



## South Gippsland now a Refugee Welcome Zone

South Gippsland Shire Deputy Mayor, Cr Mohya Davies, yesterday signed the declaration to make the shire a Refugee Welcome Zone.

In September 2015 the Australian Government announced that 12,000 additional humanitarian places would be made available to people displaced as a result of conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

Now one of 124 Refugee Welcome Zones in Australia, South Gippsland Shire Council has made this commitment to human rights, to welcome refugees into the community, to demonstrate compassion for refugees and to enhance cultural diversity in the community.

"We understand that as the third tier of government, much of the response to the international refugee crisis is out of our hands. However, though this declaration we can demonstrate our willingness to support those displaced by war and other crises around world," Cr Davies explained.

In the five years to 31 March 2015 South Gippsland received a total of 211 migrants comprised of: 98 families, 8 humanitarian entrants and 105 skilled workers. Services are provided within the Shire in settlement support, migrant English and direct support from community members and groups.

Local organisations working with refugees in the area include Milpara Community House, Latrobe Community Health Service, South Gippsland Rural Australians for Refugees and Gippsland Multicultural Resource Centre.

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