Launched in September 2016 by Mayor of Mount Alexander Shire Christine Henderson and Mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo Rod Fyffe, the Scroll originally had only the logos of the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) and Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR).

It now proudly bears, not only these 2 logos, but also the logos of local governments from all states of Australia.
During Refugee Week 2017 the Welcome Scroll made its reappearance in its **new expanded format**.

At the Alexandra Gardens - 17th June 2017

The Welcome Scroll was launched on its National Journey by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and the Inflatable Refugee

Belgian artist collective Schellekens and Peleman have created this inflatable figure from the same material as the boats used by human traffickers to cross the Mediterranean Sea are made from. The material is too fragile to withstand the waves of the sea, making the passengers on these boats extremely vulnerable.

The sheer size of the Inflatable Refugee allows him to look over and beyond us and keep watch on the horizon, not limited by borders or documents. It makes him inescapable, undeniably present.

[https://www.facebook.com/schellekens.peleman/](https://www.facebook.com/schellekens.peleman/)

An early morning crowd on the banks of the Yarra, a few speeches … and a good many photos, and Scroll was on its way around Australia. First stop, the Immigration Museum.
The Welcome Scroll, now almost 6 metres long, with the logos of 113 Refugee Welcome Zone Councils, moved from the banks of the Yarra River to the Immigration Museum in Melbourne.

The Scroll bears the declaration –
"We are a Refugee Welcome Zone"
under the name and logo of each town or city listed

113 Refugee Welcome Zone Councils *

have endorsed the Welcome Scroll
with their Council Logo and Mayoral Signature
The aim of the Refugee Council’s **Refugee Welcome Zones** is to promote the adoption of flexible, humane and constructive policies toward refugees and people seeking asylum by local governments and their communities.

On Wednesday, 21 June, the **Welcome Scroll** began the first part of its National Journey, travelling to the ACT and **Canberra** for the first ever **Refugee Welcome Zone National Forum** on Thursday, 22 June 2017.

*Instigator of the Welcome Scroll, Jan Govett, with Rural Australians for Refugees Vice-President, Ruth Fluhr*

On 22 June in Canberra at the Refugee Welcome Zone National Forum with Matthew Kirwin, Mayor of the City of Greater Dandenong, and in foreground, Mr Na Jit Lam, the UNHCR Representative for Oceania.

Also in Canberra at the Refugee Welcome Zone National Forum were Refugee Ambassador, Priscilla Kuer Bul, and Road to Refuge advocate, Zaki Haidari
Liam Jolley of Bega High School presented the Welcome Tree to the Refugee Rally. The Year 11 student explained the tree was created to show refugees they are welcome in Australia. He also expressed concern at the political division surrounding refugees in Australia.

"There is a lot of people from the left side of politics here today, and that is great that you have come out to support the rally," he said.

"But if we're going to make progress on this issue, we need to reach out to the other side and discuss the mutual benefits of improving refugee policy."

"While we were making this tree, there was concern that it was too political for a government school to take a stance on refugee issues," Liam told the crowd.

"This isn't a political issue, it's a humanitarian issue," Liam added.

Robin de Crespigny, author of “The People Smuggler” was also in Bega so we had the opportunity to chat with her. The book is the true story of Ali Al Jenabi, who escaped torture under Saddam Hussein, only to find himself on an epic journey to find a safe place for himself and his family. Renowned author, Thomas Keneally, describes this as a significant book about “a figure seen by some as a saviour and others as a criminal.”

Robin generously gave us 2 free autographed copies of her book to use as best we can “to change the conversation about refugees”. Thank you Robin.

**From Bega to Moruya**

People from Eurobodalla Shire joined in a celebration of Refugee Week in Moruya on Saturday, 24 June, at a special ceremony on the banks of the beautiful Moruya River as the Welcome Scroll visited on its national journey. Many thanks to Magella and Bernie from RAC Eurobodalla for their welcome.

The Welcome Scroll includes the signature of Eurobodalla’s Mayor Liz Innes.

Deputy Mayor of Eurobodalla Shire Council, Anthony Mayne, and Councillor James Thomson display the Scroll.

**And on to Braidwood …**
In Braidwood with Sister Jane Keogh and Tim McKenna (*Manus Lives Matter*), Braidwood RAR, and Amnesty International.

*Braidwood is in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Region of NSW*

---

**In Bowral**

We were welcomed by Southern Highlands RAR members.

And after the photos, we were treated to some delicious Bowral hospitality.

Maree and Sarah (below) Geoff and Georgina.
After our visit to Bowral, we took 2 days off to enjoy the wonderful (if chilly) Southern Highlands, visiting the beautiful Fitzroy Falls, last seen by me 50 long years ago.

We travelled on down the escarpment to Wollongong, taking the scenic route via Macquarie Pass and were almost late for our interview with ABC Illawarra.

*Photo at right …
The Welcome Scroll at full stretch in the ABC’s Illawarra office.*

A quick re-roll and we were off to meet both the Mayor of Shellharbour and the Mayor of Wollongong.
Shellharbour Refugee Week event:

“Shellharbour Council has become signatory to the official Refugee Welcome Scroll on its tour around Australia. Mayor Marianne Saliba signed the 6 metre long scroll at Warilla Library with Wollongong Mayor Gordon Bradbery. The inspiration for the Welcome Scroll is to spread local government and community support for successful resettlement of refugees.”
On to Goulburn Mulwaree and Yass Valley Councils

Goulburn Mulwaree Council
Mayor, Bob Kirk, with Steven Lamond from Goulburn RAR

Yass Valley
Mayor Rowena Abbey proudly holds the Scroll with Karan Gabriel from Yass RAR

And finally to Wagga Wagga
With Deputy Mayor, Dallas Tout and Prime 7
And so back to Victoria and the newly declared Refugee Welcome Zone of Strathbogie Shire.

In Euroa - 4 July 2017

At a delightful afternoon of events among like-minded people, Strathbogie Shire Mayor, Amanda McClaren and a number of fellow councillors enjoyed the hospitality provided by Euroa RAR.

Jessica Hackett, the amazing young woman who last year walked from Melbourne to Sydney, collecting 18,000 signatures on her Welcome Petition, was in Euroa when we visited with the Welcome Scroll.

(Jessica with the Scroll - below right)

Also there was the Strathbogie Shire Mayor, Amanda McClaren, and 4 Councillors. Strathbogie Shire has just just voted to become a Refugee Welcome Zone, and will sign the declaration next month.

The afternoon in Euroa was organised by RAR Vice-President, Ruth Fluhr, and with speakers coming from Shepparton and beyond, was a well-attended event.

Photo below: With keynote speaker will be George Megalogenis, Walkley Award winning author and documentary maker.

In Gippsland: Cardinia Shire:

With Cardinia Shire Mayor Brett Owen and former refugee representative Jawad Hakim
In Dandenong

The City of Greater Dandenong threw open the door for our final signing event for 2017.

With … Cr Angela Long, Cr Matthew Kirwan, Cr Roz Blades

... ... on the right ... ...

that's a rather tired me (still talking)
... but looking forward to a rest
before travelling on in to 2018
on the

National Journey of the Welcome Scroll
Our first stop on the National Journey this year was in Ballarat where the Scroll was welcomed, and signed by Mayor Samantha McIntosh, as part of Ballarat’s Harmony Day celebrations.
Participating Refugee Welcome Zone Councils

ACT

- Government

NSW

- Albury City Council
- Armidale Regional Council
- Ballina Shire Council
- Bathurst Regional Council
- Bega Valley Shire Council
- Blacktown City Council
- Blue Mountains City Council
- Byron Shire Council
- City of Canterbury-Bankstown
- Council of Ryde
- City of Sydney
- City of Wagga Wagga
- Coffs Harbour City Council
- Dubbo Regional Council
- Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Georges River Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Goulburn Mulwaree Council
- Griffith City Council
- Gunnedah Shire Council
- Hawkesbury City Council
- Hornsby Shire Council
- Inner West Council
- Kiama Municipal Council
- Ku-ring-gai Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Leeton Shire Council
- Lismore City Council
- Liverpool City Council
- Moree Plains Shire Council
- Newcastle City Council
- North Sydney Council
- Penrith City Council
- Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
- Shellharbour City Council
- Snowy-Monaro Regional Council
- Sutherland Shire Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Upper Lachlan Shire Council

NT

- City of Palmerston

Queensland

- City of Ipswich
- Flinders Shire Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Townsville City Council

South Australia

- Adelaide Hills Council
- City of Adelaide
- City of Marion
- City of Mitcham
- City of Mount Gambier
- City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters
- City of Onkaparinga
- City of Port Adelaide Enfield
- City of Salisbury
- City of Victor Harbor
- City of West Torrens
- Rural City of Murray Bridge
- Town of Gawler

Tasmania

- Break O'Day Council
- City of Launceston
- Clarence City Council
- Derwent Valley Council
- Hobart City Council
- Huon Valley Council
- Kingborough Council
- Northern Midlands Council
- West Tamar Council

Victoria

- Ararat Rural City Council
- Banyule City Council

Western Australia

- City of Fremantle
- City of Subiaco
- City of Vincent
- Shire of Augusta Margaret River
- Shire of Katanning Shire
- Town of Manjimup
- Town of Victoria Park
The Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration

(Council crest/logo)

The ________________ Council,

Declares the Council of _____________ a

Refugee Welcome Zone

This Declaration is a Commitment in Spirit to

Welcoming refugees into our community,

Upholding the Human Rights of refugees,

Demonstrating Compassion for refugees and

Enhancing cultural and religious Diversity in our community.

____________________________________

[name and title of signatory]

Date: ________________

This Declaration is proudly supported and endorsed by the

Refugee Council of Australia

The Refugee Council of Australia is a national umbrella organisation representing over 1,000 organisational and individual members. The aim of the Refugee Council is to promote the adoption of flexible, humane and constructive policies toward refugees and asylum seekers by the Australian and other Governments and their communities.