

REFUGEE WELCOME ZONE

Letter of Request from
Mt Barker Hazara Community WA
Refugee Council of Australia: How to become a
Refugee Welcome Zone.
Refugee Welcome Zones.

Meeting Date: 26 October 2021

Number of Pages : 61



**Mount Barker
Hazara Community
WA**

Dear Chris and Members of Council,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Mount Barker Hazara Community WA organisation to request the Shire of Plantagenet to propose for Mount Barker to become a 'Refugee Welcome Zone'.

This request is based on the number of Afghan Hazaras currently residing in Mount Barker, and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities in our jurisdiction.

Following the atrocities currently happening in Afghanistan, we're anticipating the possibility of Afghan evacuees from Afghanistan to re-settle in our community in the near far future.

Becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone would support the settlement and integration of these and other refugees who will eventually start life in our regions. It will also assist local Mount Barker refugees who are trying to bring their families to Australia through the humanitarian pathways.

If you have any further query or question, feel free to get in touch.

Kind regards

Ali Jafari
Hazara Community Spokesperson
Mount Barker, WA



Refugee Council
of Australia

How to become a Refugee Welcome Zone

refugeecouncil.org.au/how-to-become-refugee-welcome-zone/



Most Refugee Welcome Zones have been declared after an initial proposal by a community or church-based organisation that is subsequently supported by an approach from RCOA. If you would like your local Council or Shire to become a Refugee Welcome Zone, here are some suggested steps:

- Write a letter of proposal to your Mayor and Councillors. It is important to highlight the level of community support for refugees and people seeking asylum, the benefits of becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone and opportunities to work with local groups and organisations and support groups. You should also enclose a copy of the Refugee Welcome Zone information for councils.
- If you work for a local organisation or are part of a community support group which provides assistance to refugees invite your Mayor and Councillors to visit you. This provides a great opportunity to showcase the work you do.
- Request an opportunity to present the proposal at a Council meeting.
- Contact RCOA at manager@refugeecouncil.org.au to let us know about your proposal. We can provide further information and advice and approach your Council to support the proposal.

The process for becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone is very straightforward and simply involves the Council signing the *Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration*. To mark the occasion of becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone, many Councils and Shires choose to hold public signing ceremonies to highlight the initiative and acknowledge the work of local groups and individuals that support refugees and people seeking asylum. To request a representative from the Refugee Council of Australia to attend a ceremony, get in touch with our head office on (02) 9211 9333.

Local Government has historically played an important role in assisting refugee settlement and promoting community harmony. Becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone is a way to continue this proud tradition of supporting the settlement of refugees. It can motivate Local Government and local organisations and support groups to work together more effectively so as to improve settlement outcomes for refugees.

Signing the Declaration can also promote harmony, social cohesion and respect for human rights in your local community. It is a great way to demonstrate support for refugees and take a strong stand against racism and discrimination. It can help to raise awareness about the issues affecting refugees, foster a culture of mutual respect and promote an appreciation of cultural diversity.



Refugee Council
of Australia



Photo: City of Greater Dandenong Council

Refugee Welcome Zones

Local Councils building a culture of welcome for refugees

December 2013

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INTRODUCTION

The Refugee Welcome Zone is an initiative of the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) and currently involves 87 Councils around the country. This paper is aimed at introducing the reader to the concept of a Refugee Welcome Zone, promoting awareness of the actions and activities undertaken by participating Councils and encouraging more Councils to sign-up and get involved.

Who is the Refugee Council of Australia?

RCOA is the national peak body for refugees and the organisations and individuals who support them. RCOA promotes the adoption of flexible, humane and constructive policies towards refugees and asylum seekers through conducting policy analysis, research, advocacy and public education on refugee issues.

What is a Refugee Welcome Zone?

A Refugee Welcome Zone is a Local Government Area which has made a commitment to welcoming refugees into the community, upholding their human rights, demonstrating compassion and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in the community.

By making this Declaration, Local Government Areas are encouraged in their continuing efforts to support the men, women and children who make the difficult journey to Australia to seek our protection.

With 87 Local Government Areas having declared themselves Refugee Welcome Zones, the initiative has proven to be a great success in connecting local governments with the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers.

This public commitment is also an acknowledgment of the tremendous contribution refugees have made to Australian society in so many fields, including medicine, science, engineering, sport, education, the arts, business and commerce.

What is the process for becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone?

The process for becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone is very straightforward. It simply involves the Council signing the Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration. A template is included at the end of this document.

Many Councils choose to hold public signing ceremonies to mark becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone. These provide an opportunity to highlight the initiative and acknowledge the work of local groups and individuals that support refugees and asylum seekers. If possible, a representative from the Refugee Council of Australia will attend the ceremony to present a Certificate of Appreciation.

Why become a Refugee Welcome Zone?

Local Government has historically played an important role in assisting refugee settlement and promoting community harmony. Since federation, Australia has become home to over 800,000 refugees and we have a proud history of settling refugees from all over the world who have gone on to make an enormous contribution to our economic, social and cultural wellbeing.

Becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone is a way to continue this strong tradition in supporting the settlement of refugees as well as promoting harmony, social cohesion and respect for human rights and dignity in your local community.

What are the obligations and responsibilities of Refugee Welcome Zones?

The Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration does not confer any formal obligations and Refugee Welcome Zones are not required to uphold any statutory responsibilities, to make financial commitments or enter into reporting accountabilities. The signing of the Declaration is simply a way of demonstrating broad support for the principles it contains.

The actions or activities undertaken by Refugee Welcome Zones are not specific requirements of the Declaration. However, any initiatives which help to create a welcoming atmosphere and assist the settlement of refugees and their communities are welcomed and encouraged.

How can Refugee Welcome Zones support refugees?

There are many simple things that local Councils can do to welcome refugees. Here are some examples, based on ideas already being implemented:

- Develop or review local government policies on refugees and asylum seekers;
- Offer funding for community-based initiatives which support the settlement of refugees;
- Hold gatherings to encourage communities from different backgrounds to meet;
- Organise a street fair, festival or other event during Refugee Week and Harmony Week;
- Canvass refugees and refugee support agencies on ways to provide support;
- Work with local groups and service providers in service design and delivery;
- Promote better access through community assistance directories that help refugees use services;
- Provide translated information and interpreters to assist interaction with service delivery;
- Allow free access to refugees to Council facilities, e.g. swimming pools, libraries;
- Provide local resources such as on-line learning centres that support self-learning;
- Offer youth programs that support recreational, social and educational outcomes;
- Support libraries in developing English tutoring and other support programs;
- Hold a public forum to enable guest speakers from refugee backgrounds to share their stories;
- Build community through award schemes and local leadership development programs;
- Develop and/or participate in local networks to build understanding and partnerships;
- Promote a local cultural precinct through a quirky or innovative project;
- Hold film festivals, museum exhibits, dance festivals, art exhibitions, story sharing or other innovative activities that promote diversity and intercultural understanding;
- Run employment assistance programs to provide local experience, references, self-confidence and connections with local employers;
- Liaise with Red Cross to run information sessions for newly arrived refugees who have been separated from family members and relatives.

Putting the Declaration into Practice

RCOA has been in touch with many of the 85 Councils that have declared themselves as Refugee Welcome Zones, to learn more about the good work that has been undertaken. As expected, the exercise revealed a wide and interesting range of initiatives in line with the number, diversity and needs of the local refugee communities.

Councils with relatively large numbers of refugee new arrivals have well developed and extensive services and activities. However, Refugee Welcome Zones with smaller refugee settlement populations have also been active in implementing support and assistance to the increasing diversity of their constituency.

The Councils featured in the project also expressed a diversity of motives behind their initiatives. Many Councils have focused on celebrating cultural diversity, promoting community harmony and raising public awareness by regularly supporting Refugee and Harmony Week celebrations through a range of musical events, workshops, film festivals, book launches, public talks and photo exhibitions. Others have been concerned with developing programs in partnership with refugee communities that promote capacity building and foster sustained engagement and connections between Council and communities over time.

Similarly many of the initiatives implemented by Councils reflect an array of different focus areas; for example, some programs have been targeted to a specific age or cultural group where Councils are responding to the needs of a particular ethnic, cultural or social group in the community.

The following pages contain summaries that highlight the work being undertaken by Refugee Welcome Zones around the country, no matter their size, location, cultural diversity or refugee settlement numbers. In the interest of limiting the length of this document for the reader, it was not possible to include contributions from all Refugee Welcome Zones. Some of the entries are comprehensive and others are relatively short and outline only an indicative sample of the effort involved.

It is intended that further updates will be issued on a periodic basis to provide further information about existing Refugee Welcome Zones and potential new ones for the purpose of sharing good ideas and practice. These will be listed under a separate link on the Refugee Council's website.

Get Involved

Councils that are not yet Refugee Welcome Zones are welcome to get involved. Some of them are already doing good work. Signing up will mean that the Council is counted among those that adhere to the principles enshrined in the Declaration. It is a positive and powerful message to send to local constituencies.

Readers are urged to engage with their local Councils in encouraging them to making the necessary Declaration and joining with other Refugee Welcome Zones in welcoming refugees into our community and assisting their successful settlement in Australia.

CURRENT REFUGEE WELCOME ZONES

There are currently 87 Refugee Welcome Zones in Australia.

New South Wales: Armidale Dumaresq Council, Ashfield Council, Auburn City Council, Bankstown City Council, Bathurst Regional Council, Bega Valley Shire Council, Blacktown City Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Burwood Council, Campbelltown City Council, City of Canterbury, Coffs Harbour City Council, Dubbo City Council, Fairfield City Council, Gosford City Council, Griffith City Council, Hornsby Shire Council, Kogarah City Council, Ku-ring-gai Council, City of Lake Macquarie, Leichhardt Council, Lismore City Council, Liverpool City Council, Manly Council, Marrickville Council, Moree Plains Shire Council, Mosman Council, North Sydney Council, Penrith City Council, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Randwick City Council, Rockdale City Council, City of Ryde, Sutherland Shire Council, City of Sydney, Wagga Wagga City Council, Warringah Council, Waverley Council, Willoughby City Council, Wollongong City Council

Northern Territory: City of Palmerston

Victoria: City of Ballarat, Bass Coast Shire Council, Brimbank City Council, Shire of Campaspe, City of Casey, City of Darebin, City of Greater Bendigo, City of Greater Dandenong, Greater City of Greater Geelong, Hepburn Shire Council, Horsham Rural City Council, Hume City Council, Maribyrnong City Council, Maroondah City Council, City of Melbourne, Mildura Rural City Council, City of Monash, City of Moonee Valley, Moreland City Council, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Mount Alexander Shire Council, City of Port Phillip, Greater Shepparton City Council, Surf Coast Shire, Swan Hill Rural City Council, City of Whittlesea, Wyndham City, City of Yarra, Yarra Ranges Council

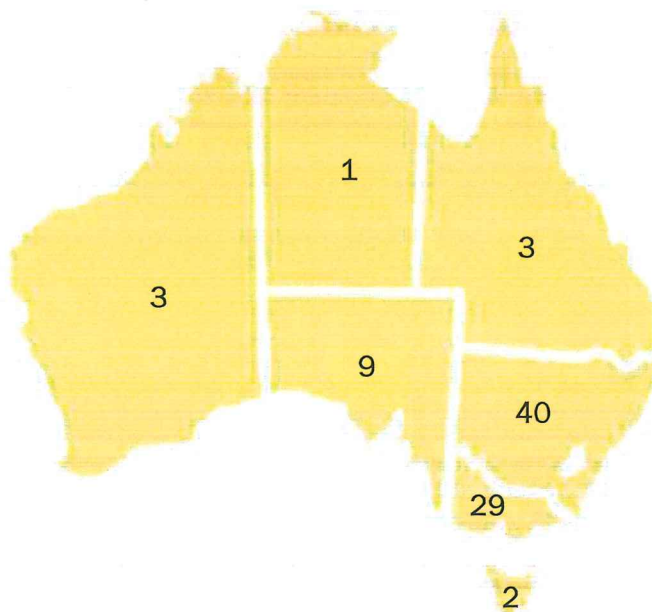
South Australia: Campbelltown City Council, Town of Gawler, City of Marion, City of Mitcham, Rural City of Murray Bridge, City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters, City of Port Adelaide Enfield, City of Prospect, City of West Torrens

Queensland: Brisbane City Council, Toowoomba Regional Council, Townsville City Council

Tasmania: Hobart City Council, Launceston City Council

Western Australia: City of Fremantle, City of Subiaco, City of Vincent

Map of Refugee Welcome Zones in Australia



AREA PROFILE

Auburn City Council has a population of 80,892 and is the second fastest growing Local Government Area (LGA) in NSW. It is also one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse LGAs in Australia and is often a first place of settlement for many newly arrived refugees and migrants. Between 2007 and 2012, the Auburn LGA received 9,498 new arrivals with the highest proportion of humanitarian entrants per capita of any Council area in NSW. The largest number of people came from Afghanistan, followed by China and then Iraq.

According to the 2011 Census, 56.9% of the population were born overseas and 71% spoke a language other than English. In addition, 27% arrived in Australia within the last five years. Today Auburn's residents come from more than 126 countries of origin and represent more than 67 language groups.

Auburn is ranked as the second most disadvantaged LGA in the Sydney Statistical Division but, despite this, there is a diverse range of communities living and sharing the identity of being part of the community of Auburn, with Auburn City Council adopting the motto "Many Cultures - One Community".

In 2004, Auburn officially became a Refugee Welcome Zone, with a declaration that Auburn City Council has a "commitment to welcoming refugees into our community, upholding the human rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in our community". Council continues to undertake a broad range of initiatives to welcome and promote social inclusion for refugees living in the local area.

CURRENT REFUGEE WELCOME ZONE INITIATIVES

Examples of current Council initiatives include:

- **Production of the "Journeys to Auburn" DVD** to highlight the value refugees contribute to our local community.
- **Auburn Welcomes You** annual event to officially welcome new arrivals to the area and provide key settlement information in relation to civic life, employment, housing, and safety and to connect new arrivals with local services.
- Production and distribution of a **Local Settlement Services Factsheet**.
- **Cultural Events and Celebrations** which promote celebrate the contribution of refugees to our local community and promote social inclusion, such as Refugee Week, Auburn Festival, Flavours of Auburn and Australia Day.
- **Capacity building programs to support community organisations from small and emerging communities**, including convening of the Auburn Small Community Organisation Network (ASCON), the Regents Park Community Hub (shared meeting and office space for voluntary organisations), subsidised access to a network of community facilities and funding for local community development projects via the Community Grants Program.
- **Visitor education program**, including talks and tours of the Auburn area to educate the broader community about the benefits of cultural diversity.
- **Employment programs** specifically targeting the needs of new arrivals.

CASE STUDIES

Journeys to Auburn

To celebrate Refugee Week 2013 Auburn City Council produced a video documentary, "Journeys to Auburn" which offers an insight into the lives, experiences and dreams of four refugees whose journeys to Auburn began in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Sudan. The documentary gives the participants the chance to tell of their story of being a refugee in Australia in their own words, providing an insight into their lives and individual journeys including their transition to and settlement in Australia.

The stories are diverse: two teenage Afghan girlfriends Bibi Goul Mossavi and Bibi Shamsia Mosawi vow to make a difference to refugee women's lives; Ghassan Allassadi explains why he has become a local environmentalist; Beatrice Sesay from Sierra Leone describes how to adapt to a new culture; and when Santino Yuot fled from Sudan he makes clear it was a journey from persecution to peace. In addition to these five featured stories, 20 other community members also provide insight into their journeys from Vietnam, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Burma and this supports the main narrative.



The individuals chosen for the documentary had already received recognition in Auburn City Council's Citizen of the Year awards because of their inspirational leadership within the local community. They all share the common experience of arriving in Australia as refugees, travelling from Asia, the Middle East and Africa to make Auburn their home. Despite their personal trauma, the video clearly shows that they see their future as living in harmony in Auburn and being active contributors to Australia's future.

"Journeys to Auburn" shares the stories of the everyday lives of refugees, stories that are too often hidden. This unique video showcases the rich cultural diversity of the Auburn community, embraces the lives of people who despite coming from vastly different backgrounds, nonetheless share a common story of displacement. The result is a warm and fascinating documentary that evokes joy, has the power to transform attitudes and above all inspires.

The creation of the video "Journeys to Auburn" was a process which generated mutual understanding between diverse sections of the Auburn community. People told their stories and were listened to with respect; the creation of the video itself was a powerful project of social inclusion and intercultural dialogue. The use of interpreters and subtitles was also a method utilised to enable a group of Afghan men to tell their stories and express themselves in their own words.

Another dimension of the project was the 'Immersed' multi-media exhibition featuring commissioned photographic portraits by local photographer George Voulgaropoulos and the "Journeys to Auburn" documentary. The exhibition contained natural portraits of the people featured in the video, who were photographed in their home environments. "Immersed", which ran for two months at local art space, the Peacock Gallery, was a powerful way to promote the video and provide another way for people to engage with the individuals and their stories featured in the video.

By creating "Journeys to Auburn", Council has created a resource freely available to everyone via YouTube, which acknowledges the positive and ongoing contribution that refugees make to our local community and to the nation. Two hundred copies of "Journeys to Auburn" were distributed

throughout Sydney and shown in a range of settings including workplaces, health centres, government agencies, local interagency networks, schools and at community events. The video is also available locally and continues to be shown regularly in a range of different venues and settings. It is a valuable educational tool, particularly for communities outside Auburn and for school groups coming to Western Sydney. RCOA also posted the Youtube video on its Facebook site and Twitter which assisted in reaching an even greater audience.

One of the aims of “Journeys to Auburn” and “Immersed” was to combat the high degree of negative media coverage about refugees and to promote messages that counter social misunderstanding. The documentary illustrates the positive contribution refugee communities make to Auburn and highlights how engaged citizens from a refugee background can make a great contribution to the broader national culture.

Auburn Welcomes You

In late 2007, Council identified the need to welcome newly arrived migrants and refugees to the Auburn Local Government Area and developed a series of activities to help achieve Council’s key strategic direction of ensuring that Auburn is inclusive and culturally engaging. The first “Auburn Welcomes You” event attracted more than 200 newly arrived migrants and refugees and provided an opportunity for new residents to meet local community based services and find out more about Council’s role and services.

The event has been held annually ever since and forms part of Auburn City Council’s annual Local Government Week celebrations. The objectives of the event are to:

- Demonstrate the community’s welcome and acceptance of new arrivals;
- Introduce new arrivals to the services and opportunities available to them locally;
- Guard against ethnic or religious separatism and social polarisation; and
- Acquaint new arrivals with aspects of the local community’s behaviours, practices and expectations.

Capacity Building Programs

Auburn Small Community Organisation Network (ASCON)

ASCON is a group of small, volunteer run, not-for-profit community organisations which provides a forum for intercultural community dialogue and collaboration on joint projects among community groups.

ASCON builds the capacity of members by providing regular training on topics such as Conflict Resolution and Advocacy. Over 100 people from 30 different community organisations have participated in ASCON activities. ASCON members are involved in activities such as the provision of welfare services, sporting activities for young people, social and cultural activities, literacy classes, and management of housing cooperatives. Many of these organisations are ethno specific organisations from a number of new and emerging communities, such as Sri Lankan, Filipino, Burmese, South Sudanese, Indian, Ethiopian, Afghan and Somali. Together with Council’s support, they have established the Regents Park Community Hub as well as the highly successful Flavours of Auburn annual event.

Auburn Somali Community Capacity Building Project

Most of the Somali community has resettled in Australia for more than five years, yet adjusting to the new environment and culture has been a struggle for the community. The Auburn Somali Community Capacity Building project is funded by the NSW Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW and aims to:

- Strengthen the community infrastructure of the Somali community in the Auburn LGA; and

- Develop and resource Somali community organisations to ensure that they are strong, sustainable and work collaboratively.

In 2013, Council produced a Somali Profile and Somali Community Directory to assist mainstream service providers to effectively engage and work with the Somali Community.

Regents Park Community Hub: *Strengthening partnerships between government and multicultural communities*



Auburn is home to many small and emerging and refugee communities with high levels of disadvantage associated with recency of arrival to Australia and pre-arrival experiences. These communities often do not utilise services and can be hard to reach for mainstream services.

One of Auburn's key strengths is its multitude of voluntary organisations representing these small and emerging communities. Council has identified that many of these organisations provide essential services and support to newly arrived communities, such as literacy classes, sporting activities,

community events and welfare assistance, with little to no resources or funding.

In response to requests from organisations for more affordable and accessible community facilities to support their valuable work, Council converted an under-utilised women's rest centre at Regents Park into a Community Hub consisting of shared office and meeting space. The Community Hub provides shared access for over 20 small voluntary community organisations and helps to resource local volunteer organisations by reducing their overheads and other associated costs, while making it easier for local groups to carry out their valuable community support work.

The Community Hub assists and strengthens small, emerging and other high needs communities by:

- **Developing effective community services and cultural programs for 'hard to reach' communities** – The types of programs delivered by volunteers at the hub include career workshops for young people and newly arrived migrants, drama workshops, English conversation classes, culturally appropriate welfare services, health education and social activities for isolated women. Community Hub members also receive support from TAFE Outreach who are based at the Centre.
- **Building leadership and supporting organisation growth and development** – Members of the Community Hub are able to access training on operating a community centre and managing community organisations and are encouraged to share their expertise and experience with each other. The space also enables small voluntary organisations to provide better administration and management for their organisation as well as hold meetings, consultations and provide a place for community members seeking help and support.
- **Facilitating collaboration and partnerships** – By physically sharing the same space, small groups have the opportunity to collaborate with each other on common issues. Collaboration increases access to funding opportunities and enables groups to share their skills with each other. The users group responsible for day to day management of the site further encourages a collaborative approach.

- **Building social capital and a sense of belonging for newly arrived communities** – The Community Hub assists in further developing relationships between members of Auburn’s diverse community. Organisations representing communities from Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Burma, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Pacific Islands are hub members.

Community Events

All community events and festivals in Auburn have the objective of promoting the cultural identity of the area, community harmony and intercultural understanding. Some examples include:

- **Lunar New Year Multicultural Street Parade and Food Festival** (February) – A celebration of an Asian cultural event, which includes an invitation to all members of other cultures to come and join in through participation in the street parade of multicultural dress, having a stall or food stall at the event or providing music and dance performances.
- **Auburn Festival** (September) - All communities are invited and represented through food, stalls, music and dance.
- **Flavours of Auburn** - An annual event which is part of the Sydney Good Food Month and showcases the culinary culture and heritage of Auburn’s small and emerging communities and food that you can’t find easily in restaurants. The event is organised by ASCON and Auburn City Council and aims to bring people from different cultural backgrounds together to share food and break down barriers.
- **Africultures Festival** (March) - Auburn’s award-winning Africultures Festival transforms Auburn Park with the flavours and cultures of the African continent. Now in its fifth year, the festival showcases the diversity of African culture. People from many countries and cultures can come together for new cultural experiences. The Festival strengthens relationships between African communities and the wider community, and encourages Africans to feel proud of their cultural heritage.



Improving Employment Opportunities

Employment is one of the most significant settlement needs faced by new arrivals. Council has developed significant partnerships with both State and Federal Government agencies and numerous community, training and employment service providers in the area to address employment barriers and provide better access to employment networks and learning opportunities for Auburn residents.

Council facilitates the development of an annual *Employment Action Plan* with the Auburn Employment Working Group, which includes specific strategies to address the distinct needs of skilled migrants as well as refugees. The strategies are based on community and stakeholder consultation, and encourage their active participation. One particularly successful initiative is the annual *Career Pathways Expo* which attracts hundreds of local job seekers every year.



BANKSTOWN CITY COUNCIL, NSW

Bankstown is a vibrant city and home to approximately 190,000 people. Just 20km south-west of Sydney CBD and only 30 minutes by direct rail-link or road from Sydney Airport, the City of Bankstown offers a wide range of visitor experiences. Covering a total area of 77 square kilometres, Bankstown is home to the picturesque Georges River, Georges River National Park and more than 350 parks and sporting reserves.

Bankstown is an increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse community. The 2006 census revealed that one in three people in Bankstown were born in a non-English speaking country and that one in two speak a language other than English at home. This increasing diversity makes the City a vibrant and interesting place to live. The most common overseas birthplaces in Bankstown in 2006 were Lebanon, Vietnam and China, followed by the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, India and Egypt. There are also new communities moving to Bankstown such as the emerging African communities.

Multicultural Bankstown Strategy 2007-2012

As part of Bankstown City Council's City Management Plan, a Multicultural Bankstown Strategy 2007-2012 has been adopted. This has led to the establishment of the Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC). The MAC, which involves individuals and groups of diverse backgrounds, provides advice and recommendations to Council on issues affecting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background communities in Bankstown.

Mission Statement

In 2008, Council adopted a mission statement which expresses Council's strong commitment to a multicultural city and its opposition to all forms of racism and discrimination.

Refugee Charter

On Thursday 26 June 2008, Bankstown City Council made history as the nation's first council to officially sign the Refugee Council of Australia's Refugee Charter. CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia, Paul Power, and Councillor Khal Asfour signed the Charter, confirming the City of Bankstown's commitment to respecting and supporting refugees. The Charter contains 12 principles that recognise the difficulties faced by refugees and their right to live without fear of persecution.

Cultural Awareness Training

Council's Human Resources Unit has been running Cultural Awareness Training to frontline Council staff to bring awareness of cultural needs and sensitivities when communicating among various cultural groups. The Training has been designed to allow staff to understand cultural intelligence rather than learning about specific cultural groups.

The training reflects the Access and Equity Framework as it demonstrates Leadership and Responsiveness to the needs of our community to ensure that they can access Council with a minimum of difficulty. Part of the training takes frontline staff through Communication techniques so that interactions meet the mutual needs of the customer and Council.

Harmony Day is managed by the Federal Government and celebrates the cohesive and inclusive nature of our nation and promotes the benefits of cultural diversity. Council staged a Harmony Day Concert in 2013 at Bankstown Arts Centre to highlight cultural diversity and to celebrate refugee stories. More than 150 people attended.

Council saw Harmony Day as an avenue to show some leadership in relation to forging opportunities in which to bring people from differing cultures together through a community celebration. Such opportunities have been identified in community consultations as being needed. The event was widely promoted and communicated to the community through a range of media. New partnerships were developed through the process.



Refugee Week 2013

Refugee Information Sessions were attended by over 60 participants during Refugee Week 2013. In collaboration with Canterbury Bankstown Migrant Interagency, Council ran a legal information session for culturally and linguistically diverse community members at Bankstown Arts Centre.

Council used Refugee Week to create a further opportunity for different community groups to showcase their culture and talents in a friendly atmosphere in response to the community's call for such activities. Communication about the concert was positive in the lead up to and after the event, highlighting the area's many cultures and talents to the broader community.

2013 International Women's Day

International Women's Day was celebrated across the Bankstown LGA with a week of great events. Bankstown City Council invited women from all backgrounds to come together in celebration. A day full of women-only activities included facials, belly dancing, Salsa dancing and henna tattoos. The day also highlighted current women's issues and promoted women in Bankstown who are role models and are exceeding in their current field of work. A presentation from Kate Fitzgerald from Anti-Slavery Australia brought home the realities of what many women face worldwide and in Australia.

Youth StepUp Project

Council, in collaboration with MTC Work Solutions, Human Services, Centrelink and other partners, has been working on youth related employment initiatives in Bankstown for over two years. This project aims to support young people particularly from culturally and linguistically diverse community groups in educational and employment pathways.

Throughout 2013, four-hour workshops were conducted at Bankstown Arts Centre with over 30 youth from local schools and refugee communities participating as part of a pilot program. The program covered basic employment strategies and skill development related to resume writing, interviewing and presentation. The project specifically targeted refugee and CALD youth.

In 2013, Youth StepUP was granted funds to develop smart phone apps specifically designed for youth from refugee and migrant backgrounds around employable skills development. These and resources will be launched in April 2014.

Parental Engagement Partnership

Council is part of a Creating Brighter Career Connections Initiative in which stakeholders work together to support the achievement of outcomes by young people, assisting them to maintain education engagement to Year 12 or equivalent and to gain the skills and experience necessary to become creative, confident individuals.

The Parental Engagement Partnership focuses on Arabic-speaking families to support and encourage better communication between their children, school and home. The partnership helped identify barriers with Arabic-speaking families back in 2011 through the Meet and Greet session held with principals of both Punchbowl Boys High and Condell Park High and conducted workshops at Punchbowl Community Centre to look at how to address their barriers.

The partnership is now working on assisting Arabic-speaking women with computer skills development through an outreach TAFE Course conducted at Punchbowl Boys High. The partnerships ran various workshop that supported current issues such as language barriers, technology, cultural barriers and financial assistance. These workshops were conducted by various community organisations such as Metro Migrant Resource Centre, MTC Australia, Human Services, Melkite Welfare Association, Bankstown Council and Canterbury Council.

CALD Child and Family Mental Health Working Party

Council in collaboration with Human Services, Melkite Welfare Association, Baptist Community Services LifeCare, Metro Migrant Resource Centre, Family Relationship Centre, Bankstown Community Resource Group, Families NSW and Benevolent Society have been closely looking at addressing issues regarding families and children mental wellbeing within Arabic-speaking communities as they are the highest population in Bankstown LGA.

The working party sourced funding from Bankstown City Council's grants process and held interactive workshops in 2011. The workshops concentrated on providing much needed education on self care for parents with young families. The working party's primary goal is community engagement with those who are currently disengaged, refugee groups, new migrants and young parents.

The working party is developing family friendly resources that reinforce the 0-5 Attachment phase. These include a children's book and a children's audio CD launched in October 2013 at Bankstown Arts Centre. A link of the Arabic Children's Book can be found on the Children's Program section of State Library of New South Wales.

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/6061381/Bankstown%20do%20not%20delete/index.html>



BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL, VIC

Bass Coast Shire is located in south-eastern Victoria and has a population of approximately 28,000 people. Bass Coast Shire Council signed the Refugee Welcome Zone (RWZ) initiative in 2005 in response to strong local lobbying from the South Gippsland Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) group. In implementing their commitment to welcoming refugees to the area, the Council has been involved in hosting a settlement planning committee that supports activities in the community involving refugees. These include making Council facilities available free of charge and publicising events. There are only a small number of refugees in the area, with the majority being Karen refugees. One of the most successful programs that the Council has been involved in is supporting family sponsorship of Karen refugees, which has had multiple agency input.

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO, VIC

The City of Greater Bendigo is located in the geographical heart of Victoria. The City is recognised by UNICEF and /UNESCO as a Child Friendly City and has a growing population of more than 103,722. Greater Bendigo is becoming increasingly culturally diverse and the percentage of City of Greater Bendigo residents born overseas has risen to 7%, with 3.4 % born in non-English speaking countries. Approximately 2% of households speak a language other than English at home (2011 Census).

Over the past 10 years more than 300 Karen refugees (to name just one group) have been welcomed to Greater Bendigo. A recent example of their success in our community was the national award won by two young Karen weavers for their beautiful woven scarfs. The City of Greater Bendigo supports the weavers by allocating a supported arts space for their weekly workshops. In addition, the City of Greater Bendigo endeavours to endorse its commitment to refugee resettlement by providing funding to assist local Karen organisations to celebrate their culture.

Since 2010, The City of Greater Bendigo has convened and hosted the Bendigo Local Settlement Planning Network, a network of over 20 organisations. The overarching purpose of this voluntary and unfunded network is to work together to facilitate self-reliance and social cohesion among migrants, international students and refugees in Bendigo so they are settled and empowered.

In March each year, the City of Greater Bendigo opens Cultural Diversity Week and works with the community to recognise and celebrate harmony and diversity. The on-going contribution by refugees to the civic life of Bendigo is recognised at this event and throughout the year.



BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL, VIC

The City of Brimbank is located in the western and north-western suburbs of Melbourne, between 11 and 23 kilometres west and north-west of the Melbourne GPO. Brimbank is the second most populous municipality in metropolitan Melbourne, and the largest in the Western Region with approximately 193,168 residents as of June 2012. Population growth across the municipality is forecast to increase to over 200,000 by 2031.

Council's commitment to support newly arrived and settling communities

Brimbank City Council is committed to developing and fostering a diverse community; a community that is active and connected in sustainable, well designed, safe and accessible local areas with high participation in community life. As a Refugee Welcome Zone, Council declares its commitment in spirit to welcoming refugees into its community, to uphold the human rights of refugees and to enhance cultural and religious diversity.

Council's Social Justice Charter 2012 aims to build a just and inclusive community where human rights are upheld and structural disadvantages are recognised and reduced. It commits Council to social justice and building a municipality that supports and encourages communities and individuals to strive to fulfill their aspirations.

In particular, Council's Social Justice Charter comprises commitments to access, equity, participation and human rights in Council policy, programs and projects, especially for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable population groups. The Charter is underpinned by international, federal and state laws in relation to human rights. Implementation of the Charter is a key priority in the Community Plan 2009 - 2030.

What is the role of Local Government in supporting newly arrived and settling communities?

- Coordination – bringing together key service providers to identify issues and opportunities for partnerships.
- Collaboration – engaging with key stakeholders in the Brimbank community and all other levels of government.
- Advocacy – promoting and protecting the human rights of settling communities.

Development of the Brimbank Settlement Action Plan

In developing the Brimbank Settlement Action Plan (BSAP) Council conducted a consultation process that involved the input and feedback from key stakeholders. The process included a Settlement Communities Forum which was held on the 30 November 2011. The purpose of the Forum was to identify common systemic issues and provide an opportunity for organisations and services to network with other relevant services. Approximately 60 representatives from different service providers, who work with humanitarian and refugee clients in the Brimbank municipality, attended the Forum. Representatives from the Department of Immigration and Municipal Association of Victoria also attended. Workshops at the Forum focused on four priority areas for settling communities:

- 1) English language, vocation and training
- 2) Health, family and wellbeing
- 3) Legal and governance
- 4) Housing

From the Settlement Forum, a working draft BSAP was developed and presented to the following groups:

- Brimbank Melton Settlement Advisory Group meeting (June 2012); and
- Brimbank Early Years Reference Group (BEYRG) meeting (May 2012).

Focus groups were then reconvened in September 2012, based on the themes raised at the Settlement Forum, to further confirm priorities and strategies. The draft BSAP was discussed at the Brimbank Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee in November 2012 and June 2013.

Purpose of the Brimbank Settlement Action Plan

The Brimbank Settlement Action Plan aims to:

- Identify strategic opportunities to work with local agencies, peak representative bodies, and the State and Federal Government agencies to achieve joint goals.
- Develop strategies to respond to the identified needs of new and emerging communities settling in Brimbank.
- Support the work of Brimbank's settlement agencies.

Brimbank City Council – Living In Your Neighbourhood Program (LIYN)

In partnership with local language service providers, Council hosts LIYN workshops that include inclusive presentations from Council Officers about the role of Compliance, Community Engagement, Customer Service and Environment, and also a bus tour of Council's Leisure Centres Libraries and Neighbourhood Houses.

The LIYN workshops allow new settlers to understand the role of Local Government through an interactive and unique approach that has been developed between Council and local service providers. The project has also created new relationships with community agencies, and has strengthened existing connections which has built trust and created positive ongoing relationships between Council, its community and service providers.

The aim of the LIYN program is for project objectives to be delivered in a manner that is easy for participants to understand. Council officers, in collaboration with language teachers' work together to ensure that a quality workshop is developed for participants and guidance and advice is given to Council presenters to develop material that aligns with classroom learning competencies taking place in the participants' formal English classrooms. Feedback provided by participants at the end of workshop is also used to redesign the workshop where relevant.



BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL, QLD

Brisbane, the capital city of Queensland, is located on the east coast of Australia. It is a bustling, modern and culturally diverse city. The Brisbane Local Government Area is the biggest local government in Australia and encompasses residential, rural, coastal and forested regions.

Brisbane, with a population of over one million people is Australia's third largest city after Sydney and Melbourne. It is a city with many cultures, languages and religions. At the time of the 2011 Census, the region had 295,181 people who stated that they were born overseas (28.3% of the total population) and 151,909 who stated that they were born overseas and spoke a language other than English at home (51.5% of the overseas born population)¹ It is predicted that Brisbane will be the fastest growing economy of the mature cities worldwide from 2012 to 2020.²

Brisbane City Council, through its Brisbane Vision 2031, envisions Brisbane being a city of strong and diverse communities who will show friendship and caring by helping others; where all residents, students and visitors will be welcomed and cultural diversity celebrated. The friendliness and diversity of the community are two of the nine qualities that most Brisbane people valued about Brisbane's lifestyle and community. This Vision for the future of Brisbane was developed in consultation with residents of Brisbane and is a future that encourages all residents to be involved in decisions that affect their city.

Brisbane City Council recognises the valuable contribution and benefits that cultural diversity brings to the city and is committed to Brisbane being a city where cultural diversity is valued and celebrated, and residents from refugee backgrounds are able to participate fully in civic life and are able to live without experiences of



One of four banners developed by Brisbane City Council to celebrate the city's diversity.

¹ Source: 2011 Census data

² Source: Jones Lang LaSalle, 2012

social exclusion, racism, discrimination and other forms of disadvantage. Key initiatives that support this commitment include:

The Lord Mayor's Refugee Welcome Ceremony:

- The Lord Mayor's Refugee Welcome Ceremony is a significant event for newly arrived residents to Brisbane from refugee backgrounds. The event is held annually to demonstrate Brisbane City Council's support for residents from refugee backgrounds and promote Brisbane as an inclusive city. The ceremony also provides opportunities for participants to network, meet with community leaders and access a range of programs and services provided by government and non-government agencies. 220 people attended the 2013 ceremony which was held in April. In 2012, the top 10 source countries for refugees settling in the Brisbane area were Iran, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Iraq, Somalia, Pakistan, Eritrea, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Burma.

World Refugee Day Festival

- World Refugee Day is an opportunity for the residents of Brisbane to acknowledge the diversity, skills and contribution made to our city by residents from refugee backgrounds and the recently arrived communities. World Refugee Day Brisbane is now Australia's largest refugee gathering. This celebration of culture encompasses sport, traditional and contemporary dance and music, fashion, food, art and culture. Brisbane City Council partner with the Multicultural Development Association (MDA) for the provision of World Refugee Day Community Festivals. The 2013 event was held on 23 June and was attended by 15,000 people.

Library services

- Membership brochures can be printed in 43 different languages.
- A number of collections in languages other than English available on loan. Collections include Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Spanish, Greek and Italian.
- The on-line catalogue is available in several languages.
- The World Kitchen Program which promotes better appreciation of diversity in Brisbane through the sharing of cultural food traditions.
- English Conversation Groups provide opportunities for informal conversation groups for residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Throughout the year a range of exciting and inspiring initiatives are held to enhance intercultural understanding, for example cultural craft workshops and performances.
- As part of Council's forthcoming Youth Strategy 2014-2019, we will deliver a program that welcomes people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to our 33 libraries. We will work with the Multicultural Development Association to welcome new members to connect with Library Services in culturally appropriate ways.

Brisbane Multicultural Centre

- This centre, opened by Council in January 2012, was the first of its kind in Queensland, providing people from migrant and refugee backgrounds a community facility to access available services to help their settlement in Brisbane.
- Brisbane City Council has leased the facility to the Multicultural Development Association (MDA) and Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT), two of the major settlement services in Brisbane.
- At the Centre, people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are able to access services to help their settlement in Brisbane. It also provides meeting and activity spaces for a range of cultural organisations and residents to use.

Celebrating cultural expression and heritage

Council celebrates Brisbane's cultural expression and heritage through facilitated partnerships, grants, festivals and events including: Brisbane Chinese Cultural Festival; Buddha's Birthday; Eidfest; Eritrean Festival; French Festival; Indian Bazaar; Iranian New Year Festival (Nowruz

Persian New Year Festival); Italian Week; Oktoberfest; Paniyiri; Polish Festival; Sri Lankan Vesak Festival; Vietnamese Children's Moon Festival; Vietnamese Tet; Zillmere Multicultural.

Engaging diverse communities

Council supports and engages culturally and linguistically diverse residents, communities and associations to access Council's programs, grants and facilities and ensuring culturally appropriate responses to the needs of CALD communities. Key initiatives include:

Community Connect:

- Incorporates a strategic mix of initiatives and activities that promotes Council's services, improves communities' access to information about Council's programs and services and facilitates opportunities for Council to respond to requests by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Key activities include:
 - Information sessions to newly arrived students enrolled in the Adult Migrant English Program and Milpera High School Students (Milpera is an intensive English Language Preparation Centre for students aged 13-18 years).
 - Aqua English – a water safe program targeting culturally and linguistically diverse communities, especially new and emerging communities. The program improves confidence, helps to overcome social isolation and contributes to an active and healthy lifestyle. A number of swimming pools participating in the program have developed 'women's only' time slots which increases participation of women who are able to accompany their children to the pools.

Building strong intercultural community relationships:

Intercultural Dialogues focused on building relationships and developing practical actions on how constructive engagement could be progressed between Elders from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and Elders and community members from refugee and migrant backgrounds and the wider community. As an extension of the Intercultural Dialogues an Elders, Seniors and Leaders Tent space is provided at a number of major multicultural festivals where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Elders can tell their stories and talk to visitors to the tents.

Supporting economic participation:

- The Lord Mayor's Multicultural Round Table identifies and facilitates opportunities for business and economic development in Brisbane's multicultural community.
- Lord Mayor's Multicultural Entrepreneur Awards is an initiative of the Lord Mayor's Multicultural Round Table to showcase business achievements of business owners from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
- The Lord Mayor's Multicultural Business Scholarships provide financial study assistance to young entrepreneurs from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
- The Lord Mayor's Multicultural Business Dinner is an annual event that raises funds in support of the multicultural business development programs in Brisbane.

Local Area Multicultural Partnership Program (LAMP)

The LAMP initiative is a partnership between the Queensland Government and local government to support local government to integrate the principles and practices of multiculturalism throughout their organisations and promote positive intercultural relations in their local region. Brisbane City Council has been part of the LAMP Program since 1999. Within Council the LAMP program aims to promote multiculturalism and intercultural relationships between diverse communities, including people from refugee backgrounds. Council's LAMP officer has traditionally worked alongside communities from refugee backgrounds to:

- support and facilitate their settlement journey in Brisbane
- build community capacity through various initiatives
- identify opportunities to enhance social inclusion and cohesion
- provide relevant Council information to increase their participation in Council services and programs.

COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL, NSW



Coffs Harbour is located on the Mid North Coast of NSW approximately half way between Sydney and Brisbane. The region incorporates both townships and rural localities and has a population of around 75,000. Since 2005, around 1,000 refugees have settled in the area.

Coffs Harbour City Council became a Refugee Welcome Zone in 2008 and has committed to this declaration by hosting annual celebrations of Refugee Week and Multicultural Harmony Festival (in recognition of Harmony Day), citizenship ceremonies, performances, film festivals, and other initiatives that support and sustain our refugee community. One of Council's most important means of engaging with refugee and migrant communities has been through its Multicultural Reference Group, set up in late 2006 to promote the benefits of a culturally diverse community and engage with and provide services for CALD residents. The group is made up of representatives from the local refugee community, service providers, interested community representatives, government and non-government organisations, a councillor and Council staff.

Additionally, some of the key initiatives Council has been involved in to better welcome refugees to the area and create an inclusive society include:



- In partnership with the Community Relations Commission, Sport and Recreation, and local refugee services, under the management of Council's qualified Life Guards, run the Surf Awareness Sessions Program which highlights beach safety for young people up to adults.
- In partnership with the NSW Premier's Department, Council hosted the African Cultural Awareness Forum in 2007 for local service providers and government and non-government organisations, with the opportunity to share experiences of settlement with refugees in their own words, around the issues of housing, employment, health and education.
- Council also has representation on the NSW Community Relations Commission Northern Regional Advisory Council, which meets at Council quarterly, and where refugee settlement issues are raised and discussed.

- Council adopted its Multicultural Policies and Services Program 2010-2014 and in 2010 developed a Multicultural Action Plan.
- Council's representative also attends the regional Multicultural Network Group, which also raises, discusses and works collaboratively to address settlement issues.
- Links to websites such as Refugee Council of Australia, Australian Human Rights Commission, Department of Immigration and the NSW Community Relations Commission are available on Council's website under "Multiculturalism in Coffs Harbour".



CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG, VIC

The City of Greater Dandenong Local Government Area is located in the south eastern suburbs of Melbourne. It is a dynamic and vibrant city and known as Victoria's most culturally diverse municipality. The area has a population of approximately 144,000 people, more than half of whom were born overseas, with 51% from non-English speaking countries. The diversity of the community and its extensive range of cultural and community support services make Greater Dandenong one of the most practical and popular places for settlement. The city has a long and proud history of welcoming new and emerging communities in the area and over the past ten years more than 7000 refugees from over 70 different countries have settled in the area. Since signing the Refugee Welcome Zone (RWZ) declaration Greater Dandenong Council has supported and implemented a wide range of projects, programs and events that support refugees in the area including annual celebrations of Refugee Week and Cultural Diversity Week, providing funding through a grants program to refugee communities, participating in the Local Settlement Committee and Refugee Action Program, hosting cultural events and festivals and supporting youth inclusion projects and multicultural playgroups.

Emerge Festival

One of the festivals that Dandenong Council has supported since 2010 is the 'Emerge Festival', an initiative of Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV). The cultural festival, which has presence across Melbourne CBD and suburbs is launched during Refugee Week in Fitzroy and culminates a month later in Dandenong. Emerge commemorates the United Nations World Refugee Day and promotes "diversity, social inclusion and respect" by celebrating the dynamic culture of "Victoria's many rich and undiscovered refugee and emerging cultures". Greater Dandenong Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Multicultural Arts Victoria and is committed to linking local groups and organisations in the promotion, implementation and funding of the event.



Exodus (Sudan) – Photo: Damian Vincenzi

The Emerge Festival is now held annually at Dandenong's Drum Theatre, and over the years has involved an afternoon of free cross cultural celebrations and interactions of stories, music, song, drum, dance, food, crafts and ceremony. So far the artists and performers at the event include refugees and new arrivals from the Republic of Congo, Sudan, Afghanistan, the Cook Islands and Mali. The event promotes and celebrates cultural diversity,

while encouraging refugees and new arrivals to participate in a range of artistic projects to facilitate artistic expression, build confidence and create bridges between refugees and the local community. It is a vibrant celebration by and for the communities who now call Greater Dandenong home and gives artists networking, training and employment opportunities with key arts and entertainment organisations.

Afghan Tea Cycle

Another inspiring example of Greater Dandenong Council's support of refugee communities is the creation of the Afghan Tea Cycle; a collaboration between Greater Dandenong Council, RMIT University and designer Aslam Akram. Refugees from Afghanistan represent the largest refugee community in the area, with more than 2000 settling in Dandenong over the past decade. The Afghan Tea Cycle is described by the Council as a "creative cultural exchange vehicle that uses the serving of tea as a point of engagement". The quirky and innovative project promotes intercultural understanding and exchange by acknowledging and celebrating the Afghan community's culture and contribution to the area and providing practical employment opportunities for the community.

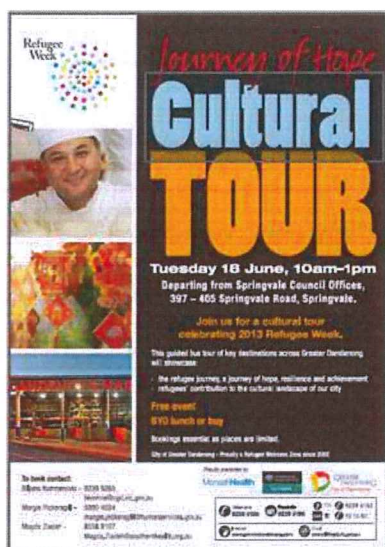


The Afghan Tea Cycle is a functioning pedal powered cart created to promote the Afghan Bazaar cultural precinct in central Dandenong and provide a micro-business to an existing trader in the Bazaar. Greater Dandenong's cultural precincts promote and celebrate culturally specific shopping, food and traditions and offer alternative opportunities of employment for communities often facing language, education and access barriers. The ritual of communally sharing tea, hospitality and conversation is an integral part of Afghan culture and an essential element of any Afghan bazaar. The initiative promotes Afghan culture and traditions while providing a culturally unique experience that can be experienced by the wider community. The Afghan Tea Cycle is owned by Greater Dandenong City Council and since its inception more than 10 Afghan-born people, both men and women, have worked on the project.



The Afghan Tea Cycle has been hired on more than 60 occasions since 2010 for festivals, events and locations including: Hidden Treasures Exhibition Melbourne Museum; Amnesty International Film Festival; Mainstreet Australia Conference; Convergence Exhibition at the RMIT Design Hub; Melbourne Food and Wine Festival (2010–2013); Dandenong Plaza; Dandenong Market; Treadlie Made to Measure Royal Exhibition Building; Emerge Festival; Stringy Bark Festival; T2 Tea Store openings; City of Greater Dandenong Australia Day ; The Convent ; Coburg Carnival; Woodlands Park Tea Festival; Fawkner Festa Program; Victorian Local Government. Multicultural Issues Network forum; and WalkFest Dandenong.

“Journey of Hope” Cultural Tour



In 2013, a suite of events took place allowing the community, council staff and councillors to participate in Refugee Week activities.

The Major Event for 2013 was the “Journey of Hope” Cultural Tour. The free event involved a bus tour through locations that have been significant for newly arrived migrants in the City of Greater Dandenong such as the site of the former Enterprise Hostel, Lexington Gardens, Springvale Cultural Precinct, Noble Park Activity Centre, Maiwand Bakery and Dandenong Market. The tour showcased the journey of refugees, their resilience and achievements through telling the stories of these places and their significance to the community.

In addition to the bus tour, lunchtime sessions were arranged at all Council offices which screened short documentary films made by the Burundian community, showcasing their experiences of refugee camps and their journey to Australia.

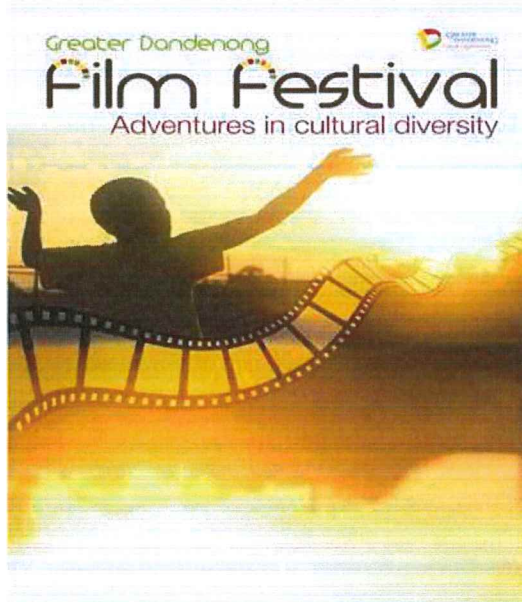
Greater Dandenong Film Festival: “Adventures in Cultural Diversity”

The Greater Dandenong Film Festival “Adventures in Cultural Diversity” has become an important way through which Council responds to the needs of a multicultural community. The event was initiated as a way for culturally and linguistically diverse communities and the wider public to come together, share stories and bridge the gap of perceived differences. The annual event takes place during Cultural Diversity Week at Readings Cinema Dandenong. The program included screening of short films is screened followed by a panel discussion.

The aims of the film festival are:

- To promote and celebrate Greater Dandenong’s cultural, linguistic and faith diversity;
- To engage and bring together a wide audience;
- To promote a positive image of Greater Dandenong;
- To provide an opportunity for local film makers and video artists to screen their work.

The Greater Dandenong Film Festival enables people to develop mutual understanding and appreciation of each other by sharing their views. In 2013, films from local production were screened from the Burundian community, Springvale residents and Dandenong Primary School showcasing a wide range of stories from people with diverse backgrounds, along with films from across the nation. The series of short films capture a culturally diverse Australia, with depth, authenticity and clever insights. Furthermore three stories by the Burundian community members shed light on the experience of refugees, their lives in a refugee camp and their journey and settlement in Australia.



The Greater Dandenong Film Festival is an important vehicle to educate the broader community about other cultures and celebrate diversity in an entertaining and engaging way. In return the evocative nature of film offers CALD communities the chance to be heard beyond media stereotypes and social constructs illuminating their lived experiences with depth and hope.

FAIRFIELD CITY COUNCIL, NSW

A long tradition of welcoming refugees and migrants

Fairfield City is a uniquely vibrant and compassionate community. The City is home to many refugees and asylum seekers and continues to welcome new migrants. The population of Fairfield City is 198,335 with 13% of people arriving in Australia within the last five years. The number of people born overseas increased by 6,232 (6.7%), and the number of people from non-English speaking backgrounds increased by 6,262 in the last 5 years.

Fairfield City Council acknowledges that migrants and refugees need to see that society accepts their culture as equal and valid – it is a pre-requisite to being able to function as a part of it. Being accepted, expressing identity through cultural maintenance activities, sharing traditions, and being in the company of people who put you at ease, whilst helping you to navigate change is vital to an effective settlement process.

Networks and Interagencies

Fairfield City Council convenes and/or supports a number of local forums, networks and interagencies to give a platform and a voice to the community. It is by working in partnership and encouraging collaboration between agencies that Council's Community Project Officer – Multicultural can make the most of resources to enhance services and opportunities to the community. Priority areas include: settlement, education and employment, health, and strengthening the 'soft infrastructure' to best support refugee and migrant communities:

The **Fairfield Migrant Interagency (FMI)** addresses the settlement needs and issues of migrants and refugees living in Fairfield City. The FMI brings together 190 service providers from local ethnic groups and government and non-government organisations through monthly meetings. FMI identifies issues, proposes strategies to improve client services and actively represents the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Through the FMI, Council provides effective leadership; a supportive environment, equity in decision-making among all members, and opportunities for members to build stronger partnerships and effective networks. This has been demonstrated by a 63% membership increase of the FMI in the reporting period.

Council provides strategic support to **Fairfield Emerging Communities Action Partnership (FECAP)**, a community-based partnership which assists the emerging refugee communities of Fairfield to development of social/cultural infrastructure; and build linkages between these communities and mainstream service providers. Each year, FECAP delivers the Pathways to Employment Expo to equip migrants and refugees with a range of job market skills to find employment. Representatives from employer's groups, education and training organisations, specialist agencies and community organisations run workshops and hold information stalls, provide referrals and answer questions. Interpreters are available to support participants with low level English.

Council actively supports and participates in the **CALD Communities Coalition**, which aims to strengthen and promote the capacity of the ethnic community organisations to cultivate a culture of support and collaboration among CALD communities; and to facilitate an environment that ensures ongoing consultation, planning, cooperation, communication and advocacy across community based organisations. The Coalition is an active advocate on issues affecting these communities and organisations to government and service providers.

The Coalition's first major project was the **Future of CALD Community Organisations Conference**, sponsored and supported by Council. More than 200 individuals, ethnic and

mainstream organisations attended to hear keynote addresses from politicians, community leaders and academics. Q&A sessions and workshops further explored the impact of current government multicultural policies; and the fundamental role CALD community organisations have in the settlement of migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants and in the social, economic and cultural development of Australia.

Council actively supports and participates in the **Immigrant and Refugee Women Network (IRWN)** which is committed to empowering women and valuing their life experiences. Over the years IRWN has been actively lobbying for CALD women by taking part in discussions about issues affecting refugee and migrant women including family violence, forced marriage and human trafficking in NSW. IRWN forges networks with both government and non-government organisations to increase support and knowledge on such issues.

IRWN also organises and promotes major annual events including International Women's Day, 16 Days of Action Against Gender Violence and Refugee Week. These events create an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the strength of women. In December 2012, for 16 Days of Action, IRWN held a symposium addressing forced marriage and human trafficking in NSW. The event attracted over 600 people from diverse community groups.

Capacity Building for Newly Arrived Communities

Council is committed to skilling up and building the capacity of new and emerging and small ethnic organisations to support their role as community advocates. Some of the workshops and training provided in the past two years are:

Sudanese Community

Council is currently working in partnership with Immigrant Women Health Service (IWHS) and the Sudanese community, exploring the development and delivery of programs focussed on language proficiency, unemployment and access to Centrelink benefits for the Sudanese community.

Ahwazi Community

Council, the Immigrant Women's Health Service and CALD Communities Coalition are working in partnership to provide support, mentoring and information to the Ahwazi community. This year, 160 people from the Ahwazi community, an Arab ethnic minority group from Iran, settled in Fairfield City. The aim of the project is to engage with people from the Ahwazi community with low language proficiency, who are isolated from services and from their own community. The project includes a mentoring approach, which sees established refugee communities working with the Ahwazi community.

Community Engagement

An example of Community Engagement is the Expo 12 Community Engagement and Support Services that was held in November 2013 at the Wetherill Park TAFE South Western Sydney Institute (SWSi). Our communities often find it difficult to navigate the myriad of services available, so the Expo brought together 35 service providers (government and NGO) in the one place to share information with the community about the services they offer. The service providers also learnt more about each other, and how they might better collaborate. The Expo attracted over 700 people and was delivered by a partnership of Wetherill Park TAFE SWSi, FMI network and Fairfield Council.

Advocacy

Fairfield City Council has played an active role in advocating to State and Federal Governments on issues affecting CALD communities, refugees and asylum seekers in the area, including: Settlement Grants Program (SGP) funding; the role of small ethnic community groups in the settlement process; and threats to the continued provision of English as a Second Language (ESL)

education to migrant and refugee students in NSW Government schools under *Local Schools Local Decisions*.

Events and Celebrations

Council also supports local organisations with celebrations and events that are self-determined and encourage community participation and community cohesion. Annual events regularly supported by Council include Refugee Week and Harmony Day.

Refugee Week Celebrations

Refugee Week was celebrated across Fairfield City in June 2013, with the theme "Restoring Hope". Council entered into partnerships with four local organisations:

Bonnyrigg Celebrations highlighted the contribution of refugees to the social, civic, economic and cultural development of Fairfield City. More than 500 people attended the event.

Fairfield Celebrations organised by Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network (IRWN) and Immigrant Women's Health Services attracted key personalities from refugee backgrounds that have successfully settled in Australia, live performances, information stalls. More than 700 people attended the event.

Villawood Celebrations was organised by Karen Australian Organisation Inc. The program included speeches, sharing refugee experiences, cultural performances and live entertainment. More than 500 people attended.

Khmemarang Sarang Temple Bonnyrigg Celebration was organised by the Khmer community. This event featured an exhibition of photos of refugee experiences in their journey from the camps to Australia. The event attracted more than 100 people from different ethnic community groups.

Harmony Day Celebration

Harmony Day on 21 March 2013 was held at Cabramatta PCYC Community Hall and attracted more than 700 people and 13 local service providers. Fairfield Migrant Interagency, Fairfield Emerging Communities Action Partnership and Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre joined in partnership with Fairfield City Council to celebrate this successful event. Harmony Day showcased a variety of cultural performances, inspirational guest speakers, information stalls, assistance from local service providers, light refreshments and provided children's activities to allow parents to engage in the event.

For more information, please contact Fairfield City Council's Community Project Officer – Multicultural, Janette Sauterel on (02) 9725 0230 or jsauterel@fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au

CITY OF FREMANTLE, WA

City of Fremantle

The City of Fremantle is a local government area in the south metropolitan region of Perth, the state capital of Western Australia. Fronting the Indian Ocean to the west and forming part of Australia's western boundary, the city is 15.9 kilometres south-west of the Perth CBD. The municipality has a population of nearly 30,000 residents with 8,000 born overseas and 20% of these having arrived within the last two years.

Before the age of air travel, newcomers to Australia made the journey by ship and their first sight and landing in their new country was at the port of Fremantle. The City has declared itself a Refugee Welcome Zone in line with this strong tradition of welcoming newcomers to Australia.

Fremantle has an extensive range of services accessible to its residents, but gives special support to events and activities during Refugee Week each year. Some of these events include the “Welcome Refugee Fiesta” and “Walk Together”, with the involvement and support of a range of prominent refugee support, community and advocacy groups. The City assumes responsibility for hosting, coordination and promotional advertising for the events each year and provides financial relief for participating refugee community groups.



LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL, TAS

Launceston is Tasmania’s second largest city with a population of just over 67,000. It is situated by the Tamar River in the north of the state and, while it has the atmosphere of a regional community town, it also has the diversity, facilities and services of a large city.

The city prides itself on its strong community spirit and recognises the city’s increasing diversity as a real strength. Although predominantly populated by people of European and Anglo descent, the city has welcomed an increasing number of refugees over the past ten years, with the largest numbers from Bhutan, Sudan, Nepal and Burma³.

As a signatory to the RWZ declaration since 2010, Launceston City Council collaborates with other community organisations and government to assist refugees and new arrivals in settling in the community.

While not traditionally a direct provider of humanitarian services, the Launceston City Council works in partnership with or provides support to service providers and community groups to facilitate activities, programs and events that celebrate diversity and inclusion. Through the Community Grants and Events Sponsorship programs, direct financial assistance is provided to support events such as the Sudanese community’s South Sudanese Independence Day celebrations.

Through its Social Inclusion program, and in partnership with the University of Tasmania, the Council participates in the annual Harmony Day festival, celebrating diversity in the northern suburbs of Launceston. Through the Launceston Human Library, a Council supported initiative, awareness and understanding of cultural diversity is also raised through some of the human “books” presented at a series of events held throughout the year in schools, public spaces and community events. One of the “books”, for example, is a refugee who tells their own story to readers.

Through the Launceston Safer Communities Partnership – a collaboration of a number of service providers and stakeholders within the Launceston community – safety issues are addressed through partnerships on projects such as the development of the 'Dealing with Police' brochure; a publication that aims to remove the uncertainty of how to report crime for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

In Launceston, the Migrant Resource Centre (Northern Tasmania) is often the first point of contact for refugees and new arrivals. It is important for Councils to work with community organisations, both in gaining access to specific cultural groups in the community and in working together to deliver to those groups, the services and support that they need. The Council works with the Migrant Resource Centre, to plan for the arrival and welcoming of new refugees into the Launceston community, most recently the settlement of Afghan Hazara refugees, a new community for the Launceston area.

³ Profile.id (2013). Retrieved 27/09/13, <http://profile.id.com.au/launceston>.

CITY OF MARION, SA

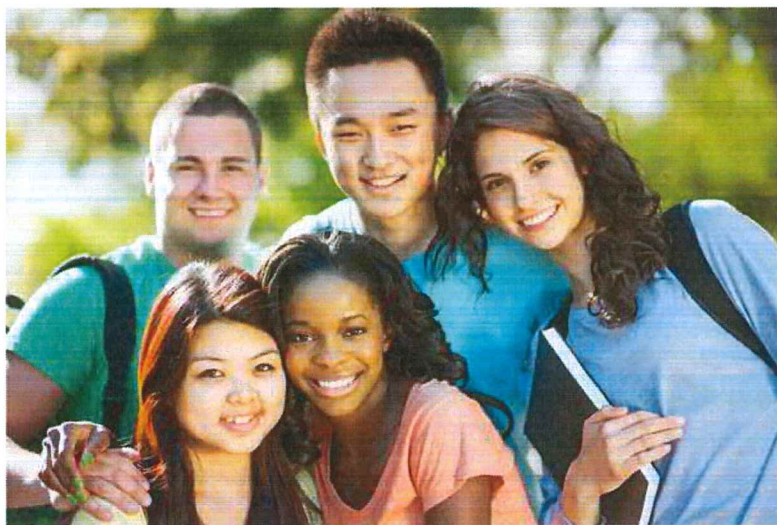
The City of Marion is located 10 km south of Adelaide in South Australia. It has a population of approximately 86,000 people and is showing healthy growth. This is due in part to overseas migration which welcomes newcomers from countries such as the United Kingdom, India, China, the Philippines, the eastern countries of Africa and many others. There are approximately 21,000 people living in the City of Marion were born overseas and 27% arrived in Australia within the last five years. Overall around 25% of the population were born overseas with 14% from non-English speaking backgrounds.⁴

On 26 August 2003, the City of Marion Council became a Refugee Welcome Zone (RWZ) and this commitment is enshrined in their community vision of “Cultural Vitality: Embracing of diverse cultures and communities and expressions of identity and belonging” (City of Marion Strategic Plan 2010/2020). These themes have been implemented in many of their cultural programs in support of refugees and culturally diverse communities.

Cultural Programs

The City of Marion supports and works in partnership with culturally diverse and aboriginal people through community cultural development projects, programs and events.

It has also been active in promoting their RWZ commitment to enhancing cultural and religious diversity by organising a number of key events reflecting and celebrating this diversity.



Annual events supported by the City of Marion include **Harmony Day** in March.

The Living in Harmony initiative, designed to challenge all Australians to take a stand against racism, prejudice and intolerance, is about practising justice, equality, fairness and developing friendship.

City of Marion collaborated with ‘Local Government Reference Group’, six other councils and the ARA to produce a **Community Connections** guide for refugees and new arrivals to assist those

that are unfamiliar with written English to understand the role Council plays and the services that they provide.

The City of Marion supports the **Australian Refugee Association's Scholarship Program**.

The **Marion Celebrates** Festival is a large community festival with the theme **Many Cultures, One Earth** attracting approximately 7000 people. The festival gives emerging and culturally diverse communities the opportunity to showcase their culture, identity and talents through projects, performances and market stalls.

⁴ Community Profile (2011). *City of Marion Community Profile*. Retrieved 3/9/13, <http://profile.id.com.au/marion/overseas-arrivals>

Neighbourhood Centres

Each year Marion's Neighbourhood Centres participate in a **Refugee Week** event involving morning teas, information sessions and small scale celebrations.

Neighbourhood Centres collaborate with the Baptist Care Fuse program. **The Fuse Mentoring Program** provides opportunities for volunteer mentors to build friendships with people from refugee backgrounds ('mentees') who are settling into Adelaide.

Welcome to Australia runs a Christmas in Australia event every year at Coinda Neighbourhood Centre to welcome new arrivals.

Lutheran Community Care ran a monthly event for the **New Neighbours Settlement Support Project** based at Coinda Neighbourhood Centre.

Programs at Neighbourhood Centres include ongoing **English Language classes** and **Adult Community Education programs**.

City of Marion Libraries

Marion Libraries offer a range of opportunities to maintain cultural heritage or to learn about other languages and cultures. Books for adults and children, audio visual resources or magazines in nearly 50 languages are available for loan from the South Australian public library network.

Community Development Programs and Events

Community Grants are available to support non-profit groups to develop new projects benefiting the community.

A **Harmony Day** event in 2012 was run by the International Forum of Reconciliation and Peace (IFORAP) and supported by the City of Marion. The International Forum of Reconciliation and Peace (IFORAP) stands to promote human rights, social justice and equal opportunity among all migrants in Australia. The event was held in April 2013 at the Duncan Avenue Reserve in Park Holme with 180 people in attendance. It was in part assisted by the Park Holme / Plympton Park Capacity Building Project that delivers on outcomes involving new arrivals. The event provided opportunity for the community to come together, participate in the sharing of food and promoting cultural diversity through cultural performances, refreshments and speeches.

The Community Food Festival, was held in June 2012 at the Park Holme Community Hall and initiated by Park Holme and Plympton Park residents as part of the Park Holme/Plympton Park Community Capacity Building Project. The event was inclusive of all cultures and a celebration of their diverse community, participants enjoyed different cultural dishes making the event a true celebration! Twenty-six community cooks registered and five local organisations were involved including Ascot Park Primary School, Spring Park Baptist Church, Park Holme Community Hall, Ascot Park Kindy and the Park Holme Mosque. Spring Park Baptist Church is a largely Filipino congregation and they provided several traditional dishes. Singaporean specialties were donated by Ascot Park Kindy, and Park Holme Mosque provided a spread of Middle Eastern dishes. The Community Food Festival was an excellent way to bring different cultural groups together, form friendships, promote working together, social inclusion and acceptance.

MAROONDAH CITY COUNCIL, VIC

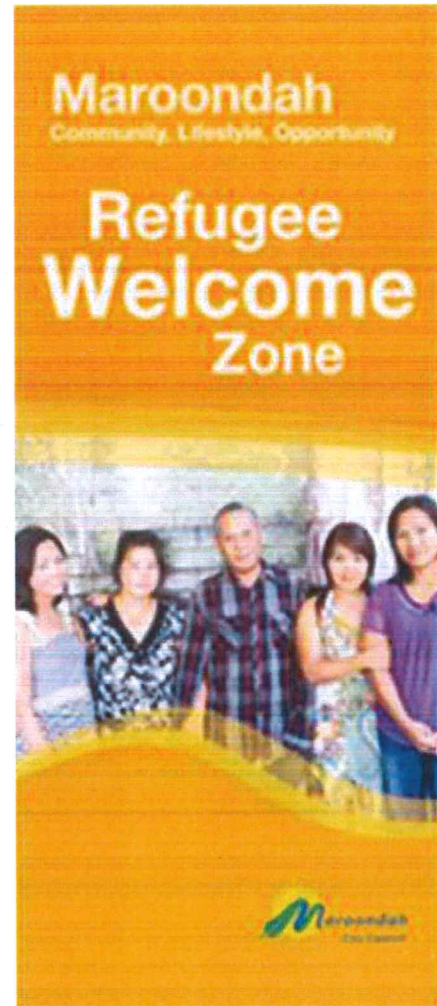
Maroondah is located in Victoria, 25 kilometres east of the Melbourne Central Business District. The City of Maroondah was created in December 1994, when the former cities of Ringwood and Croydon joined together. Maroondah is named after an aboriginal word meaning 'leaf', which symbolises Maroondah's green environment.

The estimated residential population of Maroondah is 108,104: 0.8% of this population are people from Burma. Maroondah has the second highest number of refugees from Burma settling in Victoria. Most of Maroondah's settlers from Burma are ethnic Karen from the Thai border area, and Chin, from the area bordering Bangladesh and India. Many would have lived in refugee camps for 10 or more years before coming to Australia.

Maroondah became a Refugee Welcome Zone in March 2013. The declaration was signed at the Harmony Day event held in Eastland shopping Mall on 23 March. Prior to this, the Mayor and Councillors invited leaders from refugee groups to an evening event to provide the opportunity for Councillors to understand, on a more personal level, the refugee story; and for the refugee leaders to share some of the issues they face.

Maroondah City Council is involved in various activities and events to assist refugee communities, including:

- Harmony Day and Refugee Week activities.
- A Government Uniforms and Emergency Services Expo run in partnership with various agencies.
- A cross-council culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) working group to ensure Council staff are working together to meet the needs of CALD communities.
- Maternal Child Health Nurses run regular information sessions for refugee parents on sourcing and cooking healthy food for their children.
- Maternal Child Health sessions for refugee families are run with interpreters two to three times a month.
- Catch up immunisation sessions are offered to refugee families.
- The publication of The Migrant and Refugee handbook – a directory of services available for refugee and migrants settling in Maroondah.
- Cultural awareness training is offered to Council staff.
- Involvement on Emergency Management committees to assist with engaging refugee communities.
- Council participate in various networks involving refugee health, refugee youth, employment and general settlement issues.



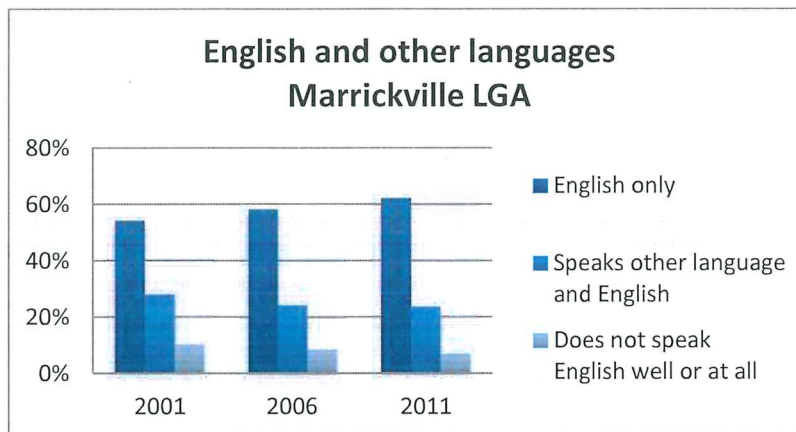
MARRICKVILLE COUNCIL, NSW



Marrickville Council is an Inner West Sydney Council, with 81,689 residents (2011 Census). It has been a Refugee Welcome zone since 2003 and recognises the important contribution that people from refugee backgrounds make to our culture, our economy and our society.

Marrickville's multicultural foundation is rapidly altering as the established CALD population ages, numbers of multilingual people decrease and the area gentrifies. Older CALD people have particular support needs and their numbers are beginning to decline through death and moving out of the LGA to supported living accommodation. Gentrification has restricted housing affordability and so limited the number of low income migrant and humanitarian entrants to the area. The proportion of overseas born residents in Marrickville is currently steady from 2006, at around 34% of the population. Although across the decades there has been a declining trend: in 2001 overseas born people were 39% of the population, falling from 51% in 1991. The most common countries of origin of overseas born residents are the United Kingdom, Greece, Vietnam, New Zealand and China.

Figure 1: English and other languages spoken: Marrickville LGA



Source: ABS (2012) 2011 Census of Population and Housing: Marrickville LGA time series profile.

The most significant change in cultural diversity is the decreasing numbers of multilingual residents. The proportion of people speaking only English has been increasing, and the numbers of people speaking another language and English, or non-English speakers have been declining (Figure 1). There are still significant numbers of people who speak languages other than English in the LGA, with Greek, Vietnamese and Arabic the most commonly spoken (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Languages spoken. Marrickville LGA

Language	Marrickville	Marrickville %
Greek	4234	5.5%
Vietnamese	2826	3.7%
Arabic	1790	2.3%
Portuguese	1514	2.0%
Cantonese	1275	1.7%
Spanish	1199	1.6%
Italian	1191	1.6%
Mandarin	979	1.3%
Nepali	699	0.9%
Filipino – Tagalog	624	0.8%

Source: 2011 Census of Population and Housing: Marrickville LGA.

Key issues for CALD people in Marrickville

Older people are one of the largest sections of Marrickville's CALD community, with around 4000 people aged 65 and over. Gentrification is impacting on the elderly migrant communities, for example children of ageing migrants often move away and are less available to care for their parents. Elderly people may have lost neighbours speaking the same language and places where they used to meet and socialise no longer exist. There is a lack of welcoming, accessible and

affordable public spaces for elderly people. Many of the newer cafés are expensive and not attractive to elderly people from CALD backgrounds.

A considerable section of the elderly migrant community in Marrickville are asset rich (own their own homes) and income poor (on income support, benefits, pension). Community transport is seen as an essential support for many elderly people who need to cross the local government area to access services and shop for their basic needs.

Emerging Communities and Humanitarian Arrivals

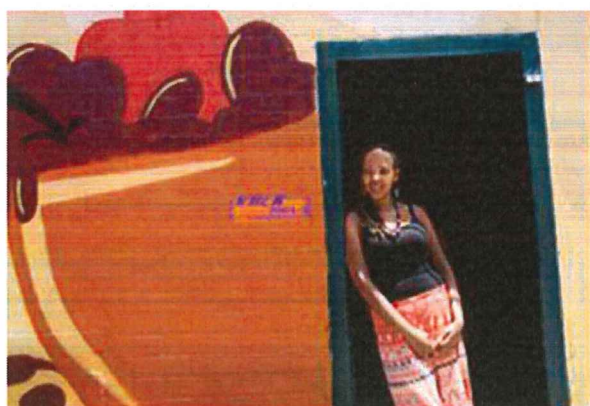
Council works with emerging communities to assist them to settle in the area. The Marrickville Multicultural Interagency (MMIA) has focused for some time on the needs of emerging communities to strive towards equity of access to services and programs.

Figure 3. Emerging Communities. Marrickville LGA

Nationality	Marrickville	Marrickville %
Nepali	699	.9%
Filipino	624	.8%
Indonesian (Tagalog)	454	.6%
Bangladesh (Bangla)	454	.6%

Source: 2011 Census of Population and Housing: Marrickville LGA.

Data from the 2011 (Figure 3) indicates that people from Nepal and the Philippines make up Marrickville’s largest growing communities with those from Indonesia (Bahasa) and Bangladesh (Bangla) also now having a significant presence in the local area.



Approximately 135 humanitarian arrivals settled in Marrickville between 2005 and 2011 coming from 29 different countries, with the largest number being from Sierra Leone.

Council’s Response

Marrickville Council has developed a Strengthening Marrickville’s Migrant Communities Local Action Plan which was reviewed in 2013. Council’s multicultural festivals and events are an essential support for cultural diversity and help develop links to emerging communities. The migrant business community also believe they are good for business. Services appreciate the opportunity to disseminate information to the broader community.

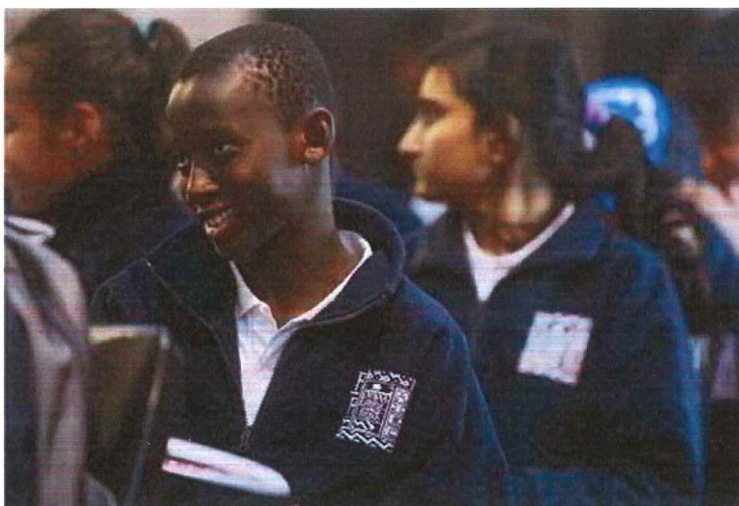
Some other Council initiatives include:

- The Community Strategic Plan has just been reviewed and there are a number of priorities identified that will support CALD residents.
- Healthy Ageing talks are held in various community languages.
- The multicultural meals service at Tom Foster Community Care Centre serves local Chinese, Portuguese, Greek, Vietnamese, Turkish, Maltese and Korean



communities as well as Aboriginal Elders.

- Neighbourliness Programs are in place to reduce social isolation and build community cohesion.
- Accessible Transport supports seniors to access services.
- Partnerships with local services are in place to ensure responsive service delivery.
- A Multicultural Interagency is supported to share information and resources and develop collaborative projects.
- A wide range of Festivals and Events are held (e.g. Refugee Week and Open Marrickville).
- Council information is produced in a range of languages.
- Healthy living talks are delivered in four community languages.
- A range of activity programs are available for CALD seniors.
- Interpreter Service are available in a range of languages.
- A Directory of Services is maintained which includes services for CALD communities.
- Library and History Services provides English conversation classes and books and other resources in a variety of languages.
- Community Grants are available to support CALD community groups.
- A Cyber Seniors program partners seniors with school students who speak the same language so they can learn basic computer skills.



CITY OF MONASH, VIC



Introduction

The City of Monash is 81.5 square kilometres, located 20 km in Melbourne's southeast with an estimated resident population of 177,970. The City of Monash is one of the most culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse municipalities in Melbourne, with 45% of the population born in a country other than Australia, 69% of residents have at least one parent born overseas and 48% speak a language other than English at home. The top overseas countries of birth for Monash residents include: China, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore, Korea and New Zealand.

Supporting Refugees and Migrants – 'The Monash Way'

Council has a strong commitment to its community, supports cultural diversity and values and respects the expression of difference. Monash Council has demonstrated significant leadership in the areas of multicultural policy development, service provision, inclusive participation and engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse community in the civic life of the municipality.

Monash Council has adopted an Access and Equity Framework 2013-2017 that provides a context to all Council planning activities including the development of plans which are specific to the needs

and interests of particular target groups including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The overarching principles that guide the Framework are those of Human Rights, Social Justice and Access and Equity.

Key Initiatives and Commitments

Council has in place a number of policies, programs and initiatives that welcome and support refugees and migrants living in the municipality and that embrace and celebrate cultural diversity. These take a 'whole of council approach' and include:

Refugee Welcome Zone

Monash Council signed the Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration in 2002.

Community Accord

Monash Council signed the Community Accord in 2005, a public statement initiated by religious and community leaders and supported by the Victorian State Government, which emphasises and promotes respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

Racism It Stops With Me Campaign

Monash Council is a partner in the 'Racism. It Stops With Me.' campaign overseen by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Multicultural Action Plan

The Monash Multicultural Action Plan 2013-2017 outlines a number of actions to be implemented over a four year period that will address issues important to culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Monash.

Language Services Program

Council provides interpreting services to CALD communities through the *Monash Language Assist* program to ensure that access to Council services, programs and information is achieved. In addition it translates key Council documents such as the Monash Bulletin (our community newsletter), the Multicultural Services Directory and Community Grants Program applications and guidelines into key community languages.

Cross Cultural Awareness Training

A cross cultural awareness training program is offered to Council staff on an on-going basis and is embedded into Council's Corporate Training program.

Community Profiles

The development of a number of community profiles representing the key local CALD communities. The profiles provide a summary of settlement history, demographic data and other relevant community information. These profiles are being updated with 2011 Census information and will be available on Council's website shortly.

Cultural Diversity Awards

Council holds Cultural Diversity Awards annually to recognise achievement in relation to cultural diversity. They recognise individuals, communities, service providers and businesses.

Annual Celebrations

Council organises annual events for the celebration of Cultural Diversity Week, Refugee Week and A Taste of Harmony, in partnership with key local organisations and Council staff.

Annual Public Forums

In partnership with the Monash Interfaith Gathering and the Monash Multicultural Advisory Committee, Council hosts annual Interfaith and Multicultural forums which address current topical or emerging issues from a multicultural perspective.

Monash Interfaith Gathering

The Monash Interfaith Gathering (MIG) is supported by Monash Council and brings together faith leaders in the City of Monash to support interfaith dialogue and interfaith and intercultural relationship building. The MIG has undertaken a number of projects and initiatives since its inception in 2006. These include annual community forums; Leadership Training for faith leaders; an Interfaith Exhibition; a Tour of Places of Worship and the Interfaith Expo. The MIG meets bi-monthly.

Monash Multicultural Advisory Committee

The Monash Multicultural Advisory Committee is a standing Council Committee consisting of representatives of the Monash multicultural community. The committee advises Council on multicultural affairs and also supports Council in the implementation of the Multicultural Action Plan. The Committee is chaired by a Councillor and meets bi-monthly.

Senior Citizens Forum

The Senior Citizens Forum is a standing Council committee chaired by a Councillor and brings together the leadership teams of over 65 senior citizens groups in Monash, including ethnic senior citizens groups. The forum meets on a quarterly basis.

Monash Multicultural Settlement Services Network

The Monash Multicultural Settlement Services Network is a newly established Network that brings together local service providers responsible for multicultural and settlement services, access and equity and policy development. It is an action oriented Network supporting priority issues of the community and advocating on multicultural, settlement and access and equity issues.

Multicultural Festivals

Monash Council celebrates cultural diversity through a number of public events such as festivals. It currently supports the annual Chinese New Year Festival, the Flavours of Oakleigh Festival, the Glendi Festival and the Clayton Community Festival.

Sports Without Borders

A partnership project between Council and Sports Without Borders supports Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people to engage with sport in Monash.

Outreach Program

Council has a strong outreach program implemented through the Multicultural Community Development Officer. The program works closely with and supports CALD communities in Monash.

Youth Programs

Council's Monash Youth and Family Services provide a range of programs and services to CALD young people and their families, in partnership with local service providers such as the Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council.

Community Grants Program

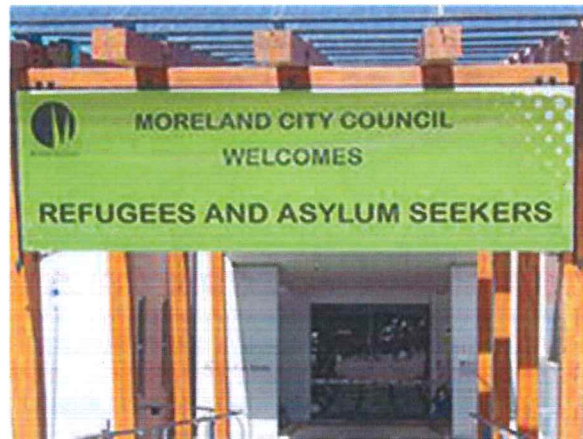
Council has a large Community Grants Program that funds a range of activities and projects run by not-for-profit community organisations and groups. Many of the projects funded by our Community Grants Program respond to identified needs within CALD communities. For example, the Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council receives community grants funding to support young people from new and emerging communities.

MORELAND CITY COUNCIL, VIC

Welcome Messages

Moreland Council has displayed banners welcoming asylum Seekers and refugees at Brunswick and Coburg Town Halls. This is a result of a Moreland Council resolution. Council advocates for asylum seeker rights, including the right to find safety when faced with persecution, discrimination and violence.

The banners erected at the Coburg and Brunswick Town Hall entrances signify that Moreland Council welcomes all people to our municipality, extending hospitality and providing opportunities to settle well and participate in the life of our municipality.



Annual Refugee Week Celebrations

Moreland Council holds an annual event to highlight the issues and challenges faced by asylum seeker and refugee communities. The event is also a celebration of contributions made by refugees to our community.

On Friday June 21, 2013, Council's Library Services and Community Development and Social Policy Units partnered to celebrate Refugee Week at Coburg Library. This event was a great success and was attended by over seventy people. The Welcome to Country was provided by Aunty Di Kerr who drew important historical parallels between the experiences of refugees and Aboriginal families. The key note speaker was Abdi Aden, a young Somali refugee who arrived in Melbourne as a refugee minor aged 15. Abdi is known for his appearance in series 2 of the 2012 SBS documentary *Go back to where you came from*. Also speaking at the event was a speaker from the Asylum Seekers Welcome Centre (ASWC) in Brunswick. The talk highlighted the important work carried out by ASWC staff and volunteers, supporting the increasing numbers of asylum seekers who now live in our community. This event was truly inspirational and provided a forum to share some of the amazing stories and experiences of Moreland's refugees and asylum seekers.

Support for Service Providers who support Asylum Seekers living in the Community

The local impact of asylum seekers living in community detention has become more obvious to service providers and the local government sector. Council's Social Development Department supports a range of local service providers by co-ordinating and hosting the Moreland Multicultural and Settlement Services Network. During 2013 Council conducted a number of multicultural inter-agency sessions on how best to develop services, and negotiate service access for asylum seekers living in the community.

Moreland Council is also a direct service provider and funder. We provide community grants funding to organisations that support asylum seekers and promote asylum seeker welfare. Direct Council services include:

- provision of Maternal and Child Health Services
- provision of Youth Services

- access to leisure facilities, including 3 month free membership at the local gyms and free swimming lessons for a limited periods
- access to Council's youth centre with targeted activities for refugee and asylum seeker youth and school holiday programs for refugee minors.



RURAL CITY OF MURRAY BRIDGE, SA

The Rural City of Murray Bridge is a thriving region on the banks of the Murray River. A scenic drive from Adelaide of about one hour, it is well placed in terms of its geographic location, being on the national road network, with road and rail access to the eastern states and Adelaide. It's proximity to Adelaide, connection to the South Eastern Freeway, land affordability, investment opportunities and river connection makes the Rural City of Murray Bridge an appealing place to live, work and visit.

New Neighbour Activities and Projects

2003 was a special year for Murray Bridge when the Rural City of Murray Bridge declared the city Refugee Friendly. Many hundreds of people from China became our new neighbours in 2005 and 2006. Since 2008 we have welcomed new neighbours from South Sudan, Bhutan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, the Philippines, Korea and many other places.

"New Neighbours" is the new terminology to refer to our multicultural community. The community has identified this more inclusive title instead of references such as "asylum seekers", "refugees" and "immigrants".

Council works hand in hand to provide support to Lutheran Community Care, Migrant Resource Centre and Regional Development Australia in the delivery of a broad range of multicultural services.

Lutheran Community Care provides advice, referral and casework for new neighbours in Murray Bridge. Encouragement and support towards self advocacy and self reliance is the focus of this service. They also work to support local ethnic leaders to increase their capacity to serve their communities.



The New Settlers' Retreat was established in March 2007 by Lutheran Community Care through a grant from Council and Community Benefit SA. The Retreat provides nine computers with broadband access, a sitting room with audio-visual equipment, and a teaching area for small groups.

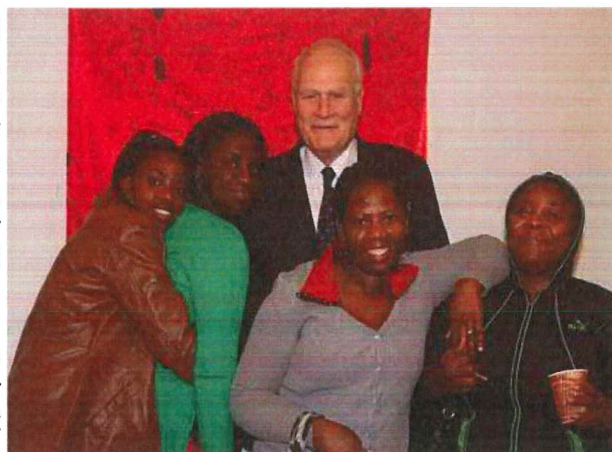
The retreat is available for volunteer tutoring of English and computers, for community meetings, for community language and culture teaching, for after school homework assistance, for study and for new settlers to use computers to contact relatives and friends overseas.

Government funding has ceased to LCC.

Council also funds the Multicultural Project on an annual basis which was established in 2006 and we continue to represent Council on the Murraylands Multicultural Migration Settlement Committee. The Murraylands Multicultural Project supports the settlement of all new migrants, irrespective of visa class. The Murraylands Multicultural Project is one of a number of initiatives of the Settlement Committee, all of which contribute to the attraction of new settlers and their retention in the Murraylands. Unfortunately, government funding for the Multicultural Coordinator through Regional Development Australia was cut.

Council also funds new neighbour community projects through community grants twice per year and delivers new neighbour events also on an annual basis.

The New Neighbour Welcome Reception and Congolese Independence Day celebration on 30 June 2012 also hosted the launch of the 'home project'. The event aimed to engage the community and Murray Bridge's diverse cultures through music, food and the launch of the Home Project. The Home Project captures experiences of our New Neighbours in story form, photography and film.



Mayor Allon Arbon OAM and the Congolese ladies at the All Cultural Fest.

This multicultural event brought together people from all cultural backgrounds in celebration of our cultural diversity, including our Aboriginal culture. It encourages the entire community to try new things and bask in the cultural, social and religious diversity of the community of Murray Bridge. In doing so we take our own steps towards social inclusion and a deeper understanding of the value of multiculturalism, Aboriginal communities, diversity and cultural pride.

Through the Federal Government's Sustainable Regional Settlement program, Lutheran Community Care New Settler Services has conducted an extensive survey of the Sudanese refugee community, service providers and businesses with the support of the Rural City of Murray Bridge. A part of this research focused on Sudanese youth, and identified both strengths and deficits about their experience of Murray Bridge.

Projects that Council have funded or been involved with in some way:

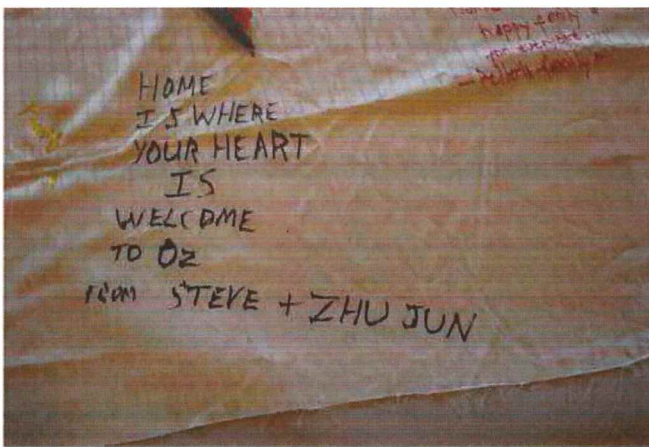
- Muslim Cemetery;
- Multicultural Welcome Events;
- English classes;
- Recreational and educational programs for youth;
- Volunteer programs supporting families of new arrivals;
- Community information sessions;
- Information about new communities for mainstream services;
- Consultation and information sessions for community leaders;
- Community capacity building programs for a range of ethno-specific groups;
- New Settlers Retreat;
- New Settler Online Learning Centre;
- Afghan social, emotional and English language support project;
- Development of future leaders of the Afghan and Sudanese communities;



Faith Box and Thanuja Hiripitiyage celebrating Murray Bridge's diversity.

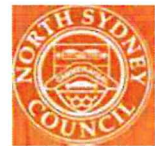
- Multicultural Centre crèche;
- Building Bridges to Sustainable Employment;
- Building Safer Drinking Cultures;
- Aboriginal Art – Sturt Reserve bollards, mosaic seats, public art, LGC mosaic and mural, supporting local artists' work;
- Youth projects – Traktion hip hop music events, Just Too Deadly Awards for graduating year 7 and 12 Aboriginal students;
- Family projects – Deadly Fun Run series, Ngarrindjeri Mimir Kayklun Choir, Ninkowar Cultural Centre support, Aboriginal Youth and Family Network.

At the 2013 All Cultural Fest, the North School Drummers performed along with Chinese, Filipino dancing and young talented Murray Bridge solo singer Midi Marks. Colourfest films also be featured, showcasing the best of short Australian multicultural films. Balloons and face painting were highlights for the children along with a lavish afternoon tea for all to enjoy.



During the event, attendees were asked to write or draw what home meant to them so Council could frame and proudly display the results in honour of the amazing event held in 2013. The adjacent photo is just one of the messages from a New Neighbour!

The event's objective is to bring people together from all cultural backgrounds in celebration of our cultural diversity. We encourage all to attend to try new things and bask in the cultural, social and religious diversity of the community of Murray Bridge.



NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL, NSW

The North Sydney Local Government Area is located on the north side of Sydney Harbour. It has a population of 67,772 (as at 30 June 2012) with 36.5% born overseas and 28% who do not speak English at home. According to figures from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Settlement Database (June 2013), North Sydney received 25 humanitarian visa arrivals and 602 Family visa arrivals in the five years to May 2013. In 2002, the Council became a Refugee Welcome Zone and has remained active in refugee initiatives since this time.

Most recently, in 2013, North Sydney Council supported the establishment of the Northern Sydney Refugee, Humanitarian Entrants and Asylum Seekers Forum comprising of representatives from Commonwealth, State and Local Government and local community service providers. This ongoing forum focuses on understanding and addressing the needs of local refugees, and shared learning among members.

Also in 2013, Council supported the establishment of a new not for profit organisation: Migrant and Refugee Women's Association (MARWA). In addition to providing grant funding, Council is working with MARWA to build their presence in the local community and is partnering with them to celebrate Harmony Day in 2014. In July 2013, MARWA partnered with the North Sydney branch of Amnesty International to run a training session at North Sydney Council to teach the local community about the refugee experience.

In 2013, Council also partnered with the Lower North Shore Multicultural Network to produce a Migrant Services Quick Reference Guide for recently arrived migrants and refugees to help them access the organisations which can help them to settle in the local area and gain their independence. The guide was translated into Simplified Chinese and Japanese with further translations into Farsi, Korean and Spanish due this year. Council has also received grant funding for 2013-14 to produce an Employment Guide targeting recently arrived migrants and refugees in recognition of the important role that employment plays in helping recent arrivals gain their independence.



PALMERSTON CITY COUNCIL, NT

The City of Palmerston is located 20 kilometres south of Darwin in the Northern Territory and encompasses 10 established residential suburbs, with an additional four suburbs currently under development. Dubbed one of the country's fastest growing cities, Palmerston currently boasts a 28,000 strong population, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics predicting a surge to 42,000 residents by 2021.

On 11 September 2013, the City of Palmerston proudly became the first Council in the Northern Territory to sign up as an official Refugee Council of Australia Refugee Welcome Zone, solidifying the region's motto – A Place for People. At the time of signing the declaration, the city's Mayor Ian Abbott said Council was proud to recognise the important part refugees play in the Palmerston community. "As part of the 2013 Palmerston festival we held a successful global fair as a wonderful celebration of our city's cultural diversity, and signing the Refugee Welcome Zone declaration is an extension of our commitment to promoting cultural harmony and diversity in the community," Mayor Abbott said.

As part of the recent festival, Council also hosted a group of Gyuto Monks for a week long period. The Buddhist Monks are originally refugees who fled from Tibet, and now reside in a monastery located just outside of Dharamsala in India.

The City of Palmerston has previously been a proud supporter of local cultural societies and organisations, awarding a number of financial assistance grants through the City's Community Benefit Scheme.



PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS COUNCIL, NSW

Hastings is located 420 km north of Sydney. The area incorporates both rural and regional inland communities, national parks and coastal towns. Port Macquarie, situated on the coast is the largest town. The region has a population of approximately 75, 000, 11% of whom were born overseas and 3% from a country where English is not the first language (2011 ABS Census).

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council signed the Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration in 2006 and, while not a high refugee settlement area, the Council has made a concerted effort to reflect their support and recognition of refugees in many of their initiatives. Beginning with an official launch to celebrate becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone, Council then placed the declaration in three Council reception areas. Council developed and launched a Multicultural Directory of Services designed specifically to assist refugees and new arrivals in accessing information, support and services. Funding has also been given by Council to Harmony Day activities. Council attends the meetings and supports the Mid North Coast Multicultural Network.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL, NSW



Sutherland Shire has a population of around 221,147⁵ and 12% of the population has settled in the area since 2006. As a Refugee Welcome Zone, Sutherland Shire Council endeavours to attain the community vision of a “connected and safe community that respects people and nature, enjoying active lives in a strong local economy”⁶.

Council has supported multiculturalism locally through screening of Harmony Day short-film festivals, and activities in libraries for Harmony Day and Refugee Week. Council is an active member of the Sutherland Shire Multicultural Network which aims to build capacity and share information across local not-for-profit service providers. A number of diverse community groups have been recipients of council grants which support local projects. As a part of sector development initiatives, council has run a number of training seminars, including Creating Cultural Inclusion. Council regularly develops resources and provides support to the community sector.



CITY OF SYDNEY, NSW



The City of Sydney has a population of approximately 180,000 people. It is a highly culturally diverse and cosmopolitan area that has become the home of around 400 refugees over the past ten years. The City of Sydney Council became a Refugee Welcome Zone in 2005 and its involvement in programs targeting refugees and asylum seekers has included a Refugee and Asylum Seeker Access Project which provides refugees and asylum seekers free access to a range of Council facilities and services including Swimming pools, Libraries and Meals on Wheels. The program recognises and addresses some of the difficulties that new arrivals face when settling into a new environment – for example, financial restraints, limited awareness of services and information and difficulty engaging and participating in a new community environment. The Council also encourages refugees and asylum seekers to participate in the City’s annual Living in Harmony festival, and provides grants to local NGOs running projects in support of refugee and asylum seekers.

TOOWOOMBA REGIONAL COUNCIL, QLD



Demographic background

Toowoomba Regional Council (Toowoomba Regional Council) governs a culturally diverse area. About 59% (or 94,098) of its 157,669 total population have diverse ancestral backgrounds. The 2011 Census showed that the region has 15,753 residents who were born overseas or 10.4 % of the total population. Of those, 5.3% are from a non-English speaking background.

⁵ Sutherland Shire Council (2011 Census). Sutherland Shire Community Profile ID. Retrieved 10/09/13, <http://profile.id.com.au/sutherland/home>

⁶ Our Shire: Our Future: Sutherland Shire Council’s Community Strategic Plan, Dec 2011, [http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Council The Shire/Our Future/Planning](http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Council%20The%20Shire/Our%20Future/Planning)

From 2006 to 2011, 4,429 individuals were recorded as recent arrivals and this number is increasing. The Toowoomba region is one of the areas in Queensland piloted for the Government's Women at Risk refugee scheme. Between May and September 2013, the Multicultural Development Association (MDA) reported 80 families (some of which are big families, e.g. 10 members) as new refugee arrivals in Toowoomba. The region is also the third largest refugee settlement area in Queensland and was recently proclaimed a Refugee Welcome Zone.

A Refugee Welcome Zone

Toowoomba Regional Council became the third local government area in Queensland to become a Refugee Welcome Zone on 22 June 2013. "We are proud to recognize the work of families, schools, churches and service providers who have made Toowoomba a place of welcome for refugees over the years," Mayor Paul Antonio said. This declaration is a commitment in spirit to welcoming refugees into the community, upholding the human rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in the community.

Toowoomba has for many years been designated by the Federal Government as a refugee and humanitarian settlement area because of the success of well-established collaboration and partnerships at different levels of government, settlement services, NGOs and the diverse community who have provided new arrivals support.

Council partners with the Queensland Government through the Local Area Multicultural Partnership (LAMP) program. The Community Development Officer (CDO) - Multicultural is also the LAMP officer for the Council. His role is to support the local government to 'integrate the principles and practices of multiculturalism throughout the organisation and promote positive intercultural relations and social cohesion within the region'. This ensures that all Queenslanders, regardless of their cultural, linguistic or religious background have equitable access to services appropriate to their needs; are able to fully participate in and benefit from all aspects of life in Queensland; and feel a sense of belonging to a cohesive and harmonious community.

Initiatives that welcome refugees to Toowoomba

Some of the key initiatives undertaken by Toowoomba Regional Council to welcome and support the settlement of migrants from Refugee and Humanitarian backgrounds are:

- **A pilot to guide Toowoomba towards becoming a City of Peace and Harmony** - Toowoomba Regional Council in partnership with Pure Land Learning College's Goodwill Committee, the University of Southern Queensland (USQ), the community and faith groups are working together to make Toowoomba a model city of peace and harmony. Council is represented by the Community Development Officer Multicultural (LAMP) Officer as member of the Goodwill Committee. This is an initiative started by Pure Land Learning College Multifaith Multicultural Centre which selected Toowoomba due to its social infrastructures, population and unique and diverse communities. Toowoomba was also a designated refugee settlement area. The Pure Land Learning College through its founder Venerable Master Chin Kung AM committed resources and started this vision around 10 years ago. The initiative aims to build bridges across communities through interfaith dialogues and sharing, and education forums for youth and the general community. It aligns well with the welcome of refugees and humanitarian migrants. In August, a Toowoomba delegation made up business, faith, youth and community representatives led by the Mayor presented to UNESCO the Toowoomba pilot initiative with positive endorsements. Within the last two years, Toowoomba delegations have attended overseas interfaith and peace forums through multifaith and multicultural exchanges in Bangkok, Thailand, Colombo and Sri-Lanka, and have visited Singapore on an educational tour to meet many faith leaders and learn about the different multicultural programs and integration models.

- **Toowoomba Regional Council Multicultural Policy** – Toowoomba Regional Council, through the community development unit, has developed a draft of its **multicultural policy** which is now going through the approval process.
- **Toowoomba Regional Council Cultural Awareness Training** is an integral part of the induction orientation and training for all Council staff.
- **English language programs and access to translating and interpreter services.** In response to demand, Council now fully participates in the Australian Society.

The Toowoomba Library is running English language conversational class for the CALD community from non-English speaking backgrounds on an informal basis. This program has been well attended and popular with many newly arrived Afghan women and families (women at risk). This supplements the formal structured AMEP English classes at the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Settlement Services (TRAMS) and other community groups and churches- based programs. The settlement services and agencies like MDA, Mercy Family Services, TRAMS, Centacare, and Queensland Health specifically through the Refugee Health Assessment, provide ready access to interpreting services. To address the need for more local interpreters for new refugee groups, Council is involved with a local Interpreters working group to assist in recruitment of local community members for new and emerging languages and their assistance towards accreditation with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).

Celebrating community events

Toowoomba Regional Council continues to support CALD communities and multiculturalism through capacity building, governance training and encourage participation through cultural activities, celebrations and events such as:

- **Harmony Day in March** - This year as the lead agency, Council coordinated and organised Harmony Day in the City working group which was made up of several agencies mainly from settlement service organisations. Council staff, the Indigenous community, the mainstream and the newly arrived migrants and those from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds attended and were provided with opportunities to participate in the program as volunteers and cultural performers. Two activities were held for this event – a lunch barbecue with the community and Council staff and, in the evening, a multicultural film fest showing films of refugee and migrant experience in Australia shown to community and industry leaders. Toowoomba Regional Council also encouraged simultaneous Harmony Day celebrations in many schools (many of which have a high proportion of students from CALD and Refugee backgrounds), in offices, and clubs to recognise the positive contribution of refugees and migrants from all backgrounds.
- **Refugee Week in June** - Toowoomba Regional Council is a member of the Refugee Week Working Group. This event affirms the welcome and recognition of the difficulties and eventually the contributions of the refugees and humanitarian migrants by the community.
- **Australia Day** – an event where refugees a can already participate and feel part of their new home and adopted country.



- **Welcome to Toowoomba** – a biannual event organised by Toowoomba Regional Council to welcome and introduce the elected officials and showcase the services of Council to newly arrived migrants in the region.
- **Citizenship Ceremonies** – newly arrived refugees are encouraged to witness this event to inspire them to aim to become Australian citizens.
- **Regular engagement** – consultations with new and emerging refugee groups. Toowoomba Regional Council supports community **cultural celebrations** of new migrants and those with a refugee background such as South Sudanese Independence celebrations, Congolese Cultural Day, Nepalese Teej Festival, Filipino Independence Day and Flores De Mayo, Indian Diwali, Chinese New Year, Papua New Guinea Independence Day, Sinhalese and Tamil New Year and Fiji Day.

Toowoomba Regional Council also organises and coordinates:

- **Toowoomba Languages and Cultures Festival** – Coordinated by the Community Development Officer - Multicultural (LAMP), this is a partnership between Toowoomba Regional Council and the Toowoomba International Multicultural Society (TIMS) and the Modern Language Teachers Association of Qld (MLTAQ) held every August and now in its eighth year. More than 100 different languages and around 80 cultures are on show. It celebrates the region's ethnic diversity and the contributions of migrants to the culture, human resources and economic prosperity of Toowoomba. It showcases multicultural heritage through promotion of the different cultures, food and languages. This year's event recorded an estimated 15,000 attendees. This event provides a platform for refugee groups and communities' capacity building and participation through volunteering, selling food, business enterprise, and development and presentation of cultural performances. The flow-on effects for refugees include sharing and acquiring new skills, an introduction to cultural awareness, opportunities to give back to the community, as well as feeling welcomed and accepted.



- **Cultural Diversity Network (CDN)** – facilitated by Council's Multicultural Development Officer, this is an inclusive network of more than 50 organisations, communities, local and state agencies, specific interest groups and networks. CDN supports the growing networking of individuals and agencies working with CALD communities and to promoting common dialogue and exchange on working issues with Toowoomba's CALD populations. Refugee groups are encouraged to participate and introduce themselves to the community and service providers in this network which meets quarterly.
- **Networks** – Toowoomba Regional Council supports and promotes CALD and refugee community capacity building, advocacy work, participation and best practice to access services by working with specific refugee settlement service providers and agencies such as the Multicultural Development Association, Department of Human Services - Centrelink, SQITafe, Centacare, Lifeline Darling Downs, Mercy Family Services, Queensland Health, Queensland African Communities Council, faith-based organisations, the Federal Government, Queensland Department of Communities and its agencies, peak bodies like Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, NGOs and other government agencies.

Toowoomba Regional Council through the Multicultural Community Development Officer participates and is represented in the following networks related to refugee settlement:

1. **Refugee and Migrant Settlement Services Support Interagency** – focuses on settlement services and regional issues for refugee and Humanitarian Migrants.
2. **Agencies CALD Action Group** – developing and delivering early intervention modules for newly arrived CALD communities generally from refugee and humanitarian background. Collaborative partnership with Toowoomba Regional Council, NGOs and specialised services.
3. **Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) South West Queensland Local Area Coordination (SWQ LAC) Network** - this network facilitated by Multicultural Development Association (MDA) is attended by government agencies, mainstream services and settlement services. Its aim is to improve coordination and cooperation between key service delivery agencies and a mechanism to coordinate settlement services at a strategic level.



WARRINGAH COUNCIL, NSW



Warringah Council is located on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Warringah has a population of 150,275 people, and 14.6% of the population at the last census in 2011 identified as being born in a country where English is not the first language. There are large representative groups from China, Italy, South Africa and the Philippines.

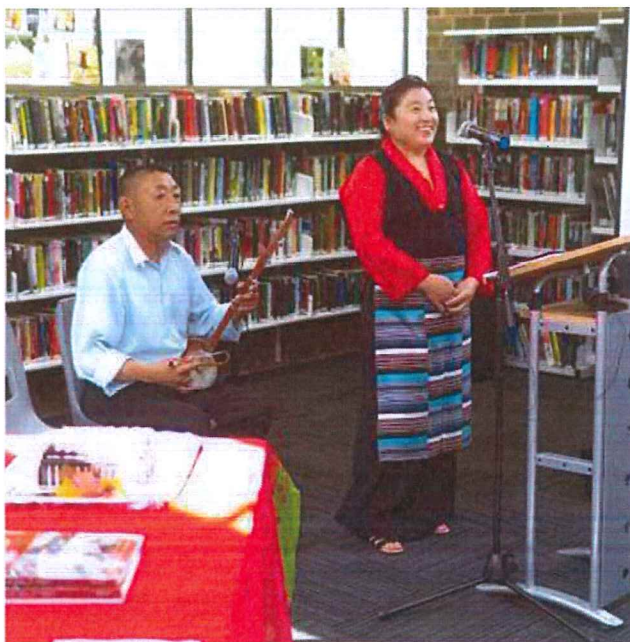


Some groups, including Tibetans, Nepalese, Pacific Islanders and Maoris, have been identified as facing additional challenges such as low socio-economic conditions, low education levels and poor literacy in both English and their first language. Significantly Warringah (in particular Dee Why) has the largest Tibetan population in Australia, with over 500 now being residents there.

Refugee Welcome Zone

Warringah Council passed a resolution to become a Refugee Welcome Zone in November 2011, and was declared a Refugee Welcome Zone on 17 July 2012 and registered with the Refugee Council of Australia.

Following this adoption the Mayor of Warringah wrote to the Federal Members for Warringah and Mackellar, the Minister for Immigration and the Prime Minister, outlining Warringah Council's concerns about the treatment and rights of refugees within Australia, advocating on their behalf for improved status and handling. This included a request that federal representatives revoke the plans to reintroduce Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs); speed up processing times of asylum seekers; end mandatory detention; process asylum seekers entering Australia within Australia and not in overseas detention; provide services and funding to asylum seekers on bridging visas and



therefore end their absolute reliance on charities for survival; and ensure no child is in detention in Australia, or in overseas detention centres, funded by Australia.

It is intended that this declaration will be used to foster an awareness of the issues facing refugees, and improve visibility of refugees, in the Warringah community and will be used to inform and bolster cultural events such as Harmony Day.

Community and Cultural Grant Programs

Warringah Council runs an annual funding program which includes a Community Development Grants and Cultural Development Grants schemes. The Community Development Grants are to fund evidence-based community initiatives which

align with Council's Social Plan goals to address community issues through community capacity building and community connectedness.

The Cultural Development Grants enable artists and communities to develop and participate in a variety of arts and cultural activities that reflect the cultural diversity and capacity of Warringah and celebrate a sense of place.

Projects need to engage an identified group such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse groups as creators, participants and audience. Over the last two years projects aimed at culturally diverse groups were awarded funding for programs that will increase community engagement and inclusion, and address the needs of marginalised communities in the Warringah area. These included:

- a camp for Tibetan children;
- a Leadership and Personal Development Training Program for multicultural youth;
- Eurofest Multicultural Festival;
- a learn to swim program for Tibetan people;
- a three-year community inclusion program for new migrants;
- a Women's Wellness Group for senior Italian women;
- the development of an Australian Tibetan Cookbook;
- the Tibetan Losar Festival;
- the Nepalese Dashain Tihar Cultural program;
- the UpBeat program for Pacific Islander and Maori youth.

Warringah Council is committed to the delivery of an ongoing Community and Cultural Development Grants program that will engage and benefit the Warringah community. One of the core aims of this program is to promote social inclusion, increase opportunities and visibility for diverse groups, celebrate multicultural Australia and develop sustainable capacity within the community.



CITY OF WHITTLESEA, VIC

The City of Whittlesea is located in Melbourne's north, about 20km from the Central Business District (CBD). Our current population is approximately 176,000 residents and is expected to grow to 250,000 persons by 2031. Almost half of our residents are aged 25 to 54. Whittlesea is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia, and welcomed 8500 new residents in 2011-12.

We are one of the most multicultural municipalities in Victoria, with almost half of our community speaking a language other than English at home. Our diverse community speaks over 140 languages. Our residents come from a wide range of backgrounds with approximately 40% born in other countries, including Italy, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, India, Greece and Vietnam. New migrants also make a small percentage of the Whittlesea community. The urban areas of Thomastown, Lalor and Epping contain a greater proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds than other parts of the city. These residents bring with them many aspects of their own cultures, which contribute greatly to the character and identity of the City of Whittlesea.

We are one of the largest municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne, covering an area of approximately 489 square kilometres. Around 60% of the City covers rural green wedge areas comprising Whittlesea, including the townships of Yan Yean, Woodstock, Eden Park, Humevale and Kinglake West. The other 40% contains established urban areas including Lalor, Thomastown, Bundoora and Mill Park, developing areas including Epping, South Morang and Doreen areas proposed for future growth including Wollert, Donnybrook and Beveridge.

Programs and services that Welcome Refugees to the City of Whittlesea

Whittlesea Council's Multicultural Plan 2007 – 2011 – many faces one community valuing diversity, provided us with a number of key actions to address our community's needs over a four year period. Many of these actions and initiatives are listed below. We are in the process of developing a new four year Multicultural Plan.

The Welcome Program and Expo

The Welcome Program was developed as a key action of the Multicultural Plan – to support culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities to access local services. The Welcome Program has evolved over four years and, after testing different models, a Welcome Expo was established, working collaboratively with local service providers.

The Welcome Expo maximises the opportunities for new residents to learn about the services available in the community, as it enables residents to ask questions and to move around freely and in their own time. The Welcome Expo is held one to two times per year.



Welcome Expo volunteers from NMIT and the then Mayor, Cr Stevan Kozmevski, in October 2012. Fortunata Maria Callipari, Multicultural Officer, City of Whittlesea

Multilingual Services

Various language services are offered to people of refugee background, to help residents communicate with us.

Interpreting services

Council provides a free interpreter service for residents who need to communicate in another language with Council officers. In addition, Council aims to provide trained language aides to assist residents of non-English speaking backgrounds to communicate and access the services provided by Council. The language aides are part of Whittlesea's customer service responsibility and provide Council with in-house language services.

Multilingual telephone information

Residents can call our multilingual telephone lines to hear pre-recorded information about Council services including: rates; garbage, waste and recycling services; community care for the aged, disability services; child maternal health service; and, libraries in the municipality that have multilingual reading collections. These information lines can also connect residents to an interpreter in order to communicate directly with a Council officer.

Multilingual website

Residents can read or listen to information about the following topics in languages other than English on the City of Whittlesea website www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au: your home and family; government and laws; health and safety; and, what you need to know about living in the City of Whittlesea. The languages available include: Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Turkish and Vietnamese.

Community Profiles

We invite leaders of local not-for-profit community associations to present information about their respective communities to our staff and local community service providers to form the Community Profiles program. This allows community members to represent themselves in their own right as experts of their own culture, and become a part of our local multicultural network. In 2012, community leaders from the following community organisations delivered information about their communities: Palestinian Community Association; Macedonian Community Welfare Association; Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights; local Sri Lankan community members; Whittlesea Chinese Association; and Romany Community of Melbourne Inc.

Work Ready Program

The Work Ready program supports newly-arrived migrants and refugees in the municipality to become ready for the workforce. The program creates meaningful work experience placements to help disadvantaged migrants and refugees overcome the employment challenges they face. These barriers to the workforce may include getting Australian work experience and speaking English. It provides skills, support and confidence to the individual participants, getting them ready to work, with the long-term goal of securing employment in the wider community.



Multicultural Youth Programs

In recognition of the different issues that youth from CALD backgrounds face, Council's Youth Services department has created a specific Multicultural Youth Portfolio to focus on engaging and supporting these youth. The Multicultural Youth Portfolio programs are open to all youth, but target youth from CALD communities who for various systemic and cultural reasons do not access youth services.

Refugee Week Awards

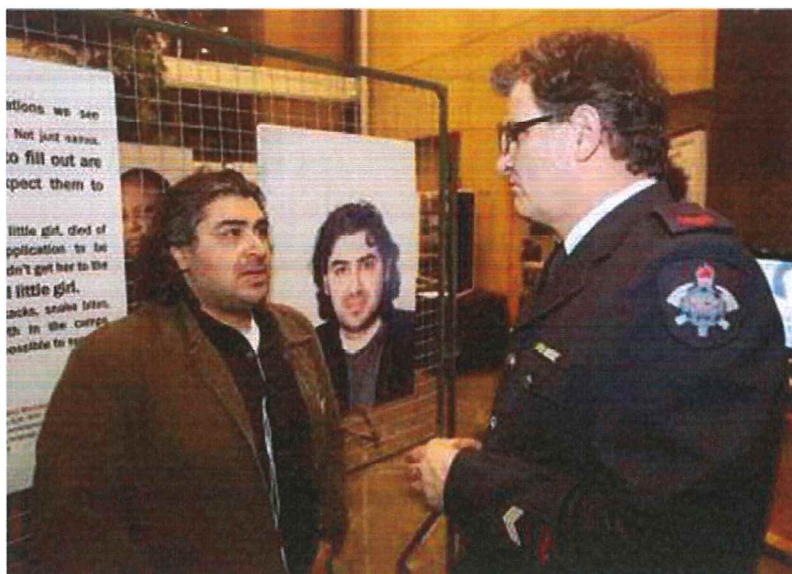
The annual Refugee Week Awards is a partnership between the City of Whittlesea and Whittlesea Community Connections, the main community service agency in the municipality.

The Refugee Week Awards aim to acknowledge, recognise and value the contribution of people of refugee backgrounds in the local community. It is also a tool for raising awareness among the broader community about the refugee experience. The inaugural Refugee Week Awards 2011 recognised the contribution of 23 people in an awards ceremony and exhibition highlighting their stories.

Community Leadership Project

The Community Leadership Network Pilot Project will establish a leadership model with and for community leaders, advocating and building community resilience supporting Council's vision of creating vibrant, self-sustaining communities.

Newly arrived communities are not adequately resourced and are often consumed by the settlement process. There is a need for leadership in these communities - to assist and support settlement and advocacy of new communities



and the integration into the broader community. Community leaders are generally self-appointed or voted by peers to fulfil the role of leadership for a community group. Leaders must respond to various issues and expectations of members without adequate qualifications. Leaders are not always versed in areas relevant to their role, such as Australian laws, rights, responsibilities, the role of citizenship or the Australian Constitution. The City of Whittlesea believes that local government has a role to play in building the capacity of community leaders – as a way of supporting community engagement and improving cultural citizenship.

Networks and Connections

There are various local community networks and working groups that support our multicultural and interfaith communities. Whittlesea Multicultural Unit actively participates in these networks. We feel this is an opportunity to exchange information and learn about community issues, strengthen partnerships and build trust and show Council's commitment to the multicultural communities. Some of the networks that the Multicultural Unit is regularly involved with include: North East Regional Settlement Issues Network; Whittlesea Interfaith Network; Whittlesea Multicultural Communities Council; Whittlesea Multicultural Issues Network; Northern Intercultural Interfaith

Network; Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues Network; and Whittlesea Community Futures Network.

Whittlesea Interfaith Network (WIN)

WIN brings together faith-based leaders from all the faiths in the City of Whittlesea, who meet to talk and learn more about each other's respective faiths. This network has been a reference group to guide strategic planning in new growth areas.

The Whittlesea Interfaith Network was created in 2007 after faith leaders attended a community forum in 2006 where the commonalities of faith were explored with Indigenous elder, Ian Hunter. The theme of the forum was 'the lanterns are different but the light is the same'. With support from the City of Whittlesea and the Whittlesea Multicultural Communities Council, – WIN held an interfaith exhibition in 2009 to celebrate and highlight all the faiths in the municipality. In 2010, the network held a local Interfaith Conference, titled 'Talking Faith'.

In 2011, the network created an interfaith display and exhibition – which toured Epping Plaza and Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries – taking interfaith dialogue to the community. WIN also staged the Human Rights Gender and Equality forum and exhibition and contributed to The Blessing of the Fleet, an annual Council event that recognises the important work of local emergency services and emergency management.

CALD Community Consultation Guidelines

The City of Whittlesea is currently developing CALD community consultation guidelines. The Council is committed to consult, listen, respect and value CALD communities' contribution to enhance Council's policy development, community engagement and community relationships.

The City of Whittlesea CALD Consultation Guidelines is an important tool when consulting with the CALD community. The purpose of the guidelines is to provide Council officers with practical guidance on how to both engage and undertake consultation with CALD communities. The guidelines aim to encourage a commitment to and consistency across Council in effective and appropriate consultation with CALD communities.

LEAD: Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity

The City of Whittlesea was awarded the LEAD Project in June 2009, funded by VicHealth, to improve community understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity and reduce race-based discrimination. The three year LEAD Project is one of only two to be funded in Victoria. The pilot project was developed in response to VicHealth research that showed despite widespread support for diversity in Victoria, people from Aboriginal, migrant and refugee backgrounds continue to experience unacceptably high rates of race-based discrimination. The City of Whittlesea received the LEAD funding due to its strong track record in working to support diversity and address disadvantage affecting people from Aboriginal, migrant and refugee backgrounds.



WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL, NSW

Wollongong is a regional coastal city with around 200,000 residents located 80 km south of Sydney. It lies along the coast bounded by the Royal National Park to the north, Lake Illawarra to the south and the Illawarra escarpment to the west. Wollongong became a Refugee Welcome Zone in 2005 and the Council describes the community as a place where a "deep respect for others' traditions and regular celebrations of diverse customs adds to the vibrant tapestry of

community life⁷. Just over 20% of the population were born overseas and around 14% originate from non-English speaking backgrounds⁸. Over a ten year period, Wollongong has become home to around 1000 refugees⁹ with the largest groups originating from the former Yugoslavia. In more recent years, refugees from Burma, various African nations, Iraq and Iran have had the highest settlement numbers in the area. Wollongong Council supports a range of initiatives for refugee communities in the area including key support for the Illawarra Refugees Issues Forum (IRIF): a bi-monthly interagency of services that work with refugees. In the last year, Council has initiated sub-committees of IRIF to investigate employment and transport issues. In 2013 Council introduced three traineeships specifically targeted at residents from refugee backgrounds. The traineeship is a 12 month program, based at the Wollongong Botanic Gardens, with vocational modules delivered by a local training organisation. Given its success so far, it is likely it will become an ongoing employment strategy of Council.

In 2013 Council's Wollongong City Gallery held a professional contemporary art exhibition of works by artists of refugee background and works exploring stories from refugee communities; this was complemented by a community-based art exhibition, a panel art program and a complementary education program for school students. The program was a strong partnership between Council's Community Development and Gallery teams and the community sector. The program provided broad exposure of local refugee communities' talents and stories to the wider community. It also provided a supported entry point for new communities to the city's key cultural institution. In addition, the exhibition launches saw record attendance numbers for the Gallery.

Council provides regular support for local Refugee Week activities, a supported venue for HSS orientation sessions, regular library tours and presentations on Council's services to TAFE AMEP students and ongoing support for and partnership work with frontline agencies. In 2013 Council assisted the setting up and development of a new African performance group, the development of a new social/support group for 18 to 26 year olds studying at TAFE. This builds on the success of Council's Wollongong Youth Centre provision of activities for 12 to 18 year olds from refugee backgrounds and the youth services team's active support of the Multicultural Conference, a local youth partnership project, targeting young people from refugee backgrounds. Council also links refugee communities to the city's major events, such as Viva la Gong, and provides free interpreting for children and their families from refugee background through the Wollongong City Council Interpreter Service.

Wollongong Living Books

One of the most successful programs that Wollongong Council has implemented is the Community Development "Wollongong Living Books" project which gives the local community the opportunity to talk and listen to the stories of a diverse range of living "books". These "books" are local volunteers from a diversity of different backgrounds and life experiences. These include people of different ages, sexuality, ethnicity, culture,



⁷ Wollongong City Council (2010). *History and Demographics*. Retrieved 20/10/10, <http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/city/demographics/pages/default.aspx>

⁸ Community Profile (2006). *Wollongong City Council Community Profile*. Retrieved 17/10/10, <http://profile.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=302>

⁹ Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010, op. cit., p. 10.

faith, language, occupation, ability and life experience who share their stories and converse with readers from the local community. The initiative was started in 2007 and since then over 2800 readers have participated with around 30 “books” currently in the collection.

The project was designed to build understanding in the community and uses the motto of “Real People, Real Stories” to work towards challenging stereotypes, encouraging recognition and valuing of diversity and promoting respect for human rights. The project has been highly successful and widely promoted through its introduction into local schools.

A highlight of the 2013 program was the inaugural Refugee Living Books, held with high school students at the Art Gallery, in conjunction with a tour of the Refugee Art Exhibition. The current ‘books’ from refugee background include: *From Liberia to Wollongong*, *Elizabeth’s Story*: (a refugee woman from Sudan), *Sudan to Wollongong* and *An Afghan Boy’s Story*.



CITY OF YARRA, VIC

The City of Yarra is an inner metropolitan municipality which is home to a diverse community of about 79,500 people. Yarra’s 19.5 square kilometres include the suburbs of Abbotsford, Burnley, Clifton Hill, Collingwood, Cremorne, Fitzroy, North Carlton, North Fitzroy, Princes Hill and Richmond. Parts of Alphington and Fairfield - south of Heidelberg Road - are also included in Yarra.

The City of Yarra has a rich multicultural community. Yarra residents are as diverse as Melbourne itself having come from as far afield as the United Kingdom and Ireland, Italy, Greece, the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Turkey, the United States of America, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, East Timor, China and Hong Kong, Japan, South Africa, and other African nations such as Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. Yarra’s diversity, with almost 28% of its residents having been born overseas, is similar to the Melbourne Statistical Division with 29% residents born overseas.

Yarra’s Multicultural Policy 2010-2014 aims to ensure Council’s accountability to its culturally diverse community, providing services that are accessible and as culturally relevant as possible. It provides a blueprint for staff that supports best practice delivery of services to residents, businesses and visitors to Yarra.

Policies and Council Statements

Yarra City Council has been a Refugee Welcome Zone since 2002, being one of the first local government authorities to join this initiative.

Council adopted its own Refugee and Asylum Seeker Statement in 2005, which outlines Yarra’s commitment to a respectful and compassionate approach to Asylum Seekers (see below). At this time welcome banners stating “City of Yarra Welcomes Refugees and Asylum Seekers” were hung outside the Collingwood Town Hall on special occasions such as Refugee Week.

City of Yarra Refugee and Asylum Seeker Statement

The City of Yarra encourages the development of a strong, resilient and diverse local community. The Council is proud to work with and support refugees and asylum seekers living in our municipality.

The City of Yarra recognises that people who leave their country due to war and other conflicts have often experienced persecution, trauma and grief and should be treated with dignity and

compassion. We also recognise that refugees and asylum seekers have been disenfranchised from their own governments and need support to re-engage with government processes in Australia.

Respect and compassion will be the hallmarks of the City of Yarra's ongoing commitment to assisting refugees and asylum seekers:

- We will engage with our citizens, community groups and local service providers to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers settling in our municipality receive appropriate support to deal with the challenges of living in a new society;

- We will provide opportunities for participation in local decision making processes, undertake capacity building in emerging communities and foster leadership development;

- We will seek to empower people through building knowledge and understanding of how Australian institutions and services work, with the aim of increasing participation in all aspects of community life; and

- We will advocate for policy change and additional resources for refugees and asylum seekers from other levels of government where these are discriminatory or lacking.

The City of Yarra welcomes refugees and asylum seekers

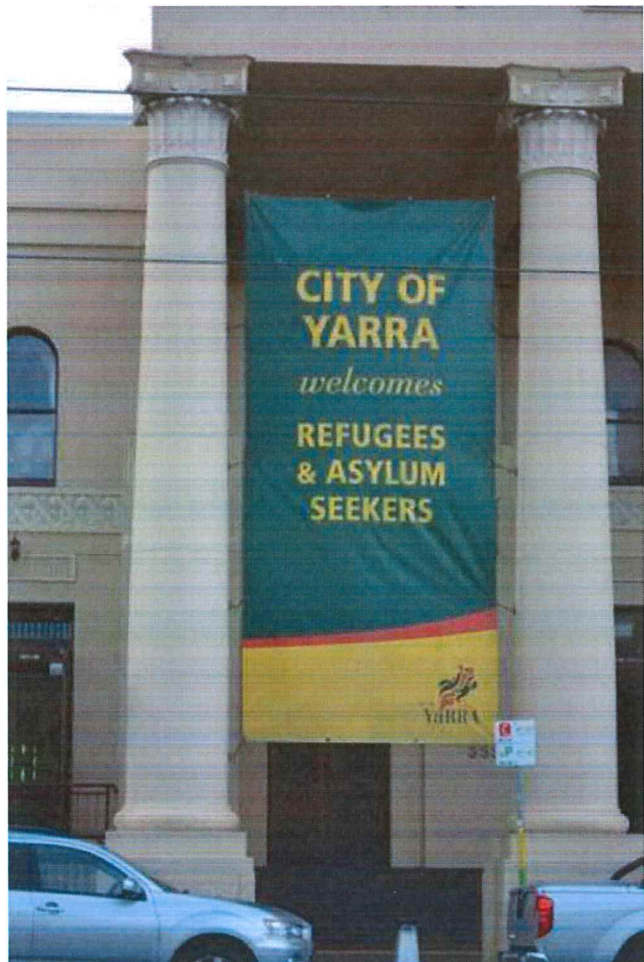
Council unanimously voted in 2010 to permanently display the Welcome Banners to Refugees and Asylum Seekers from three town hall sites – Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond, and continues to display them. As stated in Yarra's current Multicultural Policy 2010-2014, Yarra City Council welcomes refugees, asylum seekers and other humanitarian migrants to the municipality with respect and compassion and facilitates a responsive resettlement response.

Networks and Collaborations

Yarra co-convenes (and funds) the Yarra Settlement Forum (YSF) with North Yarra Community Health which looks broadly at settlement issues of all new arrivals with a special focus on refugees and asylum seekers. Members of the YSF include services with a focus on supporting refugees and asylum seekers (e.g. Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Fitzroy Learning Network).

Activities of the YSF have included:

- Advocacy working groups for refugees and asylum seekers;
- Refugee week events;
- Mental Health Issues for Refugees and Asylum Seekers Forum;
- Housing Forum;
- Employment Forum (focus on refugee communities);
- Early Childhood Forum (focus on refugee communities); and
- Education Forum (focus on refugee communities).



Community Grants

Council provides support through its Community Grants program, assisting refugee and asylum seeker groups to access funding for community strengthening projects, including:

- projects which support the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers;
- community events to celebrate diverse cultural traditions, and which include the wider community;
- building the capacity and leadership skills of refugee and asylum seekers; and
- supporting partnerships between local community groups and service providers to enhance support for refugees and asylum seekers.

Council assists new and emerging community groups to access the Community Grants program by providing training sessions and one-on-one support in building the groups' capacity in grant-seeking. Please see the table below for a listing of projects that were directly related to refugee and asylum seekers in the 2012/13 Community Grants Program:

Organisation	Project Name
<i>Asylum Seeker Resource Centre</i>	<i>Community Cooking Classes 4 Refugees</i>
<i>Boroondara Kindergarten</i>	<i>Cross-cultural and flexible parenting support within a CALD community; welcoming new residents</i>
<i>Brotherhood of St Laurence</i>	<i>Yarra Afghan and Iranian Women's Social Support Group</i>
<i>Circus Oz</i>	<i>YAMEC-Circus Oz Project</i>
<i>Ethnic Community of Mozambique</i>	<i>Events for Mozambique Community Awareness National Day, New Migrant Day, Christmas Day</i>
<i>Fitzroy Adventure Playground Cubbies</i>	<i>Cubbies Girls African Dance Group</i>
<i>Fitzroy Learning Network</i>	<i>Muslim Mum's cooking group - Fitzroy African Muslim group</i>
<i>Fitzroy Learning Network</i>	<i>Fitzroy Sudanese Eritrean Families and Children's group</i>
<i>Fitzroy Learning Network</i>	<i>Ramadan, Kurban Bayram and International Womens Day Celebrations</i>
<i>Fitzroy Legal Service</i>	<i>Khaane - Home</i>
<i>North Richmond Community Health</i>	<i>Healthy Eating Program - Sudanese, Ethiopian and Eritrean Communities</i>
<i>North Yarra Community Health</i>	<i>Refugee Wellness Program</i>
<i>Richmond Junior Football Club</i>	<i>Sponsorship of Sudanese and Vietnamese Children</i>
<i>The New Hope Foundation</i>	<i>Refugee Week Film Festival</i>
<i>The New Hope Foundation</i>	<i>Youth Behind The Wheel</i>
<i>The New Hope Foundation</i>	<i>Youth Leadership Camp</i>
<i>Victorian Arabic Social Services</i>	<i>Media Skills training for refugee youth</i>
<i>Multicultural Arts Victoria</i>	<i>Emerge Festival</i>
<i>North Yarra Community Health</i>	<i>Refugee Health Clinic</i>
Total \$124,355	

Projects from the 2012/13 Community Grants program that are indirectly related to refugee and asylum seeker issues (yet involve a significant number of members from these communities):

Organisation	Project Name
<i>Australian-Iranian Society of Victoria</i>	<i>2013 Persian Fair</i>
<i>Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House</i>	<i>Collingwood Homework Club</i>
<i>Many Moons Group</i>	<i>Multicultural Social Engagement Program</i>
<i>North Richmond Community Health</i>	<i>Multicultural Homework Support Program</i>
<i>North Richmond Community Health</i>	<i>Harmony Day</i>
<i>North Richmond Community Health</i>	<i>Eid Celebrations 2013</i>
<i>Victorian Arabic Social Services</i>	<i>Young Women's Sport and Recreation Development within the Arabic and Islamic Community Project</i>
<i>North Yarra Community Health</i>	<i>Collingwood Living in Harmony Project</i>
<i>North Yarra Community Health</i>	<i>Yarra Settlement Forum</i>
<i>Fitzroy Learning Network</i>	<i>Neighbourhood House programs with a special outreach to Refugees and Asylum Seekers</i>
Total: \$172,344	

Council also provides heavily discounted use of the Town Halls to community groups and in 2012-13 the following refugee and asylum seeker communities benefited:

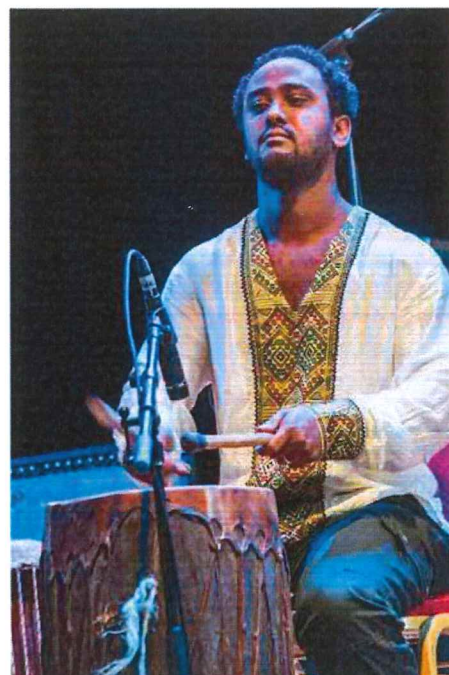
- African Communities Foundation;
- Australian Somali Women's Healthcare Community Foundation Inc;
- Liberians for Empowerment and Development Inc; and
- Sierra Leone Australia Community of Victoria.

Advocacy

Refugees and Asylum Seekers continue to face many challenges during settlement and beyond, particularly in the areas of health, employment, education and housing. Yarra Council continues to play an advocacy role in these areas, by maintaining a presence on government and regional networks. Yarra is currently involved in the Northern and Western Metropolitan Refugee and Asylum Seeker Forum, which meets regularly with an advocacy focus.

Events

- Council organises an annual Refugee Week event engaging with groups in the community to build the capacity of people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, while also raising awareness in the wider community. In 2012 and 2013 this event involved schools in Yarra and young people from refugee backgrounds creating short films with support from the Australian Centre for the Moving Image. This involved skills training, awareness raising and capacity building.
- Emerge Festival – conducted at the Fitzroy Town Hall, commemorates United Nations World Refugee Day and celebrates Refugee Week in Victoria. The only festival of its kind, Emerge unearths the incredible talents within the refugee and asylum seeker community. The festival provides an opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to share and celebrate rich and undiscovered cultures.
- World Refugee Day Rally – usually held on the Sunday closest to World Refugee Day, this rally is partly funded by Yarra, and involves a march throughout the city, concluding at the Emerge Festival, Fitzroy Town Hall.



General services to our Culturally, Linguistically and Religiously Diverse Community

Multilingual Services

Various language services are offered to people of refugee background, to help residents communicate with Council.

Interpreting services

Council provides a free interpreter service for residents who need to communicate in another language with Council officers.

Multilingual telephone information

Residents can call our multilingual telephone lines to hear pre-recorded information about Council services including: contact information; garbage, waste and recycling services; aged and disability services; child and family services; libraries in the municipality that have multilingual reading collections. These information lines can also connect residents to an interpreter in order to communicate directly with a Council officer.

Multilingual website

Residents can read information in over 70 languages on the Council website via use of Google translate. This function allows for the translation of content of every Council webpage including forms and attachments, increasing accessibility to a wider audience. This service is not as a replacement of existing translation services, but rather as a supplement to language services already offered.

Anti-Racism Campaign

Yarra has pledged its support of the Australian Human Rights Commission's Anti-racism campaign: "Racism. It stops with me". This campaign is supported and promoted across various avenues, and Council encourages community to also join in the campaign. Further initiatives are currently being developed to continue promoting this campaign.

Yarra Interfaith Network (YIN)

YIN is a collection of faith based leaders and representatives who meet regularly to share dialogue on issues of spirituality. The Yarra Interfaith Network (YIN) formed in 2011 and became an incorporated association in 2013, with the aim of contributing to peace and harmony to the Yarra Community through dialogue, cooperation and understanding between people of diverse cultures respecting the integrity of each other's beliefs, cultures and traditions. Council has supported the formation of this network and maintains a continuing relationship.



For further information, please contact the Community Planner - Multicultural Affairs on (03) 9205 5174.

REFUGEE WELCOME ZONE DECLARATION

(Council crest/logo)

The _____ Council,

Declares the Council of _____ a

Refugee Welcome Zone

This Declaration is a Commitment in Spirit to

Welcoming refugees into our community,

Upholding the Human Rights of refugees,

Demonstrating Compassion for refugees and

Enhancing cultural and religious Diversity in our community.

[name and title of signatory]

Date: _____

This Declaration is proudly supported and endorsed by the



**Refugee Council
of Australia**

The Refugee Council of Australia is a peak national organisation representing over 900 organisational and individual members. The aim of the Refugee Council is to promote the adoption of flexible, humane and constructive policies toward refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons by the Australian and other Governments and their communities.