Multicultural
NSW

NSW
GOVERNMENT

GROW

NSW GROWING REGIONS OF WELCOME
PILOT PROGRAM

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

DECEMBER 2020

CONTENTS

THE STORY SO FAR

Building on NSW's proud history of welcoming newcomers.

In 2015 the Australian Government announced it would accept an additional 12,000 refugees escaping conflict in Syria and Iraq. The NSW Premier offered to welcome more than half of the additional intake and appointed a NSW Coordinator General for Refugee Resettlement to coordinate their successful settlement.

By the end of 2017, more than 6,000 of these new refugees from Syria and Iraq had settled in NSW. Most chose to live in western Sydney close to family members and among NSW's largest established Iraqi and Syrian communities. As Coordinator General, Professor Peter Shergold AC oversaw the NSW Government's response, bringing together groups from the community, business and government to coordinate support for them.

Throughout this time Multicultural NSW has engaged with 'newcomers'[1] (refugees, asylum seekers and migrants) on their needs and heard from increasing numbers of NSW regional councils, employers and communities which wanted to attract newcomers. With their diverse employment opportunities, affordable housing and good-quality education, regional communities can offer a better quality of life than crowded urban centres. Regional towns and cities provide a sense of welcome and belonging that newcomers consistently state is the primary reason for choosing to settle and stay in places outside Sydney.

Regional and rural towns are no strangers to welcoming migrants. For generations, workers and settlers from overseas have brought global mindsets, cultural vibrancy and an entrepreneurial spirit to the regions which have boosted their economic and social growth.

Today, our regional communities face significant challenges as Australia and the rest of the world grapple with unprecedented global events. Recent devastating drought and bushfires have significantly affected regional NSW, and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted local economies. In these difficult times, tapping into the talents of newcomers can help regional communities recover, adapt, innovate and prosper.

The NSW GROW Pilot Program will help to achieve positive outcomes for these communities and for newcomers, recognising that building a sense of welcome is at the heart of thriving communities.

[1]For the purposes of this pilot program only, Multicultural NSW often uses the inclusive term of "newcomers" to capture these diverse target cohorts. Please refer to Definitions at the end of this document.

NSW GROW: A model informed by Australian and global best practice

The design of Multicultural NSW's Growing Regions of Welcome (NSW GROW) model has been based on extensive consultation with communities and stakeholders across NSW and on research undertaken on Australian and international initiatives[2]. Multicultural NSW tested the approach by working closely with several regional NSW communities over the past few years and by supporting secondary migration.

Through this work, we have identified that:

- many newcomers living in western Sydney have underutilised skills, qualifications and experience they are keen to apply to employment in regional areas, but that they need access to relevant information,

- any initiative to attract newcomers requires careful planning and involvement at all levels of government, community and business to ensure receiving communities are prepared to welcome newcomers and support them in the long term.

The targeted regional pilot locations are the Riverina and Murray. These initial pilot locations were selected because of the demonstrated capacity, interest and diversity of the local stakeholders.

Through a place-based approach in these pilot locations, NSW GROW will resource local communities and organisations to drive a strategic, collaborative approach to attracting and retaining newcomers. A focus on place will enable the communities to address their unique economic and social objectives, and joining with others at a regional level will allow them to better use existing services and infrastructure and strengthen newcomer inclusion.

In western Sydney, a Regional Employment Hub will be established to provide a gateway for newcomer talent. It will engage interested newcomer job seekers, connect them with suitable employment opportunities in the Murray and Riverina, help them to make informed decisions about relocating and facilitate their relocations.

[2] At the direction of the NSW Coordinator General, the NSW Government commissioned a review of regional resettlement in Australia, *Refugee Settlement in Regional Areas: Evidence-based good practice* (2017) by Ms Margaret Piper. Further research into international best practice was conducted by Churchill Fellow and Multicultural NSW Associate Director Settlement Ms Talia Stump. *The Right Fit: Attracting and retaining newcomers in regional towns* (2019) by Talia Stump.

PURPOSE

The purpose of NSW GROW is to:

- support coordinated efforts across sectors to create secondary migration links between western Sydney and regional NSW

- drive sustainable social and economic outcomes for participating regional communities and newcomers.

NSW GROW aims to:

- strengthen regional community capability to attract and retain newcomers[3]

- coordinate a Collective Impact[4] approach to regional resettlement in NSW

- help interested newcomers in western Sydney to relocate to regional NSW for employment and lifestyle opportunities.

[3]NSW GROW will seek to engage diverse cohorts of newcomers in western Sydney and support them to make informed choices about relocating to regional NSW.

[4]For more information please refer to Definitions at the end of this document.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

NSW GROW's guiding principles are drawn from international human rights frameworks[5] and underpin the strategic operation of the model. These frameworks lay out the foundations for safeguarding human dignity, set the minimum standards of treatment of newcomers and outline provisions on their rights.

Human rights approach

Newcomers have the same rights as other members of society to realise their potential and should be supported to participate in and contribute to social and economic life.

Lived experience at the heart

Inclusion is imperative to growth. People with lived experience directly inform and influence ways of working at every level and at every stage. Multidimensional needs of newcomers are recognised and addressed.

A focus on strengths

Newcomers have extensive skills, qualities and talents that should be harnessed to support positive outcomes for individuals and the broader Australian society.

Individuals should be supported to exercise choice and control, determine what is in their own best interests and make informed decisions about matters that affect their lives.

Regional NSW is home to diverse communities which offer a range of attractive lifestyles and opportunities. Each community has a unique set of skills and capacities it can channel to welcome and support newcomers.

Locally led design and decision-making

Communities understand their own needs and drive and manage their own solutions through place-based innovation, responsive to changing local needs.

Shared commitment and ownership

A key feature of NSW GROW will be cross-sector commitment to build and maintain meaningful partnerships, improve outcomes for migrants, newcomers and regional communities, share information and coordinate services. Cross-sector accountability will help to achieve program objectives and outcomes.

[5]Including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and of Their Families; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; United Nations' 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol; and United Nations' 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

OUTCOMES

GROW aims to achieve the following short and medium-term outcomes[6]

Short-term outcomes

- locally designed and locally driven implementation of the program
- increased newcomer awareness about regional employment and lifestyle opportunities
- increased employer capacity and willingness to commit to inclusive employment
- improved collaboration across services, industry, community, and policymakers via the place-based coordination
- improved agency knowledge of and referral to services and supports for eligible newcomers
- established monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are used to measure progress towards all outcomes.

Medium-term outcomes

- increased regional community preparedness
- increased newcomer relocation from western Sydney to regional areas for successful employment and lifestyle opportunities
- increased newcomer access to regional job opportunities that align with their skills and aspirations
- increased regional capacity to research and plan for newcomer attraction
- increased uptake of existing programs and services by eligible newcomers
- demonstrated value of place-based investment, and the social and economic benefits of regional resettlement through a robust external evaluation.

.

Long-term outcomes

NSW GROW aspires to influence longer-term social change in NSW. These changes will take concerted effort from newcomers, regional communities and all levels of government[7] beyond the program scope and timeline and include:

- increased economic participation of newcomers and their sense of social connectedness
- increased regional population growth, diversity, and community inclusivity
- decreased labour shortages and increase in economic growth in regional NSW
- decreased pressure on infrastructure and services in western Sydney
- increased engagement of cross-sector networks to deliver on shared outcomes for newcomers
- decreased number of newcomers dependent on federal income support
- achieved sustainability of initiatives by leveraging alternative sources of funding.

[6]The outcomes outlined in this strategic framework are what the program aspires to achieve at the minimum in the short and medium terms, with those in the short term to be progressed and strengthened in the medium term. It is intended for these short- and medium-term outcomes to be built on by the regional place-based partnerships and Regional Employment Hub as they identify and develop their strategic priorities.

[7]The longer-term outcomes listed in this framework are reflective of broader NSW Government policies and strategies, and will not be achieved by NSW GROW in isolation.

NSW GROW AT A GLANCE

❯ WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF NSW GROW?

Drive sustainable social and economic outcomes for participating regional communities and newcomers	Support coordinated efforts across sectors to create secondary migration links between western Sydney and regional NSW

❯ WHAT DOES NSW GROW AIM TO ACHIEVE?

Strengthen regional community capability to attract and retain newcomers	Coordinate a collective impact approach to regional resettlement in NSW	Help interested newcomers in western Sydney to relocate to regional NSW for employment and lifestyle opportunities

❯ WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES THE PROGRAM AIMS TO ACHIEVE?

SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM
• Locally designed and locally driven implementation of the pilot program • Increased newcomer awareness about regional employment and lifestyle opportunities • Increased employer capacity and willingness to commit to inclusive employment • Improved collaboration across services, industry, community and policymakers via the place-based coordination • Improved agency knowledge of and referral to services and supports for eligible newcomers • Established monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are used to measure progress towards all outcomes	• Increased regional community preparedness for newcomers • Increased newcomer relocation from western Sydney to regional areas for successful employment and lifestyle opportunities • Increased newcomer access to regional job opportunities that align with their skills and aspirations • Increased regional capacity to research and plan for newcomer attraction • Increased uptake of existing programs and services by eligible newcomers • Demonstrated value of place-based investment, and the social and economic benefits of regional resettlement through a robust external evaluation

❯ GUIDING PRINCIPLES

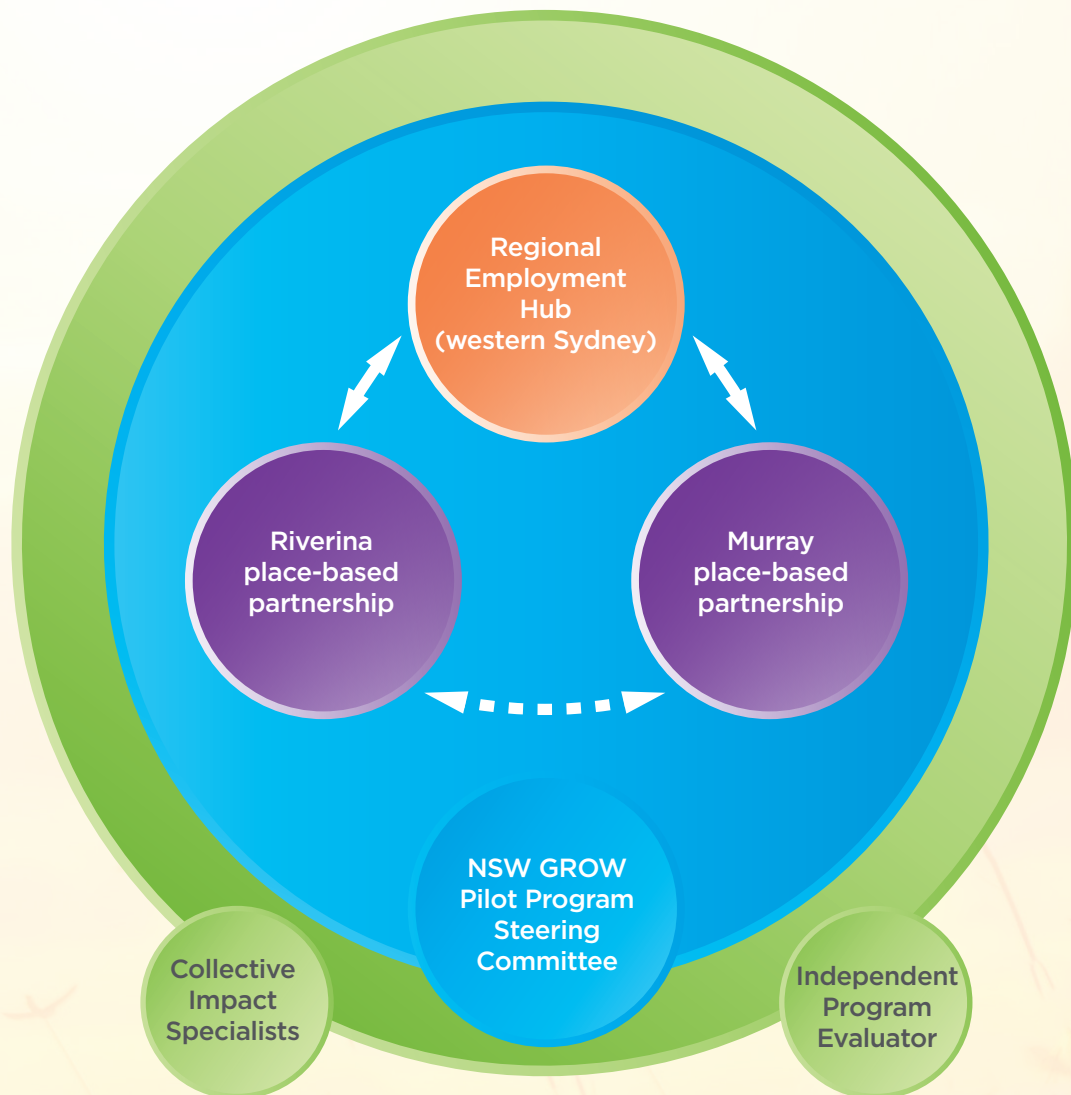| Human rights approach	Lived experience at the heart of doing	A focus on strengths	Locally led design and decision-making	Shared commitment and ownership

THE MODEL

NSW GROW will establish and connect two regional place-based resettlement partnerships (in the Riverina and Murray pilot locations) with newcomer jobseekers in western Sydney. To achieve this, NSW GROW comprises the following components:

A Regional Employment Hub in western Sydney to engage with newcomer individuals and families interested in relocation, connect them with identified opportunities and support their relocations.

Two place-based, strategic partnerships in the Murray and Riverina regions of NSW to develop local attraction and retention strategies (led by a local Backbone Coordinator and facilitated by Collective Impact specialists).

Regional Employment Hub (western Sydney)

Riverina place-based partnership

Murray place-based partnership

NSW GROW Pilot Program Steering Committee

Collective Impact Specialists

Independent Program Evaluator

An overarching Program Steering Committee comprised of senior government, community and policy experts that will monitor program outcomes, seek to align existing programs and resources to support regional resettlement and champion place-based approaches to secondary settlement across government.

Multicultural NSW will have administrative oversight of NSW GROW and monitor its progress at a program level[8].

[8]See *Monitoring and Evaluation* on page 11 for further information.
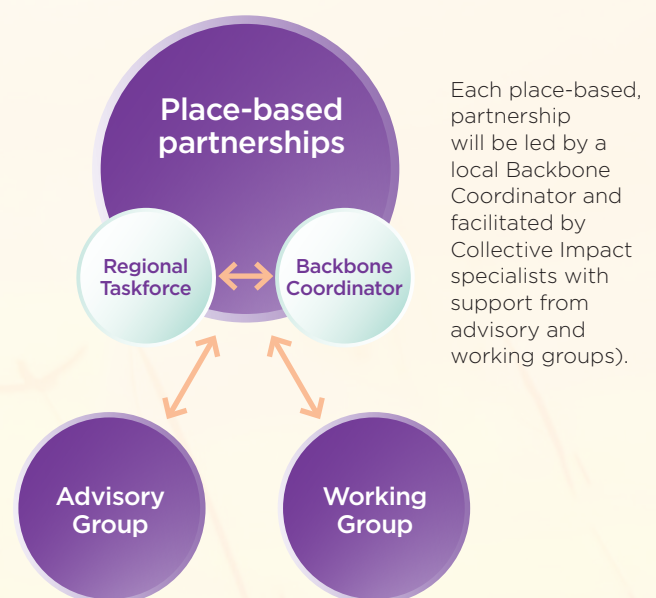
Riverina and Murray place-based partnerships

In each regional pilot site, NSW GROW supports the development of place-based partnerships that will ensure local communities are at the centre of attraction and retention strategies and foster a systematic approach. Multicultural NSW has engaged Collective Impact specialists to support cross-sector stakeholders and people with lived experience to create a shared vision for newcomer attraction and retention.

The Riverina and Murray Regional Taskforces will guide each region's strategic approach to newcomer attraction and retention and oversee a variety of related initiatives across community welcoming, employment, and service coordination. They will comprise local senior representatives of government, industry and employers, community and volunteer groups and NGO and mainstream service providers. The Regional Taskforces will monitor overall progress towards objectives and inform the Program Steering Committee of any systemic issues.

In each location, a Backbone Coordinator (a local organisation or group) will be funded to drive attraction and retention planning on behalf of the Regional Taskforces, oversee day-to-day operational management and inform taskforce decision-making. The Backbone Coordinator will also coordinate and support targeted advisory groups that ensure diverse perspectives inform taskforce planning and working groups that bring together key stakeholders to lead work on specific projects/initiatives. Importantly, the Backbone Coordinator will also be the primary link to the Regional Employment Hub in western Sydney for each region.

Key activities include:

- establishing Regional Taskforces and helping taskforce members to identify a Backbone Coordinator organisation for three-year Pilot

- conducting research and consultation to map relevant employment, community and service sector opportunities and priorities at local and regional levels

- establishing a newcomer attraction and retention strategy and outcomes framework for the regions and supporting action plans

- implementing action plans that utilise flexible seed funding and leverage existing programs to address local priorities

- establishing networks and referral pathways with the Regional Employment Hub (western Sydney) and work collaboratively to achieve shared outcomes

- reporting annually to Multicultural NSW on the implementation of the project plans and contributing to the evaluation of the program.

Place-based partnerships

Regional Taskforce ↔ Backbone Coordinator

Advisory Group

Working Group

Each place-based, partnership will be led by a local Backbone Coordinator and facilitated by Collective Impact specialists with support from advisory and working groups).

Regional Employment Hub (western Sydney)

NSW GROW will also fund the establishment of a Regional Employment Hub in western Sydney to engage with newcomers in western and south-western Sydney and promote the lifestyle and employment opportunities identified in the Murray and Riverina regions.

Engagement activities in western Sydney will focus on local government areas where the largest number of newcomers have settled in the last five years. These include Fairfield, Liverpool, Blacktown, Cumberland, Canterbury/Bankstown and Parramatta.

The Regional Employment Hub will also be responsible for coordinating and resourcing activities that connect interested newcomer jobseekers with identified opportunities, and develop strong relationships with regional stakeholders to ensure they can respond to the specific skills and needs of families and individuals interested in relocating.

Regional Employment Hub (western Sydney)

Hub Coordinator

Advisory Group

The Regional Employment Hub in western Sydney will be led by a Hub Coordinator with support from an advisory group.

Key activities include:

- establishing a Regional Employment Hub Advisory Group to provide strategic advice and support engagement activities

- developing a project plan, budgets and supporting action plans

- identifying newcomers in western Sydney whose motivations, qualifications and skill sets align with opportunities identified by the Riverina and Murray place-based partnerships

- establishing connections and referral pathways with these partnerships and work collaboratively to achieve shared outcomes

- establishing and maintaining a fit-for-purpose data system that captures relevant information on newcomer jobseekers interested in relocating, as well as the specific employment opportunities identified by the partnerships

- advising on and building the capacity of the partnerships to respond to the diverse skills and needs of families and individuals relocating

- raising awareness of regional opportunities through community engagement and support newcomers and their families to make informed decisions about relocating

- funding and implementing activities that connect interested newcomers with relevant opportunities in the Riverina and Murray, and support sustainable relocation (for example, facilitating look-see visits, interviews etc)

- reporting annually to Multicultural NSW on implementation of the project plan and contributing to the evaluation of the program.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Multicultural NSW recognises it is important to co-design shared outcomes with key stakeholders and to establish an aligned approach to measuring progress in real time. This ensures strategies adapt to the needs of community and gives confidence to all stakeholders to tell a story about overall impact.

Throughout NSW GROW, Collective Impact specialists will work closely with the Riverina and Murray place-based partnerships and the Regional Employment Hub in western Sydney to build capacity and design localised, shared parameters and indicators of success. In the first year, the focus will be on establishing benchmarks and robust and sustainable targets that are tailored to the employment needs, community and service capacity across each region. The Riverina and Murray place-based partnerships and the Regional Employment Hub in western Sydney will monitor and report on their agreed indicators.

Multicultural NSW will have administrative oversight of NSW GROW and monitor its progress at a program level. NSW GROW will be reviewed by Multicultural NSW at the end of its tenure.

Multicultural NSW will also engage an independent program evaluator to complete a comprehensive end-of-program evaluation.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Asylum seeker	An asylum-seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed.
Backbone Coordinator	A Backbone Coordinator (a local organisation or group) will be funded to drive newcomer attraction and retention planning on behalf of the Regional Taskforces, oversee day-to-day operational management and inform taskforce decision-making. For more information on the function of a Backbone Coordinator, see https://cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Blueprint-for-Regional-and-Community-Job-Deals_20200927.pdf pp26-26
Collective Impact	Collective Impact will bring people together in a structured way to create a shared vision and achieve social change. For more information on Collective Impact evidence and implications for practice, see https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/collective-impact-evidence-and-implications-practice/what-collective-impact
Local government area	A local government area (LGA) is a gazetted local government boundary as defined by the NSW Government. All LGA councils in NSW are independent, locally elected corporate bodies. They are responsible for making significant decisions that have far-reaching impacts on their communities.
Migrant	For the purpose of this pilot program, a migrant is defined as a person who has entered Australia on a skilled or family visa within the past decade.
Newcomer	For the purposes of this program, 'newcomer' is intended as an inclusive term encompassing people from all migrant and refugee-like backgrounds, regardless of visa category. For many regional communities, any new arrival, regardless of their visa category, is a welcomed 'newcomer'.
Refugee	For the purpose of this program, a refugee is defined as someone who has entered Australia under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program, or been granted a protection visa in Australia, or is seeking a protection visa.
Regional Taskforce	Regional Taskforces will make decisions about the strategic direction and target outcomes for their regional programs of work. They will also monitor overall progress of achieving objectives and oversee initiatives and projects.

Level 8,
56 Station Street East
Parramatta NSW 2150

P.O. Box 618,
Parramatta NSW 2124

02 8255 6767

multicultural.nsw.gov.au

ABN 79 863 510 875

NSW
GOVERNMENT

**Multicultural
NSW**