The light on the hill:

PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP OF REFUGEES IN AUSTRALIA

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APRIL 2017

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Executive Summary

This report summarises and discusses data collected during community consultations regarding the Community Support Program. Themes within the data are identified and implications for the future promotion of private-sector refugee sponsorship are discussed.

Five key themes are discussed in the report:

1. *The presence of considerable goodwill for the concept of private sponsorship among consultation participants;*

2. *The need for greater strategic direction among settlement organisations in seeking to engage business groups;*

3. *Potential models for sustainable private-sector funding of the Community Support Program;*

4. *Uncertainty regarding the role of refugee sponsors under the Community Support Program;*

5. *Potential for increased refugee settlement in regional areas through the Community Support Program.*

The report also makes four recommendations for AMES Australia's administration of the Community Support Program:

1. *A quota should be allocated in the 2017-18 program year for humanitarian entrants through the Community Support Program to be sponsored by Supporting Community Organisations;*

2. *Groups with the potential to act as Supporting Community Organisations in regional areas should be identified and assisted to take on the role;*

3. *Proposals for funding models, including social impact bonds, should be developed in conjunction with social finance organisations and Supporting Community Organisations to put to government;*

4. *AMES Australia should assist Supporting Community Organisations to develop*

proposals for employment projects for Community Support Program entrants, and facilitate partnership discussions with local business representative groups.

The report concludes transforming broad support for private sponsorship into concrete offers to sponsor is now the primary challenge to greater Supporting Community Organisation involvement. Access to funding and the role of sponsors are key hurdles to achieving this transformation.

Acknowledgements

Terminology

We should make clear the use of certain terms. Throughout the report, we have used the terms 'sponsor', 'Supporting Community Member' and 'Supporting Community Organisation' interchangeably. 'Supporting Community Member' and 'Supporting Community Organisation' are in fact terms with specific definitions under the Community Proposal Pilot. As the scope of this project asked participants to consider international developments in private sponsorship of refugees and the future Community Support Program in addition to the CPP, we feel the use of language specific to particular settlement programs inappropriately narrows the context and implications of the report.

However, we also feel it is necessary to clarify the current role of AMES Australia and the four other Approved Proposing Organisations (Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Australian Migrant Resource Centre, Illawarra Multicultural Services and Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre) within the CPP. Approved Proposing Organisations (APOs) are not 'sponsors' in the context of this discussion. They act instead to facilitate the 'proposing' of applicants for humanitarian entry to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. In this report, the term 'proposer' is therefore linked to aspects of Australia's migration system, while 'sponsor' and 'sponsorship' refer to the post-arrival settlement process.

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Abbreviations

AAIP	African Australian Inclusion Program
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
APO	Approved Proposing Organisation
BRMC	Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council
BRSAC	Ballarat Regional Settlement Advocacy Committee
CPP	Community Proposal Pilot
CSP	Community Support Program
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
HSS	Humanitarian Settlement Services
MVSRG	Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group
NAB	National Australia Bank
SCM	Supporting Community Member
SCO	Supporting Community Organisation
SIB	Social Impact Bonds
SME	Small or Medium Enterprise
SHEV	Safe Haven Enterprise Visa
SVA	Social Ventures Australia

Section 1: Introduction

Community sponsorship of refugees has been part of Australia's Humanitarian Programme since the late 1970s. A range of programs, including the Community Refugee Settlement Scheme, the Global Special Humanitarian Program, and the Special Assistance Categories, have placed differing levels of obligation on sponsors at various times.

In 2013, the Australian government announced the establishment of a new pilot program, known as the Community Proposal Pilot (CPP). The CPP aimed to engage community organisations and individuals, known as Supporting Community Organisations and Supporting Community Members, in the sponsorship of the settlement of humanitarian entrants. The CPP is administered by five Approved Proposing Organisations (APOs): AMES Australia, the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Illawarra Multicultural Services, Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre and the Australian Migrant Resource Centre. The CPP has provided 500 visa places annually within Australia's overall humanitarian intake.

In September 2016, recognition of the scale of the global humanitarian crisis brought political leaders together for international summits in New York. At those summits, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Foreign Affairs Minister Julie Bishop and Minister for Immigration and Border Protection Peter Dutton made a joint announcement to the effect a new refugee sponsorship program would be established in Australia. The new program is to be known as the Community Support Program (CSP) and will double the visa allocation of the CPP, commencing on 1 July, 2017. The announcement included reference to the role of "communities and businesses" in refugee sponsorship[1].

Anticipating greater emphasis from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) on the role of businesses and community organisations, AMES Australia commissioned a series of community consultations to be held in February and March, 2017. The consultations aimed to gauge interest in the CPP and CSP from settlement stakeholder organisations, and their perceptions of the programs.

This report presents the findings from those consultations. The following section outlines the project's research methodology. Section Three presents the quantitative trends in the data. Section Four comprises a discussion of qualitative themes identified during the consultations, while Section Five lays out recommendations for AMES Australia's planning for the CSP. Finally, Section Six concludes that while strong goodwill exists towards the CSP, significant hurdles must be successfully overcome to translate community sentiment into active engagement with the program.

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[1] Turnbull, M, Bishop, J & Dutton P 2016, 'Joint Media Release: Leaders' Summit on Refugees,' *Australian Parliamentary Library*, 21 September, accessed 9 April 2017 at http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/media/pressrel/4830778/upload_binary/4830778.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22Community%20Support%20Program%22.

Section 2: Methodology

This report aims to provide preliminary answers to questions regarding the capacity and interest of organisations from the business, volunteer, community services and local government sectors in engaging with the Community Support Program (CSP). Broad responses were sought to the following questions:

- What are the strengths of your organisation regarding humanitarian settlement?
- What are its weaknesses regarding humanitarian settlement?
- What opportunities do you believe the CSP may represent for humanitarian settlement in Australia?
- What barriers do you think may prevent the CSP's potential from being realised?
- If possible, would you like to be involved in the CSP in the future? If yes, in what way?

Research Design

Research was conducted via a series of four community consultations during February and March, 2017. The consultations were held in regional (Ballarat and Geelong) and metropolitan (Melbourne) locations in Victoria. The consultations had a dual function: first, to inform participants by providing background information regarding the concept of private sponsorship of refugee resettlement. Information regarding the current program design of the Community Proposal Pilot, was also included. Second, participants were invited to join a roundtable discussion of the first four of the research questions listed above.

Instruments

Data was collected during the discussions using a conventional SWOT analysis template. In the case of this project, "Threats" was replaced by "Barriers", to produce a 'SWOB' analysis. Group facilitators took notes during the discussions, and they form the basis of the analysis presented in this report.

The final question was included on a feedback form that participants were asked to complete at the end of the consultation.

Sample

In line with the research aims of the project, organisations from across the business, volunteer, community services and local government sectors were invited to the consultations. Organisations were selected for invitation based on their potential for involvement in the CSP. 67 people attended in total, representing 50 settlement stakeholder organisations.

Data Collection

Data was collected during roundtable discussions framed within a SWOB analysis. The discussions were facilitated by staff from AMES Australia's Social Participation and International Humanitarian Affairs branch,

and the Research and Policy unit.

Data Analysis

The data was primarily compiled by category on the SWOB analysis template. It was then cross-referenced against four stakeholder categories: 'Grassroots', 'Mainstream', 'Service Providers' and 'Communities'. The cross-referencing categories were used to differentiate and analyse qualitative differences in perceptions of settlement processes and outcomes across stakeholder groups. The categories represented the following perspectives on settlement:

Grassroots: Represents the point of view of volunteer and community-based organisations currently providing direct, 'hands on' settlement assistance to new arrivals. Examples include volunteer organisations (Welcome to Eltham), not for profit groups (West Welcome Wagon), and religion-based groups (Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project). This category is differentiated from Communities by the recognition of the individual agency of actors regarding the level and manner of their involvement in providing settlement assistance. Settlement assistance broadly in line with services available under the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program, but provided by community groups, was included in this category.

Communities: Represents the 'lived experience' perspective of ethnic community members and organisations regarding the settlement process and outcomes. Includes first-hand responses from participants representing ethnic communities, and from settlement service providers where those responses spoke to the lived experience of humanitarian arrivals.

Service Providers: Represents the perspective of organisations straddling the divisions between direct provision of settlement assistance, program design and policy development. AMES Australia is an obvious example. References to services provided by local and state government were also included in this category.

Mainstream: A broad category that includes the perspectives of all other humanitarian settlement stakeholders, including business, federal government departments, and the wider Australian population. Representation of groups in this category was relatively lacking at the consultations. For this reason, data in the Mainstream category should be viewed critically.

In addition to the four main categories, two other cross-referencing themes were identified:

Role of the Sponsor: Includes specific references to the role of refugee sponsors within the CSP. This category revolves around participants' perceptions regarding the level of settlement assistance to be provided by sponsoring groups and how it ought to be provided. Questions regarding specific aspects of the CSP program structure were also included in this category.

Regional Victoria: Includes specific references to the influence of geographic location regarding settlement outcomes. Responses in this category were limited to comments speaking directly to settlement in regional (ie. non-metropolitan) areas. For the purposes of this project, Geelong and Ballarat were considered regional areas.

Role of the Sponsor and Regional Victoria were analysed separately from the four main categories as they represent over-arching thematic considerations for the program design of the CSP.

Limitations

A key limitation of this study was the low representation of business and commercial representation compared to other settlement stakeholder groups. The relative lack of commercial perspectives on humanitarian resettlement resulted in participants in other categories 'projecting' their views on the role of business in settlement, potentially skewing the discussions.

Section 3: Results

Research Question 1: What are the strengths of your organisation regarding humanitarian settlement?

Responses indicate a strong correlation between the Strengths and Grassroots categories. 42 per cent of overall responses in the Strength category referred to Grassroots settlement perspectives.
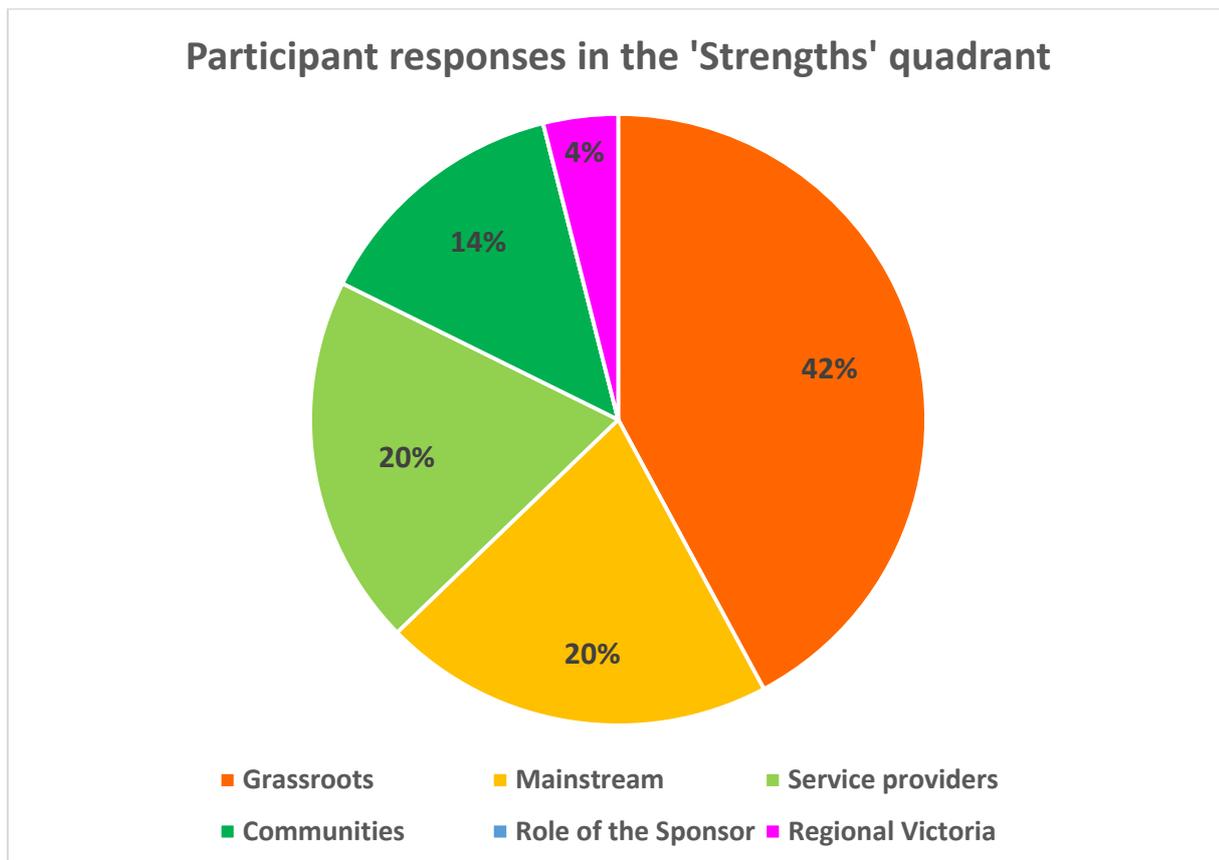
Figure 1: Strengths of settlement organisations broken down by settlement perspectives.

Further breakdown indicates settlement assistance is seen as a particular strength of the Grassroots perspective. Table 1 demonstrates the dominance of existing avenues of settlement assistance, including volunteering, financial contributions, donation of goods and facilitating social connections. Responses involving examples of assistance made up over 60 per cent of responses in the Strengths/Grassroots cross-referenced category.

Table 1: Breakdown of Strengths/Grassroots and Weaknesses/Grassroots responses

Strength/Grassroots	Responses	Weaknesses/Grassroots	Responses
Settlement assistance	27	Resources	12
Settlement networks	8	Communication	7
Agility/responsiveness	4	Weak networks	5
Diverse workforce	1	Lack of internal diversity	5
Filling service 'gaps'	1	Negative social influences	3
Access to accommodation	1	Services	3
Advocacy	1		

Although the Mainstream category only received around a quarter of responses in the Strengths quadrant, it did include a concrete demonstration of successful corporate engagement with the humanitarian sector. The National Australia Bank's African Australian Inclusion Program (AAIP) and support of Good Shepherd Microfinance were highlighted as specific examples.

In addition to the four primary cross-referenced response categories, responses were also recorded in the Strengths/Regional Victoria cross-over. Centralisation of services, access to cheaper housing and nomination of regional areas as "settlement zones" were viewed as strengths by some consultation participants.

Research Question 2: What are your organisation's weaknesses regarding humanitarian settlement?

Responses to the second question were primarily distributed between the Grassroots and Communities secondary categories. Responses in the Weakness/Grassroots subcategory were qualitatively different to those in the Grassroots/Strength cross-over, as indicated in Table 1. Strength/Grassroots responses were heavily weighted in favour of direct settlement experience gained by providing assistance to humanitarian entrants. Weaknesses reflected structural organisational concerns: lack of resources, communication and networking, and working against the undermining influence of social issues such as racism. In contrast, Table 2 demonstrates weaknesses expressed in relation to the Communities subcategory reflected similar issues to the Strengths/Communities combination.

Table 2: Breakdown of Strengths/Communities and Weaknesses/Communities responses

Strengths/Communities	Responses	Weaknesses/Communities	Responses
Social support	9	Employment	15

Service access	3	Service access	8
Employment	2	Settlement support	6
		Social issues	4
		Housing	2

The Mainstream sub-category had the smallest number of responses in the Weakness quadrant of the SWOB analysis. However, Figure 2 demonstrates lack of understanding of humanitarian settlement issues also represented a strong theme among responses in the Weakness/Mainstream combination, making up more than half of responses. Figure 2 also shows several references were made during the consultations to the CPP as a weakness. This is an unexpected result, however, consultation notes unfortunately do not indicate whether particular aspects of the CPP or the program as a whole is perceived negatively.
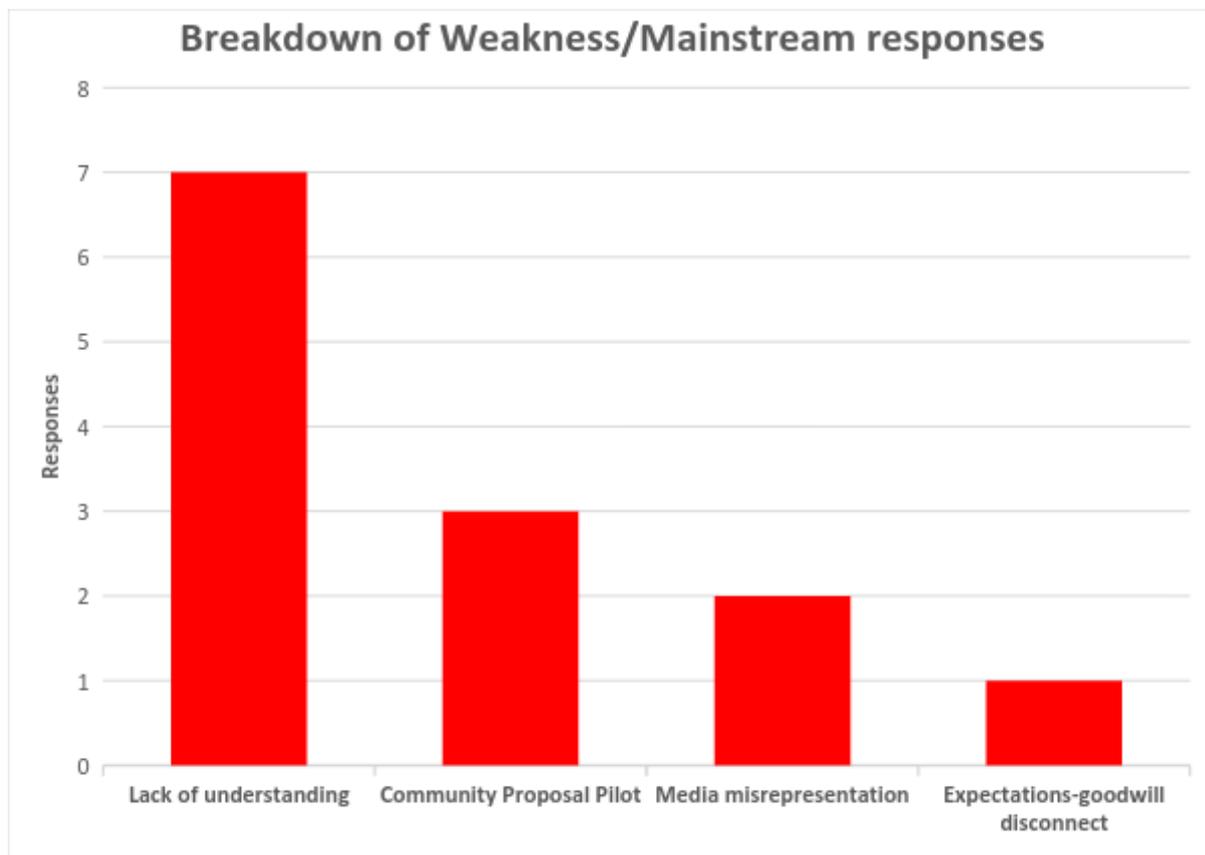
Figure 2: Response subcategories in the Weakness/Mainstream cross-over.

Research Question 3: What opportunities do you believe the CSP may represent for humanitarian settlement in Australia?

The Opportunities section of the SWOB analysis was dominated by responses in the Mainstream and

Communities categories. Figure 3 shows the Mainstream category received almost half of the responses.

Proportion of 'Opportunities' responses by subcategory

- Grassroots 11%
- Mainstream 44%
- Service providers 19%
- Communities 27%

■ Grassroots ■ Mainstream ■ Service providers ■ Communities
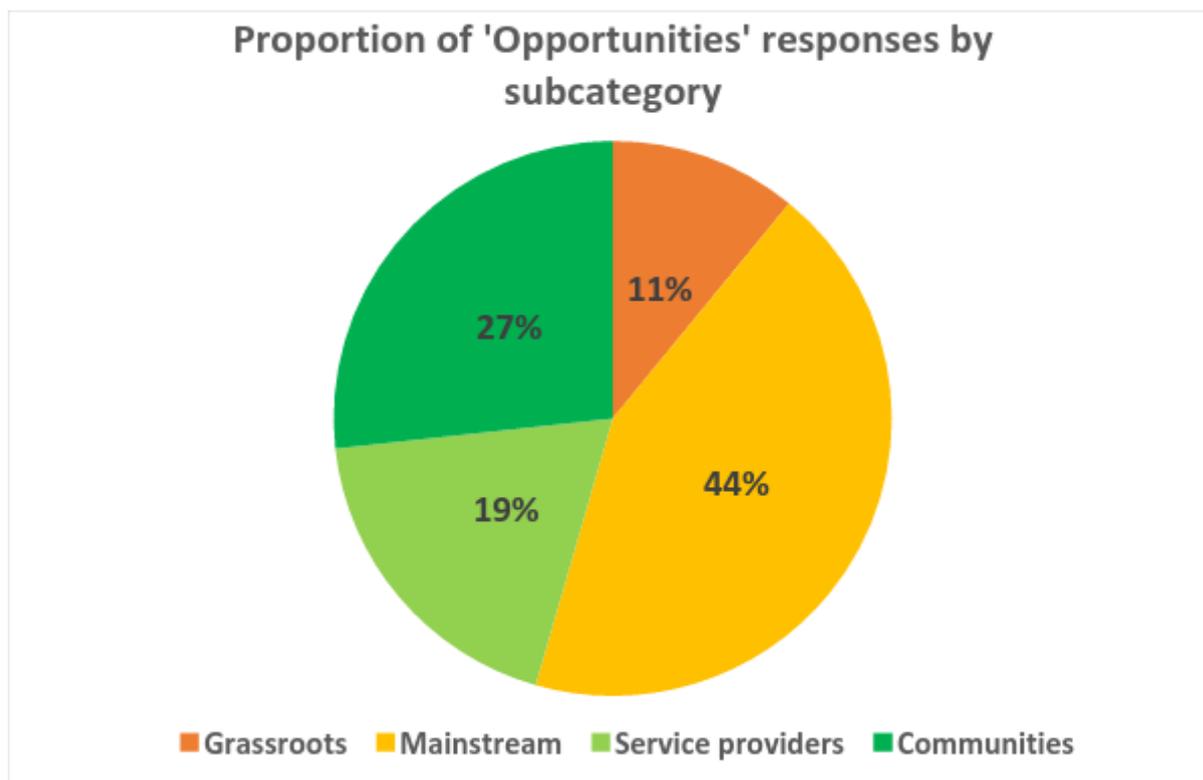
Figure 3: Mainstream and Communities responses dominate the 'Opportunities' SWOB quadrant.

Responses referring to Promotion/Engagement formed an overwhelming majority in the Opportunities/Mainstream combination. Table 3 shows responses in the Opportunities/Mainstream combination are highly concentrated, while responses in the Opportunities/Communities combination vary widely.

Table 3: Response sub-categories in the Opportunities/Mainstream and Opportunities/Communities combinations

Opportunities/Mainstream	Responses	Opportunities/Communities	Responses
Promotion/Engagement	34	Employment	13
Fundraising	9	Family reunion	4
Training	1	Social participation	3
		Strengths-based approach	3
		Education	1
		International students	1

		Establish ethnic communities	1
		Facilitation of on-arrival housing	1
Total	**44**	**Total**	**27**

In addition to the strong correlation between the Opportunities quadrant and the Mainstream and Communities categories, a non-correlation existed between Opportunities and Grassroots. Where future opportunities were identified from the Grassroots perspective, they were primarily related to forming better linkages between settlement organisations.

Low levels of responses regarding the role of sponsors within the CSP registered in the Opportunities quadrant. Undefined "benefits to sponsors" was recorded as a general future opportunity, while one other participant spoke positively of their perception of the role of sponsors as "orientation buddies".

Specific references to the Regional Victoria cross-referencing category also registered in Opportunities. General population growth and the demarcation of regional areas as Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) settlement destinations were identified by participants as broadly positive trends for future humanitarian settlement.

Research Question 4: What barriers do you think may prevent the CSP's potential from being realised?

A clear discrepancy exists between the number of responses compiled in the Barriers quadrant of the SWOB analysis and response totals in the other sections. Figure 4 indicates consultation participants provided fewer feedback responses regarding barriers to the success of the CSP. This result was unexpected, but may be the result of lack of time, as it was the last category to be considered in each consultation.
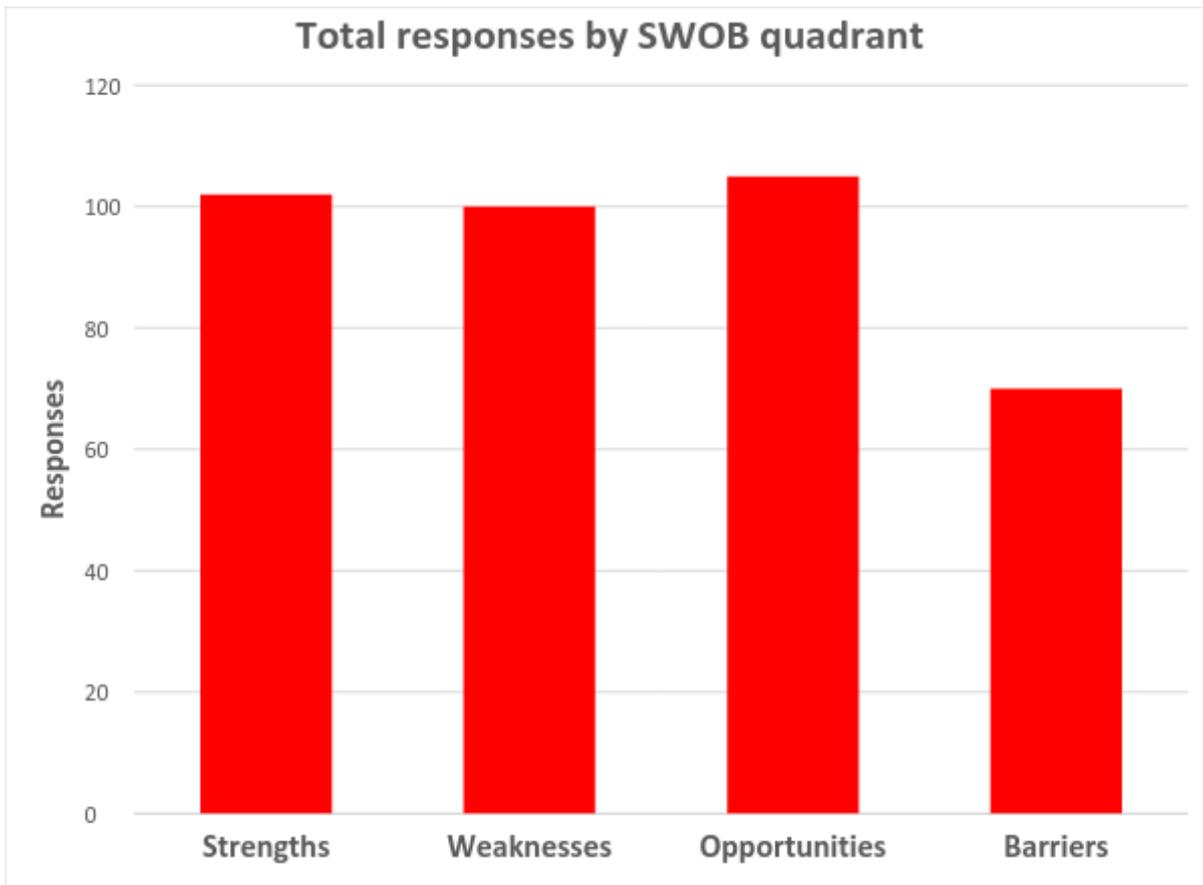
Figure 4: SWOB analysis category responses.

The Barriers/Grassroots and Barriers/Communities cross-overs received the highest number of responses. Barriers/Mainstream received a small number of responses, although it also contained the second-largest individual response subcategory, with concerns at federal government policy registering consistently across the four consultations. Finally, existing services were not generally seen as a barrier to future humanitarian settlement, either through the CSP or other programs. Table 4 lays out these trends in greater detail.

Table 4: Barriers quadrant responses by cross-over and subcategory

Barriers/Grassroots	Responses	Barriers/Communities	Responses
Resources	15	Social isolation	6
Networking	5	Economic participation	6
Community Support Program	3	Lack of equity	4
		Mental health	1
		Lack of coordination	1
		Access to education	1
		Housing affordability	1

Total	23	Total	20
Barriers/Mainstream	**Responses**	**Barriers/Existing Services**	**Responses**
Government policy	7	Large settlement organisations	2
Lack of cultural diversity	3	Rushing programs	2
Media coverage	2	Risk of exploitation	1
		Duplication of services	1
		Focus on asylum seekers	1
		High cost	1
Total	**12**	**Total**	**8**

Concerns regarding the role of sponsors also made up a small number of responses in the Barriers quadrant. Figure 5 indicates sponsor responsibilities constituted the majority of those responses. Issue areas such as sponsors' legal responsibilities to new arrivals, coordination of sponsors' collaboration with service providers and lack of settlement experience were raised during the consultations.
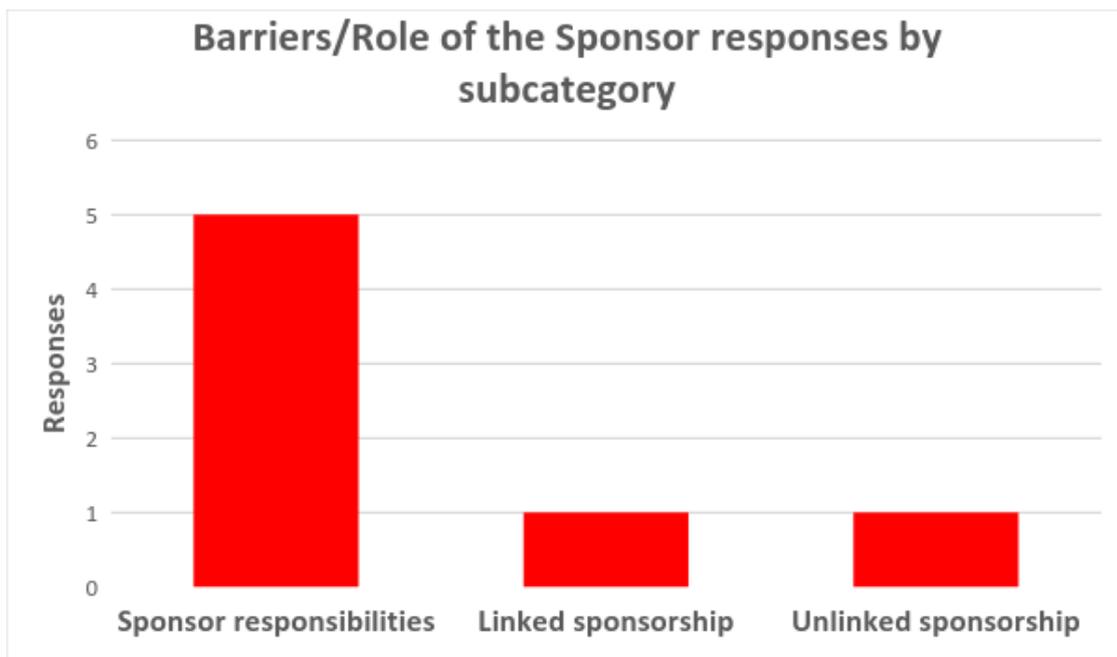
Figure 5: Response subcategories in the Barriers/Role of the Sponsor cross-over.

Research Question 5: If possible, would you like to be involved with the Community Support Program in the future? If yes, in which way?

Feedback gathered from consultation participants indicated very strong interest in future involvement with the CSP. Figure 6 shows almost 80 percent of responses to the first part of the question were positive.

In which way would you like to be involved with the CSP?

Figure 6: Level of interest in future involvement with the CSP.

When asked for specific ways in which they might be involved, respondents provided a broad range of answers. Figure 7 displays the breakdown of responses in each category.

Figure 7: Means of engagement with the CSP, as indicated by consultation participants.

If possible, would you like to be involved in the CSP in the future?

Section 4: Discussion

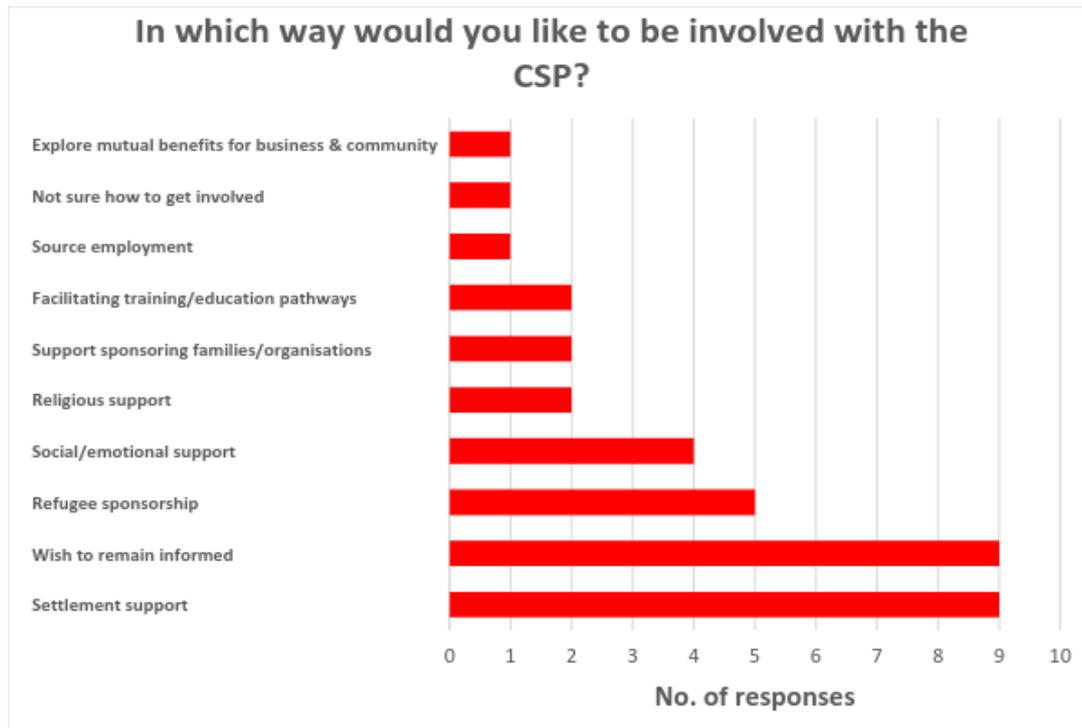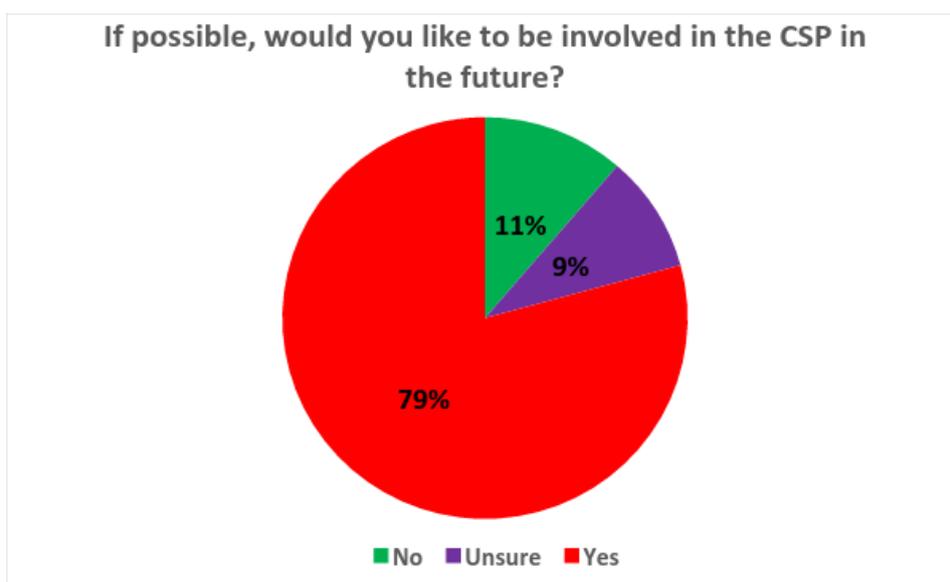The results presented in the previous section raise several issues for consideration. These issues can be broadly characterised as:

- The apparent existence of goodwill surrounding the idea of private sponsorship of refugees and increased humanitarian settlement;
- Opportunities for increased engagement with organisations outside the settlement sector;
- The cost of private sponsorship as a barrier to involvement;
- A lack of certainty regarding the role of sponsoring organisations in the Community Support Program;
- Scope for primary settlement in regional areas through the CSP.

While the trends within the data are relatively clear, each issue area also raises further questions. These are discussed in greater detail below.

Community Goodwill

The overwhelmingly positive response among consultation participants when asked if they would like to be involved in the CSP is heartening, but it is also an unsurprising result, given the profile of represented organisations. To gain further insight, it is necessary to consider the data in greater detail.

As noted in the section for Research Question 1, volunteer settlement assistance was clearly seen as a strength among consultation participants. It is important to note, however, that while a majority of responses referred to settlement assistance as a strength, they also ranged across a considerable variety of forms of assistance (see Table 1). This suggests, for some groups at least, that their capacity to assist is concentrated in a single area (financial support, for example). Of course, it is likely in many cases that volunteer groups are already providing various forms of assistance simultaneously, but the possibility remains this may be beyond the capabilities of other groups who also expressed interest in the CSP.

Case study: Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group

The Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group (MVSRG) sponsors refugees for settlement in Albury-Wodonga[2]. Settlement assistance provided by the MVSRG covers accommodation, employment, education, and language and cultural activities. Over the course of its involvement in refugee sponsorship, the group has raised over $100,000 to provide

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[2] For more information, see http://www.murrayvalleysanctuary.org.au/.

interest-free loans for airfares and settlement expenses. The MVSRG also organises additional programs for refugees, including driving lessons and a support fund for tertiary-level students. The breadth of the MVSRG's activities reflect the demands of refugee sponsorship.

A second point regarding expressions of goodwill towards the CSP is the range of responses regarding how organisations might remain involved. The largest categories in the breakdown of responses were "providing settlement support" and "wanting to remain informed (regarding the CSP)" (see Figure 7). Neither of these categories indicates a firm commitment to the idea of taking responsibility for the overall settlement process for a refugee family, as private sponsorship was defined by AMES Australia staff during the consultations. "Refugee sponsorship" was the third-most populated category, but at five responses out of the 53 participants who answered "yes" to future CSP involvement, expressions of interest in direct refugee sponsorship constitute less than 10 percent of the support displayed during the consultations.

Case study: East African Women's Foundation

The East African Woman's Foundation has assisted many Australian community members to lodge Expressions of Interest in the Community Proposal Pilot, as well as being an advocate for the participation of women with an East African background in the broader community. While the Foundation does not generally contribute to the financial commitment associated with the program, they can provide useful administrative support to Australian community members and assist with settlement support upon arrival.

Increasing engagement with organisations outside the settlement sector

In the context of the Community Support Program consultations, the 'mainstream' community was originally conceived as businesses and broad-based community organisations. While the consultations identified a clear need for improved engagement with the 'mainstream', it also became apparent consultation participants' understanding of the concept of 'mainstream' community incorporates a broader range of social institutions than was initially anticipated by project staff.

Promotion/Engagement was referred to 34 times in the Opportunities/Mainstream cross-over category (see Table 3). Within that subcategory, however, responses ranged across issue areas, from engaging with employers to leveraging cultural events to build relationships with the wider community. No single area stood out as receiving particular emphasis. The lack of specificity in suggested avenues for engaging with

mainstream organisations reflects a general recognition among participants of the need for greater engagement, but also that a universal model for achieving this ambition does not exist.

The minimal corporate representation at the consultations assumes considerable importance in this context, as the corporate perspective is somewhat lost once the data is considered in total. National Australia Bank, Melbourne Water and Barwon Water were represented at the consultations and were proactive in making their views known. When considered in juxtaposition to the broad call for greater engagement noted earlier, clear themes running through corporate responses during the consultations were the idea of mutual benefit and a desire to emphasise specific projects and programs, rather than focus on general principles of settlement.

Case study: National Australia Bank

AMES Australia and the National Australia Bank (NAB) have established a partnership that has been in place for several years. The NAB is involved in employment (African Australian Inclusion Program) and microfinance (in support of Good Shepherd Microfinance) programs for socially and financially-excluded groups. The African Australian Inclusion Program provides work experience opportunities and workplace mentoring in an Australian context for new arrivals of African background[3]. Good Shepherd Microfinance administers a range of financial products and services for people on low incomes, including the No Interest Loan Scheme, StepUp loans and Good Money[4]. Importantly, the benefits from these programs flow in two directions: the NAB's involvement helps to make sure the programs are sustainable, and awareness of the NAB 'brand' among target program groups helps the bank to gain new business.

The disconnect between the strategic capacities of grassroots settlement organisations and the investment requirements of the commercial sector is a central issue in continuing efforts to engage businesses in humanitarian settlement. AMES Australia has natural advantages of scale in its operations which facilitate maintaining relationships with corporate entities such as National Australia Bank. There was little indication during the consultations that volunteer sponsor groups would have the same kind of leverage with large-scale corporate entities. For example, the need for a coordinating body to bring settlement organisations together was a significant theme during the Ballarat consultation.

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[3] National Australia Bank 2017, 'African Australian Inclusion Program,' accessed 9 April at https://www.nab.com.au/about-us/careers/trainee-programs/african-australian-inclusion-program.
[4] Good Shepherd Microfinance 2017, 'Our Partners,' accessed 9 April at http://goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/partners/.

Without direct support from APOs, it appears likely SCOs will struggle to engage large corporate entities in a sustainable manner. Engagement with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in their local area may represent a more realistic and achievable goal, particularly in sourcing employment opportunities for people arriving via the CSP.   Unfortunately, employment via SMEs is also more vulnerable to swings in the business cycle, as small business may lack the market influence to shore up their position during downturns without shedding employees.

A potential third way may be for APOs to work together with local settlement organisations to make contact with business representative groups, such as local chambers of commerce or business committees. The Committee for Ballarat, a business group providing strategic direction for economic and social development in Ballarat, is one example. For instance, local settlement organisations could develop proposals for partnering with business on specific projects. If necessary, AMES Australia could then utilise its integrated service delivery model and strategic weight in the settlement sector to open discussions with business groups regarding project implementation. As an APO, AMES Australia could also act to link sponsoring groups and CSP entrants with local employment programs.

> *Case Study: Idea 'entrepreneurship' and building local partnerships*
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> *Local partnerships between settlement groups and business are central to raising awareness and improving the economic participation of CPP/CSP entrants. In 2016, the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC) and Ballarat Regional Settlement Advocacy Committee (BRSAC) were looking to promote Ballarat as a target settlement destination for refugees. BRMC CEO Ann Foley and Ballarat councillor Belinda Coates approached a variety of local government, business, multicultural services and philanthropic groups for support. Local business, represented by the Committee for Ballarat, also leant its support to the campaign. The result was* Destination Ballarat, *a strategy document laying out the strengths of Ballarat as a settlement destination*[5].

APO facilitation of business engagement cannot be a substitute for specific project proposals from settlement organisations on the ground, however. The data collected during these consultations suggests for Australian businesses to be meaningfully involved in the CSP, settlement organisations need to have clear strategic direction and detailed proposals that factor in the needs of the business community.

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[5] Ballarat Regional Settlement and Advocacy Committee 2016, 'Destination Ballarat: A Leading Regional Settlement Destination,' accessed 9 April 2017 at
http://nsp.ssi.org.au/images/Resources/Other/Destination_Ballarat_A5_Booklet.pdf.

Funding of settlement assistance

The cost of involvement in the CPP and the CSP sparked discussions regarding sources of funding. Although funding was often referred to as a weakness or barrier during the consultations (see Tables 1 and 4), it was also a topic that inspired creative suggestions. Three ideas stood out:

- crowdfunding;
- encouraging financial advisers to promote 'social investment', or financial investment in humanitarian settlement programs;
- and partnering with organisations such as Social Ventures Australia to seek not-for-profit 'venture capital' from investors.

These ideas appear to have ongoing potential as a source of funding for SCOs. Participants at the Ballarat consultation recounted a story of around $80,000 being raised in several days to send local residents to Rome to attend hearings into child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church[6]. Crowdfunding lends itself to small-scale projects with well-defined timelines and clearly defined outcomes. In that sense, it appears well-suited for SCOs to raise funds to sponsor the resettlement of individual refugee families on a piecemeal basis.

The idea of 'social investment' raised during the second consultation at the Multicultural Hub bears considerable resemblance to Social Impact Bonds (SIB), which involve a three-way partnership between private investors, service providers and government to deliver returns on investment in the event performance outcomes are delivered in social policy programs[7]. Consolidating social investment revenue streams with philanthropic 'venture capital' in a framework based on SIB could potentially enlarge the pool of funds available to settlement organisations, allowing business and SCO involvement in the CSP to be scaled up. The settlement expertise and reputation of AMES Australia and the other APOs means they are well positioned to introduce SIBs as a funding model for the CSP.

> *Case study: Social Ventures Australia*
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> *Social Ventures Australia (SVA) aims to increase the scale of social policy programs, helping government, service providers and philanthropic donors to improve service program effectiveness. SVA has facilitated the establishment of two social impact bond programs. The Newpin Social Benefit Bond raised $7 million in 2013 to reduce the instance of children in out-of-home care in*

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[6] Brown, R 2016, 'Crowdfunding a ticket to Rome for Ballarat abuse survivors,' *AM*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (radio), 2 February.

[7] For further information, see the UK National Council for Voluntary Organisations website: https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding/social-investment-1/investment-types/social-impact-bonds.

However, there are also risks involved with the SIB funding model. A series of general risks are identified in a summary of discussions at the Social Finance Forum 2012[10]. In the context of the CSP, however, the most obvious risk is potential damage to the professional reputation of AMES Australia and associated SCOs. Failure to meet the agreed settlement outcome benchmarks would allow government departments to withhold dividend payments to investors. Retaining investors for future SIB schemes is likely to prove difficult if ongoing returns on investment are not available.

A second risk relates to the need to achieve settlement benchmarks so that SIB schemes become financially viable. Settlement organisations, particularly at the APO level, may experience pressure to administer the CSP in a manner that prioritises the achievement of the benchmarks, rather than servicing the needs of individual CSP entrants. Over time, this could potentially result in the stratification of CSP entrants, and consequent targeting of people just below the benchmark at the expense of people who may be in greater need.

The influence of principal-agent relationships within the CSP represents a third risk. Specifically, the anticipated hierarchical structure for administering the CSP means APOs and SCOs would work at different levels of the program (see figure 8). As noted earlier, the operational scope and settlement expertise of APOs suggests they are the level of the program best-suited to working with the DIBP and investors to establish SIB models. However, SCOs and SCMs would take primary responsibility for delivering settlement outcomes. APOs could therefore find themselves responsible to the DIBP and investors for meeting a settlement benchmark that is beyond the capability of SCOs to deliver.

Currently, AMES Australia runs information sessions for SCOs and SCMs. The sessions focus on the obligations of sponsors, the role of AMES Australia as an APO, and the target settlement outcomes of the program. To reduce the risks outlined above, these information sessions could be expanded in scope to include training modules aimed at raising the service delivery capabilities of SCOs. Training topics could

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[8] Social Ventures Australia 2013, 'Information Memorandum: Newpin Social Benefit Bond,' accessed 9 April 2017 at http://socialventures.com.au/assets/Newpin-Social-Benefit-Bond-IM-020513.pdf.

[9] Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2017, 'Investors offered bonds to help SA Government tackle homelessness,' 8 February, accessed 9 April at http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-08/private-investors-offered-bonds-to-help-homeless/8249686.

[10] Tomkinson, E 2012, 'An Australian snapshot: Social Impact Bonds,' *Centre for Social Impact*, accessed 9 April 2017 at http://www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/Social_Impact_Bonds_-_An_Australian_Snapshot_-_November_2012.pdf, pp. 8-12.

include basic counselling techniques, awareness of mental illness, and establishing simple but strong governance frameworks for SCOs. Members of successful groups, such as the Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group, could also share their sponsorship experiences and knowledge.
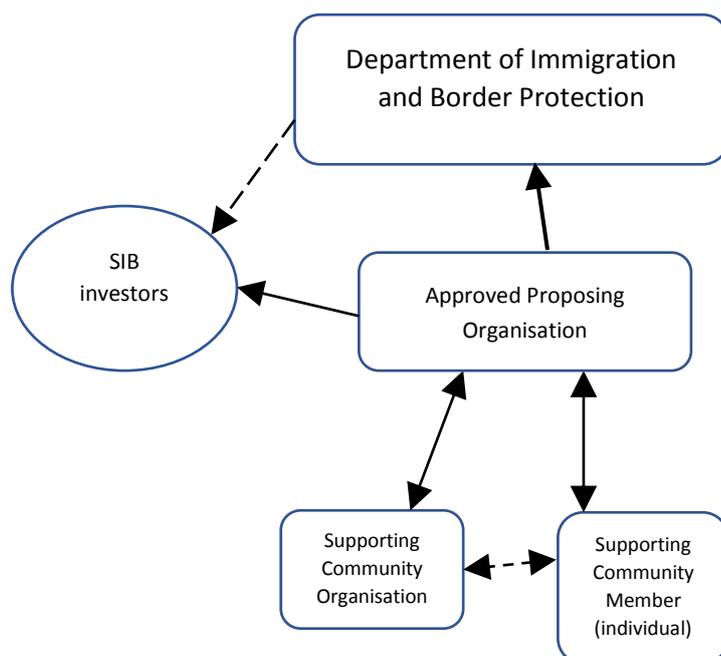

Figure 8: Anticipated structure of the CSP, including Social Impact Bond funding. Solid arrows indicate directions of permanent accountability, dashed arrows indicate contingent accountability.

Role of the Sponsor

Another overarching theme for analysis of the CSP program is that of the role of refugee sponsors. While the overall number of responses referring to this theme was not high (see Table 5), the questions raised reveal a degree of uncertainty among participants, that, if addressed, could boost the number of organisations prepared to consider sponsorship. Questions raised included:

- How would unlinked entrants be matched with sponsors?
- What would sponsors be responsible to refugees for?
- Who would coordinate collaboration between sponsors and service providers?

The difficulty for APOs currently is that they are not able to answer these questions regarding the CSP. The CPP has been dominated by linked humanitarian entry to this point, although the expansion and rebranding of the program to create the CSP, and the mooted involvement of business, suggests consideration of arrangements for unlinked entry is required. This may involve departmental pre-approval of some claims for

sanctuary in Australia, or possibly a forum in which ethnic community members looking to sponsor distant family or friends for resettlement could seek out SCOs with whom to partner.

> *Case study: Refugee Talent*
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> *Fora, or marketplaces, for matching refugees with businesses already exists in Australia. For instance, Refugee Talent was established in 2015 as an online portal to help prevent de-skilling and help refugees to gain experience working in Australia[11]. The company operates in the same way as a recruitment agency, allowing refugees to post their resumes and skills to an online database for employers to browse. Similar mechanisms could be used to match people in Australia looking to sponsor family or friends in their home country, but who require assistance to meet the obligations of sponsorship, with settlement organisations who might be able to help.*

The second question appears less likely to change from the CPP to the CSP: Supporting Community Members (SCMs) are required under the CPP to provide settlement assistance that would have otherwise been covered by Humanitarian Settlement Service (HSS) providers[12]. The structure of the CPP therefore requires SCMs to act as *de facto* case managers for the new arrivals. Even if individual SCMs lack experience or expertise in providing adequate settlement support, familial ties to CPP entrants can provide the additional motivation necessary to overcome these barriers. A SCO sponsoring an unlinked entrant represents a different relationship dynamic between sponsor and refugee, however. Good communication and coordination of assistance between members of the sponsoring group, as well as strong relationships between APO and SCO, are needed to successfully navigate the sponsorship period.

The third question is also relatively untested under the CPP, as the structure of the program limits unlinked resettlement, meaning individual SCMs currently provide support in the majority of CPP cases[13]. The nature of settlement via an SCO would be influenced to a considerable degree by the robustness of the organisation's systems and procedures, and internal relationships between members. Organisational structures will inevitably vary between SCOs, resulting in the lack of a standardised model for communicating and coordinating with external service providers. Frequent and regular communication with

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[11] For more information, see http://refugeetalent.com/#about.

[12] Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection n.d., 'Community Proposal Pilot,' accessed 9 April 2017 at http://www.border.gov.au/Refugeeandhumanitarian/Documents/comm-proposal-pilot-info-sheet.pdf#search=community%20proposal%20pilot.

[13] Bourne, T 2016, *Back to the Future? Policy directions for humanitarian entry in Australia*, Melbourne: AMES Australia, p. 38.

APOs regarding the individual circumstances of associated SCOs will therefore likely be necessary for APOs to meet their obligations to DIBP.

> *Case study: The Armenian community in Victoria*
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> *The Armenian community in Victoria has been active in supporting Armenian humanitarian arrivals from the Middle East to settle in Victoria, both by participating in the Community Proposal Pilot and by offering additional support to arrivals through the Special Humanitarian Program. Organisations such as St Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church and the Committee of Armenian General Benevolent Union have been at the fore of this support and continue to engage with AMES Australia in order to ensure better settlement outcomes to humanitarian entrants with an Armenian background.*

Resettlement in regional areas

Although regional resettlement did not feature highly in terms of direct references by participants, the containment of those responses within the Strengths and Opportunities quadrants of the SWOB analysis (see research questions 1 and 3) is worth noting. A strong perception clearly exists among settlement organisations in Ballarat and Geelong that regional centres have much to offer, particularly in terms of more affordable housing and centralisation of services. Previous research conducted by AMES Australia supports this perception[14]. The introduction of the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa category also indicates the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) is promoting primary settlement in regional areas for humanitarian entrants[15].

Increased communication and engagement between AMES Australia and regional settlement organisations would be necessary to take advantage of the alignment of these factors. Although regional centres such as Ballarat and Geelong already possess capable service provision networks, lack of information regarding settler numbers and needs is also a key issue. Particularly during the Ballarat consultation, the lack of coordination between agencies and lack of awareness that new families had arrived in the area were common themes in the discussion.

The current structure of the CPP (and the anticipated design of the CSP) provides an opportunity for APOs to

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[14] AMES Australia 2011, 'Regional Settlement: An analysis of four settlement locations in Victoria', accessed 9 April 2017 at https://www.ames.net.au/files/file/Research/Regional_Settlement_Report_2011.pdf, p. 31.

[15] Australian Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development 2016, 'Investing in Regional Growth 2016-17,' *Australian Government*, accessed 9 April 2017 at https://infrastructure.gov.au/department/statements/2016_2017/ministerial-statement/RMBS-2016-17.pdf, p. 103.

maintain contact with regional SCOs on a more regular basis. Acting as a sponsor requires regular communication between the APO and SCO, at least until the sponsored refugee arrives in Australia. Over time, and assuming SCOs would sponsor refugees in different program years, greater levels of trust could be established, and more information shared, fostering a greater degree of overall coordination.

Section 5: Recommendations

Several recommendations result from the discussion above:

1. **AMES Australia should allocate 15-20 percent of its anticipated 2017-18 CSP quota (30-40 visa places) to settlers supported by SCOs.** Obvious enthusiasm for private sponsorship exists among settlement and community groups, and the CSP represents an opportunity to make use of that goodwill. Allocation of a small number of visa places will provide time for AMES Australia to test and develop resilient frameworks for communicating with SCOs, in addition to allowing SCOs to gradually develop their own internal procedures and organisational structures without being overwhelmed.

2. **AMES Australia should identify 5-10 potential regional SCOs and work with them to build settlement strategies and capacity, with the aim of settling up to 10 new arrivals in regional areas in 2017-18.** Encouraging regional settlement organisations to engage with the CSP will help to build AMES Australia's network of SCOs, as well as allowing settlers access to good quality services and more affordable housing. As AMES Australia has a limited presence in regional areas, to ensure the best possible settlement outcomes, any quota for settlement in regional areas should form part of the larger SCO quota outlined above.

3. **AMES Australia should identify and work with associated SCOs and social enterprise venture capital organisations, like Social Ventures Australia, to develop a three-way (government, service provider and private investors) funding model that could be put to DIBP.** The current cost of the CPP and the expected cost of the CSP has been identified as a significant barrier preventing potential SCOs and SCMs from undertaking sponsorship. Social Impact Bonds represent an opportunity for broadening the pool of sponsors and scaling up the role of SCOs in the CSP. To make an SIB model attractive to DIBP, performance targets for a SIB funding scheme should be linked to either employment outcomes or reliance on income support payments. This would cater to the current policy climate prioritising economic participation of humanitarian entrants. Examples of possible performance targets are laid out below:

   Example 1:

40 percent of CSP entrants proposed by AMES Australia to have been employed at least **15** hours per week, or enrolled in full-time study (not the Adult Migrant English Program), for at least **9** months of the year immediately following their exit from the CSP.

Example 2:

40 percent of CSP entrants proposed by AMES Australia to have claimed NewStart/Special Benefit for less than **12** months of the first **2** years following their arrival in Australia.

4. **AMES Australia should work with settlement organisations to identify local opportunities for business engagement and assist SCOs to access employment projects.** Working with SCOs could take one of two forms:
   a. AMES Australia already has established relationships with business incubation organisations such as Thrive Refugee Enterprise[16]. These relationships could be leveraged to assist CSP entrants interested in opening a business to develop business plans and potentially receive mentoring from members of a locally-based business group, such as a strategic steering committee or chamber of commerce.
   b. AMES Australia could assist by developing proposals for local employment projects in conjunction with SCOs. AMES Australia could then assist as necessary by connecting SCOs with local government and business groups and facilitating discussions regarding project implementation.

Section 6: Conclusion

The expanded humanitarian intake in the Community Support Program from the start of the 2017-18 financial year presents a significant opportunity for engaging mainstream community support for private sponsorship of refugees in Australia. The data gathered during this project indicates there is broad support for the CSP and private sponsorship in general. Transforming that broad support into concrete commitments to sponsor is now the primary challenge.

There are two key hurdles to realising the potential of sponsorship. First, moving from general support to filling SCO sponsorship quotas requires the development of sustainable and scalable funding models. The report has identified crowdfunding as one possibility for locally-based volunteer groups, while APOs could look to partner with government and social finance organisations to realise the potential in larger investment schemes.

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[16] For more information, see http://thriverefugeeenterprise.org.au/about-us.

Second, ambiguity regarding the role of SCOs and how their role can be promoted by the CSP program design is also a barrier to engagement. To a degree, clarification of questions surrounding the role of the sponsor is currently out of the hands of APOs, as they wait for further announcements from the DIBP. However, the extensive sponsorship experience of groups such as the Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group offer a counterweight to this uncertainty. Providing opportunities for experienced refugee sponsors to share their knowledge could help to overcome some of the doubts expressed during this project.

The international trend is towards a greater role for private sponsorship in humanitarian settlement. The Australian government has indicated its enthusiasm for involving business in the settlement process. AMES Australia therefore needs to take on a supporting, facilitating and educating role in the CSP to increase the number of sponsoring organisations and realise the full potential of the CSP.