



**Social
Impact
Report
2022**



Our vision

**Full participation for
all in a cohesive and
diverse society**

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Message from the CEO

I am pleased to share our fifth Social Impact Report which evidences that the work we do, the way we do it, the organisations we work with, and where we deliver our programs and services makes a positive difference to the lives of our clients. AMES Australia (AMES) defines social impact as more than acquiring skills or getting a job. Social impact is what our clients tell us about significant and positive changes that improve their social connection and wellbeing. We continue to purposefully document our impact, share the stories and achievements of our clients; demonstrate our influence on corporate and public sector partners in their diversity and inclusion actions; align our measures with the United Nations Social Development Goals (SDGs); and describe specific examples of what alignment looks like. SDG alignment is grounded in the context of AMES Social and Economic Participation Framework, and our strategic priorities. It continues to inform our grant and tender submissions and underpins evaluation and evidence gathering across our programs and services with examples demonstrated in this report.

The past 12 months have continued to challenge communities and our service provision as COVID-19 variants and global conflicts placed increased demands on our organisation. AMES staff have stepped up and supported clients arriving at short notice, and in large numbers, from Afghanistan and Ukraine. The federal and Victorian governments have acknowledged AMES readiness to take a leadership role in these difficult times, while continuing business as usual operations.

As a Victorian statutory authority with over 70 years of serving and supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, our vision - 'full participation for all in a cohesive and diverse society' - remains at the forefront of our priorities and way of working. AMES place-based public value is realised through our four Hub structure - where commitment to local connections, local partnerships and local communities is demonstrated through providing a comprehensive range of settlement supports. These supports, which include initial settlement services, English language and literacy tuition, vocational training and employment services in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Sydney, impact refugees, asylum seekers, skilled and recently arrived migrants, job seekers, youth, and international students.

Our approach to meeting client needs is to focus on their strengths and skills, to innovate and find creative ways to empower and enable our clients to develop their assets and take an active role in their own settlement. Learning from our clients informs our service development and practice, and drives responses to government and key stakeholders on policies that impact settlement outcomes.

This report advances the message that listening to, and collaborating with, our clients and their communities is key to ensuring that AMES makes a positive impact on their settlement journey and outcomes.

Cath Scarth, CEO AMES Australia
September 2022



AMES approach to impact and SDG alignment

AMES Social and Economic Participation Framework

AMES Australia's (AMES) services, advocacy and corporate operations are informed by our Social and Economic Participation Framework to achieve our goal of 'full participation for all'. The four domains of the framework affirm our commitment to making an impact and aligning to relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is AMES approach to demonstrating impact.



Education

Delivering education focused on long-term, successful settlement and careers

Leads to a better skilled workforce, and a better educated Australian society.



Employment

Supporting people into sustainable, long-term employment in the right job

Leads to reduced unemployment, increased productivity and is strongly linked to success within other domains of our framework.



Health & Wellbeing

Fostering good health and wellbeing as foundations for thriving in the community

Better health and wellbeing outcomes lead to greater health equity and individual resilience.



Safety & Security

Building safer, more socially cohesive communities

Leads to community impacts that include improved perception of neighbourhood safety, intercultural social cohesion and is strongly linked to improved health and wellbeing.

SDG alignment

AMES core services of settlement, education, employment and social participation align most strongly to SDGs: **Goal 3 Health and Wellbeing, Goal 4 Quality Education and Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth.** AMES way of working is underpinned and compellingly evidenced in alignment with **Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals.** Over the past 12 months an emerging focus on SDG alignment has developed for **Goal 5 Gender equality and Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities.**

The AMES 'in practice' descriptions for each of the three primary SDGs below characterise an alignment value and impact statement. The statements reflect evidence drawn from client accounts of the impact of the programs and services delivered by AMES and our partners. These are regularly reported in publications including reports on AMES progress towards achieving outcomes from the AMES Social and Economic Participation Framework and strategic priorities. The italicised number under each of the SDGs demonstrates that SDG alignment is not unique to a particular service or initiative, rather there is integration.



SDG3 – Good Health and Well-being

AMES advocates for and connects clients to health-care services specialising in the unique needs of CALD communities; builds clients' health literacy through health information and programs; and provides specialist services as a NDIS provider.

Articles in the strategic progress reports aligning to SDG3: 46



SDG4 – Quality Education

AMES is a specialist provider of foundational and vocational programs which provide inclusive, place-based, accessible and affordable education for CALD clients and build pathways to social participation, employment and further education.

Articles in the strategic progress reports aligning to SDG4: 56



SDG8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

AMES is a specialist provider of employment services for CALD clients. AMES advocates for sustainable work with fair pay and career opportunity for all job seekers; prepares clients for work in Australia; works with employers to connect clients to jobs which match their skills and expertise; and supports entrepreneurial interests.

Articles in the strategic progress reports aligning to SDG8: 59



SDG17 – Partnerships for the Goals

AMES preferred way of working is in partnership with CALD communities, service providers, and major corporate and public sector organisations to influence, broaden our reach, strengthen our delivery and build capability.

Articles in the strategic progress reports aligning to SDG17: 101

From this broad perspective of impact the following provides a summary of AMES year of impact.



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

2022 impact highlights



Education for successful settlement and careers

5,317 enrolments in accredited and non-accredited courses

1,390 87% of SEE students made measurable improvements in language, literacy or numeracy skills

134 VET students in work placements

67%

of VET graduate survey respondents found employment

89%

of this group were satisfied with their job

1 Educating new arrivals

858 children enrolled in school

1,860 adults referred to the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

212,206 unique sessions accessed through AMEP online



Satisfying, long-term employment

4,802 jobseekers found work, and of these;

79%

of survey respondents from 2020 skilled migrant employability program were in work;

520 were the most disadvantaged, long-term unemployed;

80%

were satisfied/very satisfied with their job;

982 are refugees

53%

earned more than \$60k; 20% earned more than \$80k - compared to the median skilled migrant income of \$55k after 1 year of residence

2,340 jobseekers in AMES employment services were still in their job after a month, and;

1,220 of these were of CALD background



Sustainable employment

Sustainable employment numbers relate to particularly disadvantaged jobseekers in Victoria and are measured by number of individuals with a consistent 26 week period of employment. Impacting:

12 Indigenous Australians

66 homeless

309 women

192 refugees



Good health and resilience: foundations for thriving

120 unique COVID-19 information scripts developed and delivered in-language through phone calls to settlement clients

420 refugees and migrants participated in our cancer screening and awareness projects

66 refugees and migrants participated in swimming programs

75 refugees attended breast screening for the first time

18 newsletters with settlement and health information sent to **900** Afghan clients



Settlement outcomes*

409	refugees gained the ability to apply their knowledge of:	the healthcare system
368		the family and social support system
404		the transport system
366		local laws and rights



Safe, cohesive communities

948 newly arrived families in leased, long-term housing

91 participants from diverse backgrounds at 6 community consultations

38% of volunteers were professional mentors including from corporates and industry

525 volunteers available

180 volunteers assisted clients



Representing diverse communities

10 submissions to government policy inquiries, and two representations at Australian Senate hearings

\$1,845,000 relative value of media coverage on CALD social and economic issues

16 insights, 3 Digests circulated

1,311 broadcast and online coverage pieces

8 major organisations' diversity and inclusion actions influenced

56 print items published in mainstream media



Social media reach

12,000 LinkedIn users and 55,000 Facebook users reached

Emergency crisis response

3,816 Afghan LEE arrivals

901 Ukrainian arrivals

70 volunteers provided material aid

More than **\$1m** worth of donated goods through material aid campaign

300 kilograms of pre-loved donated goods were recycled and saved from landfill

\$73,789 donations to AMES People in Need Fund

19 requests from vulnerable clients to AMES People in Need Fund

1,539 views on website created for Afghan LEE arrivals

896 views on website created for Ukrainian arrivals

*The settlement outcomes refer to specific measures of client progress in the Humanitarian Settlement Program funded by the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs. Go to www.homeaffairs.gov.au for more information.

Our impact aligned to SDG 3

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Our impact in support of **SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being** is achieved through directly empowering clients to participate and thrive in the community. Here, our wellbeing impacts span interrelated SDGs – in particular SDG 5 Gender Equality. Our work in the prevention of violence against women area, preventative health care and mental health space all exemplify our broad focus on SDG 3 and closely related aspects of community cohesion, equality and individual mental well-being.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



We are a part of the communities we work for

9

of AMES former volunteers are now employed with AMES

75%

of our employees were born overseas

68

languages spoken across our volunteer base

62

different countries represented

Tapping into newly arrived talent while representing the communities we support

Jalal, a recent refugee from Afghanistan arrived in Melbourne in September 2021 and started volunteering at AMES donations centre a few weeks later. Although he has a Bachelor of Business Administration from the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul, Jalal saw volunteering as a way to start his career in Australia and is excited to have landed his first job, joining AMES Innovation and Marketing team.

“AMES is a great place for me to start my career in Australia and develop skills and experience in an Australian workplace”

- Jalal

Wellbeing, safety and community cohesion

Swimming and water safety - a vital life lesson

Many migrants and refugees arrive not having learnt aquatic safety skills. In partnership with Life Saving Victoria, AMES ran water safety and swimming programs for newly arrived Afghan refugees and Nepalese community members. While in short-term accommodation, 56 Afghans, including children, participated in sessions on how to be safe around water. Taking a culturally sensitive approach, sessions were also provided to female clients only with female lifeguards and instructors. Ten Nepalese community members also attended a 10-week swimming program. The majority strongly agreed that the lessons improved their swimming skills and helped them feel more confident around water: **“Swimming is a life skill that many of us in our community don’t have. If there are programs like this on a regular basis, communities can benefit”** – Nepalese participant

Breast screening saving lives

Newly arrived refugee and migrant women often have lower screening participation rates than non-migrant women, with varying understanding of breast cancer and screening depending on country of origin. Newly arrived women tend to prioritise family needs over their own, leading to poorer health outcomes. In partnership with BreastScreen Victoria, AMES supported 75 refugee clients attend a breast screen for the first time. They attended education sessions in first language and received translated information, building their confidence to continue to screen and share information with community members. One refugee client suffered cancer twice, once after arrival to Australia. She is now supporting other women to tackle health issues after her recovery: **“I encourage every woman from 50 years up to make time for a mammogram...especially those from a migrant background, to check all of their body, not only for breast cancer. I really want to help them and encourage them”**– Cancer survivor and health advocate

Volunteer program feeds body and mind

Refugees and migrants can experience mental health issues, isolation and low self-esteem as part of their settlement journey. Since 2011 the Working Beyond the Boundaries program at Werribee Park, a partnership between AMES and Parks Victoria, has seen people from migrant communities volunteer in the gardens, grow culturally appropriate food, acquire horticulture skills and connect with community. **“Because of the program, we’ve seen an improvement in the mental health of local refugee communities. People have learnt skills and gone on to get jobs in the horticultural industry, market gardens and local government”** - Parks Victoria Chief Ranger

During COVID-19 the garden supplied fresh food to disadvantaged families. This initiative is now an annual feature at Werribee Park, resulting in AMES, Parks Victoria and the Sikh community winning the ‘Volunteering Partnerships Award’ at the 2021 Volunteering Awards.

Building capacity to prevent gendered violence

Domestic violence is a significant issue in all communities. AMES Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW) leadership course builds capacity by supporting leaders to implement culturally appropriate prevention activities within their communities. Two graduates of the course developed an initiative to build awareness of domestic violence in the Asian-Australian community through animation and storytelling. For information visit: <https://www.theaiproject.com/>

Another graduate presented her Faith Leader’s Practice Guide and Toolkit at a webinar attended by over 80 participants, including the Victorian Minister for Women and Minister for Youth. This guide shares leading research on factors that cause and reinforce family violence in faith communities and the role of faith leaders in preventing and responding to violence.

Our impact aligned to SDG 4

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Education success is important for settlement success. Our education activities, as well as much of our work through social participation programs is aligned to **SDG 4 – Quality Education** for all. Extending the opportunity to access services, employment and social participation through education is at the heart of AMES work: all people rely on foundational education around language, literacy, numeracy, employability, community orientation and more.

Volunteering to enhance education impact

180

volunteers

38%

of volunteers were professional mentors

31%

of volunteers assisted clients to learn English

60%

of volunteers supported office administration across different programs

71%

of volunteers assisted newly arrived refugees to learn about daily life in Australia

8%

of volunteers supported jobseekers to seek and prepare for work

Purposeful education

Learning English is making a difference in Mildura

Learning English is critical for successful settlement, finding work and becoming part of the local community. Over the reporting period AMES Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) in Mildura supported 124 students to learn English and more than 60 graduates gained employment in the Sunraysia region. Contributing to clients' settlement in Mildura, a new series of podcasts integrated into the AMEP provided information about life in regional Australia, local customs and services, and practical advice on navigating life in Australia. The podcasts are available in Dari, Burmese, Karen and Haka Chin, with more languages being developed.

One graduate found a pathway to further education and employment: **“The AMEP course helped me improve my English and build my confidence. It also led me to study for a diploma in community services. Now I am working as a youth worker, a job I love because it means I can help young people find pathways to build successful lives – just like I did”** – AMEP graduate in Mildura

Alumni supporting VET students

Entering a new workplace can be challenging for migrants with no local work experience. Four students from AMES Certificate III in Individual Support on work placement at an aged care facility were mentored by AMES graduates employed at the facility.

“The students are very happy and feel that they’re well prepared. The employer says our students are courteous and respectful; they have the right attitude towards the elderly and have great relationships with all internal and external customers. The employer is now focusing on recruiting AMES students ahead of other providers” – AMES VET teacher

Professional volunteers assisting in English skills development

Being able to interact with English speakers is crucial to assisting migrants improve their English and build confidence. AMES corporate partnerships enable students to engage with professional volunteers. Online ‘Talking Circles’ gave English as an Additional Language (EAL) students the opportunity to talk with volunteers from a Melbourne-based law firm about life in Australia, workplace culture and employability skills.

“I would like to thank all the lawyers who joined in the conversation sessions. They were generous to share with us tips and guidance about the work environment and life in Melbourne. They encouraged us to engage with each other and to share our experiences and opinions” – AMES EAL student

Employment preparation program supporting clients in South Australia

A bespoke employment preparation program focused on volunteering as a means to assist skilled and professional refugees plan a career pathway in Australia. The program, delivered in partnership with local agencies, included career counselling, volunteering in a workplace, and vocational skills training, all of which helped participants gain vocational and communication skills for the workplace. Of the 23 clients registered for the program 56% gained employment, 26% enrolled in further studies, 9% opened a small business and 9% engaged in further volunteering.

Our impact aligned to SDG 8

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Employment is both an AMES impact domain and one of the core SDGs we align with, because finding a job is a critical turning point for migrants and refugees. Employment is captured in **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth** which articulates a vision of decent work for all people, particularly for marginalised groups who, equally, should have access to jobs and fair pay. The examples demonstrate our holistic vision for employment impact – support into a sustainable job and guided by our clients' diverse goals and aspirations.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Out of recent VET graduates we surveyed:

89%

now work in a job related to their studies

74%

think their practical placement was extremely useful

93%

rated their course experience 4 or 5 out of 5

“Our teacher helped us to find work by inviting prospective employers and former students to speak during our classes. My teacher also helped us to prepare for job hunting like writing proper resumes, dressing and behaving professionally, and speaking during job interviews”
– Former VET student

Creating opportunity for better employment

Overcoming barriers to resuming professional pathways

Many skilled, professional refugees are unable to easily, or ever, resume their careers in Australia, due to difficulty gaining overseas qualification recognition and lack of local work experience. One initiative - the Engineering Pathway Industry Cadetship (EPIC) - has changed this for overseas qualified engineers. The 18-month program links refugee and asylum seeker engineers to work on major transport infrastructure projects. Cadets receive on-the-job training, support and mentoring and complete a postgraduate Graduate Certificate in Construction and Infrastructure Management through Swinburne University. In the reporting period, AMES referred 30 refugees to EPIC with 13 of those now participating in the program. These cadets have completed more than six months' initial employment and are due to graduate at the end of 2023.

“We are learning new things all the time. English is different on the construction site from Swinburne University, so of course the support from AMES was helpful for me to be prepared for this opportunity” – EPIC cadet, supported and referred by AMES

Jobs program hits the mark

Migrants and refugees are overrepresented in under- and unemployment statistics due to lack of local work experience and language barriers. Through the Jobs Victoria Employment Services (JVES) AMES is delivering a specialised Refugee and Asylum Seeker Pathway Program. During the reporting period the AMES JVES team registered 331 job seekers and achieved 85 job placements.

One client had been unable to find stable employment in the almost 10 years she had been in Australia, and felt socially isolated. With support from AMES JVES she secured a position with Gippsland Trades and Labour Council working on a project helping fellow multicultural community members gain skills,

training, experience and employment in the hospitality industry. **“It gives me a sense of responsibility and purpose and boosts my self-esteem. I hope more workplaces would create such opportunities and offer training, jobs and support. Many people from other countries come here to make Australia home. We would [also] like to contribute to the workforce”** – JVES client

Program supporting skilled migrants into jobs

As Australia seeks to attract more skilled migrants while it recovers from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, making the most of the skills of migrants will be crucial to drive economic growth. AMES Skilled Professional Migrant Program (SPMP) is succeeding in guiding newly arrived migrants and refugees into jobs that value their qualifications and experiences by introducing them to Australian workplace culture, job seeking techniques and connecting them with professional mentors. AMES has surveyed SPMP graduates since 2010 and the most recent respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the SPMP equipped them with the confidence and knowledge to apply for and secure professional jobs in Australia.

“The SPMP was very helpful, even though the online classes [because of COVID] were difficult. The things that we got to learn were very important, especially - for me - it was learning how to tailor for a particular job. I also benefitted from having a professional mentor from my industry which was fundamental in helping me understand how the jobs market works in Australia and what employers are looking for” – SPMP graduate who recently secured a job as a structural engineer



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