

## Queensland Strategic Settlement Committee (QSSC)

### Meeting Communiqué #8

24 June 2025

The Queensland Strategic Settlement Committee (QSSC) met on Tuesday, 24 June 2025.

#### **Members in attendance:**

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Nolene Gray (DSDSATSIP)            | 11. Liz Irvine (Thriving Local)                 |
| 2. Craig Sheild (DSDSATSIP)           | 12. Tra Nguyen (TMSG)                           |
| 3. Scott Bray (TAFE QLD)              | 13. Christine Castley (Multicultural Australia) |
| 4. Hayley Stevenson (DoE)             | 14. Jo Nelson (Multicultural Australia)         |
| 5. Faysel Ahmed Selat (QACC)          | 15. Jo-Ann Cochran (Multicultural Australia)    |
| 6. John Bosco Ngendakurio (ECCQ)      |   |
| 7. Shane Klintworth (MCCGC)           |   |
| 8. Andrea Obeyesekere (Centacare FNQ) |   |
| 9. Tanya Van Bael (QPASTT)            |   |
| 10. Zoe Williams (DHA)                |   |

#### **Guest Speakers:**

16. Robi Alam (Rohingya United)
17. Joseph Gilmour (LGAQ)
18. Judith Malandu (Multicultural Australia)
19. Meredene Hill (TIQ)

### Summary of Discussions and Outcomes from the QSSC Meeting – 24 June 2025

#### **Stories from the ground: Rabi Alam (Rohingya Youth Community Representative) and Faysel Ahmed Selat (President Queensland African Communities Council)**

'Stories from the Ground' form a critical part of QSSC agenda, where community representatives address QSSC and share issues, concerns, priorities and opportunities to benefit the settlement of humanitarian and migrant communities in Queensland.

QSSC was privileged to hear from Feysal Ahmed Selat and Rabi Alam who shared their views and experiences on supporting humanitarian entrants in settlement. QSSC welcomes Feysal Ahmed Selat as the incoming President of the Queensland Communities Council and ongoing member, QSSC.

Rabi Alam shared his journey as a proud Queenslanders today – from his arrival as a refugee in Australia, 15 years ago. Rabi reflected on his challenges and opportunities in Australia that inspire him to work and support the recent cohort of Rohingya families arriving to their new home in Queensland. Rabi is passionate about supporting the inclusion and belonging of new Queenslanders – and works to support Rohingya youth through sporting activities. He highlighted the importance of

belonging, mentorship, cultural pride, and youth empowerment, particularly through community, sport, and education. Rabi spoke about the resilience of the community, and thanks to Australia's humanitarian efforts, many are now thriving and contributing to society — but stressed that new families are arriving with more complex needs, including mental health and cultural adjustment challenges.

Faysel Ahmed Selat spoke of his personal journey from arrival in Australia in 2013 – fleeing Somalia's civil war and spending 10 years in a refugee camp in Eritrea, without access to high school or formal education. Faysel forged a successful education and career pathway in Australia and now supports the Somali community through their settlement in Australia. As President of the Queensland African Communities Council, Faysel is engaged in supporting Queenslanders from over 54 countries. He understands community pressures and needs around understanding and navigating Australian service systems. Faysel holds a deep belief in community — noting his own lived experience informs his understanding of cultural differences and the importance of culturally responsive support.

***Key themes discussed at the meeting:***

**Queensland Settlement Updates**

QSSC members heard current humanitarian entrant settlement trends and updates – including, updates on the Rohingya community settlement in Queensland, as well as support for Palestinian and Israeli nationals (under the Temporary Humanitarian Concern visas). QSSC members were also provided updates from regional settlement locations (through the work of Local Area Collaboratives in Cairns, Townsville, Brisbane, Logan/Gold Coast and Toowoomba).

**2025 Outlook**

QSSC noted the current global context, including ongoing major conflicts (e.g. Middle East, Ukraine) and their continued impact on refugee and displaced populations. Updates from Zoe Williams (Assistant Secretary, Settlement Program Operations Branch, Department of Home Affairs) and Christine Castley (CEO, Multicultural Australia) noted the recent announcement of the establishment of a new Office for Multicultural Affairs (OMA). The OMA is established as part of broad reforms flowing from the Multicultural Framework Review and will seek to centralise Multicultural Affairs, Settlement functions, AMEP, and TIS under one office within the Department of Home Affairs. The inclusion of the Ministry of Multicultural Affairs within the Cabinet was noted as a historic first for Australia.

### **Education Inclusion for CALD Students**

QSSC priority discussions have focused on mainstream service capacity and how the settlement sector can work with these services to support humanitarian entrants. In this context, QSSC retains a focus on health, housing and employment.

With intent to include education as a priority domain, QSSC invited the Department of Education to QSSC membership.

Hayley Stevenson (Assistant Director-General, Student Support, Qld Education) - addressed QSSC on Inclusion Support for CALD and Refugee children in Queensland public schools.

Regional representatives from key humanitarian settlement locations (Cairns, Toowoomba and Townsville) shared key issues and barriers for refugee and humanitarian entrant students in Queensland schools. Representatives noted the local barriers (e.g., housing and transport) impacting access, enrolment and ongoing attendance as well as structural barriers (e.g., requirements for possession of long-term housing lease agreements and the deregistration of a number of 16–17-year-old humanitarian entrants from high school (those still on an English language acquisition pathway).

A critical outcome from the meeting is an agreement to coordinate key meetings with the Department of Education Regional Directors across key settlement locations and relevant settlement stakeholders.

### **Settlement Planning Queensland**

QSSC retains a significant interest in migration and settlement planning discussions. It recognises that delivering settlement and integration outcomes for refugees and humanitarian entrants, directly involves all three levels of government in Australia, and requires a coordinated approach across all levels, to effectively support new arrivals.

In pursuance of this objective, QSSC welcomed the Local Government Association of Queensland to the QSSC membership.

QSSC progressed discussions noting the recent transition in Australia, to a multi-year migration planning model - to better align migration with long-term infrastructure and service planning needs.

QSSC heard from Joseph Gilmour (Lead, Workforce Policy, Legislation and Engagement, LGAQ) and Meredene Hill (Director, Migration Queensland, Trade and Investment Queensland).

LGAQ noted their 2024–2028 Workforce Strategy, that has a focus on migrant workers (increasing access to migrant workforce pathways, supporting regional growth and better recognition of overseas qualifications, addressing low awareness of job opportunities, and housing challenges and improving coordination between migration policy, regional bodies, organisations, and government).

QSSC discussions noted the importance of setting the scene for meaningful discussions (especially around economic participation, and secondary settlement) and addressing systemic barriers to CALD workforce participation. Discussions underscored the importance of supporting female workforce participation and the need to work with regional stakeholders (e.g., local Councils) and Migration QLD to turn ideas into action.

**Other Business:**

QSSC members were introduced to incoming Chair – Jo Nelson who will step into the role of CEO Multicultural Australia. QSSC members acknowledged and thanked Christine Castley as CEO Multicultural Australia and inaugural Chair, QSSC.

**Next Meeting:**

QSSC is scheduled to meet again in October 2025.