

Thursday 17 September 2015

## **RYDE READY TO WELCOME REFUGEES**

City of Ryde new Mayor Cllr Jerome Laxale has welcomed the federal government's announcement that Australia will take an extra 12,000 refugees from Syria and has offered that the City of Ryde play a role.

"Images of the crisis in Syria and the Middle East have touched us all and it is clear that the humanitarian situation in the region is dire. As a City we need to do what we can to help.

"As Mayor, I want to ensure that those in need are looked after and that our Council can provide a voice for the vulnerable.

"We stand ready to help refugees find their feet and settle into our community," Mayor Laxale said.

The City of Ryde declared itself a Refugee Welcome Zone in April 2013 and is proud of its status as one of the State's most culturally diverse communities, with more than 110 different nationalities living in Ryde.

The Mayor continued: "Through our close partnership with the Migrant Resource Centre and other agencies we have developed the infrastructure and capacity to welcome migrants and refugees to our community.

"There is broad community support to help this group of people who are fleeing an extraordinarily deadly conflict. I am writing to NSW Premier, Mike Baird, requesting a meeting to discuss how we can assist in welcoming refugees to the City of Ryde," he said.

In the past five years, it is estimated that 247 Humanitarian Entrants have settled in the Ryde area.

City of Ryde assistance services for migrants and refugees include a Welcome Guide for Asylum Seekers and Refugees that is printed in English, Farsi, Arabic and Tamil and can be downloaded from the City of Ryde website [www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/refugeeguide](http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/refugeeguide) .

The Eastwood office of the Community Migrant Resource Centre is located at 159 Shaftsbury Road, Eastwood. Bilingual services for the Iranian, Afghan, Chinese and Korean communities, as well as a number of other communities are available. The Centre is open Monday – Friday. [www.cmrc.com.au](http://www.cmrc.com.au)

Settlement Services International (SSI) provides humanitarian settlement services to all eligible clients in Sydney but currently have had no new referrals for Ryde.

Currently more than one third of Ryde's population of 105,000 comes from countries where English is not the first language and 42% speak a language other than English at home.