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Violet Roumeliotis
CEO, Settlement Services International
2/158 Liverpool Street
ASHFIELD NSW 2131

By email: ceo@ssi.org.au

Dear Ms Roumeliotis

I am writing to advise you of initiatives the NSW Government will be implementing to support asylum seekers and refugees to help them undertake training and secure sustainable employment once they settle in New South Wales. By offering this support, the Government is helping people to rebuild their lives and secure a prosperous future for their families while making a contribution to the continued economic growth of New South Wales.

From 1 January 2017, the Government will expand access to government subsidised vocational education and training under Smart and Skilled for holders of bridging visas, temporary humanitarian concern visas and temporary humanitarian stay visas. Importantly, asylum seekers and refugees who commence their training from 1 January 2017 will be able to access fee-free training under Smart and Skilled for all qualifications up to Certificate IV level. This is an important initiative which will allow them to gain access to the training they need to find employment. Further details on this initiative are contained in the **enclosed** fact sheet.

Non-English language materials are being developed to assist asylum seekers and refugees to understand the NSW vocational education and training system and inform them of training opportunities available under Smart and Skilled.

A range of other measures are also being developed by the Department to assist refugees and asylum seekers into employment. I encourage you to check the Training Services NSW website for further updates as they become available.

While I believe these initiatives will help asylum seekers and refugees and their families to return to a normal way of life, it will also help them to integrate and become active contributing members of their new communities.

Please contact Arline Dumazel, Manager, Partnerships on 9266 8123 or arline.dumazel@industry.nsw.gov.au if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely

David Collins
Executive Director, Training Services NSW
NSW Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development

21.11.16

Training for refugees under Smart and Skilled

From 1 January 2017, the NSW Government will change its Smart and Skilled eligibility requirements to support refugees and asylum seekers into training and jobs.

Smart and Skilled provides eligible students with an entitlement to government-subsidised training in many targeted priority areas. It's helping people get the skills they need to find a job to advance their careers and assist our State in addressing skills shortages.

Refugees

Refugees are currently eligible for Smart and Skilled funding if they are aged 15 years or older, are no longer in school or its equivalent, live or work in NSW, and hold one of the following visas:

- Emergency rescue visa
- Global special humanitarian programme visa
- In-country special humanitarian programme visa
- Protection visa
- Refugee visa
- Safe Haven Enterprise visa
- Temporary Protection visa
- Woman at Risk visa.

Fee-Free Scholarships

Fee-Free Scholarships mean that students can get training to get the skills they need to get the job they want, and their course fees will be covered.

Fee-Free Scholarships are currently available to holders of humanitarian visas. Asylum seekers are currently not eligible for Smart and Skilled and Fee free scholarships.

To be eligible for a Fee-Free Scholarship, a student must be eligible to study a Smart and Skilled subsidised Certificate I, Certificate II or Certificate III or Certificate IV level qualification on the NSW Skills List.

Changes after 1 January 2017

Both refugees and asylum seekers will be eligible for Smart and Skilled funding and Fee-Free training.

To access all Smart and Skilled programs, individuals must meet other Smart and Skilled eligibility and hold one of the following visas:

- Emergency rescue visa
- Global special humanitarian programme visa
- In-country special humanitarian programme visa
- Protection visa
- Refugee visa
- Safe Haven Enterprise visa
- Temporary Protection visa
- Woman at Risk visa
- Bridging Visa A, B, C, D, E
- Temporary Humanitarian Concern visa
- Temporary Humanitarian Stay visa.

Holders of the above visas who meet other Smart and Skilled eligibility will be eligible for fee-free training under Smart and Skilled for qualifications up to Certificate IV level.

Holders of the above visas who are disabled, or the dependant of a Disability Support recipient, and meet other Smart and Skilled eligibility are exempt from any fees under Smart and Skilled.

From 1 January 2017, asylum seekers will also be eligible for subsidised training in higher level qualifications such as Diplomas and Advance Diplomas under Smart and Skilled, as is the case for refugees.