



Media Release

Social and economic contribution of refugees to Australia is a success story

The Settlement Council of Australia highlights the growing body of research and evidence showing the significant contribution refugees make to Australia.

Australia has a proud multicultural heritage and is greatly enriched by refugees from around the world. Refugees continue to contribute socially, culturally and economically to Australia, displaying strong entrepreneurial qualities and helping to meet labour shortages in key parts of the Australian economy.

SCOA's CEO, Simon Gordon said, "Refugees and humanitarian entrants make an immense contribution to Australia and now is not the time to take a short-sighted view of the settlement process."

"Refugees naturally need support when they first arrive and Australia's settlement services are internationally recognised as world-class in providing this support. These critical services, delivered by a strong and mature settlement sector, allow newly arrived people to reach their full potential."

"The stereotype that refugees are all unskilled and poorly educated is untrue. In the long-term people from refugee backgrounds are more likely to develop small businesses, contributing to Australia's economy and providing jobs and growth which is exactly what Australia needs," said SCOA's Chair Dewani Bakkum.

The landmark Hugo Report on economic and civic contributions of refugees found striking evidence of the economic contribution from people of refugee backgrounds, such as filling employment niches in regional Australia. The report concluded that second generation refugee families surpass the Australian average on most labour force measures.

"Australia is one of the world's great multicultural nations and has a strong track record of successfully settling refugees. We are aware of the impact of leadership statements on community harmony and social cohesion and call for all Australian leaders to focus on the positive impact that refugees make to Australian society and recognise the role of the Australian settlement sector in achieving this," concluded Ms Bakkum.

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