



Refugee Council of Australia

17 February 2012

VICTORIA TO SHOWCASE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SERVICES

More than 60 international leaders of government and non-government refugee resettlement programs will spend next week in Victoria to observe and discuss post-arrival support for refugees.

The global Working Group on Resettlement will meet in Australia for the first time from Monday (February 20) to Thursday (February 23), bringing together delegates from UNHCR, government and NGOs based in 16 countries in the Americas, Europe and Asia-Pacific for four days of site visits and discussions.

The meeting is being organised by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA), in cooperation with UNHCR's Resettlement Service in Geneva, as part of Australia's chairing in 2011-12 of the global dialogue on refugee resettlement.

On Monday, delegates will visit refugee support programs around Melbourne, learning about Australian approaches to employment, education and training, housing, health, support to torture and trauma survivors, youth and family programs, the roles of refugee communities and of volunteers and government planning of settlement support. The visits will take place at Foundation House (Brunswick), AMES (Melbourne CBD, Maidstone and Footscray), Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (Preston), South East Region Migrant Resource Centre and Centre for Multicultural Youth (Dandenong), Brotherhood of St Laurence (Fitzroy) and Victorian Arabic Social Services (Broadmeadows).

On Tuesday, delegates will visit Shepparton, Geelong and Werribee, to see programs coordinated by Uniting Care Cutting Edge, Diversitat, Wyndham Community Education Centre and other organisations.

RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power said the meeting was an important opportunity for Australia to share best-practice examples of refugee settlement services.

"Australia has a commendable record when it comes to the resettlement of refugees, a point emphasised by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres during his visit to Australia this week," Mr Power said.

"That's why RCOA argued for Australia to host a meeting of the Working Group on Resettlement. Now international delegates will have the opportunity to see first-hand how a range of settlement services are delivered in Australia."

A public lecture will also be held on International Refugee Protection challenges and opportunities at the University of Melbourne on Wednesday night. Speakers include Wei-Meng Lim-Kabaa, the head of UNHCR's Resettlement Service; Anastasia Brown, who heads the world's largest NGO resettlement program, conducted by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops; eminent demographer Professor Graeme Hugo from the University of Adelaide; and Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Senator Kate Lundy.

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The Refugee Council of Australia represents
non-government organisations and
individuals working with and for refugees
in Australia and around the world