



Refugee Council
of Australia

October 17, 2006

CONTRIBUTION OF REFUGEES CELEBRATED AT EVENTS ACROSS NSW

The contribution of the 675,000 post-war immigrants who arrived in Australia as refugees will be celebrated at Refugee Week events across NSW from Sunday, October 22 to Saturday, October 28.

More than 40 community events, including concerts, picnics, art exhibitions, seminars and educational events, will be held across the state.

The Lord Mayor of Sydney, Councillor Clover Moore MP, will launch Refugee Week in NSW at an event at the Australian National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour on Sunday, October 22. The launch, at 11am, will include speeches and presentations by Fatmata Bangura of the Sierra Leonean community and actor Claudia Karvan and performances by young refugees working with Powerhouse Youth Theatre and Sudanese dance troupe Bhar El-Ghazal Youth Union.

The theme for this year's Refugee Week celebrations is "Journeys".

Chief executive officer of the Refugee Council of Australia, Paul Power, said the aims of Refugee Week included giving Australians opportunities to hear the stories of people who came to this nation as refugees and to learn more about the great contribution they have made as Australian citizens.

"Sadly, some of the destructive public debate about refugees has clouded many people's understanding of the circumstances of refugees and what they have given to Australian society," Mr Power said.

"Today, well over one million Australians have personally experienced the terror of fleeing their country of birth as a refugee, or have a parent or grandparent who has.

"These people, who have become Australian citizens at a higher rate than any other immigrant group, have given our country greater diversity, new ideas and a deep commitment to Australia's freedom and its future."

A detailed list of events in NSW for Refugee Week can be found at www.refugeecouncil.org.au (or see attached list).