



The importance of connection

Prior to emigrating to Australia in 2015, Tadros Hanna was a successful architect and interior designer in Egypt. However, despite his skills and experience, he found it difficult to gain employment in his chosen field, a common theme for many newly arrived Australians.

"People who are born here can find it a challenge to find work, so what about people who come from another country? They don't speak the same language, so it is impossible for them to have the same opportunity to find work."

Because of a lack of local qualifications, Tadros found the process of looking for work discouraging. "I remember the first day I went to another organisation and I told them I need to be an architect again and they said 'Impossible!'. So maybe I can't be an architect here and I can't build homes or buildings, but I can build myself and build my children and contribute to the community."

He began volunteering at the community hub at his son's school. It was here that he was put in touch with Nicole Attard (pictured), a Settlement Support Worker with Jesuit Social Services. Tadros says that Nicole "was the one who searched to find help for me. She helped me with my first steps and supported me."

In addition to his volunteer work, Tadros has been making connections in his new community through art, through his participation in Jesuit Social Services' *Diversity Through the Lens* project in 2016, the *Play Me, I'm Yours* street pianos project, and his first solo art exhibition in mid-2018.

Despite the challenges he has faced during his time in Australia, Tadros says he is very happy in his new home.

"Here in St Albans, it is like the UN, you see different people but at the end we are all the same, we have the same needs, we have the same dreams and we share all the same values - humanity."

Tadros says the settlement services provided by Jesuit Social Services are vital in ensuring a smooth transition for migrants to life in their new community.

"They support you when you don't have a family and don't have friends. They care about you and want the good for you and your children and try and open doors for you so you can contribute to the community. While I'm not working, I'm trying to volunteer everywhere to feel that I'm still alive and that I have a value. Everyone needs to contribute to feel like they belong to the community."

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Settlement support the key to helping people flourish

For more than 40 years, Jesuit Social Services has worked with people from newly arrived communities. We see first-hand the many and varied challenges that some people face when settling in Australia, and the positive impact that practical support can bring.

Helping people from newly arrived communities to learn the local language and customs, and supporting them to access secure housing, education and employment, is critical in improving social cohesion and ensuring every person has the opportunity to flourish.

Regardless of our cultural background, we all want the same thing. We all want to belong, to provide for our families, to be connected and to make a positive contribution to society.

Sadly, we continue to see fearmongering in mainstream media about young African people. This leads to hardening community attitudes and makes it more difficult for people to feel at home in Australia.

We all want less crime and fewer victims – but instead of stigmatising particular cultural groups, we need to focus on doing what works. We need to ensure young people participate in the community, providing education and employment pathways and ensuring young people can remain connected to family and culture.

In this issue of our newsletter, you will read about some of our settlement and community building programs which aim to ensure everyone who settles in Australia has access to the things we take for granted.

This includes our Corporate Diversity Partnerships program, which provides paid work opportunities, mentoring and support to skilled migrants and refugees at major organisations like John Holland and the Australian Taxation Office, and a new program we run in partnership with Victoria Police to ensure the workforce reflects the diverse community they serve.

The scope of these programs is broad but the method remains the same – we build relationships with people, support them to achieve their goals and work towards safe, cohesive communities for all.

Julie Edwards, CEO, Jesuit Social Services



Award-winning Homework Club seeks funding

In 2004, Jesuit Social Services began providing an after-school Homework Club to students in the Flemington region of inner-city Melbourne. We recognised that many students in this area come from newly-arrived migrant backgrounds particularly the Horn of Africa, and some were struggling at school.

Fifteen years later, the award-winning program is still going strong.

The Homework Club supports dozens of students, from primary school age through to VCE, each week at the Flemington high rise public housing estate.

Volunteer tutors, many of whom are university students, current teachers or retired members of the community, are crucial to its success.

Tutors offer students help with their schoolwork, which parents may be unable to provide, and also guidance and support. In addition to the practical help they receive, students also benefit from improved social connection and confidence.

Omnia, a grade four student from Kensington Primary School, has been attending Homework Club for three years.

"Homework Club has helped me with my maths. The tutors explain things clearly and slowly – I like focusing on my work and I like seeing my friends," she says.

Last year, Omnia was named runner up in the Outstanding Primary School category at the Centre for Multicultural Youth's MY Education Awards – recognition of her positive and hardworking attitude.

At the same event, our Homework Club was the winner of the Outstanding Community-run Out-of-School-Hours Learning Support Program.

Jesuit Social Services Homework Club has helped thousands of students over the past 15 years. We don't receive any Government funding and rely on grants and donations to keep helping children flourish.

If you or somebody you know can assist in supporting the Homework Club financially, please contact Nicole Dunham on (03) 9421 7617 or nicole.dunham@jss.org.au.

New program will increase police diversity

Three days a week, Wol Majok goes to his job at a supermarket, completes his shift and then goes straight to class to support his dream of becoming a police officer.

"The days are very long and it is very tiring but it shows how committed I am to hopefully becoming a police officer and serving the Victorian community," he says.

Wol, who settled in Australia from South Sudan in 2003, is a participant of the Victoria Police Diversity Recruitment Program run by Jesuit Social Services, Victoria Police and Victoria University Polytechnic.

This initiative was developed with the support of many other organisations, including the African Australian Multicultural Employment and Youth Service, AMES Australia, Matchworks JobActive, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers and Jobs Victoria.

The program provides training and support to assist people from African backgrounds to navigate the Victoria Police recruitment process. It was established to ensure Victoria Police reflects the cultural diversity of the Victorian community as it undertakes its biggest ever recruitment drive - recruiting 3000 people across the state over the next three years.

Wol had applied unsuccessfully for a position with Victoria Police in the past. He says the mentoring support and skill development he has received during the 15 week training course has been vital in helping him, to hopefully succeed this time.

"We get to learn about what's involved in being a police officer, we get to hear from and meet with current police officers to understand what they do every day and we learn important skills like how to de-escalate a situation which we may deal with in the community."

Participants are also supported to improve their swimming skills and fitness levels ahead of the Victoria Police recruitment process, and applicants who are successful in entering the Police Academy will receive on-going mentoring.

Victoria Police Community Engagement Inspector Stephen Mutton says "We want quality applicants who are capable of doing the job. We're excited to partner with Jesuit Social Services who will help identify these applicants as well as provide them with support so they can succeed in their application."

Wol says the program can play an important role in improving social cohesion.

"There are many African communities in Victoria, but we are all part of the wider Victorian community. It will be good if the program can bring everyone together, build trust and respect and show everyone that we are all Victorians and we are all the same."

The Victoria Police Diversity Recruitment Program is currently accepting expressions of interest for its second round commencing in April.

For more information about the Victoria Police Diversity Recruitment Program, visit www.jss.org.au/victoriapolicediversity



Victoria Police Diversity Recruitment Program participant Wol Majok

Building pathways to employment for diverse communities

With more than a quarter of Australians born overseas, diversity is a central pillar of our society. It is a strength that is recognised and welcomed by the vast majority of Australians.

In December 2018, the Scanlon Foundation released its 11th national survey report on social cohesion in Australia. The report found that 82 per cent of people agreed that immigrants had improved our society and 85 per cent of people agreed that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia'.

These results are heartening. However, we also know that prejudice remains a problem in society, with direct and painful ramifications for those who experience it – including barriers to employment. A 2016 study undertaken with 72 members of the South Sudanese community seeking employment in the Australian Capital Territory found that 89 per cent experienced racism in the process of looking for a job. Despite nearly half having tertiary qualifications, the majority were underemployed and working outside their chosen fields.

Employment is understandably a crucial goal for new migrants. It helps to ensure positive settlement outcomes, fosters broader participation in society, provides a sense of purpose, and creates opportunities for them to contribute to their community.

We believe that the role of business as an enabler of social inclusion should be more actively explored and promoted. This requires moving from a transactional to a transformational relationship between business and marginalised people; an approach grounded in an understanding of the capacity of business to work with organisations and the community – with positive outcomes for all involved.

A key example is the African Australian Inclusion Program (AAIP), which Jesuit Social Services runs in partnership with NAB. The program is now in its 10th year. It offers six-month paid work placements, including mentoring and career coaching, to qualified African-Australians. More than four hundred people have graduated from the program since its inception.

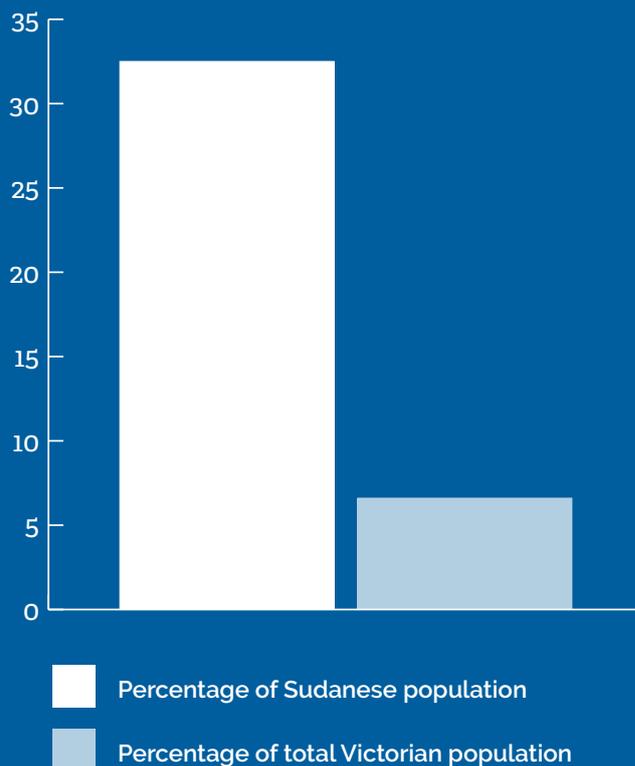
This program performs a social good, by broadening employment prospects with great benefit to those employed, plus their families and communities. It also provides significant benefits to the private sector by opening up an untapped labour market of talented workers. Of the most recent round

of AAIP graduates in Melbourne and Sydney, more than 80 per cent were offered employment at NAB. The vast majority of program participants go on to secure full-time employment at NAB or elsewhere.

Building on this success, we developed the Corporate Diversity Partnerships program to help companies connect with a diverse talent pool of qualified people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. This includes collaborations with John Holland – one of Australia's leading engineering, contracting and service providers – the Australian Taxation Office and Yarra Valley Water.

With a Federal election approaching, we call on the incoming Government to invest in strategies that promote social cohesion and enable individuals in our diverse communities to thrive. As part of this, the government should explore how initiatives that promote social leadership among business could be developed to help open pathways to employment for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Percentage of Victorian population experiencing unemployment



A life-changing foot in the door for Sulmaz

Like many others who come to Australia, Sulmaz arrived in search of new opportunities and professional growth.

Sulmaz settled here in 2017. Having worked as a chemical engineer for four years in Iran, she was full of optimism about her new life. Sadly, Sulmaz realized how challenging it can be for skilled migrants to secure work in Australia.

Determined to do everything she could to succeed, Sulmaz enrolled in a course at Melbourne Polytechnic to secure a local qualification and volunteered with a range of organisations.

But still, she received knockback after knockback for the 40 or 50 job applications in her field of expertise.

Sulmaz was eventually connected with Jesuit Social Services' Jesuit Community College, and was supported with job readiness training such as resume, cover letter and interview advice.

"It was different from any other experience, and a really pleasant one," she says.

Through Jesuit Social Services, Sulmaz learned about the John Holland Pathway Program. Established in 2018, the program provides a foot in the door at one of Australia's leading engineering, contracting and servicing providers for qualified engineers from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Sulmaz was thrilled to discover she was one of 23 successful applicants accepted into in the program's first intake.

Sulmaz says the training provided by Jesuit Social Services "really gave me an insight into Australian corporate culture, ways of doing things, thinking and expected behaviours. It set me up on the pathway to success," she says.

Over the six month paid program, Sulmaz worked as a junior engineer with responsibilities in Quality Assurance, cost tracking and reinstatement.

Her Project Manager, Matt Razkenari, says Sulmaz had made herself "indispensable."

"I need her on this project – she's brilliant," he says.

After successfully completing the six month program, Sulmaz was offered a permanent role at John Holland as a Junior Engineer as part of the Melbourne Water team.

"This program has finally given me the opportunity for my skills and talents to be given expression and I'll be forever grateful for that."



Sulmaz has secured a permanent role with John Holland

Akee's sense of freedom

Like many new arrivals, Akee faced considerable challenges when she arrived in Australia. Originally from Tibet, she came to Australia to join her husband after living in exile in India for seven years.

"I came here on the partner visa, so I was not eligible to receive services that other people get. Through the help of Jesuit Social Services we got temporary housing and access to doctors, so we are now quite settled," Akee said.

Akee hasn't been able to find paid employment yet because of her English skills, but with the support of Jesuit Social Services' Settlement Program she has begun attending English classes two days a week. "Very gradually my English is improving."

Through the Settlement Program, Akee was connected with the Salvation Army community garden, located a few streets back from Sunshine's shopping district. The garden provides recent arrivals with an opportunity to participate in their community and feel a sense of belonging. The garden has become a place of enjoyment and community participation for Akee. "I have an interest in gardening, it suits me as a hobby. Nicole (a Jesuit Social Services Settlement Support worker) brought me here and I started working and now I am enjoying it here."

Through her interaction with the Settlement Program, Akee noticed "that the people are very welcoming and very respectful and outspoken and caring and smiling. They ask questions, like what kind of problems you have, and try to solve that problem or issues that we are facing."

Through the community garden, her English classes, her home with her husband and the small garden plot that has become her hobby, Akee says she feels a "sense of freedom" that defines her experience in Australia.



Akee is finding her place with the support of our Settlement Program

Fundraising event for Ignite Food Store

For those in New South Wales, please join us on March 30 for an entertaining evening to raise valuable funds for our Ignite Food Store in Western Sydney.

A Night for Ignite will be held at Juana Mateo Room, St Aloysius' College and feature live jazz, wine, canapes and a candid conversation between ABC Radio Sydney broadcaster Wendy Harmer, Tristian Harris, co-CEO of Harris Farm Markets and David Hammond, General Manager of Jesuit Social Services – Western Sydney.

Ignite Food Store provided low-cost, healthy fresh food to around 20,000 low income local residents last year, thanks to the support of businesses like Harris Farm Markets.

The fundraising event will also include three live auction items including a 12 month designated car space at Lavender Bay, only a few steps to North Sydney Station.

Tickets are \$125 per person and can be booked at www.trybooking.com/BAQTI



Wendy Harmer will lead the panel at A Night for Ignite

Xavier mothers raise funds to help young boys stay on track



Principal of Xavier College, William Doherty with The Men's Project's Brigid Henley

Jesuit Social Services was proud to be the Charity Partner of the Xavier Mothers' Association Spring Racing Luncheon in September 2018.

The annual event combined glamour with heart as more than 500 women enjoyed a day out with good friends and good food to support a great cause. This year, the work of The Men's Project's Before it Starts initiative was featured and the room dug deep to help at-risk boys stay engaged with school and keep on track.

As the room was predominantly filled with mothers of boys, the ground breaking work we are doing to help boys be their best selves was deeply personal to those in the room.

A range of fundraising activities including raffles, lucky envelopes and a pledge activity raised an amazing \$71,674 for the work of Before it Starts.

Specifically, the money will allow us provide intensive support for at-risk boys aged eight to 12 years, and work with families and schools to ensure they remain connected with education and supported in their educational journey.

We are deeply grateful to all who attended and helped support The Men's Project.

CAPSA continues to influence hearts and minds

The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA) continues to actively advocate and support the Catholic schools, organisations, individuals and parishes working to make a difference in the lives of people seeking asylum.

In February CAPSA members and supporters successfully contributed to the broader campaign to see legislation that would ensure individuals in offshore detention were able to receive appropriate medical attention.

CAPSA participated in the Refugee Alternatives conference in Adelaide and engaged in a sector wide strategy day to share knowledge and ensure that our work is complementing the broader movement for compassion across our society. We also organised a well-attended panel discussion relating to advocacy and service for people seeking asylum in Adelaide, where local parishioners, school staff, the Adelaide Archdiocese and local and interstate Catholic organisations came together to discuss and deepen knowledge and connections around issues faced by people seeking asylum and how to positively respond.

On Palm Sunday, April 14th, walks for justice for refugees will take place across the country. CAPSA is engaging the Catholic community to ensure a strong call for justice and show of public support for humane treatment and welcome for people seeking asylum.

If you are interested in attending or assisting in organizing others to attend a Palm Sunday walk, or would like to know how you can be involved further in CAPSA's work, please get in contact with Josh at info@capsa.org.au



Josh and Mimi from CAPSA at the Refugee Alternatives conference

Our decades of experience working on the ground plus our extensive research means we know how to support communities in need.



Please make a donation to ensure we can continue to assist families and communities to flourish and reach their full potential.

Want to help Jesuit Social Services?

Together we can build a just society by advocating for social change and promoting the wellbeing of disadvantaged people, family and communities.

I would like to make a donation of:

\$75 **\$150**

\$500 **\$1000**

\$

Please send me information about leaving a gift in my Will.

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