



Adnan has been working for Metro Trains Melbourne since 2020.

Major Projects employment program helps Adnan find a pathway to a brighter future

When Adnan Hussein* fled Iraq, he left behind a town in ruins. "My hometown of Baghdeda was my paradise, when ISIS invaded, it was chaos; there was no electricity, no water and sounds of explosions were everywhere". In 2018, Adnan was granted a Refugee visa and began his new life in Australia with his wife and three young children.

Like many new arrivals, Adnan had employment qualifications but faced barriers breaking in to the Australian job market. After submitting a string of applications for engineering jobs that didn't lead to interviews, he approached Jesuit Social Services and was linked in with our Major Projects employment team. The team provided Adnan with a range of services to improve his job prospects in the Australian market. This included support with improving his resume and cover letter, certification of his overseas qualification, and training to help him navigate the recruitment process.

The Major Projects employment team supported Adnan to gain an Engineering Pathways Industry Cadetship (EPIC). This is an 18-month industry-wide cadetship for refugee and asylum seeker engineers, working on major transport infrastructure projects, enabling them to gain paid employment in entry-level engineering jobs.

The EPIC program also granted Adnan the opportunity to participate in further study in his field. Through hard work and dedication, Adnan now holds a Graduate Certificate in Infrastructure Engineering Management from Swinburne University.

Adnan commenced employment in 2020 with Metro Trains Melbourne. Adnan is now a site engineer working for Metropolitan Roads Program Alliance on the Level Crossing Removal project.

The support from the Major Projects employment team was instrumental in helping Adnan find a permanent role in his chosen field, and he couldn't be happier. "The dream came true! I am very proud to be a member of the Metro Trains Melbourne family and I am going to do my very best towards making its values and behaviours my guide in work and in life."

**Name and image have been changed to protect identity.*

In this issue:

Kim's citizenship journey

Page 3

People seeking asylum

Page 4

Family violence

Page 7



Settlement support creates more cohesive communities

Over the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of a number of things that many of us take for granted, such as employment and safe and secure housing.

Jesuit Social Services believes these are fundamentals that everybody should have access to in order to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. Sadly, many of the vulnerable people and communities we work with face significant barriers to accessing education, employment and housing, which in turn limits their ability to thrive.

Through our settlement and community building programs, along with our targeted education, training and employment programs, we see new arrivals and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds contend with these barriers every day.

We work with people and communities; from those with little or no support networks to improve their social connection, build capacity and foster a sense of belonging; through to skilled and qualified professionals who struggle to enter the Australian corporate sector due to a lack of local work experience.

In this newsletter, you will read about our ongoing efforts to create stronger and more cohesive communities by supporting each individual to flourish. This includes our work on the ground with people like Adnan Hussein who fled Iraq in 2018, and was supported by our Major Projects employment team to improve his job readiness.

Through the pandemic, Jesuit Social Services' work has been critical in enhancing people's living skills, promoting meaningful community engagement and working towards the just society we all strive for. As our communities now transition to a new era, this work of building personal and community resilience is more important than ever.

Thank you, as always, for your generous support.

Julie Edwards
CEO, Jesuit Social Services

Anne-Marie helping newly arrived engineers into work

Anne-Maire joined Jesuit Social Services as a volunteer in 2018, and runs interview skills workshops for participants in our employment pathway programs – including professionals from refugee backgrounds looking to resume their careers in Australia.

Adnan Hussein, whose story you read on Page 1, was one of Anne-Marie's first trainees. Adnan says that the work he did with Anne-Marie "changed my life".

Reflecting on the trainees with whom she works, Anne-Marie says: "They have amazing experience, they're eminently qualified... they've left war and strife in their home countries, and they're looking for a second chance".

The two-hour workshops cover tips to make successful job applications, interview skills, cultural insights, and help with articulating work skills and history.

"Sometimes people can't see how building bridges in Syria relates to removing level crossings in Melbourne. We talk about problem-solving, time management; those matching skills."

Anne-Marie says she's humbled by the willingness of the job-seekers she supports to start their lives and careers again.

"It's not people sitting at home thinking 'poor me, what can I do?'" she says.

"It's people with multiple degrees doing Certificate IVs because they might be helpful. They don't think the qualification is beneath them. You feel humbled – I don't know if I'd be able to be so willing and courageous."

Anne-Marie has so far trained close to 100 newly arrived skilled migrants and refugees. She hopes companies continue to embrace multiculturalism as the valuable asset is.

"Diversity is a strength and people must be able to be themselves."



Anne-Marie has been volunteering with Jesuit Social Services since 2018.

How Kim supports Vietnamese migrants on their citizenship journey

A decade ago, Kim — who works in our Settlement program — noticed a gap in the support available to Vietnamese people seeking Australian citizenship. While they could find help filling out their forms, no one was supporting them to study for the citizenship test itself.

Kim brought the idea to her manager and the Bilingual Vietnamese Australian Citizenship Test Preparation Course was born. The course runs in Sunshine once a week over six sessions during the school term. Participants learn about the application process, settlement support services, and citizenship test content.

"The demand in the community is very high," Kim says. She's proud of her success rate: "Most of our students pass the exam".

Kim is very active in the Sunshine refugee community. In 1981, she fled Vietnam by boat, arriving in Australia via a refugee camp in Indonesia. She began working in factories and restaurants and later did an English language course. Kim then studied social sciences at university. She's been with Jesuit Social Services since 1995.

Kim teaches the course content in Vietnamese, accompanied by Kimberley Malone, Jesuit Social Services' Settlement Coordinator, who teaches in English. Kimberley says the class is bilingual to increase students' English language proficiency and break down social isolation. "Teaching in both languages supports the participants to get in touch with new people and increase their community connectedness."

Kim also agrees that the course is about connection. "At the end of the course we have a social gathering, and I organise a Christmas party for everyone from the different classes to be together. They are very happy."

Outside of the citizenship test course, Kim runs a range of programs including a volunteer training course, parenting classes, women's group and elderly group sessions. She says some of the participants who attend the citizenship course also participate in these other Jesuit Social Services' settlement programs. The relationships she builds in the citizenship course allow her to link more people with the support they need. "If someone in the community is experiencing hardship, my students introduce them to me, and that's how I connect people with Jesuit Social Services programs."

After 27 years at Jesuit Social Services, Kim's work is still close to her heart: "I cannot stop working. It's my joy, my commitment. I'm really lucky."



Supporting others in their settlement journey brings Kim joy.

Continuing our advocacy for a more humane immigration system

When we're born, we don't choose the family we're born into, the country in which we live or the circumstances we may face. We don't, as children, choose the religious faith our family may practice, or the culture they identify with. As children, we certainly don't choose to live in situations marked by conflict, persecution or violence. When families are forced to flee their homeland due to a well-founded fear of persecution, this is not a choice, it is an act of survival. In order to survive, many people fleeing persecution will seek safety for their family regardless of the immense barriers that may lie ahead.

One of the greatest challenges that many will face in coming to Australia is the harsh and punitive nature of our current immigration system. This can range from indefinite and arbitrary imprisonment inside immigration detention through to a life stuck in limbo on temporary protection, with limited support services and onerous visa-reapplications.

The barriers faced by people seeking asylum and refugees seem insurmountable at times. It has led Jesuit Social Services to undertake policy and advocacy work that seeks to address systemic injustices with the hope that newly arrived people will feel welcomed and supported when they come to Australia.

One of the avenues through which Jesuit Social Services does this work is via the Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA). Jesuit Social Services initiated this Alliance in 2013 and now co-convenes it with Jesuit Refugee Service Australia (JRS Australia). CAPSA is supported by a National Advisory Group, with representatives from peak Catholic bodies and organisations in Australia across a range of sectors – health, education, social services and pastoral.

Through engagement with the broader Catholic community, CAPSA advocates for an Australia that provides safety and welcome to people seeking asylum. Recently, CAPSA provided a submission to the Federal Government's Inquiry into the Ending Indefinite and Arbitrary Immigration Detention Bill 2021, calling for the immediate release of those indefinitely detained.

Since the fall of Kabul in August 2021 a key advocacy priority for CAPSA has been the Action for Afghanistan campaign. Through numerous channels of engagement and sector collaboration, CAPSA has sent many letters to Members of Parliament (MPs), taken part in community meetings with MPs, received hundreds of signatures of support from Catholics around Australia, and held an action-based webinar that reached over 200 people. Most recently, CAPSA was represented at a delegation of faith, veteran and diaspora leaders who met with Federal Members of Parliament to urge further action for Afghanistan. Throughout this campaign, CAPSA has worked in close collaboration with the Afghanistan diaspora community in Australia, particularly through our co-conveners JRS Australia.

Throughout this time, CAPSA has engaged Catholics in Australia to advocate for the Federal Government to take immediate #ActionforAfghanistan. We continue to advocate for an additional intake of 20,000 humanitarian places for refugees fleeing Afghanistan, permanent protection for those from Afghanistan living in Australia on temporary visas, and family reunification for those in Australia with family fleeing Afghanistan. As the crisis in Afghanistan continues, so too does CAPSA's advocacy.

Our policy and advocacy work also seeks to improve social connectedness, build capacity and foster a sense of belonging for newly arrived people, their families and communities in Australia. In a recent contribution to the Federal Pre-Budget 2022-23 consultation, Jesuit Social Services called for adequate and sustained funding of settlement supports, such as interpreter services and financial assistance. Central to the way we work is our ongoing call for those with lived experience to have a voice in shaping these services to ensure they meet their specific needs.

By advocating for a more humane immigration system, along with adequate settlement supports, we aim to ensure people seeking asylum and refugees can live their lives to the fullest.

To find out more about CAPSA and to take action, visit www.CAPSA.org.au.

Western Sydney vaccination clinic owes its success to relationship building

Since late 2021 Jesuit Social Services, in partnership with NSW Health, has supported the delivery of over 1,800 COVID-19 vaccine doses in one of New South Wales' most disadvantaged communities.

Western Sydney Manager, Monique Perusco, says the team's vision was to create a community-based way of delivering vaccines, with a focus on the needs of Aboriginal people and families.

"Many people in local Aboriginal communities had not been vaccinated before. Some people were highly anxious about vaccines and about communicating with nurses and doctors. We created a culturally safe bridge between the community and health services."

The clinics focused on getting referrals from partners who were known and trusted by the local Aboriginal community.

"Our partners and community members knew that if someone was booked into our clinic we would be there to provide support. If people weren't ready on the day, that was okay. We would keep in touch until they felt confident. As more people had positive vaccine experiences, they became powerful advocates bringing aunts and uncles and brothers and sisters."

In January, Monique and the team were thrilled to get the go-ahead to provide boosters and vaccinate children aged 5-11 years old. "Creating a child-friendly vaccine clinic meant we had to step it up. The waiting time before and after the needle is when children tend to feel scared or anxious. With funding from Blacktown City Council and help from our partners, we transformed our garden space with some distractions, fun and silliness that let children be children."

Monique says relationships are key to the clinic's success: "Our way of working is genuinely community-based and relational".



Children play with bubbles at the Willmot Community Hub.

Homework support more than just educational

Tom has been volunteering as a tutor for Jesuit Social Services' Homework Club at the Flemington public housing estate for almost four years.

Tom began volunteering because he feels passionate about the need for support services that empower newly arrived migrants and refugees: "A lot of the participants we work with have been through trauma in some capacity, or their parents have been through trauma".

For Tom, the program is more than homework support: "I predominantly work with younger children and it's as much about social and emotional support as it is educational.

"I find that a lot of it is just giving the children the space to talk about their day, their week, their experiences... it's about their overall development and wellbeing".

Speaking about the highlights of his time with the Homework Club, Tom says: "One of the most fulfilling and moving developments is seeing individuals regain their sense of confidence and really seize the opportunity — which they deserve — to speak for themselves and really recognise themselves as individuals who have something to contribute to Australian society".

Volunteer leads garden transformation for Willmot

When Angela was asked what she thought of the community garden at a Willmot Community Hub breakfast, she replied true to her straight-talking nature: "It's looking pretty shabby".

Back then, the lawn was dried out with rough and bare patches. Angela envisioned a lush space where community could gather and kids could play – a place Willmot could take pride in.

Monique Perusco, Manager of Jesuit Social Services' Western Sydney programs, says the way Angela led Willmot staff and volunteers has had an impact beyond a tidier-looking garden. "One day, a few of us were moving huge collections of dried leaves and stalks when we heard Angela yell 'Drop that now!'. Turns out Angela had been collecting and drying out these bunches for months, after speaking with local women who wanted to use them to weave baskets." Monique says Angela is a committed volunteer and natural leader: "She has everyone's deep respect".

Angela's greatest joy as a volunteer was reseeding the lawn, watching it grow and maintaining it. In recent months, the

Willmot Community Hub has used the garden to gather for community breakfasts, and to run games and activities on the lawn outside children's vaccination clinics. The Western Sydney team expect the welcoming feel will support greater community engagement as COVID-19 restrictions ease and community programs and events ramp up again.

Angela believes that creating a beautiful space will encourage people to connect with and protect the nature around us. "The Willmot Community Hub and garden is a place that's ours. That we can be proud of, and that values our local people, bushland and wildlife."



Angela's efforts have led to a total transformation of the community garden.

Ali changes pace through new work

Ali* was working as an interpreter for the Australian and New Zealand armies in Iraq. When the Australian Army was preparing to leave, it offered to sponsor Ali and his mother to resettle in Australia. They were granted permanent residency in March 2021.

Several months on, Ali was growing frustrated and anxious. He hadn't been able to find a job. Securing work was his main priority, so that he could support himself and his mother as they began their new life in Australia. A friend recommended Jesuit Social Services' Jobs Victoria Employment Services (JVES) program, which provides a direct pathway into employment for people seeking work.

Ali was flexible about what roles he was prepared to take on. JVES staff helped him create several different versions of his resume, to assist with the variety of roles he was applying for. Through one of our JVES Employment Brokers a suitable role came in – working with asylum seekers. JVES staff worked with Ali to help him apply quickly.

Ali got the job. Staff helped him navigate Melbourne's public transport system and figure out the best route to get to work. Ali has started work and is loving his role. He says that his new colleagues are kind and supportive. Ali is in weekly contact with his Employment Mentor who ensures that any issues or barriers that may arise are addressed quickly.

**Name and image changed to protect identity.*



One year since getting his permanent residency, Ali is settling into life in Australia.

Strengthening support for culturally diverse women experiencing violence

Family violence happens across all cultures and communities. In Jesuit Social Services' work with migrants and refugees, we sometimes come into contact with women experiencing, or at risk of domestic or family violence, in those communities too. Our new partnership with the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR) is part of an ongoing effort to tailor our responses to women experiencing violence.

As part of the partnership, AMWCHR is delivering training to Jesuit Social Services staff working in settlement programs. Settlement Coordinator, Kimberley Malone says migrant and refugee women face different barriers to seeking help, and mainstream family violence services aren't always equipped to meet their needs. "This partnership will help us better identify family violence, and strengthen our relationships with local specialist multicultural and culturally-specific domestic

violence services, so we can confidently connect women to services that meet their specific needs."

Jesuit Social Services also plans to collaborate with AMWCHR to deliver a six-week program on healthy relationships for participants in our settlement programs. "We hope the program will increase awareness of family violence, challenge institutionally and culturally embedded assumptions that condone violence against women, and address barriers to seeking help.

"It is often women in the community who are the first responders to family violence. By empowering our participants with an understanding of family violence, we hope to see the impact of the program extend far beyond the immediate group," Kimberley says.

Building climate resilient communities in Melbourne

Jesuit Social Services works with some of the most marginalised members of society, including people who face barriers to education and employment and people who have contact with the criminal justice system. It's often these same people who are hardest hit during extreme weather events caused by climate change.

During heatwaves, for example, people living in poor-quality rentals are more likely to suffer heat stroke, anxiety, and disrupted sleep — which are linked to spikes in family violence and poor engagement with school. Our recent *Dropping off the Edge 2021* report also shows that environmental disadvantage like heat stress and poor air quality often goes hand-in-hand with other forms of social and economic disadvantage to create a web of disadvantage that is hard to escape. Building climate resilient communities means addressing inequities in access to quality housing, services and infrastructure.

In 2021, Jesuit Social Services, with funding from Gandel Foundation and the Victorian Government, launched the Centre for Just Places - an initiative supporting place-based

solutions to social and ecological justice problems. Since its establishment, the Centre has been facilitating climate adaptation and resilience workshops with local governments and community service organisations across Melbourne.

"We know that community service organisations are key responders in supporting people at risk during extreme weather but they often aren't prepared for the disruption it can cause to their services. That needs to change," says Susie Moloney, Executive Director of the Centre for Just Places.

The Centre's workshops bring diverse agencies and organisations within a specific local area together, to build a common understanding around climate change impacts, share knowledge on local strengths, vulnerabilities and risks, and spark community-led solutions.

We look forward to continuing to share updates about the valuable work of the Centre for Just Places in the future.

Upcoming Events

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of our Annual Dinner fundraising event for the past two years, and the need to prioritise the safety of our supporters meant we were unable to hold our dinner again this March.

During the pandemic, we have continued to engage with our supporters through a series of online events that have provided an opportunity to hear about, and support, the ongoing work of Jesuit Social Services.

Thank you to all those who have stayed connected to our work throughout the pandemic. We hope to re-connect with you both in-person and online this year. We will be in touch soon with more information on events in 2022.

The need for programs that support settlement and community building remains great.

Please help us continue welcoming people and communities by providing them with critical services, social inclusion and a sense of belonging.

Want to help Jesuit Social Services?

Together we can build a just society by advocating for social change and promoting the wellbeing of disadvantaged people, family and communities.

I would like to make an ongoing monthly gift of:

\$ _____ (Please specify amount)

I would like to make a one-off donation of:

\$75 **\$150**

\$500 **\$1000**

\$

Please send me information about leaving a gift in my Will.

Contact and payment details

Surname _____

First name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Cheque enclosed OR VISA Mastercard

Card number _____

Expiry _____

Signature _____

You can also donate online. Please visit jss.org.au, click DONATE and select 'Autumn Appeal 2022' in your campaign selection.