

Billion Dollar Benefit: A roadmap for unleashing the economic potential of refugees and migrants

Refugees and migrants have tremendous unrealised potential

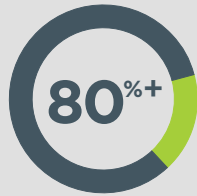


\$1.25 billion
in lost wages
over five years from the underutilisation of skilled migrants

1 in 4
permanent skilled migrants work beneath their skill level



\$1 billion
generated a year within 10 years by supporting refugees in Australia to launch new businesses



80%+ migrants are of working age, compared with 65% of the broader population

But refugees and migrants face barriers to finding meaningful employment

Recognition roadblocks



Only 33% of permanent arrivals have their post-school qualifications recognised in Australia

RIGHT TO WORK

57% of people seeking asylum in Australia are not allowed to work



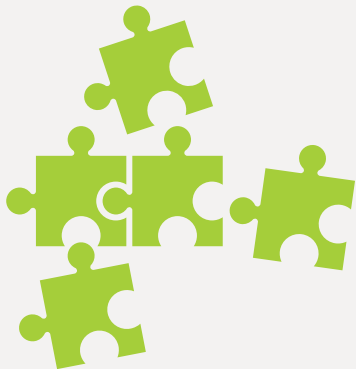
Discrimination: Applicants from ethnic backgrounds are 57% less likely to be considered for leadership roles in Australia, despite identical resumes

EXPLOITATION

Almost two thirds of workers on temporary visas are paid less than the minimum standard



We consulted 50 experts who backed five barrier-breaking solutions



Top 5 actions to implement by 2025:

- 1** Fix the broken skills and qualifications recognition system
- 2** Strengthen protections for migrant workers
- 3** Review the right to work for people on temporary visas
- 4** Scale innovative 'tripartite' partnerships
- 5** Reform English language requirements

Unleashing refugee and migrant talent is **good for newcomers, good for business, and good for Australia. It's a win-win-win.**

To find out more, visit www.ssi.org.au/BillionDollarBenefit

Refugee and migrant voices: Stories of starting again

"I had experience as an engineer overseas and then I did my masters here in Australia. But it was still difficult to get a job in my field. I ended up driving Uber to make ends meet. At times I wondered if I would ever get a job as an engineer. I am very happy now working as a flood damage recovery engineer in Horsham. It is a great relief to get work in my field and use my skills."

Mohammad Hassaan Masood: an engineer from Pakistan who has found a dream job working in his field in regional Australia

"I thought it would be easy to find a job in Australia, but it wasn't. I had degrees in computer science from Iran and Japan, but I had to apply for more than 1,000 jobs in Australia before I eventually got an IT role. I worked as a labourer while I tried to find work in my field."

Ali Akbar Mohammadi: an IT Specialist from Afghanistan who now works for Accenture in Adelaide as an Application Development Analyst

"Although I already knew how to express myself and engage with new people in English, my first months were difficult. In job interviews, I would struggle to understand the interviewer as they would speak quickly, and I'd have to ask them to speak slower or repeat their questions. But day by day I got better."

Salwa Afif Razzouk: SSI employee with bachelor's degree in law and master's in public management from Syria

"People from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds have the skills and talent, we just need the opportunity. Please give us a chance."

Mohsen Shahsavarzadeh: an entrepreneur from Iran who now leads his own mortgage brokerage in north-west Sydney

"In one of my first job interviews in Australia, the interviewer said straight to my face: 'I don't know if we can hire your kind.' It turns out he was referring to my dreadlocks at the time, but employers need to look beyond things like that to the skills we can bring to their business."

Joshua Alexander: a community services team leader from Sudan who now helps newcomers settle in Australia

"Asylum seekers are denied study rights, working rights and the right to access Medicare. We want to work and contribute in this country, but we aren't allowed to until the government makes a decision about our long-term status, which can take a long time."

Betia Shakiba: an office worker from Iran who sought asylum in Australia after arriving by boat