

GUIDE: Engaging new and emerging communities

New and emerging communities are those that have recently arrived in Australia and are increasing in number. They could be humanitarian entrants, asylum seekers, skilled migrants or part of the family stream of entrants.

Identifying new and emerging communities

To understand a new community, research its demographic make-up. As a starting point, seek settlement data from the Department of Home Affairs:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/settlement-reports#:~:text=>

This site identifies specific information relating to the country of birth, spoken languages and the visa stream relevant to individual communities.

Potential barriers

Every individual and community is unique and should be approached differently. Potential barriers that may limit community engagement include:

- feelings of dislocation and isolation from traditional cultures and practices
- rearranged family structures, particularly if some family members are still in the country of origin
- housing issues due to lack of experience and understanding of the Australian home ownership/rental market
- education worries about unfamiliar schooling systems
- experiences of past trauma and torture which can introduce physical and mental health issues
- low English proficiency and poor literacy skills
- employment issues including potential exploitation in the workplace, difficulty obtaining a job or visa status
- lack of trust in authority or government structures.

Overcoming barriers: good practice tips

- **Community member engagement:** Identify and understand key community leaders and influencers who can help to increase understanding and grow better knowledge
- **Areas to focus:** Opportunities to engage with new and emerging communities could be at local shops, cultural events, religious structures and sporting events. If you can, meet them where they live, work, play rather than expecting them to come to you.

Further research

Research the background of various communities to understand their history and important cultural/religious celebrations. Country profiles can be found at on the Department of Home Affairs website, and are a good starting point: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-statistics/statistics/country-profiles>. Another resource is the SBS Cultural Atlas which focuses on communities that have settled in Australia. The Cultural Atlas is available at: <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au>.