



RURAL COMMUNITIES WANT TO WELCOME MORE REFUGEES

“Rural communities have a long tradition of welcome and hospitality. Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) is pleased to be part of the Community Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (CRSI) launched this week”

RAR President Marie Sellstrom said that the initiative calls on government to create a system which allows the generosity of ordinary Australians to flourish.

“RAR groups have been supporting refugees and asylum seekers to settle in regional communities all over Australia for many years” Ms Sellstrom said. “We know from overseas experience that successful community sponsorship can help to provide an extra way to welcome and support the world’s displaced people”

“The number of resettlement places available is grossly inadequate to respond to the need out there. Australia needs to step up a bit more to provide solutions by both increasing its humanitarian intake and by changing policy to help individuals and communities add to the intake by sponsoring refugees to settle”

“Candidates for sponsorship should include refugees referred by UNHCR, those with family in Australia and those who may have secured employment in Australia”.

“There are many fantastic examples of rural and regional communities that have embraced newcomers to their mutual benefit. It’s time for the Government to make sure it’s rules don’t get in the way” said Ms Sellstrom.

The CSRI is a joint project of the Refugee Council of Australia, Amnesty International, Save the Children, Welcome to Australia, Rural Australians for Refugees and the Australian Refugee Task Force. For more information go to <http://www.ausrefugeesponsorship.com.au>

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