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**Great South Coast Economic Migration Project (GSCEMP) Evaluation:
Community Report**

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Great South Coast Economic Migration Project (GSCEMP) Evaluation: Community Report

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Great South Coast Economic Migration Project (GSEMP) Evaluation: *Community Report*

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Photo source: GSEMP Facebook page; Photo credit: The Hamilton Spectator

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A message from the Project Manager

I would like to make a special thank you to all our volunteers, relocated families and local communities who embarked on this journey of regional settlement in the Great South Coast.

This has been a whole-of-community project and many people have invested extensive volunteer hours to support the families to move to our rural towns.

As the first example of regional settlement in our region, this was a new venture for our communities, and with limited resources it was never going to be easy. Upon the advice from experienced practitioners, we expected this to be a challenging experience and at the two year mark, the level of complexity has been beyond what we could have foreseen.

This evaluation took place in the latter end of 2019 to meet the reporting requirements of Regional Development Victoria. We have been advised that for successful regional settlement outcomes, it takes at least three years to see the intended results.

I thank everyone who has contributed to this evaluation to inform changes we have been able to implement in 2020, and I look forward to updating these outcomes again three years post relocation.

Yours sincerely,

Carly Jordan

GSCEMP Project Manager

Researchers' acknowledgements

We acknowledge the traditional custodians, the Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung, Bungandjiti and Jarwadjali peoples whose lands make up the Southern Grampians and Glenelg shires. We pay respects to their Elders and to Country itself.

The evaluation team would like to acknowledge Regional Development Victoria; the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong; and the School of Geography, University of Melbourne for funding the evaluation.

We thank the Great South Coast Economic Migration Project (GSEMP) partnership group – incorporating Leadership Great South Coast, the Great Lakes Agency for Peace and Development International, and iGen Foundation – for entrusting us with this evaluation and for participating in it collaboratively. Specifically, we thank Amanda Hennessy, Carly Jordan, Lilja Sigurpals, Emmanuel Musoni, Leonard Nyandwi and Lynda Ford. We also acknowledge the important support and oversight provided by external evaluation steering committee members, Margaret Piper AM and Dr David Radford.

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We thank the communities of Hamilton and Casterton – including their newest members, who relocated to the region under the GSEMP – for giving up their time to speak to the evaluation team. We further thank the Southern Grampians Shire Council for providing a venue at the Council office in which to conduct evaluation interviews.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This *Community Report* has been developed for community members who participated in the Great South Coast Economic Migration Project (GSCEMP) evaluation. The information in this report has come directly from the evaluation. A more extensive evaluation report was submitted to the GSCEMP project partners and to Regional Development Victoria in December 2019.

Note on terminology: in this report we refer to the people who relocated to the Great South Coast region of Victoria under the GSCEMP as relocating households, families or individuals – rather than as migrants or refugees. We do so because the label ‘migrant’ does not accurately reflect their mode of arrival in Australia (primarily as humanitarian migrants) and because refugee status is temporary, not a fixed identity.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE GSCEMP

Regional settlement of migrants (including humanitarian migrants) has been a key priority for Australian governments – federal, state and local – for more than two decades. In late 2019, the Australian Government announced an intention to settle 50 per cent of refugees and humanitarian entrants in regional areas by mid-2022 (Australian Government, 2019:13)ⁱ. This focus has occurred due to concerns over population pressure in Australia’s major cities,

alongside population and economic decline and labour shortages in some regional areas.

Regional settlement takes different forms. In some cases, migrants settle in regional locations because their visas require or encourage them to do so. In other instances, movement to regional areas occurs via secondary migration pathways. That is, migrants living in Australian cities move to regional areas voluntarily. Such secondary mobility has been initiated by diverse groups including regional employers experiencing labour shortages, local governments and rural communities seeking to boost their populations and retain services, and migrants themselves. The Great South Coast Economic Project (GSCEMP) is one example of such voluntary secondary mobility.

The GSCEMP was started by three partners: Leadership Great South Coast (LGSC), the Great Lakes Agency for Peace and Development International (GLAPDInt) and iGen Foundation. The GSCEMP pilot supported the relocation of families (primarily, but not limited to, former refugees), who were living in Australian capital cities to the Great South Coast region of Victoria – specifically Hamilton in Southern Grampians Shire and Casterton in Glenelg Shire. The households that have been involved in this relocation process, to date, are originally from the Great Lakes Region of Africa (a region which incorporates Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo).

Hamilton is located in the Southern Grampians Shire in inland Victoria approximately 290 kilometres due west of Melbourne and 500 kilometres south-east of Adelaide. The Gunditjmarra, Tjap Wurrung and Bungandjiti people are the traditional custodians of the land on which the Shire is located. In 2016, Southern Grampians LGA had a population of almost 16,000 and Hamilton had a resident population of 9,974ⁱⁱ (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016a, 2016b)ⁱⁱⁱ. Hamilton is the Southern Grampians Shire's largest town and main retail and service centre. Its hospital, Hamilton Base Hospital, is run by the Western District Health Service and the town has several primary and secondary schools.

Casterton is located in Glenelg Shire, which is in the far south-west of Victoria, approximately 350 kilometres to the west of Melbourne and adjoining South Australia. The traditional owners of the region are the Gunditjmarra, Bunganditj and Jarwadjali people (Glenelg Shire 2017). In 2016, Glenelg LGA had a resident population of 19,557 (ABS 2016c)^{iv}. Portland is Glenelg Shire's main regional centre. Portland SA2 was home to 10,800 residents in 2016 (ABS 2016d)^v, more than half of the Shire's population. Casterton is far smaller, with a population of 1,668 in 2016 at the State Suburb Code (SSC) level (ABS 2016e)^{vi}. Casterton is serviced by Casterton Memorial Hospital and has a public and private primary school and a secondary college.

2. GSCEMP PARTNERS

The three partner organisations that make up the GSCEMP partnership group have taken primary responsibility for different parts of the project. Specifically:

- **GLAPDInt** has strong relationships with urban-based communities from migrant and refugee backgrounds, particularly from the Great Lakes Region of Africa. GLAPDInt took the lead role in identifying families willing and able to move to the Great South Coast region of Victoria. GLAPDInt has also worked closely with the GSCEMP's Family Liaison Officers. These are members of the relocating families who provide a point of contact between the GSCEMP partnership group and the relocating families.
- **iGen Foundation's** primary role has been to provide expertise and support in relation to the intercultural framing of the project. This included work to prepare destination communities and to assess their readiness to accept relocating families.
- **LGSC** has played the lead role on-the-ground in the region with regard to project implementation. LGSC's role also involved oversight and management of the project funds.

The overarching purposes of the GSCEMP are:

- to relocate families to the Great South Coast region of Victoria in response to population decline and associated challenges (e.g. employment gaps); and

- to support the desire of some migrants and former refugees from the Great Lakes Region of Africa to call regional Australia home.

The GSCEMP has also sought to increase the population diversity of the Great South Coast region and to support integration between the relocating families and the broader community. For LGSC and iGen Foundation, a key priority was to address labour shortages in the agriculture, food and fibre sector and other sectors with employment gaps (e.g. aged care). With this in mind, LGSC and iGen Foundation aimed to relocate people with a desire to live in a regional area and to work in a sector impacted by labour shortages. For GLAPDInt, key priorities included jobs, housing and land for the relocating families.

Over the course of this evaluation it became clear that there were some differences in the partner organisations' priorities (particularly with regard to contributing to the region's agricultural workforce versus obtaining farmland for the relocating families' use). These differences created implementation challenges for the project, as discussed below.

3. SCOPE OF THIS EVALUATION

This independent evaluation was conducted in 2019 by researchers from the University of Wollongong, the University of Melbourne and the University of Newcastle. This evaluation involved in-depth interviews and a small number of qualitative online questionnaires with:

- individuals from the relocating households (8 adults and 3 children),
- 19 key community members, drawn from diverse sectors, and
- 6 representatives of the GSCEMP partner organisations.

This evaluation assessed the GSCEMP against the four aims established by the partnership group (LGSC, GLAPDInt and iGen Foundation):

1. To relocate families of African origin, resident in metropolitan Australia, to a regional area in which they have secured employment.
2. To ensure that the relocated families are welcomed and supported by the destination community.
3. To build population numbers and diversity in the Great South Coast region of Victoria.
4. To enhance sustainable economic and social development in the Great South Coast region of Victoria across a range of sectors including agriculture, business, education and community facilities.

4. KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation has identified a number of positive outcomes associated with the GSCEMP, alongside a range of challenges and areas for improvement. While participants identified a range of ways in which the project model and its implementation need to change, support for the continuation of the GSCEMP remains high amongst many members of the broader community and relocating

households. There is, however, widespread agreement that new families should only be brought to the region after the project model has been adjusted to address issues raised during this evaluation.

Based on the information provided to the evaluation team, as at December 1st 2019 all relocated households had:

- at least one person in employment,
- secured rental accommodation (with one family having purchased a house), and
- been provided with access to borrowed land, which was a key priority for the households.

Aim 1: To relocate families of African origin, resident in metropolitan Australia, to a regional area in which they have secured employment

Based on the evidence collected in this evaluation, the GSCEMP has partly met this aim. There has been a net population gain in the region of 49 individuals (14 adults and 35 children) originally from Africa. The GSCEMP was not able to secure jobs for members of all relocating households prior to arrival. Nonetheless, as at December 1st 2019, all of the relocating households had at least one member in some form of employment. Moreover, the GSCEMP partnership group has introduced changes to address employment-related challenges. Specifically, the partnership group made a decision in January 2019 to shift to a 'jobs first' approach for future intakes to

reduce the gap between families' arrival in the region and employment.

Aim 2: To ensure that the relocated families are welcomed and supported by the destination community

The GSCEMP prioritises an intercultural approach to settlement. To this end, the project model includes a range of elements designed to support meaningful interactions and connections between newcomers and the broader community. These elements include Community Conversations, the Buddy Program, Language Café, Tutoring Café and an English Language Support Program.

Box 1: Definition of interculturalism

iGen Foundation's working definition for interculturalism, which has informed activities incorporated in the GSCEMP model, is: *"At every opportunity, the intentional bringing together of people from diverse cultural, language and faith backgrounds which results in meaningful interactions that help people to reduce fear, increase understanding, engage in dialogue, share experiences, create new ideas and become friends".*

The evidence gathered during this evaluation shows that some strong and meaningful relationships are forming between relocating individuals and members of the broader community – particularly between some relocating individuals and their buddies. In

general, the relocated households feel welcome in their new communities and appreciate the friendliness of the broader population. A number of cross-cultural events have occurred, often organised by the relocating households. That being said, some barriers to the formation of strong relationships are apparent, including a few instances of discrimination, personal and cultural barriers, the general challenges of settling into small/cohesive towns, and relocating individuals' limited participation in some intercultural activities and broader community activities (like sports).

Relocating individuals' limited engagement with some aspects of the GSCEMP project model can be partly attributed to childcare and work responsibilities or an individual lack of motivation, however, a clear finding that emerged from interviews with relocating individuals is that they struggle to participate in intercultural activities when their more pressing needs (particularly for jobs, housing and land) have not yet been met. Despite these various issues, both relocating individuals and members of the broader community have expressed a clear appetite for ongoing and increased cross-cultural interaction.

Aim 3: To build population numbers and diversity in the Great South Coast region of Victoria

The GSCEMP has achieved its aim of contributing to population growth in the region, however, the impact of this increase in

population has been reduced because it has occurred in the region's larger towns, especially Hamilton (see Table 1).

Table 1. Tally of relocating individuals remaining in the region, as of December 1st 2019.

Town	Number of adults	Number of children	Total number of individuals
Hamilton	9	22	31
Casterton	3	8	11
Portland	2	5	7
Total	14	35	49

Onward migration of the relocating families from Casterton (to Hamilton and Portland) has occurred due to housing and employment related challenges, and communication challenges between the GSCEMP partnership group and the Casterton Working Group. As a result, this smaller town has not benefitted from a population increase. The shift to a 'jobs first' focus, as mentioned above, may assist with the distribution of future intakes to smaller towns in the region, as they will likely choose to relocate to towns that are close to their place of work. In addition, the GSCEMP has contributed to population diversity in the region, and this population diversity is viewed as a positive by many community members.

Aim 4: To enhance sustainable economic and social development in the Great South Coast region of Victoria across a range of sectors including agriculture, business, education and community facilities

Given the relatively small number of people who have settled in the region via the GSCEMP – compared to the existing populations of larger towns like Hamilton and Portland – it is difficult to identify any economic impacts at this early stage. Some local businesses have benefitted from being able to fill hidden jobs with reliable and hardworking employees, and the healthcare and disability sector (one of the region's largest and growing industries) has gained employees. While the GSCEMP aims to contribute to economic development in the agriculture, food and fibre sector, this has not occurred in the way expected by some of the GSCEMP partner organisations. Some relocating individuals have not aspired to work in that sector and/or have not had the skills or qualifications needed to be immediately employed on the region's farms (for instance, drivers' licenses or forklift licenses).

It is important to note here, however, that many members of the relocating families have extensive agricultural experience from their countries of origin and first refuge. With, in many instances, a lifetime of agricultural experience behind them the relocating individuals wish to make a contribution to food production in the region, but not necessarily as employees. They aspire to borrow, then rent and then ultimately purchase farmland on

which to grow organic produce and cultural crops for sale to local consumers and into Melbourne.

The main area of economic impact of the GSCEMP to date is the sustainability and resourcing of schools, however, this impact will be less pronounced if relocating households continue to settle in the region's larger towns. Impacts on local community facilities or activities appear to have been minimal at this early stage, given the limited participation of relocating families in activities that bring the broader community together (especially sports clubs).

In addition to assessing the GSCEMP against its four stated aims, this evaluation has also explored a number of other key areas identified below:

Assessing the GSCEMP with regard to relocating individuals' access to housing and experiences of housing provision

Housing supply has proven to be a challenge for the GSCEMP partnership group and relocating households. This is a common experience in many regional settlement projects in Australia and worldwide (Stump 2019)^{vii}. Housing affordability is a factor that drew some relocating households to leave their former Australian cities of residence but an undersupply of affordable and appropriate rental properties in Hamilton and Casterton, and short-term lease arrangements, have caused upheaval for some. Because many of

the relocated households include five or more children, it can be difficult to find houses that are large enough for their families' needs. A lack of housing has contributed to some families leaving the region entirely, or to families moving from Casterton to larger towns (like Hamilton and Portland).

The rental housing market that exists in the region is in many cases hidden and this creates challenges for relocating households seeking housing through formal networks. At the time of writing this report, however, all relocating households have secured rental housing and one family has purchased a house in the region.

Assessing the GSCEMP with regard to relocating individuals' access to adult education and training

The GSCEMP has focused its adult education and training on English language skills development. A number of clear training needs emerged during interviews, for instance, computer use, support with preparation of CVs and job applications and assistance with studying for drivers' licenses. These needs were not anticipated by the GSCEMP partnership group prior to this pilot phase of the project because they expected that the target cohort would have already received such supports through metropolitan-based settlement service providers. They attempted to provide some work-readiness support in a resource-constrained context. Additional unanticipated training needs pertain to the skills required for

work in the agriculture, food and fibre industries. There is some expectation within the broader community that the GSCEMP partnership group should address these needs. Additional funding will be needed to do so.

Assessing the GSCEMP with regard to relocating individuals' access to and experiences of land

Accessing land on which to grow their own crops was the primary motivation for many households that relocated as part of the GSCEMP. Before they moved, households were under the impression that they would be able to borrow farmland upon arriving in the region. For many of these households, the opportunity to access land in Australia is key to becoming settled and to feeling a sense of belonging. It also provides a crucial link to their African cultural backgrounds and is core to their identity. The GSCEMP partnership group was able to negotiate access to two areas of borrowed farmland, although there have been issues with the travel distances involved. Lengthy travel times are difficult to negotiate alongside the relocating households' family and employment responsibilities.

The concept of 'land' was a key area of miscommunication and misunderstanding between the different members of the GSCEMP partnership group. LGSC and iGen Foundation did not immediately understand the type of land desired by this particular cohort (i.e. farmland not a community garden or backyard garden). Delays in finding

farmland for the Casterton cohort undermined some relocating individuals' trust in the project. This issue, along with employment challenges, have caused some of these individuals to become disconnected from other project activities, specifically intercultural activities. At the time of writing, the GSCEMP partnership group is seeking to address this very important issue for the relocating households by negotiating access to farmland near Hamilton. It has committed to ensuring this issue is addressed proactively for future intakes.

Evaluation participants' perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the GSCEMP

Evaluation participants identified a range of positive outcomes of the project, as well as challenges and recommendations for improvement of the GSCEMP to make it easier for new families that come to the region. The key points made by the evaluation participants, in each of these areas, are summarised and listed within Boxes 2, 3 and 4. The tallies, for example (n=5), are based on a specific section of the interview/ questionnaire schedule where participants were asked to identify strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for the GSCEMP. Only those strengths, weaknesses and recommendations that were mentioned by multiple participants are tallied here.

These findings need to be read within the context of the project parameters. The GSCEMP is a small-scale, place-based pilot project with limited funding and without access to support from established settlement

services which are predominantly located in cities and larger regional centres. Undertaking a regional settlement project of this sort, under these types of circumstances, is a complex and challenging process.

Box 2. Evaluation participants' perspectives on the positive outcomes and strengths of the GSCEMP

Positive outcomes of the GSCEMP for relocating households:

- The GSCEMP has been effective in enabling the relocating households to move to the region. (n=5)
- In so doing it has helped to improve their quality of life by enabling them to access a desired rural lifestyle. (n=9)

Positive outcomes of the GSCEMP for the Great South Coast region of Victoria:

- The GSCEMP has contributed to population growth. (n=7)
- The GSCEMP has contributed to greater cultural diversity and cross-cultural awareness amongst the community. Members of the broader community find this to be invigorating. (n=7)
- The GSCEMP is filling employment gaps and invisible jobs. (n=5)
- The relocating individuals are perceived as good people, who are hardworking, have good family values and can make an important contribution to the region. (n=3)

Strengths of the GSCEMP:

- The local community has been generous towards, and supportive of, the relocated households. (n=8)
- The local government has been supportive of the GSCEMP. (n=6)
- The members of the GSCEMP partnership group are good, passionate, committed people. (n=3)

Box 3. Evaluation participants' perspectives on the negative outcomes and weaknesses of the GSCEMP

- Communication challenges between the GSCEMP partnership group, relocating households and Casterton Community Working Group. (n=24)

Note: many of the other challenges outlined below are a direct result of these communication challenges.

- Conflicting expectations between the GSCEMP partnership group, relocating households and Community Working Group members, especially in Casterton. (n=15)
- Challenges with project planning, organisation and structures. (n=14)

Note: It is important to consider that the project was evaluated during its pilot phase and so the evaluation findings provide important information for improving planning and structures.

- Funding and resourcing have limited the on-the-ground support able to be provided to relocating individuals and the broader community by the GSCEMP partnership group. (n=13)
- Difficulties and delays in finding employment for relocating individuals. (n=13)
- Difficulties and delays in finding long-term rental housing for relocating households. (n=7)

Box 4. Evaluation participants' recommendations for improving the GSCEMP

- Secure jobs for relocating individuals prior to relocation. (n=12)
- Improve the selection process to ensure a fit between relocating individuals and available jobs in the region. As part of this, more information about relocating individuals is needed before they relocate. (n=10)
- Provide farmland nearby for relocating households to access. (n=9)
- Ensure there is adequate and stable housing available before people relocate. (n=8)
- Ensure project staff are able to be present on-the-ground in all locations where the project is being implemented. (n=7)
- Ensure clear and consistent communication about what is being provided for relocating households. (n=6)
- Ensure that local communities and local governments continue to play a lead role in project implementation to solidify local ownership and support. (n=6)
- Improve ongoing communication with the broader community, including employers. This includes the point that marketing of the project to employers could be more effective. (n=5)

5. KEY LESSONS FROM THE GSCEMP EVALUATION

This section summarises the reflections of the evaluation team regarding the future of the GSCEMP and the key insights it provides for other regional settlement projects.

Regional settlement projects are complex, particularly in places without established settlement services. There are, however, important benefits for regional communities and relocated households when regional settlement projects are able to find a good fit between both groups' goals. We acknowledge the strengths of the relocating households, their desire to improve their families' lives and their commitment to making positive contributions to the Great South Coast region of Victoria. We also acknowledge the hard work, dedication and numerous unpaid hours that have been committed by all members of the GSCEMP partnership group and the welcoming response provided by broader members of the Hamilton and Casterton communities.

The evaluation team agrees with many of the over-arching strengths, weaknesses and recommendations identified by the evaluation participants. Our conversations with the GSCEMP partnership group, members of the broader community and relocating individuals have highlighted the importance of planning to find a good fit between the aspirations of regional communities and the aspirations of relocating households. We are optimistic that

the GSCEMP's shift to a 'jobs first' approach will address one of the major challenges experienced during the pilot phase of the GSCEMP – that is, a delay in finding employment for some individuals which created financial stress and frustration. Equally, we are optimistic that the GSCEMP partnership group's current efforts to secure farmland near Hamilton for the relocating households will help to ease some relocating individuals' disappointments, help them to feel settled, and create an enhanced sense of belonging in the region.

The key lessons below seek to provide guidance for the GSCEMP partnership group on how to continue with their project as it comes out of its pilot phase; and to other communities and organisations that aspire to support regional settlement.

Lesson 1. Working from a strengths-based perspective

A strengths-based approach to regional settlement is key. This involves recognising the pre-existing strengths that people from migrant and refugee backgrounds bring to regional areas. It is, however, unrealistic to expect that most relocating individuals will arrive with the full set of expertise and skills desired by destination communities. To this end, a strengths-based approach also requires a commitment from the organisations, local governments and communities supporting regional settlement to identify skills and knowledge gaps and assist relocating

individuals to develop additional skills and expertise that meet both groups' aspirations.

Lesson 2. Resourcing and site selection

- i) Regional settlement projects need to be well-resourced and adequately staffed, particularly in locations that lack established, government funded settlement services. While the numbers of relocating households involved might initially appear small, the amount of on-the-ground work and time commitment involved, particularly during the establishment phase, should not be underestimated. Resourcing regional settlement projects well, from the start, will ensure that they have strong foundations and are built to be sustainable over time.
- ii) Where regional settlement projects are spread across multiple locations, resourcing should support the presence of on-the-ground project staff in each location.
- iii) Some of the challenges faced by regional settlement projects cannot be solved at the local or organisational level because they relate to broader structural challenges and constraints (e.g. limited availability of affordable rental housing in many regional areas and the absence of government-funded settlement supports in smaller and more remote regional areas). Support from governments at all levels is needed to address such structural challenges.

- iv) Such structural constraints need to be considered when secondary settlement sites are selected in order to ensure the best possible chance of success in a resource-constrained environment. For example, if there is a lack of affordable and suitable rental housing in a location, regional settlement is unlikely to succeed.
- v) Sufficient resourcing also needs to be available for independent evaluation of regional settlement projects. Early evaluation can provide evidence of emerging challenges and provide opportunities to address them for current and future intakes.

Lesson 3. Meeting relocating individuals' and destination communities' needs

- i) For regional settlement projects to be successful there is a need for careful application and selection processes to ensure that the destination community is well-placed to meet the expectations and aspirations of relocating individuals and vice versa.
- ii) Processes that match people to jobs are important to ensure that relocating individuals are skilled and/or motivated to work in sectors that are experiencing labour shortages and hence will be able to meet the needs of their destination communities.
- iii) Matching people to jobs depends upon clear and transparent information about relocating individuals' experience, skills and aspirations before they move.

- iv) Matching people to jobs also depends on the implementing organisations behind regional settlement projects having access to credible, current and locally-specific workforce demand information. At present, higher-level industry sector workforce demand information is available, but detailed local-level datasets on advertised and hidden jobs are necessary for successful regional settlement.
- v) Relocating households are diverse. They come to regional settlement with varied skills, experiences and educational backgrounds, but also with diverse aspirations. For those involved in the GSCEMP access to farmland is key to feeling settled in Australia. Other groups will likely hold different goals. It is important for organisations involved in regional settlement projects to thoroughly understand these goals to ensure that the aspirations of both relocating individuals and destination communities are understood and can realistically be met.

Lesson 4. Communication, shared understandings and consistent processes.

- i) Having multiple partner organisations involved in a regional settlement project creates opportunities to bring diverse strengths to the partnership. To ensure a shared understanding between partner organisations it is crucial that partners' separate obligations and commitments are agreed upon in advance and clearly

articulated in writing. Working within agreed project aims is key to reducing the potential for miscommunication.

- ii) Regional settlement projects that involve people from migrant and refugee backgrounds are, above all, cross-cultural projects. It is critical to ensure a shared understanding of key terms between all parties (i.e. partner organisations, local governments, communities and relocating households) in order to limit the risk of miscommunication and mismatching expectations.
- iii) Related to the above, key project objectives and commitments must be translated into relevant community languages and provided to relocating households in written form.
- iv) Where multiple partner organisations are involved in a regional settlement project it is important to ensure that each partner gives the same information to relocating households, key stakeholders and the broader community.
- v) All parts of a regional settlement project need to work together so that all destination communities and relocating households have equitable access to information and opportunities.
- vi) Communication, cooperation and trust between partner organisations, and between partner organisations, key stakeholders, relocating households and the broader community, is crucial.

Lesson 5. Connecting with broader expertise and support networks.

- i) Implementing agencies should ensure that project staff are trained in working with people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Therefore, it is important to develop links with key specialist agencies in the relevant state/territory, including but not limited to those providing settlement support, language training, multicultural health and torture and trauma counselling.
- ii) This is particularly critical in regard to health. In locations where most residents are Australian-born, GPs may not be aware of their obligation to access interpreter services to assist clients from other language backgrounds or be familiar with working with patients from different cultural backgrounds. The same challenges of cross-cultural service provision need to be addressed in regard to other key services, like Centrelink. In small regional towns overseas-born persons often rely heavily on mainstream services (due to a lack of specialist or culturally-specific services) and so upskilling of mainstream service providers is needed. Implementing agencies have a responsibility to encourage and support local service providers to develop links with specialist agencies in their state/territory in order to ensure that rights to equitable service provision are met.

6. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

It is the hope of the evaluation team that the information gathered during this evaluation, and summarised in this *Community Report*, will support the GSCEMP partnership group to:

- i) ensure that the needs and priorities of the first two intakes of relocating households to the Great South Coast region of Victoria are met;
- ii) provide local volunteers, employers and community members with the information and support they need to extend upon their generous contributions to the GSCEMP;
- iii) guide necessary changes to GSCEMP model for future intakes to the region; and
- iv) provide guidance for other regions seeking to develop secondary migration projects.

Endnotes and references

ⁱ<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/files/review-integration-employment-settlement-outcomes-refugees-humanitarian-entrants-government-response.pdf>

ⁱⁱStatistical Area Level 2 (SA2)

ⁱⁱⁱABS (2016a) QuickStats, Hamilton SA2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Canberra; ABS (2016b) Quickstats, Southern Grampians LGA. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Canberra.

^{iv}ABS (2016c) Quickstats, Glenelg LGA. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Canberra.

^vABS (2016d) Quickstats, Portland SA2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Canberra.

^{vi}ABS (2016e) Quickstats, Casterton SSC. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Canberra.

^{vii}Stump, T. (2019) *The Right Fit: Attracting and retaining newcomers in regional towns*.

<https://www.citytocountryproject.com>