FOREWORD

For decades we have seen labour market growth in Canada come from immigration. We can also see the richness and vibrancy that immigrants bring to cities like Toronto, where half the population was born outside of Canada while another 25% are children of immigrants. Canada is recognized globally for its innovative approaches to harnessing diverse talent and for providing unparalleled social mobility and groundbreaking efforts to create pathways for immigrants and refugees. Yet in spite of the accolades we receive internationally, we know we can do better on this front. We know that immigrants brought to Canada based on our assessment of their skills may still face barriers preventing them from using those skills. We know that many of our training and employment programs – particularly language training – are not producing the results we need. And we also know that employers can be doing much more to create workplaces that attract and retain newcomers.

This special issue of *Canadian Diversity* examines critical issues related to skills and employment pathways for newcomers and racialized Canadians, particularly those most affected by COVID-19.

Led by a team of researchers at the Diversity Institute and informed by more than twenty workshops sponsored by the Future Skills Centre at the 2021 Metropolis Conference, these papers examine the challenges that we must address if Canada is going to harness the talent of newcomers and racialized peoples. These reports also highlight innovative approaches to challenging conventional wisdom in order to create a more effective and inclusive skills and employment ecosystem.

At the Future Skills Centre, we are dedicated to helping Canadians gain the skills they need to thrive in a changing labour market. We are constantly looking ahead, gaining and sharing insights into the labour market of today and the future. Based on these insights, and with our partners, we test and measure innovative approaches to skills development and training to learn what works.

Please join us in considering new ways of addressing challenges and harnessing evidence and experience to create a skills and employment ecosystem that drives prosperity and social inclusion to keep Canada as one of the most attractive destinations for the best and the brightest from around the world.

Pedro Barata
Executive Director, Future Skills Centre