Group should be established under the Limestone Coast Local Health Network to look at ways to move forward with some of the recommendations made in previous health-related inquiries and studies relating to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Its terms of reference may include establishing or strengthening relationships with health service providers in Victoria and other jurisdictions and seeking to use their translated materials and other expertise as well as continuing to advocate for the region at the State and Federal levels.
14. All Limestone Coast Councils, working within the Economic Development Group, should work together to brainstorm solutions to transport in the region, including identifying sources of funding and aiming for collaborative efforts for vehicle purchase and region-wide use.
15. Naracoorte Lucindale and Tatiara Councils should continue to determine ways to support migrants to obtain their drivers licence.
16. The Migration Subcommittee (see Recommendation 1) should seek to determine innovative models for strengthening English language skills of migrants. Initially, a strategy for English classes for older high school and post-high school aged young migrants should be considered. Models which include some online courses combined with less frequent face-to-face tuition could be explored. Having local volunteer buddies of the same age to spend an hour a week with them to discuss topics of interest, for example while walking or over coffee, could also be explored. Volunteers could then achieve a certificate or other recognition from the Council. This may also promote integration and new friendships.
17. The Migrant Subcommittee or Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast should determine the need for and feasibility of offering English in the workplace courses at the main meatworks in Naracoorte Lucindale and Tatiara. Funding sources should be explored to cover or co-fund costs.
18. Sporting clubs and other cultural and recreational groups should present at the Migrant Resource Centre, to inform new arrivals about the opportunities and to make them feel welcome. This could also be an opportunity to sign up new participants.
19. The Councils should seek to minimise any social isolation by ensuring that neighbours and community members are encouraged to be welcoming and inclusive through local neighbourhood initiatives

## ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
AMRC	Australian Migrant Resource Centre
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CSCS	Connecting Settlement and Community Services
DAMA	Designated Area Migration Agreement
ESL	English as a Second Language
LC	Limestone Coast
LGA	Local Government Area
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
PIRSA	Primary Industry and Regions South Australia
RAI	Regional Australia Institute
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RDA LC	Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast
SA	South Australia
STTARS	Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
WLSSA	Womens Legal Service SA

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Throughout Australia, regional towns are seeking to attract and retain migrants for their workforce and population needs. Many key industries located in regional Australia, such as agriculture and horticulture, would not be able to survive without migrant workers. Smaller towns facing population decline also seek newcomers, to keep their community vibrant and strong. At the same time, there is a recognition that Australia's main cities are growing too rapidly and that some rebalancing of the population, between urban and regional areas, is both necessary and desirable.

Strategies to facilitate regional migration are being considered at all levels of Government and several new measures have recently been put in place. Two Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs) were entered into in 2019, between the Federal Government and the State Government of South Australia. They are intended to support attracting and retaining skilled migrants across a range of occupations. Similarly, the new Regional Visas which commenced in late 2019 are also intended to encourage migrants to live and work in regional areas.

The Regional Australia Institute (RAI) has researched successful migrant settlement in regional Australia and is working with towns and communities around Australia to ensure that their attraction and retention strategies are sustainable and successful. It considers that "locally-led migration strategies" must be flexible, fit-for-place and able to meet local needs. It also considers that local councils have an important leadership role to play in the settlement and integration of migrants into their communities. Of all tiers of government, local councils are best-placed to know the needs and complexity of the community and to support a whole-of-community approach to facilitating successful and sustainable settlement.

The Government of South Australia, Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA ("PIRSA") has requested RAI to prepare a migrant workforce strategy in the towns of Naracoorte, Bordertown and Keith located in the Limestone Coast region. This region of 21,329 square kilometres in the south-east corner of South Australia had a population of 64,798 according to the 2016 Census<sup>1</sup>. Of this number, approximately 6,450 are migrants, who are primarily located in the towns of Mt Gambier, Naracoorte and Bordertown. Migrants are therefore an important component of the population and, as shown in this report, critical to the region to counter population decline and as a source of labour.

The towns of Naracoorte, Bordertown and Keith each have major industries which continually need migrant workers in order to be able to remain viable. Many came to Australia as refugees and are now being joined by their families and friends. Other migrants, both skilled and unskilled, have come from Australian cities or directly from overseas. The overall aim of this project is to develop a migrant attraction and retention strategy for the towns, reviewing the availability and sufficiency of services that are available to migrants. This strategy recognises that migrants are needed to ensure the region's communities and businesses can thrive.

The project contains a number of key activities:

- Undertaking an analysis of the characteristics of people (ages, incomes, qualifications, life stages, ethnicity) moving to/from Naracoorte, Bordertown and Keith;

<sup>1</sup> According to the 2016 Australian Census. As of 30 June 2018 its estimated resident population is 66,863, see <https://profile.id.com.au/rda-limestone-coast/population-estimate>

- Undertaking an in-depth review of the services currently available for new arrivals in Naracoorte, Bordertown and Keith and of the shortfalls and demands going forward, which includes considering the work of other organisations and agencies;
- Undertaking some comparative work with other regional communities that are a similar size to Naracoorte (pop.5960), Bordertown (pop.2953) and Keith (pop.1355), and distilling the factors for success relevant to that size town;
- Determining the main employers in the region and what their labour needs are;
- Consulting with a range of other stakeholders including government, migrant resource centre, community service providers, existing migrant communities etc.;
- Preparing an attraction/retention strategy that partners to support program delivery that meets the communities' needs.

The report is written with the understanding that many of the barriers to successful regional settlement involve chronic systemic issues such as lack of housing infrastructure, lack of funding and opportunities for tertiary education and difficulty accessing English language classes in regional Australia. For improvements to be made to some of these issues, political will and significant funding is required. This report recognises that stakeholders in the Limestone Coast region must continue to advocate for change at a higher level, and it is important that they do so. At the same time, however, there are some practical improvements which can be made “on-the-ground”. The recommendations in this report are designed to be realistic and achievable in the short to medium term.

## OUTLINE OF REPORT AND METHODOLOGY

The report provides demographic data for the region, looking specifically at the Local Government Areas of Tatiara, which includes the towns of Bordertown and Keith, as well as the Naracoorte Lucindale area which includes the town of Naracoorte. It gives an overview of the profile and mobility of the population in the region and in each of the two LGAs. It then defines the services which it will examine for each of the project locations. Recommendations are made under each service area. Information about other Australian towns of a similar size which have successfully implemented a migration strategy is provided. The report includes a number of recommendations and concludes with the outline of a strategy for the Limestone Coast to consider in order to improve migrant attraction and retention in the project locations. It also identifies factors for attracting and retaining migrants that other regions in South Australia could consider.

The report has been prepared on the basis of the following information:

- An analysis of relevant demographic and census data
- Desk research of secondary sources, including studies done by other agencies which are relevant to the region and to those towns used for comparative purposes
- Key informant interviews during and after two location visits, including a session with migrants. A list of the interviews is attached as Annex 1. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and/or by phone between August 2019 and December 2019. The report does not take into account any changes in context or situation since December 2019.
- Participation in an Immigration SA “Welcome to South Australia” event.

The report is intended to complement the studies and reports which have been done by other organisations which will also contribute to the development of a comprehensive migration strategy.

## PROJECT LOCATIONS

The report looks at migrant services location in Naracoorte Lucindale district and specifically the town of Naracoorte as well as the Tatiara district, which includes the towns of Bordertown and Keith. There are several similarities and as well as differences between the districts and their main towns. Both districts have a meat processing plant which is a significant employer, Teys Australia is located in Naracoorte and JBS is the meatworks at Bordertown. Naracoorte Lucindale also has a notable viticulture industry while there are onion and seed farms in Tatiara. The population of each of the three towns according to the 2016 Census is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Population

South Australia	Limestone Coast	Tatiara	Bordertown	Keith	Naracoorte Lucindale	Naracoorte
1,676,653	64,794	6,620	2,953	1,355	8,291	5,960

Naracoorte is significantly larger than Bordertown and Keith and is located more closely to Mt Gambier, which, with a population of nearly 30,000, is the largest town in South Australia after Adelaide. This means that within approximately an hour's drive, residents of Naracoorte are able to access a significant array of services including a regional hospital, tertiary education options and government agencies. The largest migrant community in Naracoorte is the Afghan community, counted at 223 persons in 2016. It has been growing in Naracoorte for over 10 years and is relatively well-established with members of the community buying houses and starting their own businesses.

Bordertown has a population of around 3000 and is approximately two hours drive from Mt Gambier. Most migrants coming into the Tatiara district have moved into Bordertown. The Tatiara District Council's Migrant Community Action Plan<sup>2</sup> notes that:

*Major ethnic groups have changed over time, in 2018, the major groups employed in local business and industry are Malaysian, Afghani, Filipinos, followed by Sri Lankans, Ethiopians and Chinese.*

Table 2 shows the percentage of Australian-born population of the project locations, compared to the figure for South Australia as a whole and Table 3 shows the percentage of population who were born in other countries.

Table 2: Percentage of Australian-born

South Australia	Tatiara	Bordertown	Keith	Naracoorte Lucindale	Naracoorte
71.1%	80.5%	73.4%	86.6%	80.4%	77.4%

Table 3: Next Most Common overseas countries of Birth as Percentage of Population

South Australia	Tatiara	Naracoorte Lucindale
England 5.8% India 1.6% China <sup>3</sup> 1.5% Italy 1.1% Vietnam 0.9%	England 1.5% Philippines 1.5% Afghanistan 1.3% New Zealand 1.1% China 0.3%	Afghanistan 2.7% England 2.1% New Zealand 1.7% Philippines 1.6% Pakistan 0.5%

## MOBILITY

This section on Mobility shows the numbers and profiles of people who have moved in and those who have moved out of the two LGAs. This data is drawn from the 2016 Census and covers anyone who lived in Australia in 2011 and who lived in the two LGAs in 2016.

The trend for both LGAs has been for more Australian residents to move out than move in. This decline of resident population is being offset by people coming from overseas to settle in the LGAs. In the period 2017-2018, both LGAs experienced a positive net overseas migration and a negative net internal migration (i.e. people moving from one place within Australia to another place within Australia).

Between 2011 and 2016, there was an outflow of 1,340 people from Naracoorte Lucindale. Of these, 269 were migrants (around 20% of the outflow). For Tatiara, there was an outflow of 1,170 people between 2011 and 2016. Of these, 528 were migrants, which is about 45% of the outflow.

The estimated resident population shows an increasing population trend for Naracoorte Lucindale, with population increasing from 8,239 in 2001 to 8,533 in 2018. This is an increase of 4% in that period. However, focusing on 2017-18, Table 4 shows that Naracoorte and Lucindale experienced a slight decrease of 0.2% in population size. This is mainly attributed to the negative net internal migration of - 118 people, which meant that more people were moving out of the LGA than coming in. The magnitude of this negative net internal migration offsets the positive gains from natural increase (28) and the positive net overseas migration (70).

By contrast, since 2001, Tatiara has experienced a decrease in population of 3%, as total estimated population has fallen from 7,032 to below 6,800 in 2018. However, as shown in Table 4, the LGA did experience a slight increase in population from 2017-18 by 0.3%. Again, this was mainly due to a positive net overseas migration (25) and natural increase (6), which was larger than the small negative net internal migration (-9) experienced.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes SARs and Taiwan

Table 4: Change in Estimated Resident Population 2017-2018

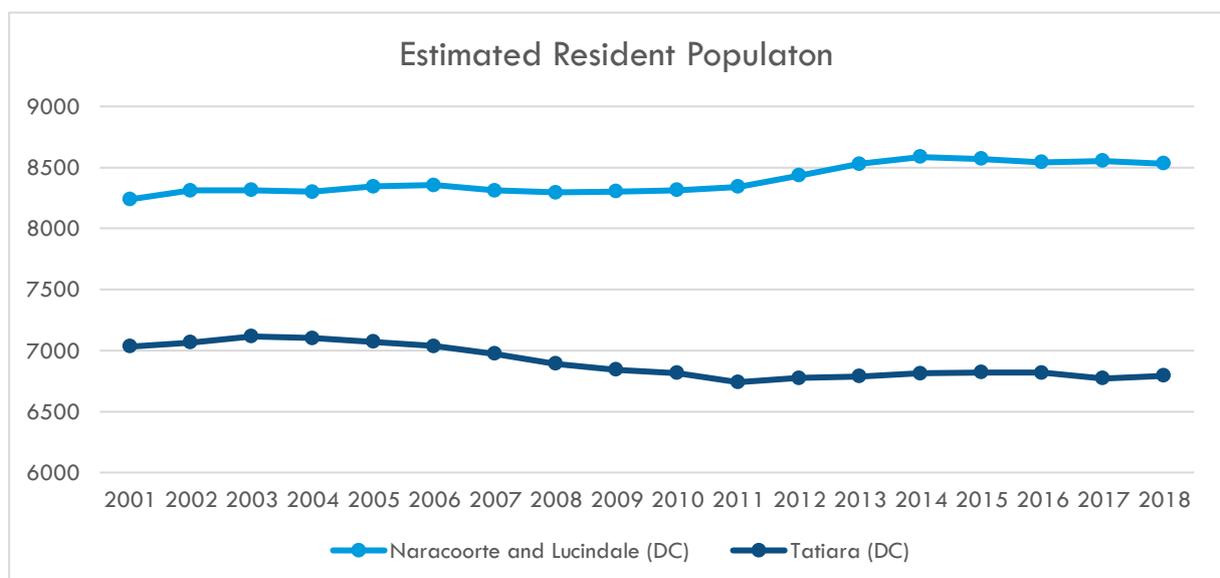
Local Government Area	ERP 30 June 2017	ERP 30 June 2018	ERP change 2017-2018 (number)	ERP change 2017-2018 (%)	Components of Population Change 2017-2018		
					Natural Increase	Net Internal Migration	Net Overseas Migration
Naracoorte Lucindale	8553	8533	-20	-0.2%	28	-118	70
Tatiara	6772	6794	22	0.3%	6	-9	25

Overall, both LGAs show that there has been significant positive net overseas migration, however the extent that has contributed to population growth has been offset by the negative net internal migration and low natural increase numbers. In other words, about the same number of people are moving in to the region from overseas as are moving out to other parts of Australia. This means that population growth is negligible, limiting the availability of workforce and the opportunity for the towns and their businesses to grow.

Given the positive net overseas migration, the proportion of residents born overseas in these LGAs is relatively significant. In Naracoorte Lucindale, most of these people have arrived in the period from 2006 to 2015, with the exception of people born in England, which had the most people moving to Australia during the period 1956 to 1975. In other words, apart from English migrants, most migrants have arrived relatively recently in the past 15 years.

For Tatiara, overseas born residents also mainly arrived in the period between 2006-2015, with the exception of those from England. Additionally, there were also around 12 Afghanistan born residents who arrived between January and August 2016. See Figure 1.

Figure 1: Estimated Resident Population from 2001



## MOBILITY: NARACOORTE LUCINDALE

### MOBILITY OVERVIEW

Table 5 shows the breakdown of people who stayed in the Naracoorte Lucindale district between 2011 and 2016, those who moved in from other places and those who left the district.

Table 5: Mobility Overview for Naracoorte Lucindale

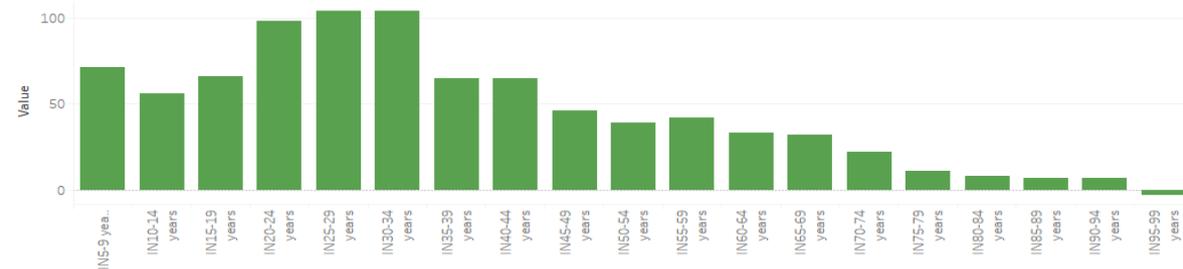
	Between the 2011 and 2016 Census:		
	Stay	In	Out
<b>Number of people</b>	<b>5979</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>1313</b>
<b>Most common age brackets</b>	45-59	25-34	20-24
<b>Most common weekly income brackets</b>	Quite an even distribution.	\$150-\$299 \$650-\$999	\$800-\$999 \$650-\$799 \$150-\$299
<b>Most common qualification levels</b>	Certificate Advanced Diploma & Diploma Bachelor Degree	Certificate Advanced Diploma & Diploma Bachelor Degree (112)	Certificate Advanced Diploma & Diploma Bachelor Degree (108)
<b>Most common occupations</b>	Manager	Labourers (109) Professionals (97)	Labourers Community and Personal Service Technicians and Trades Sales

## MOBILITY AND AGE

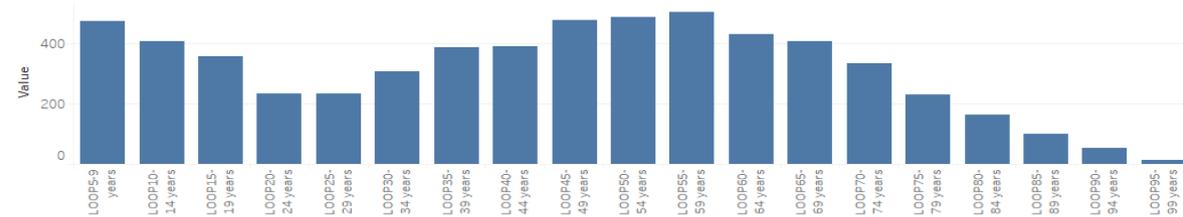
Figure 2 shows that between the 2011 and 2016 Census, the majority of the population in Naracoorte Lucindale LGA remained, with around 5,900 people staying in the same LGA. At the same time, the LGA attracted more than 860 people to move in. However, the outflow was higher than the inflow with more than 1,300 people moving out of the LGA. This outflow was primarily people between the ages of 20-24 years, which is consistent with conventional patterns where young people leave for education and job opportunities. While the inflow numbers were smaller, the people who moved in were mostly around the ages of 25-34. Those between 45 to 59 years were the age group that did not tend to move.

Figure 2: Naracoorte Lucindale Mobility and Age

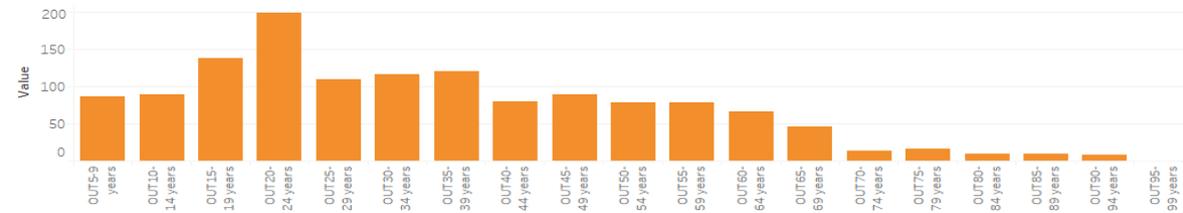
In(Age) Naracoorte and Lucindale (DC)



Stay(Age)



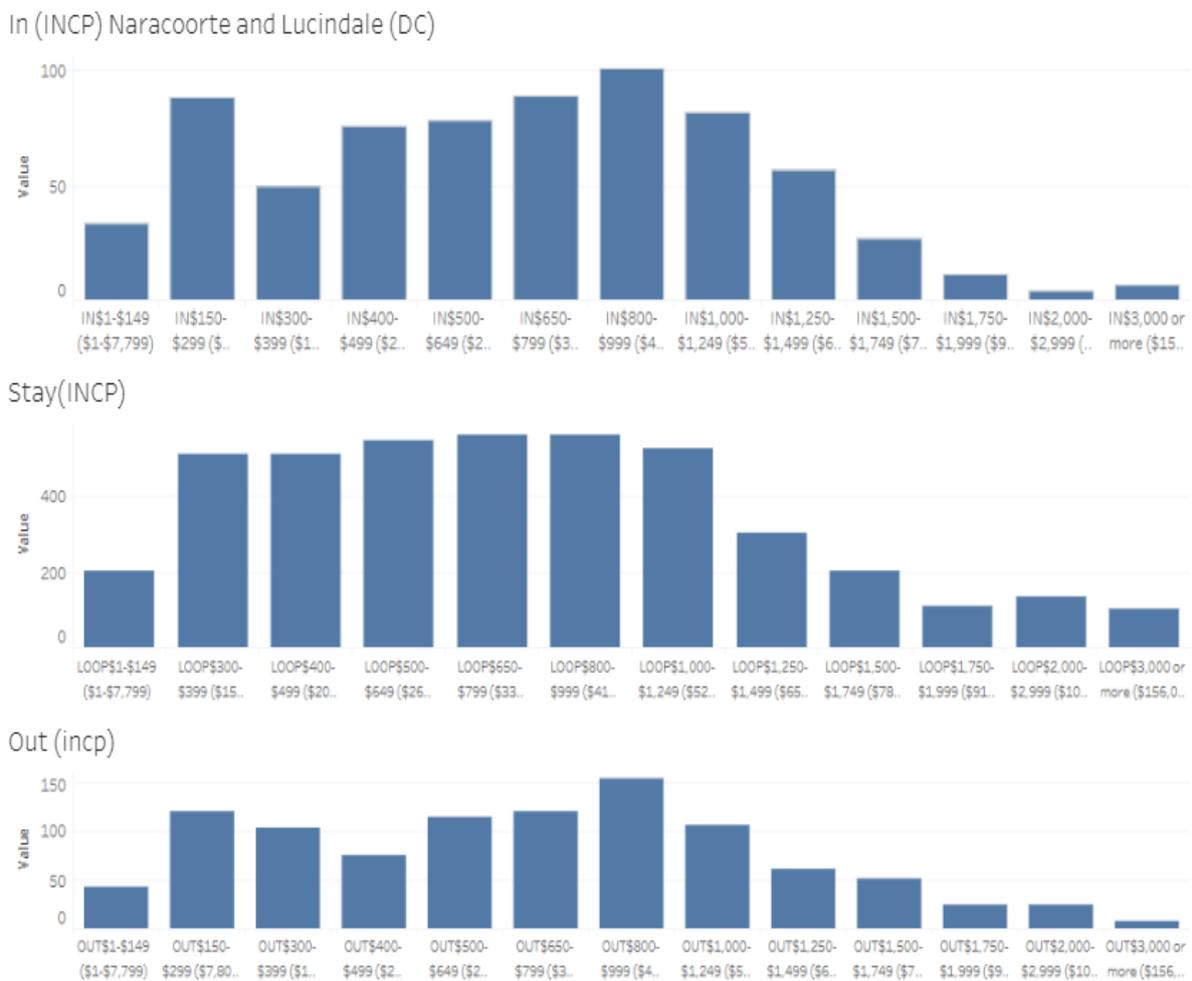
Out(Age)



## MOBILITY AND INCOME

Of those people leaving the Naracoorte Lucindale LGA, three income brackets were represented: \$800-\$999, \$650-\$799 and those earning \$150-\$299 weekly. The people who were moving in to the LGA were mainly in the lower income bracket of \$150-\$299 or within the middle-income bracket of \$650-\$999 a week. The net flows showed that the greatest change was for the income brackets of \$150-\$299 and \$800-\$999 which experienced a negative net outflow of 54 and 52 people respectively. Of the people who stayed, there is quite an even distribution across most of the income brackets, though there is a greater concentration in the lower to middle income range. See Figure 3.

Figure 3: Naracoorte Lucindale Mobility and Income Profile

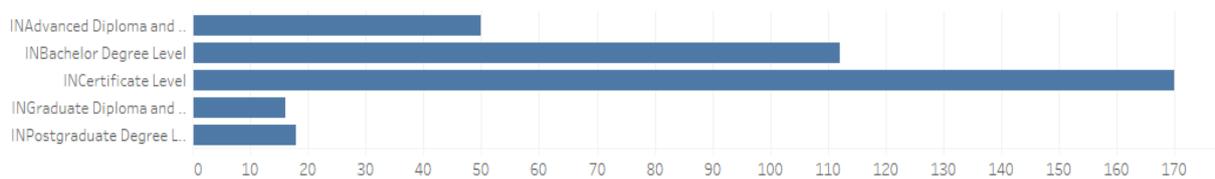


## MOBILITY AND QUALIFICATIONS

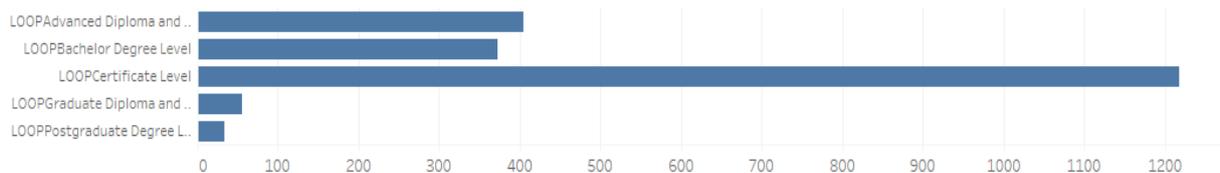
Most of the population who stayed in the Naracoorte and Lucindale LGA between 2011 and 2016 had Certificate level qualifications, followed by Advanced Diplomas and Diplomas. The LGA's outflow of people were mostly those with Certificate level qualifications (282) as is the case with the inflow, most people having Certificate level qualifications (170). On most levels of qualifications, there were more people moving away from Naracoorte Lucindale than moving in. This follows the general pattern that more people left Naracoorte Lucindale than moved in. However, the inflow of people with Bachelor Degrees (112) was slightly higher than the outflow (108), perhaps reflecting the older age profile of people who moved in. See Figure 4.

Figure 4: Mobility and Qualifications Profile

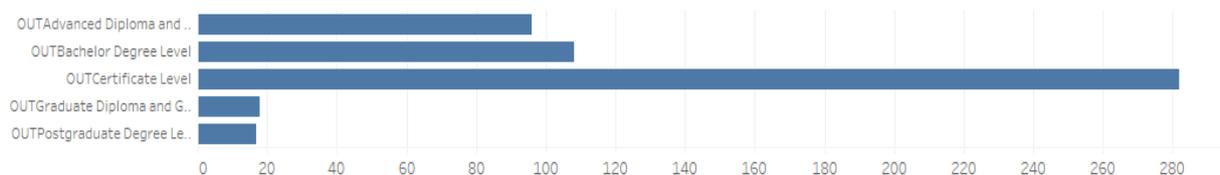
### In (QALLP)



### Stay (QALLP)



### Out (QALLP)

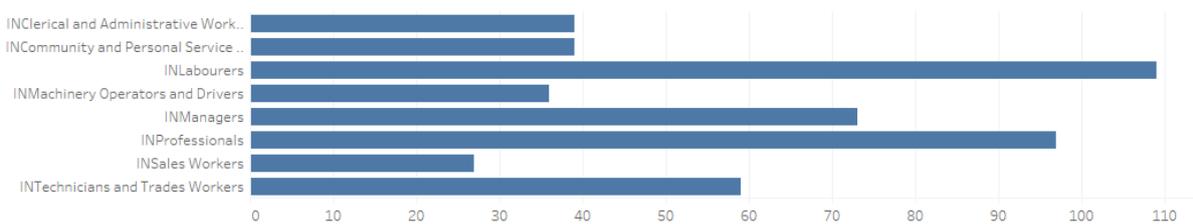


## MOBILITY AND OCCUPATIONS

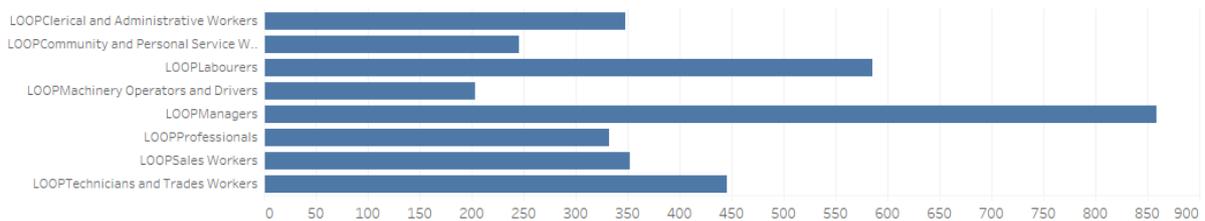
Between 2011 and 2016, Naracoorte and Lucindale saw the greatest inflows from people who worked as Labourers (109) followed by Professionals (97), while Sales Workers experienced the lowest inflows. Despite these inflows, all occupations in Naracoorte experienced net losses. In particular, Community and Personal Service occupations experienced a negative net flow of 61 people. This meant that more people who worked as Community and Personal Service occupations moved out of Naracoorte and Lucindale than moved into the LGA. Additionally, Labourers, Sales and Technicians and Trades occupations all experienced a negative net flow of around 40 people. Of the people who remained in Naracoorte, the occupation of Manager was the most common. See Figure 5.

Figure 5: Naracoorte Lucindale Mobility and Occupational Profile

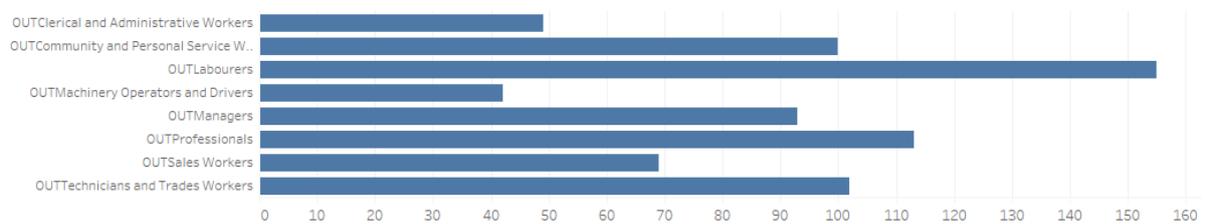
### In (OCCP)



### Stay(OCCP)



### Out (OCCP)



## MOBILITY: TATIARA

### MOBILITY OVERVIEW

Table 6 shows the breakdown of people who stayed in the Tatiara district between 2011 and 2016, those who moved in from other places and those who left the district.

*Table 6 Mobility Overview for Tatiara*

	Between the 2011 and 2016 Census:		
	Stay	In	Out
<b>Number of people</b>	<b>4644</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>1170</b>
<b>Most common age brackets</b>	45-64	25-34	15-24
<b>Most common weekly income brackets</b>	\$650-\$799 \$800-\$999	\$650-\$799 (76) \$800-\$999 (73) \$150-\$299 (73)	\$150-\$299 \$650-\$999
<b>Most common qualification levels</b>	Certificate (937) Advanced Diploma & Diploma (326)	Certificate (172)	Certificate (273)
<b>Most common occupations</b>	Manager	Labourers (95) Managers (66) Professionals (58)	Labourers Community and Personal Service (93)

## MOBILITY AND AGE

There was significant churn in the population for Tatiara LGA, which contains Bordertown and Keith. Around 708 people moved into the LGA, while more than 1,170 people moved out between the 2011 and 2016 Census. There was a net loss of 466 people. At the same time, approximately 4,644 people remained, mostly those between the ages of 45 to 64.

Figure 6: Tatiara Mobility and Age



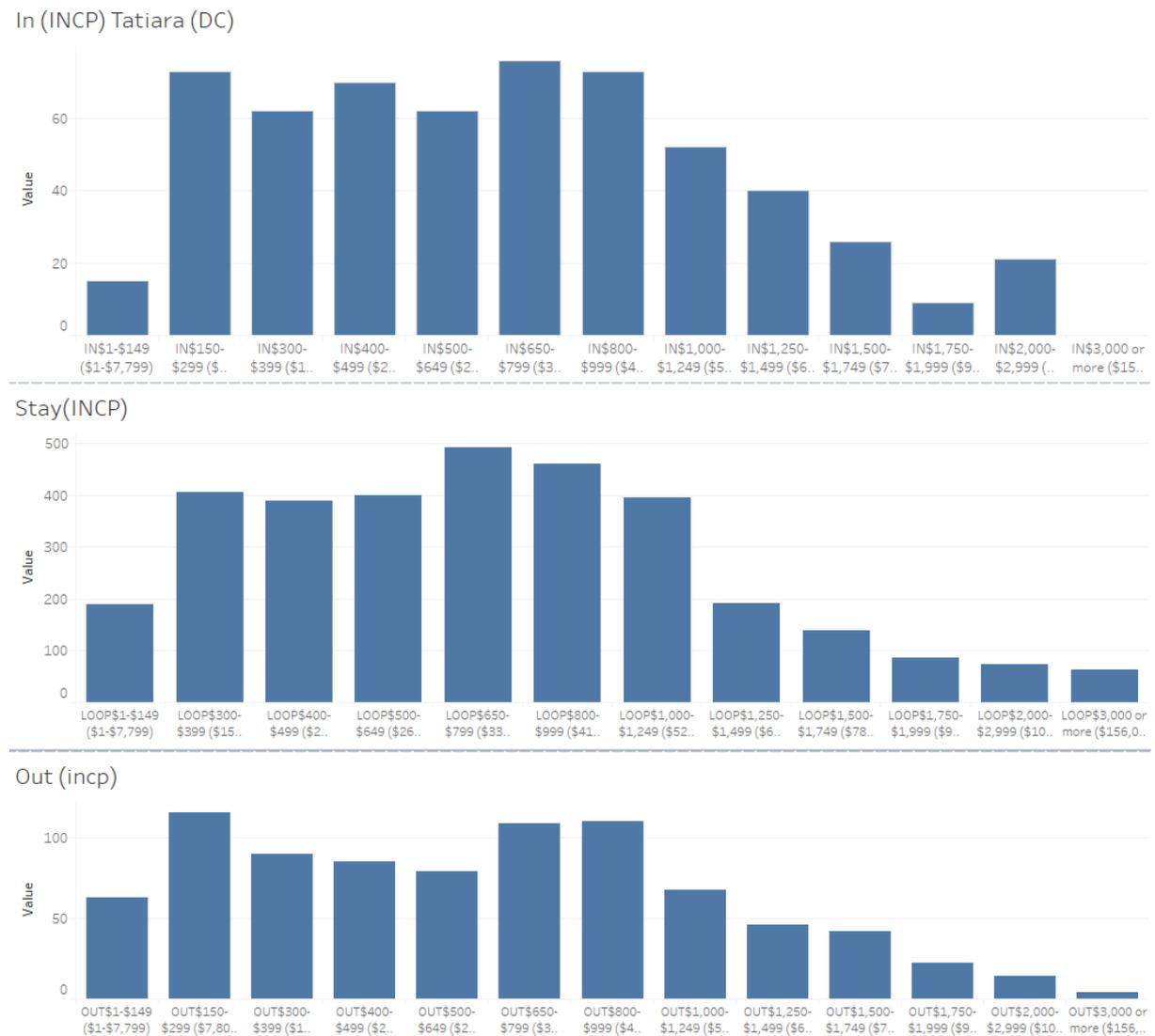
The 15 to 24 year old age groups saw the largest outflows of the Tatiara residents. This is once again consistent with the general trend that movement is higher among these age groups as young people move for education and job opportunities. For the inflows, most of the people moving into Tatiara are those aged between 25 to 34 years. While the actual number of people from this age bracket who moved into Tatiara is lower than the outflow, which resulted in a negative net flow of 32 people, it does suggest that people are coming to look for work opportunities or moving back to Tatiara.

## MOBILITY AND INCOME

The new entrants into Tatiara were distributed across the range of income brackets, with the most people (76) earning \$650-\$799 a week. This was followed by around 73 people earning \$800-\$999 a week as well as 73 people on the lower income bracket of \$150-\$299.

In terms of the residents who have moved from Tatiara, most were earning weekly incomes of \$150-\$299. There were also quite a lot of people who were earning in the higher income brackets of \$650-\$999 who left. All income brackets experienced a negative net flow, with the exception of those earning \$2000-\$2999 a week. There was a positive net increase of 7 residents for this high-income bracket.

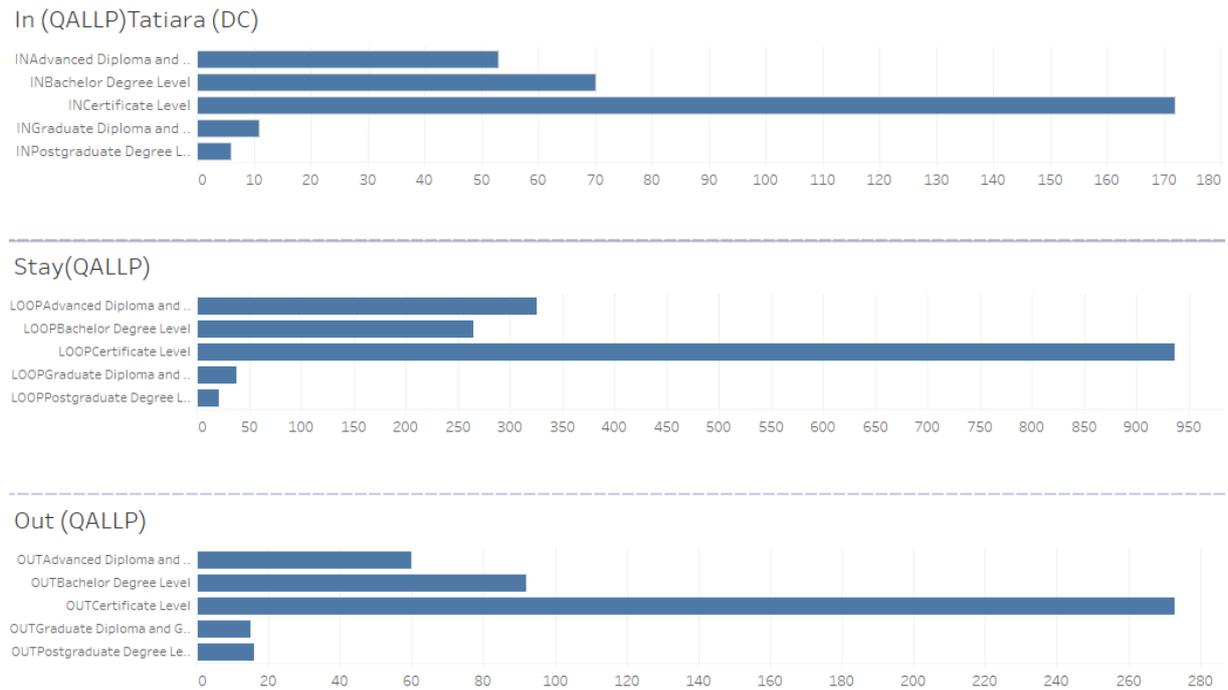
Figure 7: Tatiara Mobility and Income Profile



## MOBILITY AND QUALIFICATIONS

Most of the population who stayed in Tatiara between 2011 and 2016 had Certificate level qualifications (937), followed by Advanced Diplomas and Diplomas (326). The LGA's outflow of people were mostly those with Certificate level qualifications (273) and similarly among the inflow, most people had Certificate level qualifications (172). For all qualification levels, there were more people moving out than in. This follows the general pattern that more people left have left Tatiara. As the inflow numbers are lower than the outflow numbers, this could potentially limit the availability of a skilled local workforce.

Figure 8: Tatiara Mobility and Qualifications Profile



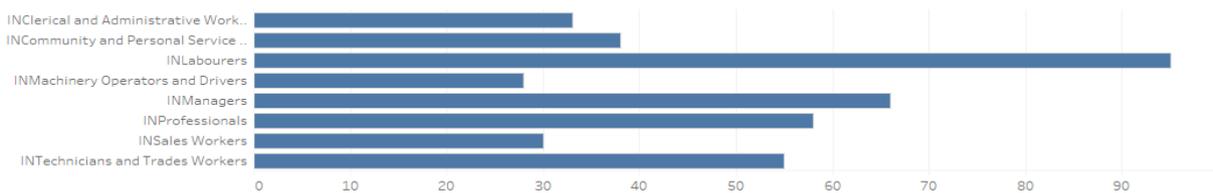
## MOBILITY AND OCCUPATIONS

Tatiara experienced the greatest inflow of people who work as Labourers (95), followed by Managers (66) and Professionals (58). However, apart from Managers, which had a positive net flow of residents (6), all other occupations experienced a negative net flow (i.e. more residents moving out than in).

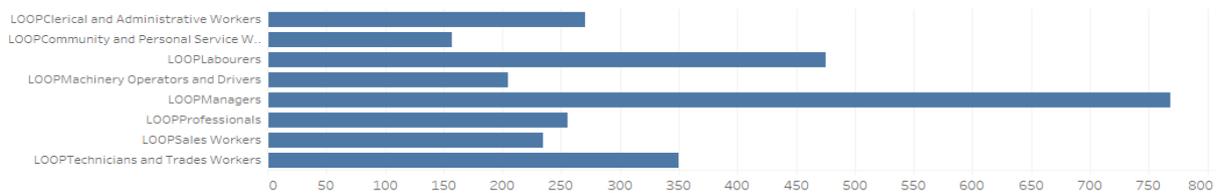
In terms of the outflow of residents, they were primarily Labourers and Community and Personal Service workers. In particular, the churn of Community and Personal Service workers was significant, with 93 people moving out and only 38 people moving into Tatiara. This suggests that there may have been a loss of jobs opportunities in this sector that resulted in many residents moving out. Of the people who stayed in Tatiara, Managers were the most common occupation.

Figure 9: Tatiara Mobility and Occupational Profile

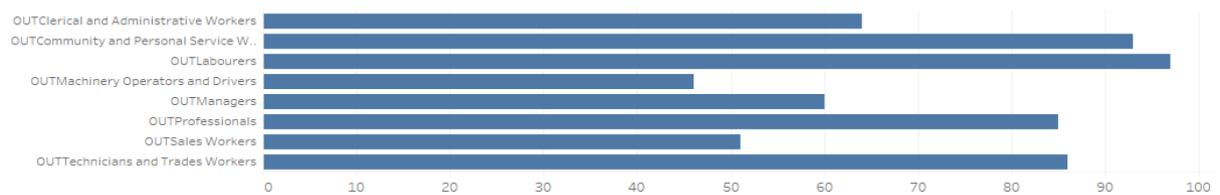
### In (OCCP) Tatiara (DC)



### Stay(OCCP)



### Out (OCCP)



## IMPLICATIONS OF MOBILITY DATA FOR THE REGION

As is the case for most regional areas around Australia, both Naracoorte Lucindale and Tatiara are witnessing an outflow of young people, and inflows of older people. The region's aging demographic means that filling its workforce needs is an ongoing challenge. Both LGAs show high rates of churn of younger workers and especially those in low and semi-skilled occupations. Naracoorte in particular has seen a sizeable loss of the semi-skilled community and personal service workers. Given the high churn rates and the net loss of Australian residents in both LGAs, migration is a critical part of a sustainable future for this region.

This has already been recognised at the regional level. Each of the seven local Councils in the region have endorsed a growth strategy to attract and retain at least 2000 additional people by 2026.<sup>4</sup> An important component of the growth strategy is to invigorate the working age population, including developing a targeted migration strategy to support attraction and retention to the region.

An Action Plans has been developed which identifies as a priority the development of a migration program to attract new people into the region, the delivery of a workforce development plan informed by the identification of skills and labour shortages and the cultivation of awareness of the opportunities in the region. These are all identified as actions needed in order to work toward a comprehensive migration strategy.

In accordance with these identified action points, Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast (RDA LC) is actively involved in seeking to secure employees for the region's industries. RDA LC regularly participate in the 'Welcome to SA' sessions delivered by Immigration SA (part of the Department of Innovation and Skills), which take place in Adelaide for newly arrived State nominated skilled migrants. At these sessions, RDA LC inform the new arrivals of the opportunities and lifestyle of the Limestone Coast, hoping that they consider moving to the region before establishing themselves in the metro area. RDA LC provide details on current vacancies and competitive cost of living data, highlighting the lower cost of housing across the region. Although no longer funded to provide Career Services, RDA LC value the potential contribution that this cohort can offer to the region and promote, via their website, the skills of the migrants that are looking to move to the region. RDA LC also maintain a jobs board on their website, updating this daily with vacancies that have been advertised across the region. Attendees at the 'Welcome to SA' session are made aware of this service and of the weekly newsletter that promotes a regional job of the week. Furthermore RDA LC, although not resourced to provide a job matching service, works with employers and Immigration SA to issue job alerts to the recently arrived skilled migrants.

### RECOMMENDATION 1

The Limestone Coast Economic Development Group form a Migration Subcommittee involving key stakeholders and sector experts to look strategically at migrant attraction and retention issues at the regional level. It should take forward elements of the Growth Strategy and Action Plan and to ensure the implementation of report recommendations.

<sup>4</sup> Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy: Technical Report, RAI, LCLGA, Regional Development Australia, June 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy: Action Plan, RAI, LCLGA, Regional Development Australia, June 2018.

## MIGRANT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION: COMMON FACTORS

While access to adequate services is critical to the success and viability of regional migration, it is also worth recalling that the reasons why migrants may stay in a place also involves intangible factors, including a sense of community, of welcome and of belonging. While services, particularly those which seek to facilitate the entrance into a new community and provide inclusive community events are important to foster such sentiments, it is difficult to quantify their effect on these intangible concepts. In its *Toolkit Steps to Settlement Success*,<sup>6</sup> the Regional Australia Institute emphasises the importance of a welcoming community noting that *Making new residents feel welcome is an integral part of sustainable regional settlement.*<sup>7</sup>

This Toolkit outlines seven fundamental factors or “building blocks” which, through its research, RAI has identified as necessary for the successful and sustainable locally-led attraction and retention strategy. The factors are broadly applicable at a local, regional and State level. These are briefly:

1. Initiating a settlement strategy. In this step, local governments, businesses and the community should think about what they have to offer migrants and why migrants should relocate to that place. At the same time, there must be a clear reason for how and why the community would benefit from more migrants (e.g. labour shortages, population decline, and surplus infrastructure challenges). A vision, objectives and priority actions should be identified as well as key stakeholders, challenges and risks.
2. Organising the local community. This step recognises that community backing is essential for migration strategies to succeed. The community need and deserve information to help them support migration and community members can play a critical part in welcoming new arrivals.
3. Welcoming and hosting new migrants. This step recognises that the welcome extended to new arrivals and activities to ensure that they quickly feel part of an integrated community is an important part of ensuring that migration is sustainable and that migrants are inclined to stay.
4. Securing employment for new migrants. The fourth step recognises that employment is a compelling motivator for a migration strategy and a powerful incentive for migrants to move to regional areas. The Toolkit notes that *“The more that migrant workers are satisfied with employment and living conditions, the more inclined they are to tell friends and family living in metropolitan Australia about how great regional Australia is.”*
5. Securing housing for new migrants. Available housing stock is a significant barrier to the expansion of many regional migration strategies. State government can have an important role to play in addressing this issue.
6. Fostering community cohesion. This is a critically important step to ensure that the community remains cohesive and inclusive as it diversifies and grows. It calls for community development activities and positive action to ensure that there are activities and events designed to bring the community together.
7. Considering culture, customs and environments. This step seeks to ensure that both the existing community and new arrivals have the opportunity to become familiar with each others’ cultures

It is also worth recalling that there are some issues affecting retention which are outside the control of local actors. For example, members of the migrant community may be on temporary or bridging visas,

<sup>6</sup> Regional Australia Institute, *Steps To Settlement Success*, Canberra 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Regional Australia Institute, *Steps To Settlement Success*, Canberra 2019, at page 13.

and some are waiting for the outcome of an asylum application and are only allowed to remain in Australia as long as their visa allows.

## MIGRANT SERVICES

As part of developing a migration strategy for the Limestone Coast, this Report seeks to assess the services that are available to migrants in the region, recognising that the adequacy and accessibility of services impacts on liveability and the choice to live in regional Australia. In other words, like all other groups, migrants will generally choose to live where they can access needed services. Where these are not available in regional areas, this may affect the choice to move to, or stay in, such areas. The services considered include:

- Council services
- Migrant resource centre
- Employment and Centrelink
- Education
- Health
- Transportation
- Language and interpreting services
- Cultural and religious services
- Services for women migrants.

Housing in the Limestone Coast region has been the subject of many meetings and reports to date<sup>8</sup>, so will not be examined in depth in this report, notwithstanding the fact that the availability of housing directly impacts the viability of migrants moving to, and staying in, regional towns. Indeed, the lack of housing and/or difficulty in securing appropriate housing for migrants relocating to the Limestone Coast has been cited as a challenge to the achievement of its growth aim. All key informants in this project referred to the lack of housing as being a critical issue, and the two main employers in Naracoorte and Bordertown noted how lack of housing was hindering their goals for expansion.

It is also worth noting that Census data shows that both Naracoorte Lucindale and Tatiara have high rates of people who engage in volunteer work. Many of the conversation classes, driving classes and activities through the MRC are run by volunteers and some services would not be available to migrants without the assistance of volunteers. This strength should continue to be harnessed to host activities for new arrivals, but some focus could also be put on those members of the community who are not engaging with or actively supporting new arrivals. In many cases it may be that they don't know how to, or don't feel that they have the opportunity. This is why buddy systems and other initiatives to promote welcome and inclusiveness are included as recommendations in this report.

<sup>8</sup> See for example University of Adelaide Reports prepared by Parliamentary Interns 2019, and Melissa Fraser, et al *Naracoorte & Bordertown Housing Shortfalls: The Community Perspective* (Report, Community Action Project, 2019) and Dr Helen Feist et al, *Enabling Rural Settlement: A case study of the Limestone Coast*, APMRC.

## COUNCIL

Local Councils can play a key role in ensuring successful migrant integration across the region. Local government is the tier of government in Australia that is best placed to understand the needs, challenges and opportunities of their community and to facilitate a whole-of-community approach to successful migrant settlement.

The Tatiara Council has taken a proactive approach to migrant settlement, recently taking several steps to implement a community development approach to improve support and opportunities for migrants in the Tatiara. In 2018, the Council adopted its first *Migrant Community Action Plan* in conjunction with the largest local employer, JBS, and the Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC). It was updated in May 2019 for 2019-2020. It contains a set of objectives and an implementation plan to achieve these, with the broad aims of improving the migrant experience in Bordertown and to increase retention rates. Its objectives include building leadership within migrant communities, building linkages to the broader community, increasing the participation of migrants in sport and recreational activities, increasing the knowledge of migrants in areas such as finance, law and justice and taking action to retain migrants in the community long term. It is actively working with AMRC and local service providers to achieve these objectives. For example, a new Migrant Association has been formed to ensure that migrant voices are being heard in policy planning. This also supports the principle of fostering leadership and participation among the migrant communities living in Tatiara.

Further, the Council has recently established a part-time Community Development Officer position which, in the Council structure, is noted as “Community Development Officer (Migration)”. The Community Development Officer is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the *Migrant Community Action Plan*.

An important step was taken by Council in October 2019 when it joined the Welcoming Cities network. This can be viewed as an explicit recognition by the Council of the importance it places on fostering cultural diversity and inclusion in Tatiara.

Tatiara Council is active, involved and committed to improving the migrant experience with its region and to fostering social cohesion within its community. The newly established Migrant Association is potentially an important voice for the migrant community which can provide ongoing input and feedback in relation to Council actions. The Council should be careful to ensure that the Association allows for a broad diversity of representation. It should also be mindful that feedback from the local community on its community development work is important too and it should ensure that there are mechanisms for obtaining this. The Community Action Plan sets objectives and their achievement should be reviewed on a regular basis.

The Naracoorte Lucindale Council has taken a less active role in migrant issues; however, it too has signed on to the Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy, and recognises the need for, and importance of, migration into its community. Its main contribution to fostering migrant inclusion is organising cultural events such as Harmony Day which it cites as a well-attended and popular annual event. It also provided funding for a soccer carnival, involving the migrant communities.

The Council could assess whether taking an increased or leadership role in ensuring an improved migrant experience is needed, looking to the more proactive role being taken by Tatiara. It should consider including a community development position in its structure, specifically looking at ways to improve the

migrant experience and foster social cohesion within its district. The Council should also consider the support that can be offered by joining the Welcoming Cities network.

#### RECOMMENDATION 2

Naracoorte Lucindale Council should consider ways to more actively support migrant integration and social cohesion in Naracoorte. This may include creating a Community Development Officer position and joining the Welcoming Cities network.

#### RECOMMENDATION 3

An event or workshop on migration including Councillors from both Councils should be held, with an independent facilitator, to discuss successful settlement, explore additional ways for the Council to be involved as leaders, share knowledge and compare approaches and best practice.

### MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRES

The Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC) provides settlement and community services to refugees and migrants, particularly new arrivals, throughout South Australia. It has branches in both Bordertown and Naracoorte.

The MRC in Bordertown employs a part-time case worker position. Currently, the incumbent is based in Murray Bridge and travels to Bordertown for 2 days per week. Services provided include the following:

- Provision of Humanitarian Settlement Program and Settlement Engagement and Transition Support settlement programmes
- Case management for people not fitting the criteria for official settlement programs (TPV, SHEV, post five-year settlement, etc.)
- Volunteer run English classes
- Education sessions, including school information sessions for new parents, RAA road safety quiz, waste management, Australian laws and regulations
- Swim and Survive program for migrants
- Harmony Day events
- Culture specific celebrations – Naruz, Eid, welcome parties etc.
- Promoting integration through sporting clubs and various community events
- Music workshops and celebrations
- Assisting staff induction at major employer
- Supporting service providers - medical clinic, schools, post office etc. care for the migrant community

The funding of the MRC is strictly limited and has recently been reduced to the point where it is only able to operate two days per week. This means that, in effect, a significant part of its valuable work is done “over and above” the scope of the funded position. Dedicated staff have earned the MRC a reportedly excellent reputation and have increased the reliance that the migrant community and employers have on its work. The AMRC 2019 Annual Report notes that 1,740 people used the centre that year for regular education sessions, conversational English classes and cultural gatherings<sup>9</sup>. To a large extent however, particularly given the limited resources, its work is primarily providing advice and assistance as migrants

<sup>9</sup> Australian Migrant Resource Centre Annual Report Jan-Dec 2019, AMRC, Adelaide.

walk through the door. If funding allowed, the MRC case worker reports that he would seek to build the capacity of the migrant community to be more self-sufficient and able to help newcomers to their ethnic community. There is also a desire for the MRC to be able to hold information sessions on issues such as services, culture and required documentation as well as to provide support for social enterprises. Currently however, there is little available funding for these more proactive strategies, community development and capacity building activities.

The Tatiara Council is taking on more of the community development work and has recently established a Community Development Officer position to build on the MRC work with more strategic and planned community building activities.

The Tatiara Council reports having a close relationship with the Bordertown MRC and has sought to include the MRC as a key partner in the achievement of Tatiara's Migrant Community Action Plan.

In Naracoorte, the Migrant Resource Centre is staffed by one part-time (2 days per week) case manager. Most of the migrants in Naracoorte who seek assistance through the MRC do not have specific funding streams meaning that the funding is extremely limited. Therefore, the opportunity for community development activities is also very limited. Again, most of the work of the staff member is assisting clients with their queries and providing immediate assistance and case work, particularly to more vulnerable clients. Common queries often involve issues related to Centrelink, housing, Workcover etc. The Centre also organises conversational English classes once per week, run by volunteers from the Naracoorte local community and it publicises a network of employers to assist clients in finding job opportunities. In 2019, AMRC reports that 2200 people used the Naracoorte MRC, including for weekly conversational English classes, health education sessions, focus groups, consultations, weekly ethnic schooling sessions and cultural and social activities.<sup>10</sup> The MRC, until recently, also was able to provide an interfaith prayer space. Moving premises means that there is no longer a prayer space in Naracoorte that Muslims can use.

There is limited connection between the MRC and the town's main employer, the Teys meatworks, despite the fact that Teys employs a significant number of migrant workers. There is also limited connection between the Council and the Naracoorte MRC.

While both MRCs strive to assist any migrant who walks in, they are funded primarily to assist humanitarian entrants and not funded to provide settlement assistance to skilled migrants or their families, Pacific labourers and others who move to the region for work. Therefore, much of the settlement assistance needed by any newcomer falls on the employer and/or is simply not systematically provided and/or provides additional strain to the stretched resources of the MRCs.

The AMRC also seeks to ensure coordination among service providers, agencies and main employers involved in migrant settlement in both Bordertown and Naracoorte by facilitating regular meetings. The Connecting Settlement and Community Services network provide an opportunity to share information and updates, discuss challenges and brainstorm solutions and new initiatives. It provides a valuable opportunity for local stakeholders to coordinate at an operational and practical level.

While the MRCs in Naracoorte and Bordertown clearly provide critical and necessary services for migrants, particularly for new arrivals, the towns both now have established migrant communities. It is

<sup>10</sup> *Australian Migrant Resource Centre Annual Report Jan-Dec 2019*, AMRC, Adelaide.

timely to place additional emphasis on community development activities and to aim for more strategic service provision rather than remaining reactive. To enhance the sense that migrants are now part of the fabric of the community, it may be useful to include the MRC within a broader “community house” open to all members of the community while still providing needed and specialised assistance to migrants. Having a more community-focused, inclusive centre would lessen the sense that there are separate communities, or special provisions for migrants, and seek to include newcomers as parts of a diverse yet cohesive community.

#### RECOMMENDATION 4

Consideration should be given to developing a staffed Community or Neighbourhood Centre in both Bordertown and Naracoorte, which includes the Migrant Resource Centre, where any member of the community can go to take classes run by volunteers, get assistance or advice with paperwork, referrals to government services and other service providers and be part of community activities. While continuing to provide necessary specialised services to migrants this will ensure connection with the wider community allowing further opportunities for integration.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5

The Naracoorte Lucindale Council, the Migrant Resource Centre and community members should meet to identify a new interfaith prayer space. This could be done through the Connecting Settlement and Community Services network meetings.

## EMPLOYMENT

As noted, the RDA Limestone Coast publicises the skills of migrants who are looking for work in the region on a webpage, and the Naracoorte MRC publicises information about employers. Further, the RDA attends employment forums in Adelaide for newly arrived skilled migrants to provide information about the opportunities in the region. There is however no “job matching” service. From its work around Australia, RAI has frequently noted the gap between available jobs in rural and regional locations and migrants in cities who are unaware of them. The Limestone Coast Local Government Association has noted that:

*There currently appears to be limited systems/processes in place that links migrant workers with regional & rural employers, nor does there appear to be a system in place that supports migration from capital cities. Support for more locally led efforts across regional and rural Australia is a key to the population and economic growth of regional communities.<sup>11</sup>*

As noted above, there is no funded settlement support for skilled migrants arriving into the region’s towns. While Immigration SA holds monthly information forums in Adelaide for newly arrived migrants, there is no consistent practical assistance provided “on-the ground”. This means that providing assistance with administrative formalities, documentation, registrations, housing, schooling etc, often fall to the employer creating both a burden on employers as well as an inconsistent migrant experience for migrants.

The main employer in Bordertown is JBS, a meat processing facility which employs 490 workers, 72% of whom are migrants, with over 30 nationalities represented. While most of its employees have come to

<sup>11</sup> Limestone Coast Local Government Association, written submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration’s Inquiry into Regional Migration, 16 October 2019.

the region as single men or men without their families, Bordertown is now seeing family reunifications with Afghani women and children arriving from their home country to be reunited with their husbands/fathers.

Recognising that migrants need more than simply a job to want to stay in a regional town, JBS has taken the lead to ensure that its workers are receiving the support and assistance that they may require to feel welcomed and to navigate life in a small regional town. The cooperation between JBS, the Council and the Bordertown Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) is unique and is an excellent example of cooperation which benefits the migrant employees. These three stakeholders meet approximately every six weeks and, until recently, both the Council and JBS financially supported a case worker position at the MRC. That has led to the development of the newly established Community Development Officer, which sits within the Council. The MRC contributes to the induction sessions for new workers at the JBS meat processing facility. The MRC has also assisted with administrative/documentation needs of the migrants and provided support to migrant families.

The JBS management acknowledges the importance of the MRC providing settlement assistance and cultural activities as well as the time-consuming work of assisting with documentation. JBS considers that the work of the MRC has directly contributed to the retention of workers. JBS works with a labour recruitment company who has hired an Afghan migrant to represent the company onsite at JBS and who is available to assist with any workplace issues or problems for migrant workers. Induction at JBS includes a welcome pack which includes information on rental opportunities, a service directory, information on community events and the contacts of the MRC. JBS has shown its commitment to improving the migrant experience at its workplace and within Bordertown and has developed strong partnerships to do this. This has been reflected in a decrease in labour turnover.

The main employer of migrants in Naracoorte is Teys, another meat processing facility. It employs almost 500 people at the Naracoorte plant, some 50% of whom are migrants with 29 nationalities represented. Teys recognises that migrant labour is critical to the viability of its business. The management of Teys has publicly affirmed that:

*Migrant labour has been essential for the economic viability of the Teys plant at Naracoorte and as a result support the employment of many Australians in that area of South Australia. Without it the plant could not operate.<sup>12</sup>*

Teys has also stated that the chronic shortage of local labour has impeded its plans to expand the business. It notes a high turnover of staff, which it is trying to tackle. Teys in Naracoorte works with a labour hire company who is responsible for attracting and contracting new staff. Increasingly, Teys is looking to source employees through the Pacific Labour Facility and anticipates hiring another 100 people to expand the business. This means that it is mainly single people who are coming to live and work in Naracoorte, who will not be permanently staying.

Teys does not maintain a relationship with the Naracoorte MRC and the MRC is not involved in induction for new migrant staff at the facility. There also does not seem to be regular communication with the Council in relation to bringing newcomers into the town and the related issues. Teys Human Resources

<sup>12</sup> "Teys Australia Submission: Inquiry into the economic contribution of migration to South Australia", 29 March 2019, Submission to the South Australia Economic and Finance Committee's Inquiry.

noted that sponsoring skilled migrants to obtain permanent residence is both costly and risky, as once they have permanent residence migrants may leave the meatworks.

Also in the Naracoorte area, migrants are employed in seasonal work on vegetable farms and in vineyards. It means that these migrants are unemployed for a significant part of the year, some seasonal work being only 3 or 4 months of the year. One Afghani migrant has started a labour hire business, supplying Afghan migrant workers to agricultural employers. Anecdotally, this has had the effect of other nationalities feeling “squeezed out” of the employment market. Another Afghani migrant has started a shop in Naracoorte, servicing the Afghan and migrant population with imported groceries.

In the town of Keith, industry is predominantly lucerne and grain production and livestock grazing as well as olive processing. One employer which focuses on timber noted that it was constantly advertising positions and had a number of vacancies at any given time. While open to sponsoring migrants, it has not yet considered seeking out migrant labour, with the exception of “backpackers” on working holiday visas.

Employment and job availability play a significant role in attracting migrants to regional areas. For many non-humanitarian migrants, it may fall to the employer to assist with settling newcomers and their families into the local community. Where they do not take on this role, migrants may never successfully settle and/or communities may become fragmented. Despite their important role, there is little if any support for employers of migrant workers to help them understand settlement or cultural issues. There are few available tools for employers to draw on to know how to best support a migrant workforce in regional Australia.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

To develop an online job-matching mechanism, contact should be made with enterprises who have started work on developing online tools, specifically designed to match migrants and refugees with jobs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

The main employers of migrants in the region, including the meatworks in Murray Bridge, should be invited to attend a forum on best practices in migrant attraction and retention in regional employment. This forum could be held in the context of the furtherance of a migration strategy and could be an opportunity to showcase some best practice from around the country in relation to how to support the migrant experience in the workplace, and thereby improve job satisfaction and retention. It can also be an opportunity for employers to consider what support and information they may need and where they can collaborate. It should be facilitated by an independent expert or organization and include the relevant local business associations and Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast.

## **FURTHER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS**

The difficulty in accessing tertiary and further education is frequently cited as a reason for which migrants do not relocate to regional areas or choose to relocate back to capital cities. It also means that many young Australians leave regional areas.

Anecdotal evidence points to the lack of tertiary options being the reason that, of the 9 Afghan families who joined their husband/father in Bordertown in recent years, only 5 chose to stay and the others went

to Adelaide. There have also been families in Naracoorte who have chosen to leave the region for their children's education.

The Naracoorte TAFE campus closed in 2018. There is a registered training provider in Naracoorte which offers courses in early childhood education, support work and business as well as some short courses. Some Afghan migrant women in Naracoorte attended computer classes which ran for one session per week for six weeks but suggested that the training was too short and did not lead to any further training or work options.

However, for those employed at the meatworks, it is possible to obtain a Certificate II and III in meat processing through TAFE SA.

An interesting model in this regard is the River Murray Study Hub in nearby Murray Bridge. It has been established to provide opportunities for regional students to pursue tertiary and VET studies without having to relocate to metropolitan areas. The local government was successful in obtaining grant funding from the Federal Department of Education and Training to roll out the Study Hub, offering online and mix mode courses from CQUniversity Australia, Flinders University and TAFE SA. This initiative should be monitored by the Limestone Coast councils, to determine whether the model is successful and potentially of benefit to increase retention of young people.

Apprenticeship opportunities in the region are also limited, however there is some work being done to try to provide migrant children with employment pathways. For example, an early childhood graduate with a migrant background recently obtained a training placement at the Bordertown creche. Further, AMRC has obtained funding for a pilot project to encourage career opportunities in agriculture by providing work experience and training for youth from migrant and refugee backgrounds. This allowed the Bordertown MRC and the Bordertown High School to work together to provide an excursion for students to visit a number of agricultural-based businesses to increase their understanding of the industry and the career opportunities it can provide. Similarly, in Naracoorte the high school arranged for migrant students to have work placements in a restaurant owned by an Afghan migrant.

Migrants however noted that employers want English skills and Australian experience, making it difficult to find work particularly with the limited English language courses and assistance available in the region.

There is no local support mechanism or training specifically for migrants who are interested in starting their own businesses, and the number who have done so in Naracoorte, Bordertown and even in Mt Gambier, is relatively small. Migrant business owners make a significant contribution to the economy. The report "Migrant Small Business Report" was released in 2018 by the insurance company CGU. Its main findings were:

- One-third of Australia's small businesses are owned by migrants.
- Eight in 10 (83%) migrant business owners started their first business venture after moving to Australia.
- Nearly one quarter of migrant business owners started their business to try out an innovative or new idea (23% compared to 16% of non-migrant businesses).
- One in two migrant business owners are aiming to generate higher revenue in the next five years (47% compared to 38% of non-migrant businesses).

- A quarter of migrant business owners are training young people in the community (25% compared to 19% of non-migrant businesses).
- One in three migrant business owners are planning on growing their business with new hires (33% compared to 25% of non-migrant businesses).<sup>13</sup>

However, a study by RAI<sup>14</sup> found that migrant business owners typically face greater barriers than their non-migrant counterparts. These barriers or challenges can include understanding the country's culture, institutional environment and language. Further, barriers to migrant business ownership may stem from personal characteristics (e.g., language difficulties), a lack of familiarity with the local labour market, a limited understanding of the regulatory environment, and a lack of awareness of available support (e.g., training programs). Research also shows that a key issue found affecting migrant entrepreneurship is the lack of business education. RAI found that:

*Regional business owners can have a positive influence on regional development, especially in terms of job creation. While regional conditions may influence business start-up rates, the local social and economic environment is critical for fostering and supporting a regional business mentality.*

By not actively supporting the establishment of migrant businesses, the Limestone Coast region is potentially missing out on an important contribution to the economy as well as potential innovation. The 2019 South Australian Migrant Small Business Expo, held in Adelaide, could be a good model to recreate locally on a smaller scale to encourage migrants to consider business and entrepreneurial activities.

#### RECOMMENDATION 8

It is recommended that the Migration Subcommittee monitor the impact of the River Murray Study Hub to determine if it contributes to increasing retention of young people and, if so, consider a feasibility study of establishing a similar hub in the Limestone Coast.

#### RECOMMENDATION 9

It is recommended to organise a migrant small business expo in Naracoorte and Bordertown, to explain what support is available for migrants who are interested in starting a business. A business mentoring model, matching local business owners to migrant entrepreneurs could also be considered. The Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast could take the lead.

## SCHOOLING

Schools are available and are providing a welcoming environment for migrant children, with staff going over and above their duties to ensure that migrant children are included and to ensure good communication with parents. The children of temporary skilled migrants, depending on their visa class, are generally full fee-paying students.

<sup>13</sup> CGU, *Migrant Small Business Report*, 2018. Available at: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2018/01/apo-nid128756-1240451.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Chen, L.; Sinnewe, E.; and Kortt, M. (2018). Evidence of Migrant Business Ownership and Entrepreneurship in Regions. Canberra: Regional Australia Institute.

One of the primary schools in Naracoorte and the high school in Bordertown both have a significant number of migrant students and both say that finding English language teachers is the biggest challenge. This lack of available English language support affects both the students' ability to settle into the school and integrate as well as potentially limiting their future pathways.

The Naracoorte primary school staff noted that they are not informed in advance by Teys when new migrant families are expected to arrive and that there is limited coordination also with the MRC. This potentially makes planning for new arrivals and their needs more difficult than it might otherwise be. The principal assists newcomers with the enrolment process and the school finance officer often drives new families to Mt Gambier to attend Centrelink for necessary paperwork etc. The school staff also noted that the waiting times for STTARs torture and trauma counselling was too long, and some children needed earlier intervention. The staff at the high school in Bordertown noted that while there are few behavioural issues due to the migrant students, the student body is quite divided between migrant and non-migrant, with few interactions between the groups. This may be due to lack of English skills of the migrant children. The Bordertown MRC assists the high school parents with enrolments and other paperwork.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 10**

A mechanism should be established where employers communicate to the Migrant Resource Centres, schools and Council about new migrant employees with families, to ensure there is sufficient support and welcome plans in place, ideally before they arrive. This could assist the school with teacher and class planning, as well as ensure that there is contact with the MRC.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 11**

A buddy system between new family arrivals and local families could be trialled by the schools, to promote welcome and cross-cultural integration, thereby promoting social cohesion.

### **CENTRELINK AND WORK RIGHTS ISSUES**

There are no Centrelink offices in either Bordertown, Naracoorte or Keith, however there are agents in each town. The Federal Department "Services Australia" has recently (re-) created a regional position based in Mt Gambier who will conduct outreach to other towns in Limestone Coast. This should be helpful for migrants living in those towns to understand correct allowances and to be supported when looking for work. Having a Centrelink officer available to explain and guide people through the system will presumably improve the migrant experience in those areas. The frequency of outreach visits and/or whether group information forums will be held had not yet been confirmed at the time of writing.

The Naracoorte MRC and STARRS have had migrants raising issues of Workcover and workers' rights, with some concerned that their rights and entitlements are not being respected. It is likely that some vineyards pay their workers in cash and that many workers are not aware of their industrial rights. Migrant workers, particularly those seeking permanent residence and/or more secure contracts, do not feel that they have an advocate in the workplace. Their lack of English skills, and the lack of access to learn English, also impacts on their knowledge of the workplace and the confidence to assert their rights.

There is however a community justice legal centre which operates outreach from Mt Gambier and appointments are available one day per month in Naracoorte and bi-monthly in Bordertown.

### RECOMMENDATION 12

Information forums on worker entitlements, contractual provisions and Workcover should be held in Naracoorte and Bordertown regularly, ideally in the evening or weekend when workers can attend. This could be hosted by the community legal centre or another independent agency.

## HEALTH SERVICES

Bordertown, Naracoorte and Keith all have small hospitals as well as community health clinics and private medical clinics. In June 2019, research was undertaken by Flinders University and the Country South Australia Primary Health Network on *“Improving Access and Utilisation of Health Services Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations in South and East Region of Country SA Primary Health Network”*.<sup>15</sup> There has also been a scoping study conducted by SA Health’s Health Performance Council on *“Issues in Health Care in South Australia for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds”*.

The findings and recommendations of each remain valid and many of the issues were reinforced during the research for the current report. Migrants were concerned about waiting periods to access a medical appointment, both for GPs and specialists. The lack of bulk billing clinics in Naracoorte also imposed a financial burden on migrants. While telephone interpreting was reported to work well in medical appointments, it was pointed out that reception staff had no access to interpreting services which was frequently problematic. There was also recognition that it was not always possible to have a female interpreter over the telephone interpreting service. Afghan migrant women particularly found this an impediment to accessing health services.

The lack of translated materials was also raised as an issue, potentially impacting on a patient’s understanding and therefore on their ability to provide informed consent. It was noted that while some translated materials exist, there are now new communities living in the region and new language needs.

Staff at the medical centre at Naracoorte noted that they rely on overseas doctors, nearly all of whom leave to work in Adelaide or other capital cities. The Naracoorte medical centre does not have a relationship with the MRC. This is different in Bordertown, where the medical centre staff reportedly relied on the MRC and noted how important its work was for the well-being of its clients.

Transport to get to appointments was also noted as an issue. There are services including the Red Cross which provide patient transport but there was some indication that migrants were not fully aware of such services or how to access them.

Torture and trauma counselling is provided through the Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS). One counsellor is located in Mt Gambier and travels to both Naracoorte and Bordertown. He notes that the lag in family reunification is a major issue which affects the mental health of many of the refugees in the region and exacerbates their trauma. The schools noted that the

<sup>15</sup> A/Prof Lillian Mwanri, Improving health service access and utilisation amongst Culturally and Linguistically and Diverse (CALD) populations living in South & East region Country SA PHN, Project No. 8187, November 2018.

waiting list to access the STTARs counsellor is too long and that parents often do not have an understanding of mental health issues which can affect children.

The Tatiara Council supports a Men's Shed initiative in Bordertown and in Keith and is seeking to assist the delivery of mental health programs in the Tatiara.

Many of the shortfalls in the health sector in relation to migrant health care have been acknowledged in previous reports, as mentioned above. A lack of clear follow-up and, importantly, the assumption of responsibility for following up and implementing the recommendations seems to be an issue. Tasking a local group to continue to advocate for the recommendations, forge partnerships and implement those recommendations which can be done at the local level may assist in this regard.

### RECOMMENDATION 13

A Migrant Health Subcommittee or Working Group should be established under the Limestone Coast Local Health Network to look at ways to move forward with some of the recommendations made in previous health-related inquiries and studies relating to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Its terms of reference may include establishing or strengthening relationships with health service providers in Victoria and other jurisdictions and seeking to use their translated materials and other expertise as well as continuing to advocate for the region at the State and Federal levels.

## TRANSPORTATION

Across the nation, the lack of public transport is frequently cited as a difficulty of living in regional Australia and it is also the case in the Limestone Coast. It is necessary to be able to drive and to own or have access to a car to be able to travel, including to and from work, and this can pose a difficulty for migrants, particularly migrant women with few English skills. Volunteers from Rotary and Lions have supported at least one woman in Naracoorte to complete her learning hours and apply for her licence.

The Bordertown MRC partnered with the Royal Automobile Association in February 2020 to deliver an information session on road safety to participants of Afghan, Bhutanese, Burmese, Congolese, Filipino, Pakistani and Liberian background. The aim was to increase understanding of Australian road rules, increase confidence regarding driving, increase awareness and engagement with road safety, promote understanding of the process of applying for a driver's licence and increase knowledge on the benefits of driving.

The Tatiara Council, acknowledging the difficulties with public transport, have purchased and funded a Red Cross vehicle to allow access by the community to specialist health appointments. It is also seeking, according to its latest *Health and Well-being Action Plan*<sup>16</sup> (still in draft) to provide support to volunteer driver programs.

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.tatiara.sa.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0024/443733/Draft-for-Consultation-January-2020.pdf](https://www.tatiara.sa.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0024/443733/Draft-for-Consultation-January-2020.pdf)

#### RECOMMENDATION 14

All Limestone Coast Councils, working within the Economic Development Group, should work together to brainstorm solutions to transport in the region, including identifying sources of funding and aiming for collaborative efforts for vehicle purchase and region-wide use.

#### RECOMMENDATION 15

Naracoorte Lucindale and Tatiara Councils should continue to determine ways to support migrants to obtain their drivers licence.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND INTERPRETING

Proficiency in English is a major factor in how well migrants can form social connections and become involved in their new community. Lack of confidence in English proficiency may deter new migrants from engaging in community activities and events which, in turn, can lead to isolation, depression and eventual departure. (RAI, Steps to Settlement Success)

The lack of formal English language courses in Naracoorte, Keith and Bordertown is consistently cited as a major problem by both migrants and service providers, impacting the ability of migrants to integrate and thrive within their communities. There is no provider of the funded Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) in any of the towns, even though many of the migrants living there would be eligible for this programme. The difficulty in getting accredited TESOL teachers is an issue, as is finding the right time for classes given that many of the migrants work long shifts. Various efforts have been made in the past to bring an AMEP teacher to the region, to organise distance learning etc, but none have been sustained. Getting the commitment of a minimum number of students a class is necessary for a teacher to conduct regular classes and, as mentioned, timing is difficult to coordinate.

Difficulties in relation to the AMEP model are well-acknowledged and widely documented.<sup>17</sup> It was recently announced that new ways of delivering the tuition would be explored by the Federal Government, including trials on language training in the workplace.<sup>18</sup>

As mentioned above, schools in the region have difficulty finding ESL teachers and running sufficient classes. It was also noted that people who migrate to Australia as teenagers with little or no English are often struggling to learn English at school and are finishing school with low levels of English, which affects their future prospects as well as their ability to integrate well into Australia.

Conversation classes are run once a week by volunteers in Naracoorte, mainly for women (spouses who are at home during the day). In Bordertown, there are also conversational English classes organised by the MRC and the Community Development Officer is looking to make classes more broadly available through the Library.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Peter Shergold, Kerrin Benson and Margret Piper, *Investing in Refugees Investing in Australia*, The findings of a Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia", Australian Government, February 2019.

<sup>18</sup> See <https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/davidcoleman/Pages/address-menzies-research-centre-20200207.aspx>

English language in the workplace courses are offered by some employers in Canada. Courses are designed to be flexible, taking into account the employer's production needs. Interestingly, JBS has a branch in Alberta, Canada which provides English as a second language courses onsite for its migrant workers. Certified language teachers provide temporary migrant workers two hours of English language per day, four days/week. The workers are unpaid during the course time but the English school is at the plant and the courses are free. It is mandatory for the migrant workers to participate if they need to improve their language skills.

#### RECOMMENDATION 16

The Migration Subcommittee (see Recommendation 1) should seek to determine innovative models for strengthening English language skills of migrants. Initially, a strategy for English classes for older high school and post-high school aged young migrants should be considered. Models which include some online courses combined with less frequent face-to-face tuition could be explored. Having local volunteer buddies of the same age to spend an hour a week with them to discuss topics of interest, for example while walking or over coffee, could also be explored. Volunteers could then achieve a certificate or other recognition from the Council. This may also promote integration and new friendships.

#### RECOMMENDATION 17

The Migrant Subcommittee or Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast should determine the need for and feasibility of offering English in the workplace courses at the main meatworks in Naracoorte Lucindale and Tatiara. Funding sources should be explored to cover or co-fund costs.

## CULTURAL, SPORTING AND RELIGIOUS

Encouraging new residents to be part of organising local events and festivals that recognise and value their traditions will make them feel welcomed as part of their new community, as well as part of the local decision-making process. (RAI, Steps to Settlement Success)

Both Tatiara and Naracoorte Lucindale Council invest in cultural events to promote community cohesion and to celebrate diversity. Both have successful celebrations such as Harmony Day which involves the schools, the MRC and employers as well as the broader community. The MRCs organise a number of other cultural days including for Eid. Such celebrations are important to deepen cross-cultural understanding.

Innovative art projects have also been commissioned to celebrate the diversity of the region. Bordertown's "This is a Border town" was a 12-month artist residency working with new arrivals as well as older men and young people. The publication following the year of exhibitions and events showcases many poignant stories of the migrant experience. Other endeavours have been taken in the region including an ethnic fashion event in Naracoorte.

The promotion of culture and arts can be an important means of respecting and celebrating diversity and can showcase the wealth that other cultures can bring to Australia. It can also serve to deepen cross-cultural understanding.

Sporting and other recreational opportunities are also important avenues for new migrants to engage in community life. The support of the Lucindale Naracoorte Council made the inaugural Multicultural Soccer Carnival a popular and successful event. Soccer is also popular in Bordertown and funding was secured

to get lights on the oval, to allow playing at night. This is important for workers who are at the meat works or other employment all day. The Community Development Officer at Tatiara noted however that often new arrivals lack confidence and need personal support to be able to approach clubs and join in. This is not support that is readily available.

Neither Tatiara nor Naracoorte Lucindale have a mosque and the inability of the Naracoorte MRC to continue to host a prayer space is a significant loss of amenity for its Muslim population.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 18**

Sporting clubs and other cultural and recreational groups should present at the MRC to inform new arrivals about the opportunities and to make them feel welcome. This could also be an opportunity to sign up new participants.

### **SERVICES FOR WOMEN**

Most of the women migrants have come to the region as spouses/daughters of the primary migrant or refugee. This means that many of them are at home during the day. Both Naracoorte MRC and Bordertown MRC and Tatiara Council have put on English classes and other classes such as swimming and sewing, particularly to target this group. Nevertheless, there were reports of isolation among these women, with most having limited English language skills, no ability to drive and some humanitarian entrants suffering from trauma.

In 2019, the Bordertown MRC was involved in consultations with migrant and refugee women as part of the “Ask Maria” project by the Women’s Legal Service SA (WLSSA). Participants gained knowledge on women’s rights, the legal system and available support services. The Legal Service is developing an online interactive resource for women and children in regional South Australia. While this is an excellent initiative, some consideration needs to be given to how many migrant women have participated in such consultations and how many, and who, are not getting the support that they may need.

Pockets of isolation are anathema to a socially cohesive and inclusive community and particular effort should be made to ensure that no part of the migrant community is disengaged or not receiving needed support. Consultations such as the one organised by WLSSA should be repeated at regular intervals and migrant communities supported to ensure that their community members are connected with service providers as needed. It needs to be noted that men experience isolation too. It has been reported in Bordertown that some men, who are worried about their families back home, feel that they cannot go out to socialise or enjoy themselves. Ensuring that other community members, and the MRC, are aware of these cases and make efforts to reduce their isolation is important.

New Zealand has successfully piloted a “Welcoming Communities” initiative, designed to increase the welcome of new arrivals by involving the local community and to foster social cohesion. Under this programme, local councils have designed a number of innovative and practical strategies to reduce isolation, for example “Meet Your Street” which involves a series of neighbourhood barbeques. These could be explored in Naracoorte, Keith and Bordertown as low-cost, practical strategies to reduce isolation and increase connectedness.

Another issue that was raised, and is a commonly reported issue in many communities, was the lack of emergency accommodation for family violence cases.

#### RECOMMENDATION 19

The Councils should seek to minimise any social isolation by ensuring that neighbours and community members are encouraged to be welcoming and inclusive through local neighbourhood initiatives.

## SUCCESS STORIES OF LOCALLY-LED MIGRATION INITIATIVES

Around Australia and in other countries, particularly Canada and New Zealand, there are examples of successful locally-led migration strategies which have revitalised towns, communities and businesses in regional areas. The below gives some examples of successful locally-led migration initiatives in towns of comparable size to Bordertown, Keith and Naracoorte, highlighting the particular factors for success in each town.

### NHILL, VICTORIA, POPULATION 2184

One of the most renowned settlement success stories in the region is Nhill, a town in Victoria near the border of South Australia of a similar size to Bordertown. Nhill was facing the same issues as those of towns in the Limestone Coast, namely a declining working-age population, low unemployment and a significant local business which could not source adequate workforce. Due to the need of one poultry farm, Luv-a-Duck to expand and source additional workforce, a locally-driven migration strategy was initiated by the General Manager, John Millington, in 2009. It has grown to see nearly 260 Karen refugees settled there. A comprehensive evaluation of the economic and social impact of Karen resettlement in Nhill was conducted in 2015 by AMES and Deloitte Access Economics<sup>19</sup>. It identified the contributing factors of the success of Nhill to include the following:

- strong leadership in the host community
- a host community which is well prepared for the new settlers
- initial accommodation for the new arrivals
- support for the new families
- management of the degree and complexity of ‘cultural adjustment’ on both sides
- strong leadership in the settling community
- potential settlers prepared for the new environment

One key lesson identified by RAI in its research for the Toolkit *Steps to Settlement Success* was the availability of temporary accommodation. Nhill had a “transit house” where new migrants coming for work could spend some time before finding a permanent place to live.

A key player in the success of settlement of the Karen newcomers was the Nhill Neighbourhood House Learning Centre, a neighbourhood house which took on the role of settlement service provider, ensuring support for new arrivals, welcome activities and community activities. It sought to ensure that adult migrants weren’t isolated but were able to engage and participate in social and cultural activities.

<sup>19</sup> Small Towns Big Returns Economic and Social Impact of the Karen Resettlement in Nhill, AMES, Deloitte Access Economics, March 2015.

Community volunteers also encouraged newcomers to acquire their own car and drivers' licences. The Learning Centre had a mentoring program staffed by volunteers from the community.

John Millington is of the view that a key component to the success of the initiative was that partners and children of the workers had to be supported, engaged and connected to the community “*or the whole thing would fall over*”.<sup>20</sup>

An innovative and successful program that is led by the Learning Centre is the Wimmera CALD Industry Partnership which supports both migrants and their employers. It helps employers to develop effective training strategies for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) employees through a regular visiting service at the workplace to address employment support needs. This is certainly a program which could be recreated in the Limestone Coast, particularly with some of the smaller to medium employers who hire migrants.

## **DALWALLINU SHIRE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, POPULATION 1429**

Another town with a successful locally-led migration strategy is Dalwallinu in Western Australia. It has a comparable population to Keith. As is the case with many other regional towns, it was facing a declining population and under-utilisation of infrastructure such as schools and recreational facilities. A primary producer with more than 37 years' experience managing a farming enterprise, Stuart McAlpine initiated a migration strategy to attract and retain new residents to the district. He prepared a proposal and presented it to the Council, and a “Regional Repopulation Advisory Committee” was formed.

Having a steering committee or working group to drive migration outcomes is one of the recommendations in RAI's Toolkit Steps to Settlement Success. Steering committees ensure that key stakeholders are involved in the process and work collaboratively to share learnings and responsibilities.

The Council also appointed an Economic Development Officer who developed initiatives to support new residents and their employers and to encourage migrants to bring their families to resettle. A variety of initiatives such as English classes, community events and new resident welcome packs were provided to support new and existing residents. A part-time Community Liaison Officer was also employed to ensure the successful integration of the new residents into the community. The population of the Shire has grown by nearly 15% with 70 new citizenships since 2011. As a result of the population increase, local residents contend that the Shire has become an increasingly attractive place to live, with more teachers for the school and sporting team rejuvenated.

Interestingly, one of the lessons suggested by the steering committee was to use the term “new residents” rather than migrants, as it placed a more welcoming tone for the community and made no cultural disparity.

The importance of not assuming cultural knowledge, needs and wants was another lesson. Dalwallinu learnt that it has to consult with new residents about their wants, for example for housing, rather than make assumptions. It also recognised how important it is for new residents to engage and fully participate in activities, events and gatherings held in the town, so that they make social connections with existing residents.

<sup>20</sup> Laurie Nowell, *Refugee Stories: In Their Own Words*, December 2018

The community are now working on a new project, the Regional Regeneration Project, aimed at promoting land, economic and community regeneration. It is designed to develop an agri-food business with an associated new resident attraction and housing project. This project is potentially replicable in the Limestone Coast and other areas as a model for regenerative agricultural diversification, employment generation and population attraction and retention.

## HAMILTON, VICTORIA, POPULATION 9974

Hamilton, located in south-western Victoria, is slightly larger than Naracoorte in terms of population. It launched the Great South Coast Economic Migration Project in 2017 aiming to assist migrants, originally from Africa, to relocate from metropolitan areas to South-West Victoria. The Project was established under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the Southern Grampians Shire Council with Leadership Great South Coast and the Great Lake Agencies for Peace and Development International. Following the conclusion of the MoU, a Project Working Group was established.

The goal is to settle up to 20 migrant families, with 11 having already made the move (comprising 60 individuals). The key aim is to address the challenges of an ageing workforce, a declining population and limited diversity. The project has helped invigorate the local schools and ensured that public facilities can remain open.

An important element to the project's success was community consultation which helped align migrant skill sets with possible job opportunities, as well as educate residents, businesses, community groups and government representatives about similar initiatives conducted elsewhere.

The Project Working Group assists families to secure jobs and approaches each employer individually to discuss opportunities and potential applicants. Numerous volunteers have ensured the project's success. The project has also developed a buddy system with local families which helps new families to meet locals in town and become part of the Hamilton community. It has also put in place English lessons with trained volunteers and a tutoring café for primary school students. A language café is also very popular, attended by about 20 people from nine different cultural backgrounds.

The project has also set up a Facebook page to keep the community informed about what is happening in their town and to encourage them to welcome the new residents.

## CANADA'S ATLANTIC IMMIGRATION PILOT

This innovative pilot is part of Canada's drive to see more migrants move to regional and rural communities in Canada and be able to obtain permanent residence. It is led by employers who are looking to fill a full-time job vacancy through migration. Its point of difference from a regular employer sponsored process is that the employer must be in direct contact with a settlement service provider organization and commit to preparing its workplace to welcome newcomers as well as commit to supporting the new arrival to settle. Only then will it become a "designated employer". The employer puts the prospective candidate in touch with the settlement agency and a needs assessment will be done that results in a settlement plan for the migrant and the migrant's family. The employer also receives a

copy of the settlement plan and this needs to be sent to the Provincial Immigration Office before approval is given to proceed with the permanent residence application.

This pilot demonstrates Canada's appreciation of the importance of early settlement services which also include family members as an important part of ensuring that regional migration is successful and sustainable.

## NEW ZEALAND'S WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

This two-year pilot programme (recently approved for extension and expansion) aims to involve existing residents in activities to welcome newcomers and increase awareness of the positive social, economic and cultural benefits of diversity. An initiative of Immigration New Zealand, the programme was developed in recognition that welcoming activities enhance understanding and appreciation of diversity, leading to stronger, more cohesive and more resilient communities.

A Welcoming Communities standard for New Zealand has been developed to benchmark practices and services in welcoming newcomers. The programme supports councils and communities to develop and implement their own Welcoming Plan, which sets out what the community will do to make their region even more welcoming.<sup>21</sup>

Each of these examples show the importance of a welcoming community and providing assistance for new arrivals to settle into the community and feel part of it. They show that such factors can lead to successful outcomes for attraction and retention of migrants. Many of the recommendations in this report recognise that these are factors which need to be reflected in the Limestone Coast migration strategy.

## STATE-WIDE FACTORS

Part of the brief for this report was to identify factors from the research which may be applicable more broadly to other areas in South Australia. There are several factors that fall into this category.

Firstly, the research conducted for this report, RAI's previous research and the success stories in the section above all highlight the fact that attracting migrants to regional areas is only the first step of a migration strategy. To improve retention and be successful, there must also be a significant focus on welcoming new arrivals in ways that support inclusion, respect for diversity and enhancement of social cohesion. While settlement agencies are important, particularly for more recent arrivals, the community must be part of the process. The promotion of welcoming activities which bring existing community and new arrivals together should be supported as widely as possible. There are many good models for this, both within Australia and overseas.

The recent focus on community development in Tatiara is therefore encouraging. Its Migrant Community Action Plan is an important step and outlines activities to bring the existing and migrant communities

<sup>21</sup> An example of a Welcoming Plan can be found here: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/welcoming-communities/resources/ashburtons-welcoming-plan.pdf>

together. It is suggested that all LGA's in South Australia should be looking at ways to improve welcome and inclusion and that these should be put together in a publicly available plan which sets goals, objectives, identifies key stakeholders and identifies any barriers or challenges. Such plans should be regularly monitored, reviewed and updated.

The importance of the role of local Council in taking the lead is also apparent from the research. Councils should be encouraged and supported to develop migration plans, identify needed actions and assign resources to ensuring that migration is successful and sustainable. The Welcoming Cities standard sets benchmarks for local councils to demonstrate their commitment to diversity and inclusion. Councils which have not yet signed on should be encouraged to explore this option.

Further, it is the case throughout the State and the country that employers of migrant workers have very little support to ensure that their workers understand Australian workplace culture, quickly become part of a cohesive team and are well-settled into the local community. The role of employers in contributing to job satisfaction and retention is significant and further consideration needs to be given to how best to support employers in the induction and support of migrant workers. This will assist businesses and South Australia to demonstrate "best practice" in the employment of migrants.

The discussion in this report about the potential contribution of migrant businesses is another broadly applicable factor which other areas in South Australia should consider. In Mt Gambier for example, there are few examples of (recently arrived) migrant owned businesses. Supporting migrants to start businesses may have an important impact on the local economy as well as providing goods or services to the local community.

Another broadly applicable factor is the recognition of the important role of settlement agencies in providing initial support services to new arrivals. Ideally, however, services for newcomers will be included within a community venue where all members of the community are able to access services, courses, events and activities. Supporting councils and regions to develop such community or neighbourhood houses will contribute to the sense of cohesion rather than differentiation.

# DEVELOPING A MIGRATION ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGY

In order to ensure that migration to the Limestone Coast region is successful and sustainable, developing a strategy is an important step, as identified in RAI’s Toolkit. This report provides necessary information to support such a strategy. It shows that key stakeholders, required services and important initiatives are already in place to support migration to Naracoorte Lucindale and Tatiara. However, there are more considered actions that can be taken to improve the migrant experience and to ensure that communities are inclusive, welcoming and cohesive. This section aims to provide the basic blueprint of a migration attraction and retention strategy for the Limestone Coast. Involved stakeholders should continue to review and refine it and contribute information from the local communities as it becomes available.

<b>Strategic Vision</b>	To create thriving and cohesive communities in the Limestone Coast
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<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To attract migrants into the towns of Naracoorte, Bordertown and Keith to fill labour shortages and revitalise the population</li> <li>To ensure that migrants coming to live and work in the region are welcomed and well-integrated into the community and are able to fulfil their aspirations, thereby contributing to retention.</li> </ul>
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Priority Action	Tasks
Develop a Migration Subcommittee or Steering Group under the Limestone Coast Economic Development Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To bring migration expertise and key stakeholders together to coordinate the implementation of migration plans and actions.</li> <li>To share experiences, opportunities and challenges in the region.</li> <li>To advocate to State and Federal Government on regional migration issues.</li> <li>To allocate responsibility for implementation of report recommendations.</li> <li>To take discussions back to each LGA to bring in local stakeholders and further local actions.</li> </ul>

Composition	Key Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO and Community Devt Officer, Tatiara</li> <li>Mayor and other representative, Naracoorte Lucindale</li> <li>AMRC representative</li> <li>RDA</li> <li>PIRSA</li> <li>Employer representatives</li> <li>Secretariat (LC Local Government Association)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss role of Council and benefits of joining Welcoming Cities network</li> <li>Organise an event of Councillors to promote understanding of settlement issues</li> <li>Discuss how community development can be strengthened in Naracoorte</li> <li>Consider how a Neighbourhood House or Community Centre could be established in each LGA, including funding and staffing.</li> <li>Consider establishing permanent interfaith prayer spaces</li> <li>Explore a job-matching mechanism for migrants and regional employers, looking to enterprises which have already started to do this</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise an employer forum</li> <li>• Organise a small business expo specifically aimed at migrants</li> <li>• Establish a mechanism in each LGA so that relevant agencies including schools and MRC are informed by employers when new migrant employees are arriving</li> <li>• Organise information forums on workplace issues</li> <li>• Research innovative models for English language tuition, looking initially at the school-leaving age group</li> <li>• Support schools to initiate family buddy system</li> <li>• Determine ways to support migrants to obtain their drivers' licence.</li> <li>• Examine innovative welcome ideas from other jurisdictions such as "Meet Your Street" under the Welcoming Communities model and the Wimmera Industry Partnership.</li> </ul>
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Priority Action	Tasks
Develop a Migrant Health Subcommittee under the LC Local Health Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To determine what recommendations in previous health studies and reports can be implemented at the local level.</li> <li>• To forge partnerships with other regions in other jurisdictions to share materials and best practice.</li> <li>• To continue to advocate to State and Federal Government on issues relating to health and migrant communities.</li> </ul>
Composition	Key Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital representatives from Keith, Naracoorte and Bordertown</li> <li>• Medical Centre representatives from Keith, Naracoorte and Bordertown</li> <li>• Mt Gambier Hospital Advisory Committee</li> <li>• AMRC</li> <li>• STTARS</li> <li>• Medically trained representative (overseas doctor)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review past health studies relating to CALD communities and health care in South Australia to determine if there are recommendations which can be implemented at the local level.</li> <li>• Seek to increase number of translated materials available for CALD patients.</li> <li>• Create contacts with health authorities at State and Federal levels and become a voice on health for the region.</li> <li>• Examine measures to make health services more accessible in the region, including transport issues, interpreter apps, bulk-billing in certain cases etc.</li> <li>• Seek additional funding and support for STTARs to reduce waiting times.</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSION

In both the Tatiara district, covering Keith and Bordertown, and in Naracoorte, there are many people working to make the migrant experience a positive and successful one. Both districts have put in place support measures and community events in an effort to welcome migrants. Tatiara Council is benefitting from staff experienced in migration settlement and is leading in its proactive approach to migrant settlement. Other areas in the region should also benefit from their experience and knowledge and look to Tatiara's approach. Similarly, the main employer in Bordertown has put in place measures to ensure that migrants are supported in the workplace and in the community, and other employers in the region could benefit from learning about its approach and outcomes as well as being provided additional knowledge and tools to support migrants.

There is always more that can be done, and this report suggests practical and achievable steps to further improve the migrant experience.

Some of the issues affecting retention are beyond the scope of this report, particularly the lack of tertiary options which is of ongoing concern in much of regional Australia. Other issues such as bridging visas being revoked is also something that cannot be controlled. However, taking steps to continue to improve the welcome and particularly to foster social connectedness and community cohesion can make a significant difference to migrants feeling that they have found a permanent home on the Limestone Coast.

Attraction and retention of migrants is an issue of importance for regional communities around Australia. The Limestone Coast has a well-developed Growth Plan and dedicated stakeholders in place to implement it. Adding a migration subcommittee to the governance structure of this Plan will ensure that migration issues continue to be kept on the agenda, implemented and regularly reviewed. The RAI stands ready to assist going forward in this exciting undertaking.

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Submissions to Parliament of South Australia's Economic and Finance Committee's <i>Inquiry into the Economic Contribution of Migration to South Australia</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naracoorte Lucindale Council, Submission 06</li> <li>• Tatiara District Council, Submission 17 and 17a</li> <li>• Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast, Submission 26</li> <li>• Teys Australia, Submission 38</li> <li>• Australian Migrant Resource Centre, Submission 31</li> </ul>
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## ANNEX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

In the course of collecting information and data for this report, RAI met with and/or spoke to the following people:

Organisation	Name	Position
Australian Migrant Resource Centre	Eugenia Tsoulis	CEO
	Jenny Stirling	Naracoorte MRC
	Bao Lue	Bordertown MRC
Bordertown High School	Sue Walter	Deputy Principal
Bordertown Medical Centre	Katrina McCarthy	Practice Manager
Commonwealth Department of Human Services	Elke Unger	Multicultural Services Officer
Immigration SA	Shellie Strike	
	Dianne Casale	Program Manager
JBS	Trevor Schiller	Plant Manager
	Jason McKenzie	
Keith Timber Group	Toni Jackson	Operations Support
Kingcraig Medical Clinic	Deb Dewhirst	Office Manager
Labour Solutions Australia	Wali Sakha	
Limestone Coast Local Government Association	Tony Wright	Executive Officer
Mt Gambier Hospital Advisory Committee	Maureen Klintberg	Chair
Naracoorte Lucindale Council	Erika Vickory	Mayor
	Trevor Smart	CEO
Naracoorte South PS	Kirsy Lush	Principal
RDA Limestone Coast	David Wheaton	CEO
	Rachel Ashman	Manager Business and Workforce Development
Regional Workforce Management	Rebecca Elsworthy	Senior Value Partner
Rowett Onions	Tony Rowett	Owner
STTARS	Rhett McDonald	Case Worker
Tatiara Council	Anne Champness	CEO
	Tracey Grosser	Community Development Officer
Teys Australia	Rebecca Elsworthy	Human Resources
	Farzana Rezaie	Member of Afghan community in Naracoorte
	Dedarili	Afghan shop owner in Naracoorte

A migrant forum was also held in Bordertown on 11 November 2019, where migrants from different ethnic communities met with the RAI researcher to share their experiences on living and working in the region.

## ANNEX 2: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

### POPULATION

South Australia	Limestone Coast	Tatiara	Bordertown	Keith	Naracoorte Lucindale	Naracoorte
1,676,653	66,836	6,794	2,948	1,355	8,533	8,533

### AUSTRALIAN BORN AS % OF POPULATION

South Australia	Tatiara	Bordertown	Keith	Naracoorte Lucindale	Naracoorte
71.1%	80.5%	73.4%	86.6%	80.4%	77.4%

### NEXT MOST COMMON OVERSEAS COUNTRIES OF BIRTH AS PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION

South Australia	Tatiara	Naracoorte Lucindale
England 5.8%	England 1.5%	Afghanistan 2.7%
India 1.6%	Philippines 1.5%	England 2.1%
China <sup>22</sup> 1.5%	Afghanistan 1.3%	New Zealand 1.7%
Italy 1.1%	New Zealand 1.1%	Philippines 1.6%
Vietnam 0.9%	China 0.3%	Pakistan 0.5%

### MEDIAN AGE

South Australia	Tatiara	Naracoorte Lucindale
40 years	42 years	41 years

<sup>22</sup> Excludes SARs and Taiwan

## EDUCATION PROFILE

	<b>South Australia</b>	<b>Tatiara</b>	<b>Naracoorte Lucindale</b>
<b>Year 12 as highest level of population</b>	15.5%	13.0%	13.6%
<b>Completed Certificate III or IV</b>	16.7%	17.6%	17.5%
<b>Diploma or Advanced Diploma</b>	8.3%	7.5%	7.3%
<b>Bachelor Degree or Higher</b>	18.5%	8.3%	10.2%

As is the case for many regional areas across Australia, these levels of educational attainment will become significant for filling skilled workforce shortages in years ahead.

## WORKFORCE

	<b>South Australia</b>	<b>Tatiara</b>	<b>Naracoorte Lucindale</b>
<b>In full time work</b>	53.9%	61.1%	58.3%
<b>In part time work</b>	33.5%	29.7%	31.0%
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	7.5%	2.4%	3.9%

While a low unemployment rate is common in many rural locations, it emphasises the lack of available labour and points to the high reliance on new migrants and residents to fill workforce shortages.

## OCCUPATIONS

	<b>South Australia</b>	<b>Tatiara</b>	<b>Naracoorte Lucindale</b>
<b>Professional Roles</b>	20.3%	25.0%	22.8%
<b>Technical and Trades</b>	13.4%	21.3%	21.2%
<b>Clerical and Administrative Workers</b>	13.3%	12.6%	12.8%
<b>Management Roles</b>	12.6%	9.6%	10.5%
<b>Community and Personal Service Occupations</b>	12.0%	9.3%	9.4%
<b>Labourers</b>	11.1%	7.7%	9.2%
<b>Sales</b>	9.6%	7.7%	9.2%
<b>Machinery operators and drivers</b>	6.1%	5.9%	5.7%

## MAIN EMPLOYING INDUSTRIES

At the 2016 census, of the employed people in South Australia, 4.1% worked in Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals), with other major industries of employment including Aged Care Residential Services 3.0%, Supermarket and Grocery Stores 2.9%, Primary Education 2.2% and Cafes and Restaurants 2.1%.

For Naracoorte Lucindale and Tatiara the local specialisation in meat processing and agriculture are highlighted, with 7.1% of Naracoorte Lucindale residents and 7.5% of Tatiara residents working in Meat Processing. Employment was also strong in Sheep Farming (Specialised) which accounted for 5.7% of employed people in Naracoorte Lucindale and 6.6% in Tatiara, also specialised Beef Cattle Farming (employing 3.5% in Naracoorte Lucindale), Grain-Sheep or Grain-Beef Cattle Farming which comprised 3.6% of the employed population in Tatiara. The category of Other Grain Growing comprised 3.4% in Tatiara.

Other employing industries across the region include Grape Growing (employing 3.9% in Naracoorte Lucindale), Hospitals (3.6% employment in Tatiara) and Supermarket and Grocery Stores (2.7% in Naracoorte Lucindale).

Over the decade between the 2006 and 2016 census, Tatiara has seen a decline in employment in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, manufacturing, utilities, accommodation and food services, transport and postal services, information media and telecommunications. The district has seen an increase in employment in mining, construction, retail trade, professional and technical services, arts and recreation services.

Over the same period, Naracoorte Lucindale has experienced growth in the healthcare and social assistance, mining, arts and recreation services, professional and technical services and administrative and support service sectors, but a decrease in wholesale and retail trade, information media, telecommunications, financial and insurance services, rental and real estate services.