



Refugee Council
of Australia

January 17, 2007

REFUGEE COUNCIL WELCOMES TAMWORTH COUNCIL DECISION

The Refugee Council of Australia has welcomed Tamworth Regional Council's decision to participate in the national refugee resettlement program on a trial basis.

Chief executive officer Paul Power said Tamworth's councillors had exhibited political courage in reviewing last month's decision to oppose involvement in refugee resettlement.

"In a polarising debate, it is all too common for political decision makers to refuse to shift their views," Mr Power said. "Tamworth's councillors have shown courage in rising above the debate to make a decision which will prove to be a positive step for the Tamworth community."

"Australia's involvement in refugee resettlement is an important contribution to global efforts to find solutions for victims of persecution and war."

"Our country's belief in giving people a fair go has helped us to become a world leader in offering a fresh start to people who have lost everything."

"Over the past six decades, Australia has given new opportunities to more than 675,000 refugees and humanitarian entrants. These people have gone on to make valuable contributions to Australian life, bringing new energy, new ideas and new skills."

Mr Power said that any process of resettling refugees from protracted conflicts brought challenges, particularly in the short-term as former refugees adjusted to life in a new and different land.

"The experience across the country shows that Australia is well-equipped at supporting refugees through the adjustment phase," Mr Power said.

"The debate in Tamworth has highlighted the many local people and organisations willing to play a part in this. If the city ends up making a long-term commitment to refugee resettlement, the Refugee Council is confident that Tamworth's support of refugees will become a source of local pride in years to come."