

Outside the Metropolis:

Resettling Visible Migrants and Refugees in Regional & Rural Victoria



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“Resettling Visible Migrants and Refugees in Regional & Rural Victoria”

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VICTORIAN
multicultural
commission

Social context

- **Changes in immigration patterns**
 - Increase in skilled migrants
 - Increase in diversity of intake
 - Ageing in already established migrant communities
- **Changes in social policy environment**
 - Link between immigration and population policy
 - Economic development and community sustainability of regional and rural areas

Impetus for regional settlement policy

- Cluster in metropolitan areas
 - Overstretched mainstream services
 - Declining population in regional areas
 - Ageing profile of regional
 - Donut process and labour shortages
- => Regionalizing settlement policy
- Neat policy response: win-win solution

Policy context

- **New visa mechanism for skilled migrants**
 - 1996/1997: SSRMs (State and Specific and Regional Migration visas)
 - 2004: SIRs (Skilled Independent Regional visas)
- **Review of settlement services for migrants and humanitarian entrants (2003)**
 - To review settlement planning - 1991: NISS
 - To review settlement services - 1998: Charter

New settlement policy objectives

National Framework of Settlement Planning (2006)

- Whole-of-government approach
- Intergovernmental coordination
- Partnership approach
- Needs-based services
- Regional refocusing of settlement policy

Empirical literature

New policy framework reflected:

- Scope and recommendations in line with government objectives and prerogatives

Gaps in the empirical literature:

- Directed settlement *but not* voluntary relocation
- Refugees *or* Migrants
- Single locale analysis (pilot studies)

New project design

Refugees *and* Migrants; Visibility as core concept

Comparative framework of analysis:

- rural/ regional Victoria vs. metropolitan Melbourne;
- migrants vs. refugees;
- immigrants vs. host community;
- local vs. state vs. Commonwealth government.

Multidisciplinary framework of analysis:

- self- and collective identity of migrants and refugees;
- social cohesion of host communities;
- employment patterns and pathways to integration;
- new multi-level policy-framework.