

The benefits of Data Integration

A series of case studies conducted by the
ABS on the benefits of data integration.

Case Study

Migrants



Humanitarian migrants
are **twice** as likely to
find a job if they can
speak English well



Australia issues 200,000 permanent visas each year. Some of these people arrive as skilled professionals, some to join family members, and some as refugees, but they all face the task of adjusting to life in a new place. But there has been an information gap about exactly how that adjustment has been going, and by using data integration it becomes possible to get a better picture using information that already exists.

The [Migrants Settlements and Census project](#) brings together census data and immigration data to fill the information gap and create new insights. David Smith, Director of the Economic Analysis Unit at the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, has found that the project has improved what he and his colleagues can do for migrant communities. "We need to know how well groups of migrants are settling in, and to be aware of any sub-populations who aren't doing as well. For example, it enables us to home in on issues of concern, such as how long does it take a refugee to find a job?", Smith said.

Having the right data is the first step to creating policies that can deliver help to people who need it. This project means that questions about migrants that were previously up for debate can now be answered with evidence. "I consider data to be a great equaliser", Smith said. "If we don't have good data, we're at the mercy of unfounded theories. If people say that migrants don't contribute to the Australian community, we can now counter these claims with insights about volunteering, employment, and more."

Integrating existing data also means that new insights can be obtained at a much lower cost. It saves time, too, because it means that there's no need to go out and do a survey on things that are already covered in the census, freeing up government resources to focus on using the data to help migrants to successfully adjust to life in Australia.

Smith has [previously written](#) that "the single-most important measure of successful settlement in Australia is the ability to communicate in English". This factor was important for engaging with education and a wider range of employment opportunities. The data suggests that investing in the English skills of new arrivals to Australia creates a big dividend in the years that follow.

These are just some of the examples of how migrants and the entire Australian community benefit from quality data. The integration of data from the 2011 Census and the Department of Immigration And Citizenship's Settlement Database was done under strict privacy and confidentiality controls, protected by law.

Find out more about ABS data integration on our [FAQ page](#).