

**Friday, November 22, 2019**

## **Response to Shergold refugee settlement review\*** **Leading agency calls for immediate action**

*\* Investing in Refugees, Investing in Australia: the findings of a Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia.*

Settlement Services International (SSI), one of Australia's largest refugee settlement agencies, **calls for three immediate actions** in response to today's [report](#), citing employment and community models in their Regional Settlement Strategy as key to future success.

The independent review commissioned by the Australian Government outlines recommendations on how to better support refugees to set them up for success in Australia, optimising the valuable talents and experience they bring and contribute to our social fabric and economy.

**SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis** is available on **0414 958 755** for interview on these key issues:

### **1. Regional resettlement...50% target by 2022...we need to start planning now**

SSI welcomes the report's recommendations on regional settlement targets and cites its experience in the settlement of refugee communities in Armidale and Coffs Harbour as a model of the integrated and long-term planning, community activation and coordination with government required for success.

- For the government to meet this ambitious target they need to start working with settlement agencies, local communities and civic institutions straight away.
- SSI is in Canberra next week meeting with the Department of Home Affairs to discuss options as part of its Regional Settlement Strategy.

### **2. Employment....we propose a model based on experience in refugee employment**

The report validates SSI's experience that it's targeted and tailored employment initiatives that are most effective and more focus and funding should be allocated to these.

- SSI is the key service provider of the NSW Government's Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP) which has led to thousands of job outcomes.
- SSI is one of the few refugee settlement agencies that also delivers a range of government employment programs as well as self-funded start-up initiatives, such as Ignite.
- SSI's Regional Settlement Strategy has an employment model as a key component.

### **3. Coordinator General...a great initiative, need to ensure they stay close to community**

SSI welcomes a national Coordinator General. Having worked in partnership with the NSW Coordinator General Peter Shergold, SSI sees the benefits of this approach and the potential for national amplification of the many benefits refugee settlement brings to communities.

This appointment will allow for a stronger narrative around the contribution of refugees to Australian society and social cohesion.

#### **Additional resources / information available:**

- Today's [report](#)
- [‘All in for Armidale’ – a case study on SSI’s settlement of over 300 members of the Ezidi community in Armidale](#)
- [UNE research report – ‘Monitoring Community Attitudes Toward Refugee Settlement – Armidale’](#)
- [Refugee Employment Support Program Report Card 2019](#)

SSI will put out a more detailed review of the report in the coming days.

.....END.....

#### **About SSI:**

Settlement Services International is a community organisation and social business that supports newcomers and other Australians to achieve their full potential. We work with all people who have experienced vulnerability, including refugees, people seeking asylum and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, to build capacity and enable them to overcome inequality.

#### **Media enquiries:**

SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis: 0414 958 755

SSI Communications Alicia Chapple: 0432 807 816 OR Shannon Kliendienst – 0488 680 240