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Refugee Week 2024: Jesuit Social Services celebrates the valuable contribution made by refugees

Jesuit Social Services is proud to once again be a partner of Refugee Week, which runs this year from 16 to 22 June, and presents an important reminder for us all to reflect on the refugee experience and to warmly welcome people into our communities.

“During Refugee Week, we celebrate the strength we see in refugees who have faced peril and persecution, and we celebrate the enormous contribution they have made to making our society what it is today,” says Jesuit Social Services’ Acting CEO Stephen Ward.

“We also continue to take positive action to improve outcomes for refugees and people seeking asylum across the country.”

“Through our various programs that support newly arrived refugees and migrants to Australia, we see the resilience and power in family bonds within their own families, and the connections made with their new communities here. This is aligned with the theme of this year’s Refugee Week, Finding Freedom: Family,” says Mr Ward.

“For example, our Homework Club program helps supports children and their families to navigate and overcome the barriers to education that families from migrant and refugee backgrounds can often experience.

“And through our range of employment services, we assist many people to get the start in work they are seeking.”

Originally from Iran, Behnaz came to Australia seeking asylum and struggled to feel accepted into Australian society. A qualified engineer, Behnaz struggled to find work in Australia. Through one of Jesuit Social Services’ employment programs, she gained the confidence she needed to apply her skills to a fulfilling new job.

Earlier this year, Jesuit Social Services made a Federal Budget submission outlining what we see as the priorities for a just and humane processing system in Australia for people seeking asylum.

“That submission continued our calls to end prolonged immigration detention in Australia, and instead to invest in supporting people to live and permanently resettle with adequate support within the community.”

Other recommendations in that submission included expanding Australia’s Humanitarian Program to at least 30,000 places annually, enhancing access to family reunions for refugee and humanitarian entrants, and increasing Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) funding.

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