NATIONAL MIGRANT CONSULTATIONS 2018

Observations of

Settlement Stakeholder Organisations

July 2019
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Introduction

In 2018, Immigration New Zealand (INZ) consulted with recent migrants\(^1\) throughout New Zealand about their experience of settling and adjusting to life in New Zealand. The findings from these consultations were published in the National Migrant Consultations 2018 report (NMC report). In February 2019, INZ invited more than 50 Settlement Stakeholder Organisations (SSOs), including national and regional SSOs located throughout New Zealand, to share their observations on the findings documented in the NMC report. 17 SSOs submitted observations (see acknowledgements in Annex 1). This SSO Observations report presents the observations and suggestions that were shared. Agencies across government will use the SSO observations and recommendations, alongside the NMC report, to help inform future areas of focus for government migrant settlement and information services.

Summary of SSOs observations

Based on observations of the settlement experiences of recent migrants they have worked with, SSOs provided their perspectives on the key insights in the NMC report and also contributed additional insights. The collated and analysed observations overwhelmingly support the findings in each section of the NMC report, and the overall key insights the NMC report sets out:

The majority of recent migrants who participated in the 2018 national migrant consultations indicated that they had been able to readily access services or information to help them adjust to life in New Zealand.

Specific areas migrants more commonly found challenging related to pursuing job opportunities, and understanding health costs and how health services operate.

The consultations indicate that recent migrants’ awareness of the settlement services and information available to them could be strengthened along with their ability to navigate across websites to find the specific information they need.

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\(^1\) Consistent with Statistics New Zealand’s definition, recent migrants are defined as those who have been living in New Zealand for five years or less.
Background

The New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy and National Migrant Consultations 2018

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) leads the whole of Government implementation of the New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy (the Strategy), which was approved by Cabinet in 2014. The Strategy represents the Government’s approach to effectively settle and integrate recent migrants into New Zealand. The Strategy outcomes are depicted in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: The New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy

Regular consultation with recent migrants² is a key part of INZ’s role in leading the cross-government implementation of the Strategy. In support of this commitment in 2018 INZ, with the support of Martin Jenkins & Associates Limited (MartinJenkins), successfully completed a nationwide consultation process with recent migrants¹. The overall objective was to gain

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² Consistent with Statistics New Zealand’s definition, recent migrants are defined as those who have been living in New Zealand for five years or less.
insights into recent migrants’ experiences of settling and adjusting to living in New Zealand and to identify their settlement service and information needs.

The areas of focus for the National Migrant Consultations were:

1) Recent migrants’ reasons for moving to their current town or city in New Zealand
2) Settlement services, information, people and places that recent migrants had found helpful for adjusting to life in New Zealand
3) The challenges recent migrants had experienced while adjusting to living in New Zealand, related to the five key outcomes areas of the Strategy (Figure 1).
4) Recent migrants’ suggestions for improvements and additions to settlement information that they would have found useful.

The consultations included:

- face-to-face workshops and focus groups in 12 locations throughout New Zealand, which involved 286 recent migrants and;
- an online questionnaire, to which 3347 recent migrants responded.

The findings of the National Migrant Consultations are presented in the National Migrant Consultations 2018 report (NMC report), published in September 2018.

**Request for SSO observations on the National Migrant Consultations 2018 report**

In February 2019, INZ invited 50 SSOs (who have direct connections with recent migrants) to share their observations on the findings set out in the NMC report. The aim was to establish whether the experiences of recent migrants that the SSOs have worked with reflect the experiences shared by the recent migrants who took part in the National Migrant Consultations.

This SSO Observations report highlights the key themes in the observations shared by the 17 SSOs who responded to INZ’s invitation. It makes comparisons between SSO observations and the collective views of the National Migrant Consultations participants gathered in the NMC report.

Together, the NMC report and this SSO Observations report are intended to help inform decision-making for future areas of focus for services and information services provided by government that support migrant settlement and integration. The two reports are also intended as a reference for local government and non-government settlement service
providers, community groups, and organisations throughout the country who support migrants settling in New Zealand.

**The approach to collating SSO observations**

SSOs were provided with an electronic form to record their observations (Annex 2) and given a month to complete it.

The form gave the SSOs the opportunity to share their observations on each section of the NMC report:

- Why recent migrants live where they live.
- What settlement services, information, people and place recent migrants found helpful.
- Settlement challenges experienced by consultation participants and additional information they would find useful relating to each of the Strategy outcome areas.

The invitation acknowledged that SSOs were not expected to provide observations related to every section of the NMC report. They were asked to focus on the sections relevant to their area of expertise or experiences working with recent migrants.

All responses received, including incomplete questionnaires, email replies and letters, were analysed.

As was the case for the National Migrant Consultations and noted in the NMC report, it is important to note that the collation of the SSO observations is not a systematic research survey. The ‘by-invitation’ approach prioritised SSOs that INZ considered to have the most direct contact with recent migrants to New Zealand. For this reason, and because not all SSOs invited submitted a response, it is acknowledged that the SSOs that completed the questionnaire do not necessarily represent the entire profile or the true demographic of all SSOs in New Zealand.

**Format of this SSO Observations report**

For ease of comparison, the layout of this SSO Observations report follows the same format as the NMC 2018 report. Each section of this SSO Observations report begins with the key insights from the NMC report (displayed in red font) and then provides an overall summary of the SSO observations:

- Detailed observations SSOs provided are presented as quotes in italics.
• Where more than one SSO commented on a similar matter quotes have been combined and paraphrased.

This SSO Observations report also includes suggestions made by SSOs relating to, for example, how they think access to settlement services and information could be improved or strengthened.

Any SSO observations relating to visa application processes and exploitation of migrants are not included in this SSO Observations report as they were outside of scope for the consultations. A separate ongoing work programme being developed by MBIE focuses on exploitation of temporary migrants.

**Considerations for readers**

While the Key Insights of the NMC report (pages 26-29) are supported by the SSO observations, it is important to note that some SSOs may have shared observations relating to groups of migrants who were not included in the participant criteria for the National Migrant Consultations 2018 (see page 15 – 16 of the NMC report) or who did not reflect the demographics of the National Migrant Consultations participants.

Some SSOs suggested a lack of true representation of the demographics of recent migrants in New Zealand amongst the National Migrant Consultations participants. The constraints around the demographics of the NMC participants are acknowledged in the ‘Constraints and other issues’ section of the NMC report (p 24). The consultations did not include systematic demographic sampling or targeting for different visa types. The constraints include that the visa type demographics of the NMC participants reflect the recruitment methods used, meaning a large proportion of participants were Skilled Migrant Category principal applicants and a high proportion were in employment.

As noted in the NMC report (p24), the responses of Skilled Migrant Category visa holders are likely to reflect to some extent the perspectives of work visa holders. Most Skilled Migrant Category applicants have previously held a work and/or student visa (89%). Similarly, many SSOs also provided observations relating to migrants transitioning from one visa status to another.

Another constraint suggested by SSOs and acknowledged in the NMC report is that there may have been an English language barrier to participation for recent migrants with lower levels of English language proficiency.
Stakeholder observations: Why recent migrants live where they live

Participants in the NMCs were asked to select three reasons for living in their current location.

The Key Insights from this section of the NMC report (pages 30-33) are:

Employment opportunities were the main considerations for the consultation participants in deciding where to live in New Zealand.

Lifestyle was the main secondary consideration. Auckland, for example, was seen positively by some because of its size, vibrancy, nightlife and busyness, but also negatively by others because of its size, traffic and pace of life.

On the SSO observations form, SSOs were asked whether the main reasons National Migrant Consultations participants selected for living in their current location reflected their observations. In summary, no SSO refuted the National Migrant Consultations findings.

The following observations exemplify the collective views of numerous SSOs.

Employment

SSOs emphasised the importance of finding employment to recent migrants’ decision about where to live in New Zealand. For example:

- The key driving force is employment. Migrants are driven to their location because of the job prospects, with salary/hourly rates and the cost of living fitting in with this.
- The three main reasons in the 2018 National Migrant Consultations report are certainly consistent with the most important matters migrants need to have in place from our experience. Employment is the crux in life, whether it is your own job or your spouse’s.
- It enables migrants to be able to feed their families, visit their families back home and to find a good and suitable place to live.
- While the migrants we work with are looking for a job, employment for themselves is not the main reason they chose Wellington. It is also the prospect of their partner gaining employment.

Lifestyle and social networks

SSOs commented on the importance of lifestyle (including size of region or city, traffic, and housing options) and the natural environment as key factors influencing choice of location. For example:
• For those who did not move to Wellington for their partner’s employment, they have chosen Wellington because of the lifestyle - the size of the city, its diversity and its friendliness.
• An additional insight into people’s experiences of settling in Marlborough includes their enjoyment of the Marlborough lifestyle, access to beautiful surroundings, and it being a safe place to bring up children.

One SSO commented that the NMC report had highlighted the need to promote the region’s natural environment more to prospective and recent migrants.

A number of SSOs emphasised the influence of social networks in migrants’ decision-making about where to live. For example:

• The number 2 reason (after employment) is people joining either family, friends or communities. They are influenced by where they will have support and connections.

Cost of living

The NMC report highlighted some regional differences in reasons given by participants for where they now live (p33). One such factor was cost of living, which was highlighted by some National Migrant Consultations participants as a reason for living in locations other than Auckland. Several SSOs also commented on this. An example relating to cost of living and employment opportunities was:

• A lot of my clients are wanting to or have moved from Auckland because of the cost of living. However they are finding that the job prospects in the South Island are very temporary or contract-based so it’s harder to find stability in Canterbury. Unfortunately the recruitment process is very slow. So as much as some migrants may want to move from Auckland, they need to take their job and its pathway to residency into consideration.

This comment also relates to the note in the NMC report (p33) that “Some work visa participants said they would like to move once they met the requirements for getting residence”. 3

3 Most New Zealand work visas (including Work to Residence visas) require applicants to work in the occupation and for the employer specified on their visa (exceptions include partner of a worker and New Zealander work visas and Post-study work visas). Skilled Migrant Category applicants awarded
Stakeholder observations: What consultation participants found helpful

Participants in the National Migrant Consultations were asked about the people, places, information and services they had found helpful for adjusting to life in New Zealand.

The Key Insights from this section of the NMC report (pages 34-37) are:

Websites were a key source of settlement information for consultation participants. Participants reported that they had found clear and useful information in most settlement areas, although it could take some time to find information about specific topics.

Employers, work colleagues, family and friends also played a key role in helping participants adjust to living in New Zealand. Local support and information services were found to be very helpful. However, there was a lack of awareness of some of the key services and information sources available.

On the SSO observations form SSO’s were asked:

1) Do the things that NMC participants said were helpful to them reflect your observations of what recent migrants they have worked with have found helpful?
2) Do you have any suggestions related to the recommendation in the NMC report that the profile and promotion of the information and services available to recent migrants could be strengthened?

Responses relating to this section of the NMC report received the most feedback from SSOs.

1. What recent migrants find helpful

In summary, SSOs did not disagree with the NMC report findings. SSOs did emphasise that while websites are an important source of information, in- person settlement support provided through various channels also plays an important role. SSO’s observations indicate their agreement with the suggestion in the NMC report that lack of awareness of available settlement services and information is an issue for some recent migrants.

points for skilled employment or an offer of skilled employment must remain in that job for at least 3 months if the job is in Auckland or at least 12 months if it is outside of Auckland.
Observations, experiences and concerns expressed related to question 1 have been grouped as follows:

a) How migrants obtain/access information
   • Migrants (as with everybody today) find websites useful. They are the first point of information for everyone. Most migrants will have perused websites before coming to New Zealand, as well as on arrival.
   • While information on a website is helpful, new migrants prefer to see someone in-person to ask questions and to clear-up any doubts. Often they find the most value in a face to face engagement.
   • Migrants greatly benefit from direct, face to face settlement support and opportunities. These enable them to form informal connections and participate in the community through organised activities and events that enable them to meet other newcomers, make new friends, and share and learn from others. These connections are very important factors in successful settlement. Being invited to a safe and familiar environment for social and cultural activities in their local area provides opportunities to share information.
   • When new to a country, migrants mainly tend to find things out by word of mouth.

b) Awareness of information and services
   • People can only access a service if they are aware of it – many migrants will not be aware of services available in New Zealand, especially if there is no similar service or provider in their country of origin.
   • Many new migrants don’t think they will be able to access services due to perceived barriers, such as language. Liaising with social networks or religious centres (known to connect with new migrants) can help them access relevant information.
   • We have observed that migrants don’t relate Citizens Advice Bureau as being a place to which they can go, particularly if they are not yet ‘citizens’

c) Issues arising when obtaining information
   • The level of migrant confidence and/or understanding of English influences and potentially impacts the choices made about information.
• Older migrants may give more weight to the availability of information from ethnic or family support and often the information given by their connections is not verified and is anecdotal, which can be problematic. The influence of this information is often what exacerbates issues for migrants.

• The National Migrant Consultations report does not refer to what migrants are told prior to arrival and how it has influenced their choices. Prior information can create a barrier to making the kinds of choices they might have otherwise made if they had been given different information (but only learnt about the implications of their choice when they got here).

2. Suggestions for improving information

While several SSOs acknowledged “getting the information out there can be a challenge as there are so many resources available”, and “there is a challenge with keeping information up-to-date and accessible”, there were a number of suggestions made for improving information.

Suggestions relating to question 2 have been grouped as follows:

a) The promotion of information to recent migrants
b) Strengthening the provision of information.

a) The promotion of information to recent migrants

• All migrant support services and information sources, irrespective of whether an organisation is being funded by a Government agency or not, should be promoted equally at the point of entry for all migrants. This includes ‘softer’ interventions and services, where the aim is to create opportunities for people to celebrate their ethnic identity through food, music, dance, sports, and ‘harder’ interventions like policy, legislation, civic education and participation, and equal representation.

• The promotion of services that are already available and facilitating access to these services would be helpful. A better profile of agencies that can assist migrants would be useful.

• Websites, Citizen’s Advice Bureaux and libraries should be promoted as important and as valid sources of information.

• Information packs (manual and electronic) need to be more readily available, with links to support networks and ‘help-guides’ included.
b) Strengthening the provision of information

**Language**

- Information needs to be accessible and take into account the needs of English language learners, whether it is coming from an institution or whether it is information relating to health or education or law.
- Where possible, all support services should consider providing information and materials in the ‘first language’ of new migrants. This will raise awareness of what is available.
- We hope implementation of the ‘Info Now in your language’ service will provide for a strengthened service for new migrants where information is given in their first language.

**Key government information channels**

- The visa application acknowledgment letter for new students from the Ministry of Education should provide region specific information about the key Migrant Centre(s). For example, in Rotorua there is the Rotorua Multicultural Council, Rotorua Newcomers Network and Rotorua Citizen’s Advice Bureau, but there is no Migrant Centre. This approach should be applied to all regional centres. Maybe a resource that is sent when the visa is granted could be helpful.
- More opportunities for face-to-face contact between new migrants and their host communities will enhance and strengthen settlement outcomes (rather than focusing on online resources).
- The ‘New Zealand Now’ website could do a better job at informing people of the programmes available to migrants looking for work – these are not shown on the ‘Work’ page on ‘NZ Now’, and finding information on these services takes a lot of navigation.

**Local/regional actions**

- Councils could provide targeted welcoming information to new migrants on the council or local board websites. Other international cities like Seattle and Vancouver are examples of where this is done well.
- Information/Welcome packs (manual and electronic) could be made more readily available with links to local support networks and help guides.
• Promotion of information sources and services available to recent migrants could be built into local action plans and emphasized in service agreements with local agencies who provide services and support to newcomers.

Other suggestions

• It is recommended that Government set up a standard measurement for all organisations providing services to recent migrants, and vet and support organisations to meet the standard(s).

• As there is so much going on when new migrant(s) first arrive, they may miss information in the confusion of the move and settling into work. There should be some form of phone call or face-to-face follow up with new migrants at, for example, 1 and 3, and 6 or 8 weeks after arrival, with a named point of contact for all non-visa related queries.
Stakeholder observations: Settlement challenges experienced by recent migrants and additional information they would find useful

Participants in the National Migrant Consultations were asked about the challenges they had or may have experienced in each of the New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy outcome areas: Employment, Inclusion, Education and Training, and Health and Wellbeing. Challenges related to learning and using English language (Outcome 3 of the Strategy) were included in discussions related to each of the other Strategy outcome areas. Participants were also asked for suggestions about additional information they would find useful.

In the SSO observations form, SSOs were asked to provide their responses to the following questions for each Strategy outcome area, relevant to their expertise and experience:

1. Do the areas National Migrant Consultations participants identified as challenging reflect your observations of the challenges experienced by recent migrants?
2. Are any other areas that recent migrants your organisation works with commonly find challenging?
3. Do the areas the National Migrant Consultations participants had said it would be useful to have more information about reflect your organisation’s observations of areas that recent migrants would find more information helpful?

Similar to the NMC report, SSO observations on the challenges experienced by recent migrants are presented in this SSO Observations report according to the Strategy outcome areas. Each outcome area follows the same structure as the NMC report. As in the NMC report, SSO observations are further grouped under the headings Cost expectations, and Access and Understanding (where relevant - refer page 39 of the NMC report for further detail).
Settlement Challenges: Employment

The Key Insights from the Employment section of the NMC report (pages 41 to 49) are:

Employment was the area that participants identified as most challenging while adjusting to living in New Zealand.

Key concerns related to pursuing employment opportunities and understanding employment rights and what to do if these were not being met.

The majority of participants indicated they would find more information about connecting with professional networks useful and that more information about how to start a business would be useful.

The SSOs provided a wide range of feedback on this section of the NMC report. The key insights of the NMC report are endorsed by the collective view of the SSOs, who agreed that recent migrants they work with most commonly find aspects relating to pursuing employment opportunities most challenging while settling in New Zealand, particularly the partners of residence and work visa holders.

Cost Expectations

Recognition of qualifications and previous work experience

The SSOs reinforced the National Migrant Consultations finding that progressing to work in New Zealand that matches skills and New Zealand ready qualifications can be a challenge for recent migrants and that this can lead to unexpected costs. SSOs highlighted the importance of ensuring that recent migrants come to New Zealand with realistic expectations of the job market and what they will be able to do with existing qualifications in New Zealand. SSOs also commented that “adjusting expectations of both the migrant and the employer is an ongoing issue”. For example:

- Recognition of prior qualifications: Recent migrants report problems related to recognition of existing qualifications from their home country in New Zealand. At times they get relatively low paying roles (creating more struggles financially) and work in industries that are not aligned to their existing qualifications and/or interests. Some of our clients report that having spent years of studying, having now come to New Zealand they feel that these qualifications are wasted.
• Migrants sometimes have unrealistic expectations of what they will be able to do when they get here. Understanding the potential need to start the New Zealand employment pathway at a lower level and lower paid role is important.

• Some migrants come to New Zealand under the impression it will be easy to get a job but once they arrive find it’s hard to find work. They leave their countries and sell many of their possessions and subsequently need to live under much different circumstances on arrival, accepting lower paid work in some cases. This can lead to various issues, including individual stress, family stress and issues and depression.

Comments made by SSOs in relation to costs of upskilling, retraining or further study are covered in the Education and training section (pages 23-26).

**Getting New Zealand work experience**

The SSOs agreed with the National Migrant Consultations finding that “Migrants often seek volunteering as a pathway for gaining relevant experience and paid employment”. SSOs also commented that “Working within their own migrant community is also very common, eg, in Asian supermarkets and restaurants”.

SSOs also agreed with the NMC report finding that partners of resident and work visa holders find getting work experience more challenging. For example:

- The partners of residence visa and/or work visa holders find settling and finding work very challenging. Those we work with typically have poor English Language skills, and their skill sets are often not well aligned with regional requirements (as English language and a job are not requirements for their visa).
- One SSO commented that Immigration New Zealand’s recent introduction of a regional skills shortage list will make it easier for migrants to identify job vacancies in regional areas that are matched to their skills and experience.

**Access**

**Understanding the job market and how to apply for a job**

Similar to the National Migrant Consultation participants, SSOs commented on challenges they have observed migrants experience related to writing CVs, understanding how to build networks and understanding the nature of the New Zealand job market.

- For many, communicating past experience in a way that New Zealand employers see as valuable in a CV is an observed barrier. We have a number of (recent migrant) clients
who come in looking for assistance with Curriculum Vitae and we help with their preparation for looking for work.

- Migrants don’t realise:
  - it’s a relatively slower and longer recruitment process in New Zealand
  - it’s also harder to find jobs without New Zealand work experience
  - how important networks are and how word of mouth impacts on the ability to find work.

- The competitiveness of the job market is something we have observed as being a surprise to many of the job-seekers we work with.

- Many international student graduates have no idea or very little understanding of how to go about finding a job in New Zealand once they have finished their study. Their networks are small and their expectations are high.

The SSO comments also related to the pressures for international student graduates to find work. For example:

- Many have very little money as it has all been spent on their education and they are therefore desperate to find work post study. Many of the graduates need to urgently find work post study to demonstrate to their parents (still living overseas) that the investment in their education has been worthwhile.

**Employer reluctance and lack of understanding**

More than one SSO cited issues such as the level of support employers provide to migrant staff and unconscious bias and discrimination as being systemic barriers. For example:

- Job seeking issues are compounded by New Zealand employers having a lack of understanding of migrants’ needs, especially if they are coming from significantly different cultures. For some migrants this has resulted in discrimination and sometimes being taken advantage of.

- Employer attitudes and racism are major challenges that migrants are powerless to change.

- It's very challenging not having a Kiwi accent, no New Zealand work experience and a non-English name.

- If Auckland is seen to have greater employment opportunities it would be helpful to understand how these opportunities are being realised for the migrant communities. What pathways and support networks are in place that mean migrants are getting an equal opportunity?
The NMC report made reference to the suggestion by some work visa holding National Migrant Consultation participants “that the time-limited nature of their visas and (the employer’s) lack of understanding about work visa requirements contributed to the employer’s reluctance to hire them”. SSOs agreed that this reflects their experience:

- At the top of the list of barriers to employment for migrants that we work with is visas. There is a lack of understanding amongst some employers of the visa process and what visas mean. Job-seekers have identified that a real issue is the requirement to include visa details when applying for jobs through online job sites and not having an opportunity to explain what their visa means or what their intentions are.
- We have predominantly small to medium enterprises in our region and so employers are limited to the resources they have available to try and understand the conditions of visa types. Employers will tend to hold out for a Kiwi candidate rather than take someone on a temporary visa.

**English language**

The NMC report includes access to English Language classes in the Education and Training section and notes a suggestion by some participants that access to advanced classes could be improved. SSOs also emphasised the significance of migrants’ English language skills to obtaining employment. For example:

- Moving countries to find new work can be challenging. If a migrant’s (spoken) English is an issue this will be an even bigger challenge for them when seeking employment.
- Although some migrants are allowed to live and work here without having any knowledge of the English language, we have observed too many non-English speakers who have been unable to find jobs due to language issues. This causes a huge amount of stress in the family.
- Access to English language classes by those without permanent resident status is an issue, as this impacts on their ability to secure employment.

**Understanding**

**New Zealand way of working**

- Migrants do not always anticipate the differences between employment in New Zealand and (employment in) their home countries.
- Training and development programmes are needed to give migrants a better understanding of New Zealand business practices/culture/process/protocols and employment agreements.
Knowing about employment entitlements, rights and conditions

- More needs to be done to inform recent migrants about their employment rights and where to go to talk about these.
- The majority of employment-related enquiries we receive from migrants are about employment issues, particularly around contracts, rights, entitlements and work conditions (for example, bullying).
- There is a need to promote the availability of free ‘community law services’ around New Zealand, to help deal with migrants’ employment law/contract related issues.
Settlement Challenges: Education and training

The Key Insights from the Education and Training section of the NMC report (pages 50 to 55) are:

At a national level, most recent migrants consulted did not experience difficulties related to education and training. This was due to education and training not being relevant for some as well as others finding it easy to access and understand how education and training worked.

Consultation participants for whom education and training was relevant had faced challenges with affordability and access to courses, including English Language Classes.

For migrants with children there were difficulties understanding the New Zealand school system and post-school options.

The findings documented in the NMC report relating to challenges experienced by recent migrants in the education and training area were supported by SSOs in the observations they shared. Similar to the National Migrant Consultations findings, the key themes SSOs highlighted were: the need for migrants to have greater clarity on the costs of education; eligibility for subsidised tuition; access to education and training, in particular English Language classes; and understanding the school system.

Cost Expectations

The SSOs’ observations reinforced the finding in the NMC report that understanding the costs of education and training, both for adults and related to the school system, is a challenge for migrants for whom education and training is relevant.

Costs of Education for children

One SSO commented on challenges migrants experience understanding all of the costs related to their children’s schooling and how different costs support their child’s learning:

- Migrants struggle to understand education costs (uniforms, stationery, technology, school activities). There is a need for more information about this to help them understand that ‘these activities are how learning happens in the New Zealand school system’, eg. a school camp is about learning and preventing children from attending will impact on their learning.
Costs of education and training for adults

- Many adult migrants are unable to undertake further education and/or training because of the high cost. As they cannot access subsidised provisions until they have residency and meet eligibility criteria many accept low paid jobs, which does not allow them to save for further education.

Access

The focus of SSO observations relating to access to Education and Training was English language classes. This was a stronger focus than in the NMC report. SSOs reflected on the importance of being able to communicate (especially orally) in English, and that this “is key to all areas of living and working in New Zealand”.

English language classes

The SSOs’ observations covered issues related to availability of English language classes and promotion and awareness of English language course options. For example:

- There is a lack of tutors (in our region) for those requiring English language tuition. A local ‘English as a second language’ group provides free classes to those with permanent residence status but it cannot cope with the demand due to a lack of volunteers.

- Many people are unaware of where to access English classes/support - these need more promotion to new migrants.

A key theme highlighted in SSOs’ observations was temporary migrant’s eligibility for government funded English language classes. Issues raised included alignment of temporary migrant’s eligibility for English tuition with eligibility to other funded services, employers’ ability to support their staff, the effect on temporary migrants’ longer term outcomes, and the need for greater clarity around eligibility. For example:

- Poor English language skills are a major contributing factor to the difficulties faced by those on temporary work visas. Throughout the NMC report partners of work visa holders expressed higher levels of difficulty with all aspects of settling in, including education and training.

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4 It should be noted that this is possibly due to the nature of the National Migrant Consultations participants; refer Considerations for Readers section on p7 of this report.
• Temporary migrants can access some training (eg industry training through ITOs), but are unable to access government subsidised/funded English language tuition which would support them to be successful in training courses and/or their workplaces. Temporary migrants can access career support services such as Work Connect, which is TEC funded, but they can’t access funded English support if it becomes clear this is needed. This mismatch between policies needs to be remedied.

• Employers are frustrated when some staff (resident visa holders) can improve their language skills in a workplace literacy programme and yet other staff can’t because of their temporary visa status.

• Clarity around visa conditions related to participation in education and training courses would be useful for temporary migrants. Their visa conditions sometimes prevent access to more than three months of study. It is also unclear if part-time courses are included in this.

• Temporary migrants who later transition to a resident visa may miss out on years of language learning opportunities. Early intervention is essential for language learning. The long-time lag before formal English lessons can begin increases the risk of developing entrenched language issues that can also prevent full participation by migrants in future activities (eg. understandable pronunciation, incorrect or limited vocabulary or grammar).

Other challenges related to accessing education and training

Communicating with children’s schools was highlighted by one SSO as a challenge for recent migrants who commented that they are:

• sometimes asked to phone the school for people in this ethnic community because they lack the English to manage the school’s phone-in system (for reporting absenteeism or making parental enquiries).

Understanding

Understanding the school system for their children

• It is challenging for families with young children to understand and navigate the school system.
• There is a need for more information to be made available about expectations of parental involvement in schooling etc, which can be quite different to what migrants have known elsewhere.
• Parents are often looking for extra classes for children (such as music and after school activities), as well as playgroups and kindergartens for pre-schoolers, but don’t know where to start.

**Understanding post-school education and training options for their children**

• Understanding and navigating the information available on post-school education and other training options is a challenge. There are so many options. Without access to specialist advice, many migrant parents of older children find it very confusing.

**Understanding how education and training works in New Zealand (for adult migrants)**

• The majority of client enquiry questions are around courses they are eligible for – whether it is English language classes or upskilling courses. Clients want to know what is available, what they are eligible for and what the cost is. In general, there is not enough support to help new migrants navigate the education and training system.

• Many new migrants do not look for training opportunities because they imagine all training to be full-time or university-based and do not understand the concept of part-time study and the availability of short courses.

• Understanding of visa conditions gets in the way of on-the-job training - many new migrants do not consider or look for employment-based training.
Settlement Challenges: Inclusion

The Key Insights from the Inclusion section of the NMC report (pages 56 to 61) are:

Most consultation participants felt welcome in their community. However, experiences of unfair or biased behaviour were a fairly common concern and some participants did not know where to seek advice and support when this occurred.

Consultation participants would have found more information about Māori language and culture as well as how to engage with local sports and recreational clubs useful.

The focus of SSOs’ observations was the challenges some recent migrants they have worked experience feeling welcome in New Zealand and connecting with others in the community. SSOs emphasised the importance of a whole of society, two-way approach to support recent migrants’ inclusion. SSOs agreed with the NMC report finding that experience of unfair or biased behaviour and knowing where to go for advice or support is a concern for recent migrants. The desire of recent migrants (noted in the NMC report) to learn about Māori language and culture was also highlighted.

Feeling Welcome

While SSOs did not disagree with the finding documented in the NMC report that recent migrants generally felt positive and welcome in their communities, SSOs’ observations did highlight barriers that limit the extent to which some recent migrants feel welcome.

One SSO noted that the expectations some migrants come to New Zealand with relating to the ‘friendly kiwi nature’ are not aligned with their experience in New Zealand:

- Some migrants find New Zealanders to be more unfriendly than expected and that people seem too busy to stop and chat.

A specific example shared was:

- When she was overseas, she saw so many promises of the good life in New Zealand – every picture was beautiful, the brochures kept telling about the friendly kiwi nature - but then she arrived and suddenly she felt alone and that no one cares.

One SSO reflected on experiences shared by migrant women they have worked with relating to adjusting to differences in cultural norms:
• Migrant women sometimes struggle with what they see other New Zealand women doing and trying to learn what is and isn’t appropriate and acceptable for them in New Zealand. An example is whether it is ok or not for a woman to enter a playground where fathers are picking up their children when in their culture it is inappropriate for a married woman to be seen in the same space as another man.

Communication barriers were highlighted. For example:

• Migrants may have completed an English Language class and their written English is good, but they need more practice speaking English. Some find that New Zealanders have low tolerance and patience with them while they are still developing speed and ease with their English speaking. Some migrants have commented that in other countries, e.g. France, Germany, people encourage new migrants to practice speaking in French or German. They don’t have the same impatience for people who speak ‘broken English’.

Some SSOs observed that the multiplicity of cultures in New Zealand can be a challenge for recent migrants, particularly in the workplace. For example:

• For many migrants it is more of a struggle to integrate with other cultures in New Zealand, not just the Kiwi culture. New migrants who are in work may be dealing with up to 30 different cultures in the workplace. This can become quite a struggle for them.

The SSOs also commented on factors which can be a barrier to inclusion in multiple aspects of life in New Zealand and can create added confusion and stress. For example:

• It is hard for new migrants to understand the public transport systems, including bus timetables. When using a taxi, migrants find it hard to know how much a taxi should cost - taxi prices can vary even if it is the same trip taken each week (eg. travelling home from the supermarket).

• Telephone systems: For migrants seeking assistance from businesses, including Government departments, the automated telephone system doesn’t always understand their accent. The lack of a personal voice ‘at the end of the line’, and being asked to follow automated telephone instructions (given in fairly quick English), often means the issue they are seeking assistance on cannot be resolved.

Connecting with others in the Community

Making friends with New Zealanders

The SSOs made note of the online National Migrant Consultation finding that 34 percent of participants found it difficult to make friends with New Zealanders, and that the partners of
work and residence visa holders found this particularly challenging. The SSO’s observations reflected on the challenges that partners experience in making connections within their community. For example:

- **We are aware that isolation and lack of confidence can have a big impact on how migrants engage in the community. We have a high number of clients who are partners (many of whom are women) seeking employment opportunities as they are at home most days, not connected to the community they live in, and do not know how to make conversation.**
- **While (female) partners may feel at ease when their husbands and children were home, when their husband and children have left home (eg for work or study or school), they often don’t know what to do with their time and are worried about leaving the house in case ‘something happens’, or that they wouldn’t be able to find their way back.**
- **Migrant women with children sometimes find it difficult to join new networks when it seems that everyone already knows everyone and their children have grown up together.**

**Engagement with local community groups and clubs**

- **Several SSOs highlighted volunteering with groups of interest as a way many recent migrants engage with their community, and that volunteering also helped them in seeking paid work and learning English, which in turn supports Inclusion. For example**
  - Volunteering can help with some migrants’ settling-in problems. Volunteering can help build confidence and new migrants can start to build their New Zealand work experience and obtain work references for inclusion in their CV. Volunteering can also enable new migrants to start building a network of friends and to expand their New Zealand support networks.
  - **Our clients are often well-connected to their community but they are often looking for information on other groups available in their community. If they are not working they will look at ways for inclusion, such as volunteering with other interest groups.**
  - **One SSO commented that a local Filipino Community Group facilitates connections to local volunteering opportunities and have a strong Facebook group which encourages and supports volunteering for migrants as a means of connecting with and giving back to the community. The Group regularly attend beach clean-up days and Conservation Groups planting days and also take part in high profile community events like the Christmas parade.**
Supporting new migrants to feel welcome in their community

As part of their observations, several SSOs shared their own initiatives that support new migrants to feel welcome and make connections with others in the community. For example:

- We have developed a ‘sisterhood network’ to connect migrant women to each other for friendship and information and to help them integrate into the wider community. This type of approach is having a positive effect on the confidence and general well-being of these women.
- Through events and festivals we encourage proactive civic participation, engagement with the local community, including the local marae, to build social and cultural capital and, more importantly, volunteerism - especially for secondary migrants, former refugees and asylum seekers.
- We encourage public appreciation of different cultures through festivals such as Holi and Chinese New Year nationally, which makes migrants feel more welcome and gain a sense of belonging.
- A key focus of our work is to promote the region as a welcoming community with a strong desire to receive newcomers and create an inclusive environment that supports a successful settlement pathway. It ensures that newcomers can participate fully in all aspects of community life and gain a sense of inclusion and belonging.

Māori language and culture

The SSOs endorsed the finding of the National Migrant Consultations that opportunities to learn about Māori culture and language are important to recent migrants. The following observations were shared by SSOs:

- We have observed that there exists a desire from migrant communities to connect with Māori communities, and that connecting to Māori language and culture enhances migrants’ sense of belonging to a community and an intercultural city.
- Many migrants find Māori culture similar to theirs but would like to know more about it before they move to New Zealand.
- Recent migrants don’t know where to learn and take part in Māori culture but want to.

Some SSOs shared current initiatives they have underway or would like to further explore:

- Recent migrants’ interest in Māori language and culture is reflected in our Huarahi Hou initiative which involves marae visit, noho marae and establishing relationships and partnerships with local iwi.
• Workshops and local cultural events like Matariki could be hosted by Māori as the tangata whenua as ways to engage recent migrants. These could provide an insight to the cultural significance of our region’s history, its land and the stories of the iwi.

Experiences of unfair or biased behaviour in the community
SSOs reinforced the finding from the National Migrant Consultations that experiences of racism and/or unfair and biased behaviour, and knowing what to do and where to go for advice and support, are concerns for recent migrants. For example:

• The issue of racism is one of the biggest concerns for recent migrants we work with.
• Some migrants are not getting the same types of opportunities (both in paid work and as volunteers) as New Zealand born / ‘white’ volunteers.
• There needs to be more information about what to report and when (particularly racial bias).
• Those who witness unfair or biased behaviour against others often do not challenge it. There needs to be more discussion about racism and challenging racism in New Zealand.

A whole of society approach
The SSOs commented on the importance of a whole of society, two-way approach to supporting migrant inclusion and reducing the occurrence of unfair and biased behaviour. For example:

• We are concerned that a significant minority of recent migrants feel unwelcome in their communities and experience unfair and discriminatory behaviour. This shows the need for more systemic change and more of a focus on institutions, employers and the community’s role in inclusion, rather than focusing solely on how to get migrants to better include themselves in communities.
• Communities must create opportunities for cultural inclusion to be celebrated, modelled and promoted at all levels, including community events, inclusive service delivery and artistic expressions.

One SSO noted the importance of collaborations between the various organisations that work with recent migrants to promoting social inclusion – including between Newcomers Networks, Regional Migrant Centres, Multicultural Councils and the councils involved in the Welcoming Communities pilot project.
Settlement Challenges: Health and Wellbeing

The Key Insights from the Health and Wellbeing section of the NMC report (pages 62 to 71) are:

The ability to pay for healthcare services, understanding healthcare costs and which services were free, and knowing how the overall health system worked, were all key challenges for consultation participants.

Participants also had difficulties in understanding the housing sector and tenancy rights and what to do if there was a problem.

Healthcare services

The SSO’s observations reinforce the key insights in the NMC report, which state that understanding healthcare costs and how health services operate is an area that recent migrants more commonly find challenging. Key challenges highlighted by SSOs included understanding eligibility for public healthcare services and understanding the different parts of the health system. The SSOs observed these challenges often lead to issues accessing healthcare services for recent migrants they work with.

Cost expectations

The SSOs endorsed the National Migrant Consultation findings and reflected that recent migrants they work with find the cost of healthcare more expensive than they expected in New Zealand.

Access

Understanding healthcare costs and entitlements

The SSO’s observations reinforced the NMC finding that understanding how health care costs work is a challenge for recent migrants. This includes a lack of clarity about entitlements to publically funded health services for temporary work visa holders and understanding how private health insurance works and what it covers. For example:
• Some migrants are not aware or don’t understand that they may not be eligible for the free healthcare system in New Zealand, and that eligibility will depend on the visa they hold. This can result in large, unexpected bills.

• Migrants who are not eligible for publicly funded healthcare don’t know they can (usually) get private health insurance after they have arrived in NZ, and what the costs of this are.

• Some recent migrants do not know they have to prove their eligibility when they go to a doctor and/or hospital.

• There is a need to develop links to information about eligibility for health-related services and this information should be readily available within a ‘one stop shop’ information point.

The SSOs agreed with the NMC finding that a key consideration for whether to use healthcare services was the expected cost (because of ineligibility for publically funded healthcare or, for those who are eligible, misperceptions about the costliness of emergency services). For example:

• Many (particularly work visa holders) do not go to the doctor because of the higher than expected cost of the service.

• Recent migrants may avoid going to doctors and hospitals until things are really bad if they know they will have to pay.

• Some work visa holders are reluctant to use doctors or emergency hospital services because of a misperception that the services are costly (when they are actually eligible for funded healthcare).

On the other hand, one SSO commented that although they “have heard a couple of recent migrants say that they feel it is expensive to see a General Practitioner (GP), recent migrants have also said they receive a very good service which makes up for the cost.”

5 Information about eligibility and resources for service providers to check eligibility are available on the Ministry of Health website: https://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/eligibility-publicly-funded-health-services/resources-service-providers-check-eligibility
Registering with a General Practitioner

The SSOs commented on challenges recent migrants experience finding a GP and perceived discrimination when registering with GP. For example:

- Many migrants don’t know how to find a GP. Many report they have been unable to register with a GP as the surgeries are not taking new patients.
- We often hear of clients who have been told the clinic they wish to register with is no longer accepting patients, then find that someone with a ‘kiwi sounding’ name has been able to register.

SSOs commented that the consequences of not registering include “waiting long hours at a clinic” and that “using the Emergency Department is the most common solution to getting immediate advice and health care”.

Language difficulties in accessing healthcare services

One SSO emphasised that “language is a significant barrier to healthcare and knowledge about healthcare for some recent migrants”. They commented that “if an interpreter was required then consultation times had to be doubled, which could prevent people from seeking the required care”.

Language difficulties relating to accessing healthcare were not highlighted as a major challenge by participants in the National Migrant Consultations. It should be noted that this may be due to the nature of the National Migrant Consultations participants; refer Considerations for Readers section on p8 of this report.

The SSOs also commented on the need for clear messaging related to healthcare due to avoid misunderstandings that can occur. For example:

- Some recent migrants thought ‘smoke free’ meant free smokes and that a positive cancer test is a good thing (not realising a positive result in this case is a bad thing).

Understanding

Similar to the National Migrant Consultation participants, a focus of the SSO’s observations related to the healthcare system was the challenges migrants experience understanding how the different parts of the system work together, particularly the role of the GP. For example:

- Migrants talk about the challenge of understanding the need for a GP and use the local Emergency department as a GP. Many migrants will call an ambulance when they are feeling unwell so they can go to the hospital straight away rather than book an
appointment with a Doctor. They turn up at the hospital only to be told they need to get a GP.

- Many do not understand the NZ health system and that we use the GP as a primary health provider and not the hospital. Many do not understand the referral process from a GP to a specialist appointment and that this will involve a waiting time.

One SSO commented that migrants they work with have noted a lack of information "about some of the standardised health checks, such as cervical screening and mammograms (people don’t ask for these things!), and that information is needed about child services such as Plunket.

Feeling safe, New Zealand laws, the role of police services, and trust in government services

Challenges relating to safety, laws, police and government services were not a focus in the SSO’s observations. The observations that were shared are reflected below.

Feeling Safe

One SSO commented that, as noted in the NMC report, recent migrants’ challenges relating to feeling safe “can vary depending on the ethnicity of the migrant group, where they have come from, and the area they are currently living in.”

New Zealand Law and the role of Police

- As noted in the (NMC) report, most clients say they understand the laws and their rights and responsibilities. However, there can often be confusion about the roles of the police and how they fit into disputes, such as family or tenancy disputes.

- Migrant clients often think police will get involved in matters that could end up at the Disputes Tribunal. There is a need for further clarification for recent migrants on the role of the police and what they will not get involved in.

One SSO expressed concern that recent migrants could unknowingly break the law due to different cultural practices around parenting:

- There is a need for more information to be made available about ‘parenting in New Zealand’, as discipline methods, age at which children can be left alone, and expectations of parental involvement in schooling can be quite different to what migrants have known elsewhere.
Understanding tenancy rights and how the housing sector operates

The SSO’s observations reflect the findings documented in the NMC report relating to challenges understanding how to rent or buy a house, instances of discrimination and understanding tenancy rights. For example:

- As noted in the (NMC) report, clients often have challenges around tenancy, particularly understanding contracts, rights and responsibilities. The extent of issue will often be determined by where they have come from and their expectations. Clients often do not understand the different types of tenancy and house sharing situations.

- Migrants can be left in a vulnerable situation if they do not have the right contracts in place. Clients often have issues with landlords and understanding bonds.

- Migrants can be taken advantage of in the rental market because they do not have a good understanding of their rights and the language used in rental agreements is difficult for them to understand.

- The length of time taken to find a house in New Zealand can be unexpected.

The SSOs commented that some recent migrants encounter “racial bias in interactions with some landlords”. For example:

- Migrants have been told that they can’t have a rental property because the owner didn’t want strong cooking smells in the house.
Conclusion

This SSO Observations report presents the observations and various suggestions that SSOs shared with Immigration New Zealand related to each section of the National Migrant Consultations 2018 report. The collated and analysed observations overwhelmingly support the findings in each section of the NMC report, and the overall key insights the report sets out. The value of this SSO Observations report is in the added perspectives and the insightful recommendations.

Summary of collective SSO observations

No SSOs disagreed with the finding documented in the NMC Report that the majority of recent migrants are able to readily access services and information to help them adjust to life in New Zealand.

The SSOs agreed that migrant’s awareness of the information available to them could be strengthened through enhanced promotion of that information. SSOs also agreed that provision of information could be strengthened in some key areas, including understanding New Zealand ways of working, employment rights, the school system, the healthcare system, Māori language and culture and the housing market.

The SSOs emphasised that while, as suggested in the NMC report, websites are an important source of information for recent migrants, in-person settlement support provided through various channels also plays an important role.

The SSOs’ observations of the settlement challenges experienced by recent migrants they have worked with align with those experienced by the recent migrants who took part in the National Migrant Consultations. In addition to providing perspectives on and examples of the challenges highlighted in the NMC report, challenges SSOs highlighted or emphasised also include:

- the significance of migrants’ English language skills to their employment outcomes, and that access to advanced classes could be improved;
- temporary migrant’s eligibility for government funded English language classes, and the issues this creates for other services, employers, and migrants’ longer term outcomes;
- isolation being an issue that migrants’ partners may experience, which affects the connections they are able to make within their community;
volunteering with groups of interest is a way that many recent migrants engage with their community;

the importance of a whole of society, two-way approach to support recent migrants’ inclusion, and reducing the occurrence of unfair and biased behaviour.

Next steps

The SSO observations and recommendations documented in this SSO Observations report will be used alongside the NMC report to help to inform future areas of focus for government settlement services and information services.

The two reports are also intended as a resource for local government and the range of non-government settlement service providers, community groups, and organisations throughout the country who support migrants settling in New Zealand.
Annex 1: Acknowledgements

INZ would like to thank the following SSOs for their valuable contributions, which are collated and summarised in this Settlement Stakeholder Observations report:

- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Multicultural New Zealand (formally the New Zealand Federation of Multicultural Councils) (in association with Newcomers Network)
- English Language Partners New Zealand
- Volunteering New Zealand
- Northland District Health Board
- Whangarei District Council
- Auckland Council (Arts, Community and Events, Community Services)
- Auckland Harboursport
- Hearts and Minds
- Settlement Centre Waikato (Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust)
- Bay of Plenty DHB
- Migrant Connect Taranaki
- Manawatu Chamber of Commerce
- Napier City Council
- Wellington Chamber of Commerce
- Marlborough Multi Cultural Centre
- Skills Connect Canterbury (Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce)

INZ would also like to acknowledge the work undertaken by all SSOs – their role in supporting new migrants contributes to the achievement of good settlement outcomes for recent migrants and cannot be underestimated.
### Annex 2: Settlement Stakeholder Observations Form

#### Settlement Stakeholder observations on the

*National Migrant Consultations 2018 findings report*

**Invitation to share your observations**

Immigration New Zealand is inviting a group of settlement stakeholder organisations who work directly with recent migrants to share their observations on the *National Migrant Consultations 2018 findings report*. We are particularly interested in hearing about whether the experiences shared by recent migrants who took part in the consultations reflect the experiences of recent migrants your organisation has worked with.

We will summarise settlement stakeholder organisations observations into a separate report which we will make available alongside the *National Migrant Consultations Report* on the INZ website.

**Guidance for completing this form**

We do not expect that you will provide observations related to every section of the report. Please focus on the sections that are relevant to your area of expertise or experiences working with recent migrants. For example, your organisation may have particular expertise and experience working with recent migrants in the employment area, but not in healthcare.

Where a national organisational body exists, only the national body has been sent this invitation. You may wish to give your local branches/members the opportunity to contribute to your response. Please submit one form per national organisation with summarised input from your members.

Please read and consider the questions carefully and try to keep your responses succinct.

Please submit the form by Monday 11 March to [anna.spencer@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:anna.spencer@mbie.govt.nz).

1. **Why recent migrants live where they live (pages 30-33)**
   - Participants were asked to select 3 reasons for living in their current location. Do the main reasons they selected reflect your observations?

   **Type your response here**

2. **What recent migrants found helpful (pages 34 – 37)**
   - Participants were asked about the people, places, information and services they had found helpful for adjusting to life in New Zealand. Do the things that participants said were helpful to them reflect your observations of what recent migrants have found helpful?

   **Type your response here**
• The report suggests that the profile and promotion of the information and services available to recent migrants could be strengthened. Do you have any suggestions related to this?

**Type your response here**

3. Settlement challenges experienced by consultation participants and additional information they would find useful

Participants were asked about the challenges they may have experienced in each of the New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy outcome areas (listed below). (Note that English Language was included within the other 4 outcome areas). They were also asked for suggestions about additional information they would find useful.

For each of the outcome areas below relevant to your expertise and experience, we seek your response to the following questions:

- Do the areas participants identified as challenging reflect your observations of the challenges experienced by recent migrants?

- Are there any other areas that recent migrants your organisation works with commonly find challenging?

- Do the areas consultation participants said it would be useful to have more information about reflect your organisations observations of areas that recent migrants would find more information helpful?

3.1 Employment (page 41-49)

**Type your response here**

3.2 Education and Training (pages 50 – 55)

**Type your response here**

3.3 Inclusion (pages 56 – 61)

**Type your response here**

3.4 Health and Wellbeing (pages 62 – 71)

**Type your response here**