



CUMBERLAND  
COUNCIL



# Just Like Us

Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood Longitudinal Evaluation

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2014 – 2018

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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# 1. Introduction

## BACKGROUND

Cumberland Council is home to one of the most culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse populations of any Local Government Area (LGA) in Australia, with half (52%) of all residents born overseas and almost a quarter of this group (25%) having arrived in Australia in the last five years. Cumberland has the highest number of people seeking asylum in NSW (DOHA\* 2018) and has welcomed more than 20,000 people from refugee backgrounds to settle within its boundaries in the past 25 years.

*“Cumberland is incredibly diverse...social cohesion is particularly important. The only way you break down stereotypes and ideas of others is through that individual relationship, completely changing your perception of that other person.”*

– Cumberland Council staff member

From 2014 to 2018 Council has run Refugee Camp In My Neighbourhood (RCIMN). This project is an annual event that focuses attention on the refugee experience that is shared by many of its local population, inviting attendance from a broad range of visitors from both within and outside the LGA. For two weeks each year RCIMN creates an opportunity within the grounds of the Auburn

Centre for Community for people to experience a simulated refugee journey. This experience helps visitors understand reasons why people flee their homes to seek refuge in other lands and the many challenges and difficulties they encounter as they try to find safety and establish a new life in Australia. As visitors are guided through their journey they hear stories of refugee experiences directly from people who have themselves lived them.

Demonstrating a strong commitment to community development principles, Council's Community Development team has embraced active collaboration between Council, local communities and stakeholders to develop and carry out all aspects of the project. The five-year marker was considered a timely opportunity to reflect on RCIMN and assess its social impact.

The purpose of this longitudinal study is to identify what RCIMN has achieved, how those achievements have been made and the ongoing impact of those achievements. The study includes a detailed qualitative evaluation of RCIMN that took place in 2018, a thematic analysis of RCIMN's social impacts from 2014 - 2018 and provides an ongoing evaluation framework.

\* Department of Home Affairs, 2018

Tour participants learn about medical conditions in a refugee camp



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## PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In 2014 Council began an intensive community consultation process to begin shaping the project that became Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood (RCIMN), identifying the form that the project would take and clarifying its objectives.

Two overarching aims for the project emerged from the consultation process that have continued to inform all RCIMN objectives and activities:

1. To develop greater understanding and support for refugees in Australia.
2. To create a greater sense of connection and empowerment amongst local communities and individuals who are involved in the project: including Tour Guides, volunteers and project partners.

Through the same consultation process two key pathways to achieving these objectives were identified:

- a) Engage local refugee communities in the design and implementation of the project.
- b) Provide an experiential learning environment for visitors to RCIMN.

A close adherence to these overarching aims and pathways has meant that RCIMN has maintained relevance and meaning for local communities at the same time as it has grown over the five year period and extended its reach across the broader community.

## PROJECT EVALUATION 2014 TO 2018

Evaluation of RCIMN processes and outcomes has been carried out throughout the life of the project and has been integral to maintaining an inclusive, participatory approach that upholds the project aims. A wide range of evaluation tools have been used by Council to gather feedback to demonstrate the social impact of the project for all stakeholders including Tour Guides, project partners, school groups, professional tour participants and general public.

Again and again two major impacts resulting from the experience of an RCIMN tour have been identified:

### 1. Increased awareness:

Almost all feedback from visitors from 2014-2018 described an increase in individuals' understanding and awareness of refugee and asylum seeker experience and issues, with many people indicating an intention to take some form of action or advocacy.

### 2. Increased sense of human connection:

The overwhelming majority of all project participants including visitors, Tour Guides, project partners and other stakeholders described a new or increased sense of 'human' or 'personal' connection between people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds and themselves.

*“It’s my first work experience in Australia - a good opportunity to tell our visitors about human rights, peace in the world. And you know, it is my favourite speech to talk about peace in the world.”*

– Tour Guide

*“I have never lived in a refugee camp - I have heard about it. I learned about the boat journey, I kind of lived their experience through their stories.”*

– Tour participant

*“When we talk about ourselves, it gives them your emotion, your feeling. They feel what you feel and that is what happens when you are talking to them.”*

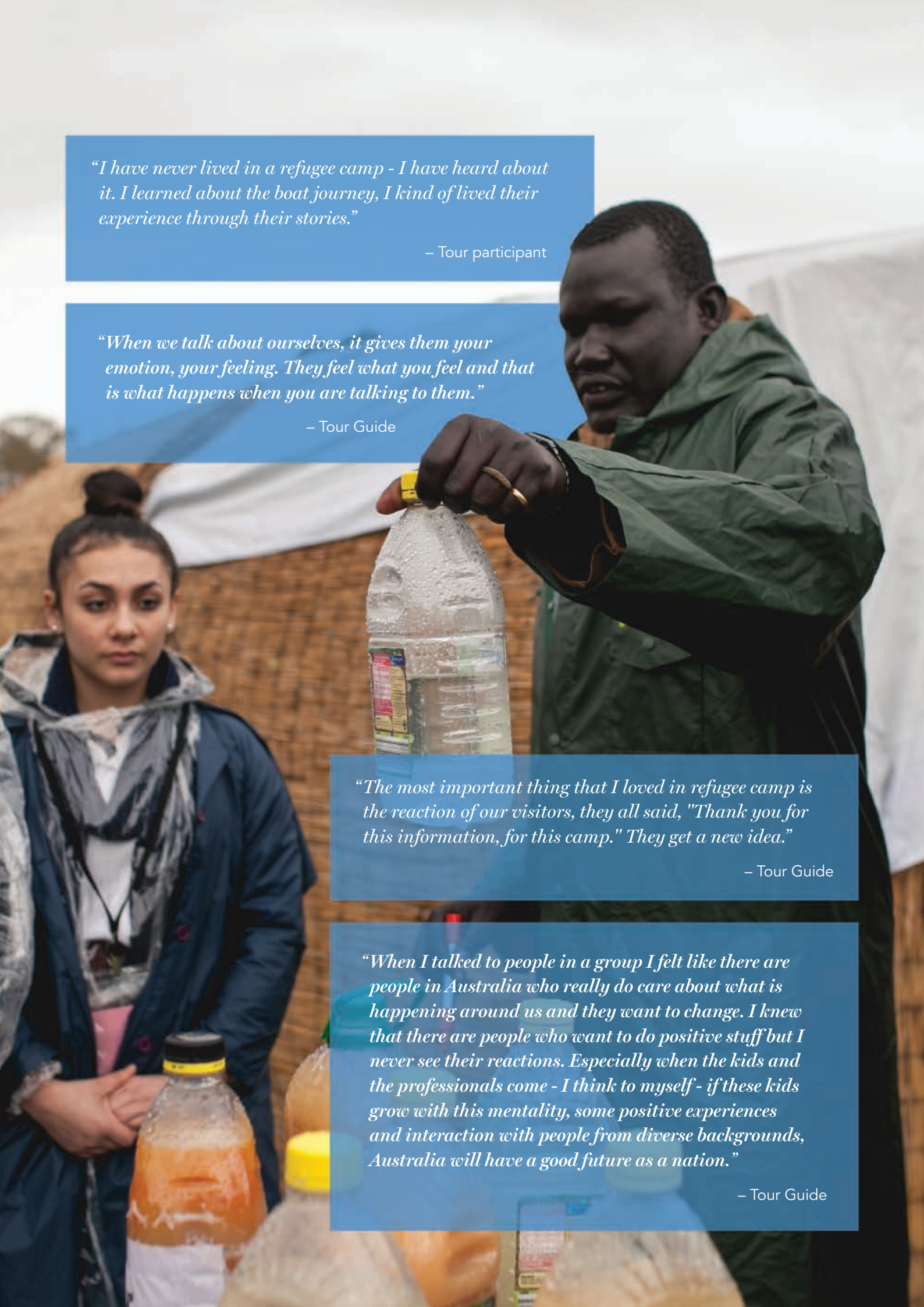
– Tour Guide

*“The most important thing that I loved in refugee camp is the reaction of our visitors, they all said, “Thank you for this information, for this camp.” They get a new idea.”*

– Tour Guide

*“When I talked to people in a group I felt like there are people in Australia who really do care about what is happening around us and they want to change. I knew that there are people who want to do positive stuff but I never see their reactions. Especially when the kids and the professionals come - I think to myself - if these kids grow with this mentality, some positive experiences and interaction with people from diverse backgrounds, Australia will have a good future as a nation.”*

– Tour Guide



## 2. Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood Achievements 2014-2018

- **115 people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds have been employed as Tour Guides.** For many it was their first time undertaking paid work in Australia and has led to long term job opportunities.
- **9867 visitors** have taken a journey through RCIMN on a booked tour. **The overwhelming majority of visitors indicated that they had gained a heightened sense of empathy and connection** with people who come to Australia as refugees or seeking asylum and a resolve to support them.
- **5 awards received** recognising the project's contribution to Australian society.
- **40+ project partners** involved in planning, delivering and evaluating the project.
- **\$112,159 of grant funding** contributed by DOOLEYS Lidcombe Catholic Club over 5 years.

*Tour Guide and participants and the 'food stop'.*



# PROJECT EVOLUTION

## 2014

- **Inception**  
Council staff rethink how they involve the community in Refugee Week activities. Idea to run a community education project highlighting local refugee experience is born.
- **Creating the Camp**  
Materials from Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) 'Refugee Camp in My City' pop-up refugee camp donated to the project in Auburn.
- **The community shaped the story**  
Workshops conducted by the UNSW Centre for Refugee Research with 100 people from local refugee communities to identify project objectives and key messages.
- **Project co-design**  
Community organisations, partners and individuals collaborate with Council to co-design the project, content and tours.
- **Funding secured**  
Grant funding secured from DOOLEYS Lidcombe Catholic Club to deliver the project.
- **Tour design**  
Tours were created around four refugee characters, based on community stories and experiences.
- **Tour Guide recruitment and training**  
40 local people, mostly from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, recruited and trained as Tour Guides.
- **RACS partnership**  
RACS staff/volunteers deliver the Life in Australia stop, focusing on legal issues.
- **STARTTS partnership**  
STARTTS staff deliver the debrief stop for all visiting groups.
- **Installation and launch**  
Simulated refugee camp installed at Auburn Centre for Community and launched during Refugee Week.
- **Welcome Lunch**  
Local refugee communities participate in a celebration event showcasing their contributions and strengths.
- **Project delivery (14 - 22 June 2014)**
  - 40 Tour Guides
  - 142 tours
  - 1440 visitors
  - Communities from 15 different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are engaged in the project.
- **Video produced**  
A short video about the project is produced, documenting the process.
- **Award-winners**  
The project wins the *Australian Multicultural Marketing Award* and 2 x *Zest Awards* for 'Outstanding Project Promoting Social Cohesion and Community Harmony' and 'Exceptional Community Partnership Project in a Local Government Area'.



## 2015

- **ASCON partnership**  
ASCON becomes the employer for Tour Guides.
  - **Tour Guide recruitment**  
All Tour Guides recruited exclusively from refugee/asylum-seeker communities.
  - **School tour stream**  
Targeted school tours promoted and school bookings taken for weekday tours.
- 
- **Change of dates to July/Aug**  
Timing of the project changed to fit in better with school Term 3 calendars.
  - **Stop redevelopment**
    - 'Urban experience' tour stop developed.
    - Tour Guides develop and add in a 'border crossing' section while delivering the tours.
  - **Project delivery (9 - 26 June 2015)**
    - 18 Tour Guides
    - 100 tours
    - 2139 general public visitors
    - 1187 primary and high school students from 26 schools
    - 337 tour visitors seeking professional development.
  - **Award-winners**  
The project wins *NSW Local Government Excellence Award* for 'Excellence in Diversity'.



## 2016



### ■ Review and redevelopment of 'stops' in the tour

- Boat journey stop redeveloped.
- Immigration detention stop redeveloped to include stories from children in immigration detention.
- Urban experience stop redeveloped to include scenarios.
- Characters removed and project only focuses on Tour Guide life experiences.

### ■ NSW Refugee Health Service partnership

NSW Refugee Health partnered to deliver health specific professional development tours.

### ■ Mudhif

Iraqi 'mudhif' included in the project installation.

### ■ Tour Guide training extended

Tour Guide training extended to be four full days of intensive training.

### ■ Council amalgamations

The project is now part of the newly formed Cumberland Council.

### ■ Project delivery (1 - 12 August 2016)

- 15 Tour Guides
- 3000+ visitors including:
  - 1868 school students from 44 schools
  - 233 visitors attended professional development tours.

### ■ Award-winners

Project wins *International Association for Public Participation Core Values Award* for 'Community Development'.

## 2017

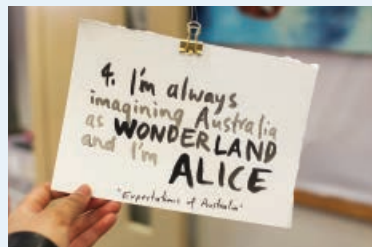
### ■ Life In Australia section updated

Welcome Studios engaged to develop the 'Life in Australia' stop further.



### ■ Project delivery (31 July - 11 August 2017)

- 20 Tour Guides
- 1442 visitors including:
  - 1024 school students from 31 schools
  - 219 visitors attending professional development tours.



## 2018

### ■ Children's perspectives included

St Vincent De Paul SPARK program and Welcome Studios carry out an art-based project with refugee children from Guilford Public School to produce an art installation and video which explored 'Life in Australia' from children's perspectives.

### ■ One Good Thing campaign

A series of stories linked by the theme of 'One Good Thing' developed, profiling local community members from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.



### ■ Auslan-interpreted tours

Auslan-interpreted tours offered to schools and general public.



### ■ Project delivery (30 July - 10 August 2018)

- 22 Tour Guides
- 2146 visitors attending, including:
  - 1340 school students from 23 schools
  - 305 professional development tour attendees.

### ■ Longitudinal evaluation

Longitudinal evaluation carried out and ongoing evaluation framework developed.



DAMON AMB

16. I was thinking  
the streets in Australia  
would be **GOLD**

'Expectations of Australia'

# 3. Bringing a Refugee Camp to *our* Neighbourhood

## INITIATION

In February 2014 the Community Development Team in the former Auburn City Council (now Cumberland Council) identified an opportunity to develop a joint Council and community activity for Refugee Week that would bring to light some of the human experiences of refugee flight that so many local residents had lived through. At the heart of the project was an intention to build and strengthen awareness and connection between people in those communities and others living and working in the LGA and increase connection and understanding between local people from refugee backgrounds and Council itself. Council negotiated with Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) to use items from refugee camps that it had previously used in an educational installation, 'Refugee Camp in My City' in Martin Place in Sydney. These items formed the basis for the design of the Auburn project that would be developed with local communities.

*“The way we get people to participate in things breaks down barriers, connects people and leaves them feeling part of a community.”*

– Cumberland Council staff member

## CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

An extensive community consultation process was begun with a series of targeted public meetings held at times and locations to fit the varying needs of local refugee communities participating. This included Afghan, South Sudanese, Somali, Tamil, Bosnian, Rwandan, Burundian, Iraqi and Iranian community members. Relevant stakeholders from a wide range of relevant local organisations including youth, health, settlement and welfare agencies and other potential project partners were identified and invited to attend planning meetings and feedback sessions. People representing relevant agencies including Anglicare, NAVITAS, the Refuge Advice and Casework Service (RACS), Auburn Small Community Organisation Network (ASCON), the Service for The Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (NSW STARTTS), Red Cross, Salvation Army and Refugee Council of Australia took part in meetings along with people from other local service providers including Settlement Services International (SSI) and Auburn Diversity Services Inc. (ADSi), the Department of Human Services (Centrelink), Inner West Skills Centre and MTC Australia.

The Centre for Refugee Research at UNSW (now the Forced Migration Research Network) came on board to carry out two 'storyboarding' workshops which brought people from local refugee communities together at Auburn Centre for Community to begin building the project and identifying what they wanted it to say. More than 100 community members including people of Sierra Leonean, Sri Lankan, Bosnian, Afghan, Somali, South Sudanese, Iraqi and Iranian origin attended the workshop sessions.

*Tour participants experience the frustrations of language barriers registering with UNHCR*



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## KEY MESSAGES OF THE PROJECT

Key messages that were identified at the storyboarding workshops by local refugee community members would form the basis for RCIMN. They included:

- To give ordinary Australian populations an understanding of why people leave their homes;
- A taste of what daily life in refugee camps or during refugee journeys is like; and
- An insight into the uncertainty and difficulties that people seeking asylum face in attempting to find permanent protection through Australian immigration processes.

## EVOLVING WITH A CHANGING COMMUNITY

Ongoing input from community members contributed to the subsequent design of all tour content and tour stops for RCIMN 2014 and has continued ever since. The ideas and key messages proposed by community members during the workshops sessions formed the basis of RCIMN project objectives from 2014 to 2018.

*“While the messages stay the same, the experiences are vastly different...many in the current group come from Syria – a different experience from someone who came from Somalia 15-20 years ago. How do you keep true to the original people you consulted with but reflect the changing dynamics of the community?”*

– Cumberland Council staff member

Ongoing action research has meant that the content of RCIMN has evolved over the years to ensure a continuing voice for local refugee communities. As the composition of Australia’s refugee intake has shifted in response to world events over the five years of the project and as the application of government legislation (such as regulations and entitlements linked to visa status) have changed, corresponding shifts have taken place in the composition and needs of local refugee populations.

A level of flexibility in managing the project by Council’s Community Development Team alongside action-research and impact evaluation that is carried out each year has allowed the tour to continue to meet the project objectives of local refugee communities. In many cases the direct input from Tour Guides has led to changes in content and structure of the tour, such as the addition of the refugee camp Border Guard stop which has had an important impact on visitors’ awareness of how it feels to become a refugee. Feedback from project partners and visitors has led to the expansion of school group participation and the addition of RCIMN tours to suit people working in relevant professional areas such as health workers, police recruits and Council staff. Input from local refugee communities has led to an increased RCIMN focus on the difficulties of the ‘urban experience’ that many people face during their journey to seek safety.

In 2017 the Welcome Studios undertook development of the 'Life in Australia' section of the tour, focusing in particular on the experiences of people arriving in Australia and their first impressions. In 2018 collaboration between the Welcome Studios, St Vincent de Paul's SPARK program and Guildford Public School brought primary school children together to illustrate their own stories of refugee flight and resilience. The children's stories and artwork were incorporated into a short video and visual display in the last tour stop.

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of all aspects of RCIMN have reflected a community development approach and upheld the project's objectives. Measuring the success of the project extends therefore past the tour experience alone, to the whole of the project.

*"You get a quality project because resources have been invested. The guides get paid, you get quality training delivery."*

– Cumberland Council staff member

*"We're modelling a good way to work with community which values their contribution. In this project, we pay for their time, their expertise."*

– Cumberland Council staff member



## SECTIONS OF THE TOUR

Over the years, the tour has evolved into a 2-hour tour which takes visitors through a series of different 'stops'. Each has been developed to reflect the key messages identified through the original (2014) and ongoing community consultation process.

1

### PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

To remind visitors that people who have become refugees have had to leave behind a country which is their home and is somewhere beautiful to them



2

### BRIEFING

To prepare the visitors for what to expect on the tour, set boundaries, and ensure that Tour Guides and visitors are emotionally and physically safe



3

### INTRODUCTION

To understand the definitions and difference between the terms 'refugee' and 'person seeking asylum', and to identify global statistics and trends



4

### FLEEING

To explore the challenges and dangers people face when they initially have to leave their homes in search of safety



5

### CROSSING THE BORDER

To explore the challenges and vulnerabilities of crossing borders – including language barriers, loss of possessions, correct identification papers



6

## LIFE IN A REFUGEE CAMP

To identify the impact the refugee experience has on people's everyday lives when they are living in a refugee camp in relation to work, education, shelter, water and sanitation, medical care, food, safety and family separation



7

## LIFE AS AN URBAN REFUGEE

To learn about the different challenges and complexities of life in an urban environment



8

## BOAT JOURNEY

To learn about the reasons why people travel by boat to Australia and the risks/realities of the boat journey



9

## IMMIGRATION DETENTION

To hear personal experiences of children and young people who have experienced life in offshore detention and the impact this has on their lives – including physical and emotional wellbeing



10

## LIFE IN AUSTRALIA

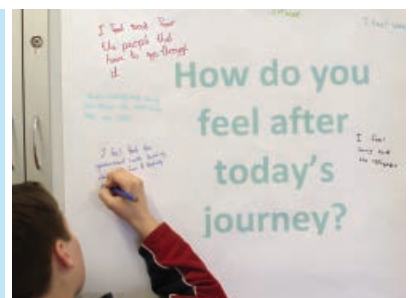
To explore people's expectations of coming to Australia, and then the experiences of arriving and settling in Australia through the perspectives of children



11

## DEBRIEF

To reflect on the impact of the experience on their understanding of the journeys and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers





Tour Guide training, 2017

## TOUR GUIDE RECRUITMENT

The RCIMN Tour Guide role was identified in the initial community consultation process as an important way to achieve project objectives and to support the participation of refugee communities. Input from refugee communities and project partners was used to define:

- Tour Guide role
- The experience and skills that the role required
- Approaches to recruitment practice and promotion of the employment opportunity in their communities

A supportive approach to recruitment has provided applicants with an opportunity to take part, many for the first time, in a formal Australian recruitment process. Positions have been advertised via relevant community and refugee organisations such as ASCON and applicants have been required to fill in Expression of Interest (EOI) responses describing their reasons for expressing interest in taking part in RCIMN, previous work experience (in Australia and overseas) and availability. Positions have been offered as volunteer or paid to allow people seeking asylum to take part despite any visa restrictions on their ability to undertake paid work. Project partners (Auburn Youth Centre in 2014 and ASCON in subsequent years) have taken on the role of official employer of paid Tour Guides whilst Council has maintained the role of direct workplace supervisor. Volunteers have been registered as Council Volunteers and reimbursed (when needed) for cost of travel to work.

Formal recruitment requirements including submission of an EOI and participation in a structured group interview allowed applicants to demonstrate their skills in a supportive environment. To demonstrate their communication skills individual applicants had to imagine that they were speaking to an audience of school students, and prepare a short presentation responding to the question: 'Why do people become refugees?' Recruitment processes have led to 117 Tour Guide positions being filled between 2014 and 2018.



## TOUR GUIDE TRAINING

Tour Guide training for RCIMN has been delivered each year from 2014 to 2018 with overall aims to enhance the quality of learning for visitors in line with project objectives, as well as to increase individual Tour Guides' local work experience and skills including:

- Tour delivery skills such as understanding how to successfully engage different types of visitors in experiential activities that highlight refugee experience
- Knowledge about current global refugee migration movements, issues and relevant Australian/international human rights law, and Australian government immigration policy
- Ability to manage difficult situations (eg. visitor expressions of emotional distress)
- Understanding of their personal needs in relation to sharing aspects of their refugee journey and ways to manage their own self-care.

Tour Guide training has aimed to support the employability of Tour Guides by providing them with training that links to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) unit of competency: *Strategies to Communicate with People in a Humanitarian and Refugee Context*. This supports entry into a range of AQF Certificate qualifications such as Community Services training.

Tour Guide training sessions have varied in length and forms of delivery between 2014 to 2018. Training sessions each year begin in the two months prior to RCIMN installation and more intensive on-site training and mentoring begins after installation.

Training sessions that have taken place each year include:

### 1. INDUCTION TRAINING

Training includes information about the Cumberland Local Government Area; project background (aims, objectives, components, project partners); details of the RCIMN tour including details about tour stops and ideas about experiential learning; completion of employment forms (employee contract/volunteer application form, tax file number declaration, Working with Children Check, bank account details, superannuation, availability). Council Community Development staff have delivered the major part of this training 2014 to 2018.

### 2. ACCIDENTAL COUNSELLOR TRAINING

A framework for understanding the current issues and challenges faced by refugees and key terms used to describe the refugee experience. The training has provided tips and skills for recognising and dealing with emotional response by tour participants. This training has also served to help Tour Guides be more aware of managing their own reactions and how their personal experiences may affect them when delivering the tours. STARTTS has delivered a major part of this training between 2014 to 2018.

### 3. EXHIBITION GUIDING SKILLS

Training in basic principles and skills of exhibition guiding including experiential learning; communicating successfully with different types of visitors (e.g. adults or school children); sharing one's own story to highlight RCIMN objectives while also maintaining personal boundaries and self-care. Training for Change has delivered a major part of this training 2014 to 2018.

### 4. TOUR GUIDE MENTORING

Following RCIMN installation Tour Guides are able to begin on site rehearsal of tour delivery. Individual Tour Guide mentoring is carried out. Council and Training for Change have carried out mentoring 2014-2018. As the project has progressed over the years Tour Guides from previous years have often provided informal mentoring for new Tour Guides.

## VOLUNTEERS

In addition to people seeking asylum who have volunteered as Tour Guides, over 50 people have taken part in RCIMN as volunteers in the five years of the project's delivery. Volunteer work has assisted with 'facilitating tasks at various tour stops' such as the UNHCR stops, helping out with welcoming tour groups and getting them organised before their tour begins, and supporting administrative tasks such taking bookings and entering visitation evaluation data. Some volunteers have undertaken the role to gain work experience, some to carry out relevant work placement for courses that they are undertaking while others have volunteered out of personal interest in the project.

Some volunteers have already had considerable knowledge about the experience of refugees while others have come knowing little about the issues and people that RCIMN is concerned with. Feedback from volunteers since 2014 has indicated consistently positive experiences, with many stating that they had developed a greater connection with people from refugee backgrounds and a heightened sense of empathy.

## VISITATION

All visitation to RCIMN takes place via a guided tour. Since 2014 approaches to scheduling tours has varied to allow for different numbers of tours to take place on any single day for particular types of visitor. Since 2015, pre-booked tours for school tours and professional visits (including tours for health workers, teachers, corporate visitors and tertiary students) have been allocated to all weekday booking slots. Tours for the General Public have taken place on Saturday 'open days'.

Since 2015 primary and secondary school tours have accounted for the largest number of visitors.



## OVERALL VISITATION TRENDS

Shifts in visitor attendance numbers are largely connected to shifts in how tours are offered to particular visitor groups. Overall visitor numbers grew steadily between 2014 to 2016.

A drop in attendance by general public visitors from 899 in 2016 to 199 the following year is linked to tours being offered every 30 minutes instead of every 15 minutes, and weaker promotion and marketing of the Saturday event in 2017.

A contributing factor to the increase in overall visitor numbers has been a steady increase in school visitation and professional visitation since 2014. A significant fall in 2017 school attendance was directly linked to a strategic decision to schedule school tours to begin at half hour rather than fifteen minute intervals which had been tried in the previous year. While this reduced the number of schools attending, it also reduced pressure on scheduling and staffing and increased the possibility to keep tours to the time that was allocated for visits.

The following table shows a breakdown of the visitation over the past five years:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total visitors</b>	<b>1140</b>	<b>2139</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>1442</b>	<b>2146</b>
School students	Not reported	1187	1868	1024	1340
Accompanying teachers	Not reported	N/A	N/A	N/A	101
General public	Not reported	615	899	199	400
Professional tours	28	337	233	219	305

*School students queue to simulate registering their families with the UNHCR, 2017*



## SCHOOL VISITATION

Since 2015 school tours have been the major form of visitation to RCIMN with 129 school visits recorded from 2014-2018. School tours are usually booked out so that the number of school tours that are delivered matches the capacity of the project to deliver them. The content and delivery of school tours are adapted to suit Stage 3 primary school students (Years 5 and 6) and high school students.

A notable feature of school visitation is a very low number of visits by government schools. School visits have been promoted via 'cold calling' and emails to schools inside and outside of Cumberland LGA. Local government schools were invited to attend individually and contacts provided by the NSW Education Department website 'Roads to Refuge' have been used to contact interested teachers. The Edmund Rice Centre promoted RCIMN tours through Catholic schools. A small group of NSW Education Department staff working on multicultural issues attended an RCIMN tour in 2016. They reported to Council staff that the tour was a highly relevant resource for primary and high school students.

Reasons for low visitation by government schools have not been fully researched. Feedback from local government schools to the Council project team have indicated a prohibitive concern amongst teachers in local government schools about bringing students to RCIMN who may themselves have experienced refugee trauma.

Many non-government schools are repeat visitors and some schools bring very large numbers of students so that school tours may become booked out very quickly on any given weekday. While the level of repeat visitation is an indication of the project success and may also contribute to ongoing social impact of the project in those school communities that attend, it may also mean that opportunities for schools that have not previously taken part are reduced.



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## PROFESSIONAL VISITATION

RCIMN tours for visitors with particular professional interest have been offered in some form since 2014, beginning in the first year with tours for Council employees and NSW Police Force recruits, and extending to other professional areas subsequently.

Since 2015 Council has partnered with NSW Refugee Health Service to provide RCIMN tours that include activities tailored to suit the particular concerns of people in health professions whose work brings them into contact with people from refugee backgrounds.

Other professionals including school teachers, tertiary educators, Cumberland Council staff and Councillors as well as Council workers from other LGAs and people from a variety of other professions have taken part in the Professional Tours which have maintained a high level of visitation.

## OPEN DAYS

In addition to weekday tours RCIMN has also held open days such as the 2018 Celebration Day that include RCIMN general public tours alongside general public participation in community events that are delivered on the RCIMN site (including food stalls and community group information and demonstration stalls). Open days allow general public visitation on tours throughout the day.

The open days were also identified as an important way to continue connection and direct involvement in the project with refugee community groups, many of whom may not want to participate in a tour (as this was too close to their personal experience). Community activities provide opportunities for visitors to engage with local refugee community groups. The sharing of food, music and dance performance and traditional activities such as kite making are practical ways to help people from different backgrounds to connect with each other. This also helps to improve cross-cultural understanding and showcase the positive contribution refugees make to their local community.

Since 2014 there has been a single open day on the first Saturday of RCIMN. In 2018 community groups that took part in the open day but did not serve food were located in the adjoining public park outside the confines of RCIMN. This allowed people in the local community who may not have been aware of RCIMN to hear about the event and to take part in the cross-cultural activities of the Celebration Day.

Groups involved in the community open days 2014-2018 have included:

- Australian Afghan Hassanian Youth Association
- The Cultural Society Bosnia & Herzegovina NSW
- Somali Welfare and Cultural Association
- African Hunting & Drumming Group
- House of Welcome
- Alliance of Philippine Community Organisations
- Cumberland Tamil Society
- Aunty's Ginger Tonic
- Kateb Hazara Association
- Djebena Coffees

## MEDIA

The spread and level of media coverage of RCIMN from 2014-2018 has been consistent, though not particularly high, especially large scale media. The purpose of seeking media coverage has been to support major project objectives to raise awareness of refugee issues and counter mainstream media misrepresentation of refugee issues.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Media/ Social Media</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>
TV	0	1	2	1	0
Radio	8	4	6	4	4
Newspaper	6	5	6	6	3
Online media		3	3	2	3
Website Traffic	4878	5365	N/A	3705	N/A
Other	9 minute documentary, ABC/SBS social media, Facebook and Partner Organisation Social Media	14 minute YouTube Video and a 3 minute Promotional YouTube Video			One Good Thing campaign featuring positive stories of local community members and Tour Guides

Media coverage has also been sought to promote the RCIMN refugee community activities that take place on open days and which have the potential to connect many more people from within as well as outside Cumberland.

In 2018 Council commissioned a 'story package' to the media exploring the notion of 'One Good Thing' experienced by people on their journey as refugees and seeking asylum. This featured positive stories of local community members and Tour Guides such as arriving in Australia and being able to

set up in small business or being supported to learn yoga for the first time. Media coverage for the 'One Good Thing' campaign was highly successful in focusing attention on the human element of refugee issues. This strongly supported the project objectives to increase public awareness and empathy, and present an alternative to stereotypical images of refugees and people seeking asylum that is often found in mainstream media.

One of the story panels from the One Good Thing campaign, 2018

**Hedayat Osyan**  
From: Afghanistan  
Arrived in Australia: 2009

arrived on Christmas Island in December 2009. I was 17 and was detained for three months. Finally, I was released in February 2010 and came to Sydney to live with my aunt and uncle. I was not only financially but also a guide in starting my life in Australia. To have Afghanistan's issues, community and find me means to proper education at home. When I came here, I was struggling to know about my own language, to drive, English, to know who to go to.

I was thinking I should go to TAFE or Sydney College, but my uncle pointed me towards a man called Ali Reza Yousefzadeh. All were very helpful to me, and told me I had to go to high school if I wanted to go to university. He called me every week to check in on me, and my uncle became like family members. But my passion was about helping other people. He established RCIMN in his home area in Afghanistan, not only the buildings but the whole infrastructure - the books, the pens, everything.

All in all, I became very motivated to go to university at the University of Canberra, where I studied a Bachelor of Public and International Relations. In 2015 I received a scholarship for an Honours degree in Area and Design, which I finished in 2018. I then had to go to the US, I then worked for the US at The University of Canberra next year.

Last July I established my thing business, Nick Tiling Services. This, in itself, means something good, and this business card means a great deal to me.

“Last July I established my thing business, Nick Tiling Services. This, in itself, means something good, and this business card means a great deal to me.”

I always say that Australia is my country now, because in my own country I was considered a second class citizen and always felt like a stranger. But since I came here I feel welcome. That's why I try to give to my community because life is no longer tough now. It's my turn to give something back to the community.

ONE GOOD THING



## 4. Evaluating the social impact of Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood

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A main purpose of the RCIMN Longitudinal Study is to **evaluate the social impact of the project for all stakeholders**. By definition, social impact is an inherently qualitative measure that deepens insight into the outcomes of a project. The social impact of a community project can be defined as the effect that it has on the lives and wellbeing of the people for whom it is carried out. Measuring social impact involves identifying and measuring change that results from the project at an individual and/or community level. Indicators of social impact are directly linked to project objectives. An understanding of social impact can be extended by monitoring indicators of social impact over time.

### 4.1 RCIMN PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Indicators for measuring the social impact of RCIMN are directly linked to its stated overall project objectives.

The two overarching RCIMN Project aims 2014 – 2018 have been to:

1. Develop greater understanding and support for refugees in Australia.
2. Empower and create a greater sense of connection and engagement amongst local communities and individuals who are involved in the project including Tour Guides, volunteers and project partners.

RCIMN Project objectives were to:

- Increase support for refugee community members in the Cumberland area (and the broader community) and enhance collaboration between services supporting refugee communities
- Increase understanding of human rights and international law (right to protection)
- Raise awareness about refugee and humanitarian crisis issues
- Challenge negative stereotypes and dispel common myths about refugees portrayed in mainstream media and current political debate
- Improve understanding of the realities of life in a refugee camp and urban environment and the challenges facing refugees in their resettlement journey

Stated project pathways to achieving the objectives have been to:

- Engage local refugee communities in Cumberland in the design and implementation of the project, and
- Provide an experiential learning environment for visitors to RCIMN



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## IDENTIFYING AND MEASURING RCIMN SOCIAL IMPACT 2014 – 2018

Evaluation of RCIMN social impact for this study has included thematic analysis of:

- Qualitative in-depth stakeholder discussions conducted in August/September 2018
- RCIMN survey/questionnaire feedback collected 2014-2018
- Uniform RCIMN evaluation survey trialled with all visitor groups in 2018

### 4.2 QUALITATIVE EVALUATION 2018: IN-DEPTH STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

Semi-structured in-depth discussions were carried out by Training For Change in group and one-to-one settings with people representing the range of stakeholders who had participated in RCIMN 2014-2018.

In depth discussion sessions were held with representatives of:

- Tour Guides
- Council staff
- Refugee community members
- School teachers
- Project partners

In depth discussions were semi structured, allowing sufficient time and flexibility for people to consider and share detailed personal insights into the impact of their participation in RCIMN at many levels.

Open ended questioning in all discussions was structured around the same path of qualitative inquiry:

1. Why did you (or your group/organisation) participate in RCIMN?
2. What changed as a result of participation?
3. What made that change happen?
4. What will you do (or what will happen now) as a result of that change?



## 4.2.1 OVERALL EMERGENT THEMES

A striking feature of discussions with all stakeholders was the direct mirroring of project objectives and congruence with general visitor feedback that emerged in response to open ended inquiry.

Four key themes were repeatedly cited by participants across all stakeholder groups when describing the impact of RCIMN:

1. Raised awareness about refugee and humanitarian crisis issues.
2. Reduced or dispelled negative stereotypes and common myths about refugees that had been frequently observed in mainstream media and political debate.
3. Increased empathy for the experience of people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.
4. Increased sense of connection with people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.

### CONTEXTUAL RESPONSE

How key social impacts were identified or understood varied according to the particular context of individual experience.



#### Complementary social impact

In the case of some themes, a complementary view of resulting social impacts emerged, which was linked to the respondents' particular role in RCIMN and of the refugee experience itself. For example, while a majority of general visitors described the raising of their own awareness about refugee and humanitarian crisis issues as an important social impact of the project, Tour Guides listed the same social impact from their point of view of having raised the awareness of RCIMN visitors, and hence Australian people in general, about their personal experience (that of the Guides) of refugee and humanitarian crises.

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## Shared social impact

In the case of some repeatedly cited themes, a mutually shared social impact emerged. For example, a high number of respondents across all groups described feeling an increased sense of human connection with people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds that they planned to act upon in simple ways such as taking action to make refugees “welcome”.

At the same time, Tour Guides described a greater sense of connection that grew with visitors and the broader population that had helped to reduce their personal fears of connecting with ordinary Australian people. In turn, this had encouraged them to take a greater role in community activities such as volunteering in the 2018 Cherry Blossom Festival run by Cumberland Council in the Auburn Botanic Gardens.

## Life changing social impact

Amongst all RCIMN stakeholders and visitor groups, RCIMN Tour Guides reported the greatest overall social impact from participation in the project. While recognising the hardships and trauma that those Tour Guides still living under temporary visa regime requirements endure, most Tour Guides described what they saw as profoundly positive impacts that had resulted from their participation.

In most cases, they felt that this experience had the power to make long lasting positive change in their lives. In addition to the overall social impacts of the project linked to raising knowledge and awareness of refugee issues, there were highly practical social impacts for Tour Guides along with deeply personal psycho-social outcomes that had direct and in many cases, immediate positive impacts on daily life.

Every aspect of the RCIMN process to recruit, appoint and manage the Tour Guide positions was cited as a powerful step in increasing individuals’ insight, knowledge and confidence to work or to apply for work in Australia. In many cases it provided a direction and incentive to undertake further study.

The local work experience that could now be listed on personal resumes and the skills (in particular communication skills) that had resulted from Tour Guide training and their successful delivery of tours to many different audiences was an important positive contribution to individual prospects of finding employment. Many Tour Guides were able to point to jobs that they had won, including jobs in Council, as being a direct result of the confidence and experience that they gained through RCIMN.

**Tour Guides described in enthusiastic and heartfelt detail the impact that taking part in RCIMN had made on their emotional and psychological wellbeing. The friendships that had been formed as the result of taking part, the respect and empathy that they encountered when sharing their personal stories of trauma and resilience, the broadening view that they had themselves gained of Australian life and attitudes, and the welcome that they had been made to feel were all social impacts that Guides saw as life-changing.**



## MAKING SOCIAL IMPACT HAPPEN

When asked about what had made change happen, two themes were repeatedly cited across all groups:

- The sharing by Tour Guides of their real stories and
- The experiential nature of the activities for visitors

Once again, these two themes directly mirrored RCIMN stated project pathways to achieving project objectives:

- Engage local refugee communities in Cumberland in the design and implementation of the project
- Provide an experiential learning environment for visitors to RCIMN

These two themes were also experienced in complementary ways by Tour Guides and visitors. Visitors cited impact resulting from their shock or surprise at certain tour experiences such as difficulties in gaining entry past a border guard into the refugee camp, or powerful emotion they felt on hearing the stories that Tour Guides shared of their personal refugee experiences.

At the same time, Tour Guides themselves described aspects of the psychosocial impact of their participation. Many reported feeling strengthened or gaining a sense of 'relief' as the result of sharing their experience of refugee trauma in the atmosphere of safe and respectful listening that RCIMN had provided. Rather than being "re-traumatizing" as some guides had been warned, the telling of the experiences that they chose to share was a source of recognition and acknowledgement that many felt reduced some of the damaging effects of past trauma.



Visitors listening to Tour Guides in the urban refugee simulation, 2018

## 4.2.2 IN DEPTH DISCUSSIONS: TOUR GUIDES

Semi-structured in-depth discussions were held with 14 RCIMN Tour Guides via two separate group discussions and 2 separate individual discussions.

The group included two guides who participated in the 2014 community consultation and storyboard forums, a number of guides who had participated more than once in RCIMN, and guides who had participated for the first time. The majority in the group live in or near the Cumberland LGA. Participants included people who currently hold permanent Australian residence visa status and people with temporary residence status including people seeking asylum with TPV (Temporary Protection Visa) and SHEV (Safe Haven Enterprise Visa) visa status.

Discussion allowed individual Tour Guides to reflect on four main questions:

1. Why did you participate? (*personal hopes and motivation for participating in RCIMN*)
2. What changed? (*the impact of participation on personal and social wellbeing*)
3. What made that change happen? (*contributing factors to the social impact*)
4. What difference will that change make? (*practical and ongoing social impact*)

Overall, the responses that Tour Guides shared in discussion strongly aligned with RCIMN project objectives and with findings from other evaluation carried out 2014-2018 including feedback surveys that were carried out over those years with a variety of visitors (RCIMN outcomes evaluation 2014 to 2018).

## EMERGENT THEMES

Through discussion, Tour Guides identified three main themes into which social impact from participation in RCIMN were connected to:

1. Raising awareness
2. Psycho social wellbeing
3. Employment



## THEME 1: RAISING AWARENESS

*“I really want to get out there and make sure people know what happened, a good opportunity to be part of Cumberland with a huge number of refugees living here... educating the community was first for me. That helped me overcome. I wasn’t going to be scared, I was going to do my job.”*

– Tour Guide

*“I am not a citizen yet so I am not comfortable to do lots of things. There are lots of hardships and challenges. I can’t study at uni because of financial hardship, can’t bring my family here, living without family for 8 years, and people should know this. This is a chance to let them know.”*

– Tour Guide

### Q: Why did you participate?

All Tour Guides linked their desire to increase the awareness of refugee and asylum seeker experiences amongst ordinary Australian people as a prime motivating factor for participating in RCIMN. Tour Guides were in agreement that there are very few opportunities to tell their stories.

Tour Guides described a wish to refute prevailing negative media characterisation of refugees and give visitors a true picture of refugee experience by explaining the reasons that they themselves had been forced to flee, the kinds of experiences that refugee flight had imposed on them and the difficulties that refugees and people seeking asylum continue to face during settlement.

Tour Guides repeatedly pointed to the difference they observed between the beliefs or superficial

understanding that many ordinary Australian people have of refugee flight and the reality of human experience.

Helping ordinary Australian people to understand that it is legal to seek asylum and the legal obligations that Australia has to uphold human rights law was seen by Guides as a practical form of advocacy that they could undertake as a Tour Guide.

## Q: What changed?

Tour Guides stationed at every stage of the RCIMN tour observed a heightened awareness across all types of RCIMN visitor groups about the experience of refugees and the causes for refugee flight. Many Tour Guides observed shock and surprise amongst visitors when learning details of particular refugee experience such as information about everyday life in refugee camps, what it is like to travel in an unsafe boat in order to seek asylum or how it feels to be in indefinite detention. Often visitors told Tour Guides that they had only known about refugees from the media, that that they had known very little about the reality of the experiences and that they had never talked with someone who had been a refugee about their experiences.

Tour Guides noted strong engagement with Years 5 and 6 students which they saw as particularly important because they considered young people to be the greatest potential 'change-makers'. A frequent comment from visitors, in particular from school students, was that 'refugees are just like us'. This kind of comment was seen by Tour Guides as a powerful indication of the positive impact that their personal contributions to the tour had made.

Tour Guides noted many visitors expressing increased awareness of the complex of trauma and difficulties that refugees face and a stated belief that they could or should do something to help refugees. The kinds of help spoken of ranged from being more kind and welcoming to refugees, telling other people realistic information about refugee experience doing things such as fundraising to support refugee support organisations or advocating at a political level for protection of the human rights of refugees.

*“Learning our personal experience, they were shocked about what we go through after we come to Australia... many kids are still offshore in detention centres. I said to them ‘It’s not illegal to seek protection’ but most kids thought it was a crime to come to Australia for protection.”*

– Tour Guide

*“Sometimes they observe you top to bottom looking at you. They do that! I usually say, ‘look around, who is a refugee here?’ They can’t tell. I ask ‘Why can’t you tell? They are the same like you, they’re human beings.’ It makes them think!”*

– Tour Guide

*“If you want change, start with the kids”*

– Tour Guide

Student writes message of support at the end of the tour



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**Q: What made change happen?**

*“It can give them a positive view about refugees and asylum seekers because it is different when you read something in a book or you hear something on TV or news. When you hear someone directly talking about his or her experience, a human level, face to face about what you have experienced, I think it makes a lot of difference...”*

– Tour Guide

The overwhelming observation by Tour Guides was that ‘personal connection’ and the sharing of their own stories was the main factor that had raised visitor awareness. Visitors told Guides repeatedly that hearing their personal stories had a powerful impact on them. This included people who had already felt empathy for refugee plights as well as others who had either not been particularly interested or had been opposed in certain ways to refugee intakes.

The direct involvement of visitors in role play and ‘first hand’ experiences (such as attempted entry into a country of asylum) was observed by Tour Guides to have a major impact on visitors. These interactive experiences engaged people of all ages in a highly critical appraisal of the refugee experience and promoted thoughtful and deeply respectful questioning of Tour Guides.

*“He was the border guard asking for things from people to get across the border and they would give him all their 5 things. We talked about it and came up with a question – ‘Ok this is your first step, you just escaped your country and you’re ready to give away all the 5 things just to cross the border! What are you going to do for the rest of your journey if you give away all the 5 things?’”*

– Tour Guide

Tour Guides reported that many visitors expressed surprise at the wide range of refugee experiences that were highlighted in RCIMN and that their own understanding of what it ‘refugee’ means or refers to had changed.

**Q: What difference will that change make?**

Tour Guides reported that many visitors who said that they were deeply ‘moved’ or ‘touched’ by the new insight that the tour had given

them into refugee experience and human rights left them with a will to become more involved in directly supporting refugees and advocating for their human rights. Guides felt that in particular, the change in understanding and increased empathy amongst schoolchildren had the power to shift broad community attitudes in the longer term and allow Australia to provide welcome and support to refugees.

*“We promoted the sense of humanity and empathy in a lot of people. One ten year-old boy said ‘if I meet a refugee I will respect him and help him.’ A lot of visitors get into tears when they hear these stories.”*

– Tour Guide





Tour Guides share a joke during a break, 2017

## THEME 2: PSYCHO SOCIAL WELLBEING

### Q: Why did you participate?

#### Human connection

Many guides described a loss of personal connection and alienation from the human networks of daily life that resulted from the refugee experience, as a threat to their personal wellbeing. Social isolation was a common experience. Some Tour Guides who did have paid work described long hours of shift work that reduced the possibility for taking part in social and community life. Others who were not employed described their situation of knowing few people and spending long periods of time alone.

Participation in RCIMN was seen by many guides as a potential pathway to increasing social connection, learning more about and building personal networks in their local community.

#### Communication barriers and negative mainstream media message

Tour Guides had a serious concern about apparent barriers to communication between people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds and the broader Australian community that they saw as connected in part to negative media reporting.

Tour Guides who were seeking asylum and had temporary visa status feared the reaction of Australian people to their situation and some described experiencing a level of shame if forced to reveal that they were seeking asylum. This had led in some cases to a reluctance to communicate with Australian people or to reveal the truth about one's own visa status.

Participation in RCIMN was seen to have offered a direct and safe way to connect and communicate with ordinary Australian people that had allowed them to counter negative stereotypes and misconceptions about refugees and the experience of seeking asylum.

*“I used to be very shy, especially if someone introduced me as an asylum seeker, someone who came on a boat. I used to think negative things about myself. But doing this project and understanding the importance of talking to people about this experience... I am feeling very confident and I can speak in front of people about my experience.”*

– Tour Guide

### Depression, stress, anxiety

Many Tour Guides identified pressures of refugee and settlement experiences as the source of depression, stress or anxiety. Fear of negative Australian attitudes had prevented some from feeling safe or comfortable, and many had feared speaking publicly about refugee issues prior to taking part in RCIMN. This including people whose work prior to leaving their country of origin had included a level of public speaking and communication.

Many Tour Guides felt that depression, stress and anxiety resulted in part from the personal disempowerment they felt that was linked to loss of social connection, employment and 'identity'. These feelings were further exacerbated by targeted vilification of refugees in mainstream media. Many Tour Guides felt that taking part in RCIMN would help them to re-assert a sense personal power and help them to take an active role in challenging negative attitudes towards refugees.

### Q: What changed?

*“Now I know that there are good people in the community, they will not judge me. They treat me as a human. It has been really positive. I am really happy for this project and I feel relief.”*

– Tour Guide

*“When you know you’ve shared your experience ... the more people find out, somebody will do something to help. That helps me a lot with my trauma.”*

– Tour Guide

*“The main thing is that at the moment I am involved with the community and I am really happy.”*

– Tour Guide

Many were shocked to find that ordinary Australian people wanted to know the truth about their experience and said they now felt more able to communicate honestly with Australian people. Some were surprised to find that it was safe to talk about the experience of seeking asylum to empathetic ears. Tour Guides described a 'normalising' process that had taken place and said that they no longer felt shame about their refugee status and were less scared of making local social and community connections. Some said they felt less stress and were now more able to 'be themselves' following the Tour Guide experience.

Many Tour Guides said that while they had been warned that talking about their past experiences of trauma may be upsetting or difficult for them, they had in fact experienced the reverse, finding strength and empowerment in telling their story. Over the time that they were delivering the tours, some Tour Guides discovered that they could talk about emotional issues while remaining safe. Tour Guides described gaining 'insight into my own trauma' and feeling increased happiness and a sense of relief as the result of their participation.

Almost all of the Tour Guides said that they felt more confident in general and more able to communicate with Australian people and to be accepted into the local community. Tour Guides described a feeling of being active in community debate about human rights and that they now felt that they could take part in such discussion effectively and safely.

Tour Guides had built new, valued friendships with each other and extended their knowledge and connection with partner organisations such as RACS and House of Welcome which in some cases had provided them with crucial support at moments of crisis. Some Tour Guides had made connection with schools and local community groups or organisations through which they were able to carry out subsequent advocacy for refugees and build lasting relationships.

**Q: What made change happen?**

Tour Guides ascribed a powerful positive impact on their personal wellbeing resulting from the acknowledgement they received in telling and sharing their stories. Being supported to share their personal stories and demonstrate their resilience in the psychologically safe environment created for RCIMN was a source of confidence and empowerment.

Through sharing their stories Tour Guides felt more connected with Australian communities and able to challenge myths and misunderstanding surrounding refugee issues that they may have previously been silent about.

*“I was kind of unsure about how people would judge me... but you knew there was support even if things go wrong or someone tried to attack you about how you came to Australia or your visa status... you were not just by yourself.”*

– Tour Guide

*Tour Guides share in small groups during training to prepare for the tours, 2017*



Many Tour Guides said that while they had initially been apprehensive about sharing their stories, the way that the daily project operations were run by Council, such as the morning group briefings, and the attention and encouragement they received to recognise their personal needs and boundaries – what to share, when to share and when not to share – increased their confidence and safety.

*“You feel like you are with the people with whom you can connect easily because of the emotions, the feelings. If you want to talk about anything you find that other people are also saying what you want to say, and it gives you confidence.”*

– Tour Guide

Tour Guides said that they felt respected by Council staff as demonstrated by the genuine input that their own experience provided into all aspects of the tour. Experiencing this kind of respect was seen to build personal self-esteem and willingness to be active in Council and local activities.

Many Tour Guides saw the teamwork in which they took part throughout RCIMN, being together, looking out

for each other, learning each other’s stories as an important contributing factor to the overall impact of the project.

Tour Guide training was seen as an essential support for Guide’s successful participation in the project overall, their capacity to share their stories, their development of communication and group management skills and their deepened insight into the impact of refugee trauma and pathways to growth.

### **Q: What difference will that change make?**

At the same time as feeling that they had a better informed insight into Australian society, Tour Guides felt more positive, regardless of their visa status, about their own settlement in Australia.

Connections that they made with local and RCIMN partner organisations and with each other and learning about the empathy and interest that many Australian people had in the lives of refugees and people seeking asylum, provided encouragement for Tour Guides to take an active role in their local and broader community life.

## THEME 3: EMPLOYMENT

### Q: Why did you participate?

#### Doing meaningful work

Loss of a past professional or work role along with the satisfaction and sense of personal identity that one's work role can provide was seen as a significant obstacle to individual wellbeing by most Tour Guides. Many Tour Guides had worked in jobs linked to education or human services in their countries of origin. Participation in RCIMN was seen to offer an opportunity to do something meaningful and satisfying that in many cases aligned with past work or personal interests and ethical beliefs.

*“It was the first time that I was speaking publicly and sharing my story in a safe respectful environment. After that I did it a lot, schools, communities, media.”*

– Tour Guide

#### Improved job seeking capacity

Most Tour Guides had faced great difficulty in gaining work in Australia, paid or unpaid, and had been frustrated by the almost universal requirement for job applicants to have local work experience, even when applying for volunteer roles. Securing a Tour Guide position was seen as a way to get valuable local work experience that could be included on a resume and help to get 'a foot in the door'.

#### Improved 'employability'

Tour Guides who had not been able to find work had experienced a loss of confidence in their ability to work in Australia leading some to become almost too fearful to apply for work at all. In addition, many felt a need to improve their confidence in speaking standard Australian English to be sufficiently confident to find work. Taking part in RCIMN was seen as a way to increase self-confidence and communication skills (including English language proficiency), as well as an opportunity to learn about Australian job-seeking and workplace systems.

Almost all Tour Guides had applied for appointment to the role as the result of encouragement via a community contact such as someone working in ASCON or Auburn Library. For many Tour Guides RCIMN was their first job application since arriving in Australia and it had been the encouragement of their community contact that was the impetus for them to apply.



## Q: What changed?

### Job satisfaction and meaning

Tour Guides described feeling increased energy, sense of personal resilience and satisfaction through carrying out their work in RCIMN.

Tour Guides felt more confident to look for work and felt that they were more employable, describing increased work skills including better communication skills and English language proficiency.

Tour Guides increased their understanding of Australian work systems and workplace culture.

Tour Guides gained local experience in employment that links to a wide variety of jobs including community work, teaching and training, customer service and events management that they are able to list on their resume.

Tour Guides became better connected with Council employment and volunteering opportunities and local organisations providing job seeking support such as ASCON.

## Q: What made change happen?

### Recruitment

Recruitment was a formal but positive process that allowed applicants to feel sufficiently safe and supported to apply successfully.

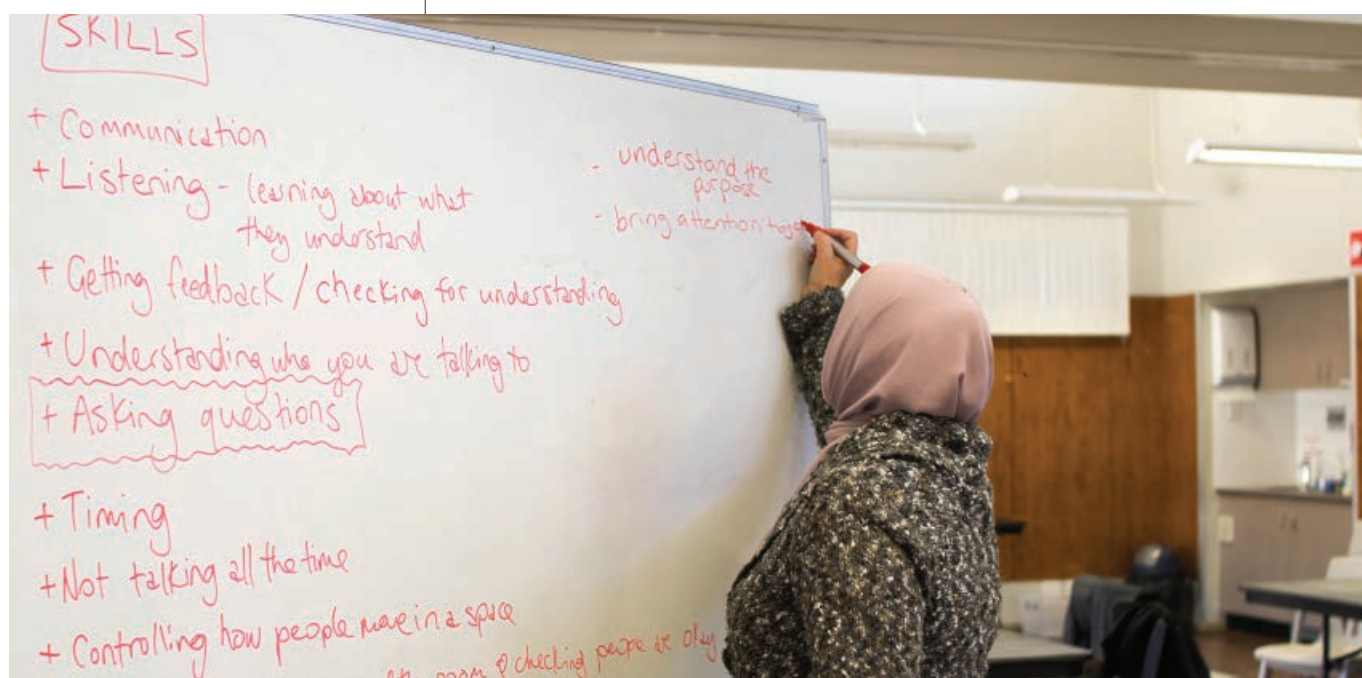
The group interview process was seen to 'take the pressure off' and prior instructions and information about how the interview would be conducted allowed applicants to feel well prepared.

*"It was my first job with a formal recruitment process, it was very competitive, I was on a Bridging Visa without work rights. But it gave you a sense of applying for something and getting involved in the work."*

– Tour Guide

The interview was conducted in a 'sensitive' way that made participants feel comfortable and confident: 'They knew who we were'.

The group brainstorms tour guiding skills during training in 2017



## Training

Tour Guide training and mentoring has taken place since 2014. Training addresses communication skills such as how to work with groups, it provides information about current global movements of people and Australian international human rights law, and helps to individuals to learn ways to identify their own needs for 'safety' and approaches to self-care. RCIMN training links to the Australian Qualifications Framework and working in RCIMN Tour Guide position adds to individuals' overall employability covering a wide range of generally applicable skills including communication skills, managing groups, teamwork, understanding different audiences and dealing with difficult situations.

*“We had all these experiences but how to deliver that experience is what the training helps - how to organise what you can deliver, what you cannot if you don't want to. Because of the different age group we learn about how you should talk to them and what is your limit ... what you should or shouldn't say. It really helps you to organise yourself how to deliver our experience and how to reach the audience.”*

– Tour Guide

## Q: What difference will that change make?

### Focused career direction

Between 2014 and 2018 many Tour Guides have undertaken study such as certificate and diploma training in community services or related fields. Tour Guides described personal growth in self-confidence through their participation in RCIMN and gaining new insight into their interest in and aptitude for community and people centred work.

### Employment

Between 2014 and 2018 many Tour Guides have gone on to be employed by Council in casual, part time and full time positions and cite their experience at RCIMN as either directly or indirectly influencing their success in gaining employment.

Many guides have taken part in other Council employment and training opportunities such as Flavours of Auburn, and volunteered in Cumberland Council events such as Africultures and the Cherry Blossom Festival. Undertaking these kinds of volunteer jobs has not only provided good work experience but has continued to support individual mental health and wellbeing.

*“After coming here I realised this is my passion, something I'm going to do. That's why I decided to do community services and social work.”*

– Tour Guide



School students on a tour in 2014

### 4.2.3 IN DEPTH DISCUSSIONS: SCHOOL TEACHERS

Semi-structured individual in-depth discussions were held with 4 school teachers from four separate schools (two primary schools, two high schools) who had accompanied a school visit to RCIMN 2018.

Discussion focussed on four main questions:

1. Why did you bring your students to RCIMN? (*hopes and motivation for participating in RCIMN*)
2. What changed for students? (*social impact*)
3. What made change happen? (*contributing factors to the social impact*)
4. What difference will that change make? (*practical and ongoing social impact*)

## EMERGENT THEMES

Teachers identified three main categories into which social impact from participation in RCMIN for students fell:

1. Increased awareness of refugee experience and issues
2. Increased sense of connection with people who are refugees or seeking asylum
3. Increased sense of personal responsibility for refugees and people seeking asylum



## Q: Why did you bring your students to RCIMN?

### Increased awareness of refugee experience and issues

All teachers linked their choice to visit with a curriculum subject area such as English (Years 5 and 6), History or to non-curriculum teaching areas such as social justice, religious studies, ethics.

### Learning through experience

Teachers saw the RCIMN visit an opportunity for students to extend their worldview via an experiential alternative to other ways of learning – ‘to walk in someone else’s shoes’.

### Promote empathy

Teachers described a visit to RCIMN as ‘a coming of age’ for their students who were usually from backgrounds of very different life experience from the lives they learned about on the tour. Teachers saw a visit to RCIMN as a way to promote empathy for refugees and people seeking asylum that would encourage students to feel a sense of connection with refugees and supported their learning about social and civic responsibility.

## Q: What changed?

### Increased sense of connection with people from refugee backgrounds

All teachers described students shock on learning the details and realities of daily life for people at many different stages in the refugee journey. Most student visitors had grown up in Australia and few had appeared to have had previous contact with people from refugee backgrounds. One teacher whose class had come by train noted that the walk from Auburn train station to RCIMN and the diversity of the community that they met there was the first major eye opener of the day for them.

Students felt a sense of greater personal connection with people who have had refugee experiences, that ‘refugees are just like me’ and that students said they wanted to talk with their family and friends about the issues and experiences they had learned about.

### Increased understanding of refugee human rights issues

Teachers described and increased awareness amongst students of refugee human rights and legal issues and that they had begun to think more critically about formal refugee policies.

*“We want to support the learning in a really practical sense - take them away from the literature and introduce them to a real experience – and the absolute key is to promote empathy and interaction and meet refugees.”*

– School teacher

*“Comments on the glass wall showed me they’d been changed. One student said ‘You guys are the heroes for the honesty of telling your story.’”*

– School teacher

*“Some of the kids later said that some of the guides seemed angry and I said, they are not angry with you, they are frustrated with life and it is our job to help.”*

– School teacher

Q: What made that change happen?

*“Being able to just go and meet the people makes it very real and tangible.”*

– School teacher

*“The experience of the schooling has a big resonance; eating, sleeping, staying. Kids are just shocked by the water situation.”*

– School teacher

*“The people walking around with us cared about us knowing their story. That was great because our whole underlying theme was ‘refugees are just like you and me.’”*

– School teacher

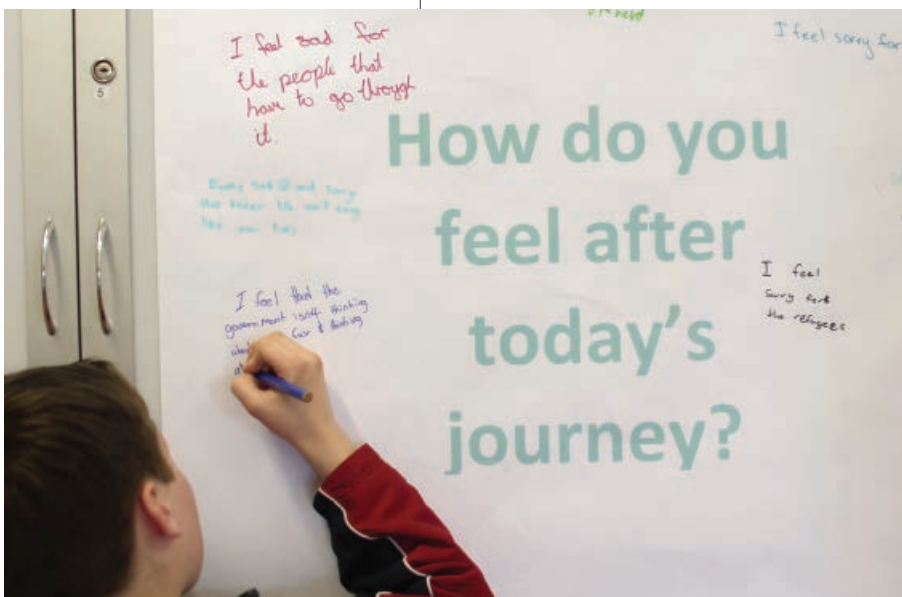
*“People telling the stories to children and making the relationships... we don’t get the opportunity to hear the joy they bring. I saw it on the man who introduced the students to the experience this year – his eyes shone and I was so pleased.”*

– School teacher

Overwhelmingly, teachers said that it was the experiential nature of the tour and a realisation that the people who were guiding them through each step of the tour had themselves had those experiences that impressed the students so profoundly. Experiential activities in the tour such as attempting entry into a refugee camp or being forced to bargain for travel documents, for water or other life essentials gave students a real, if small taste of the kinds of difficulties and dangers that refugees face.

At the same time Tour Guides looked after students throughout the tour, kept them safe at every step and shared their personal stories. This contributed to the sense of real human connection that grew between Tour Guides and student participants.

The sense of connection and feeling that ‘refugees are just like us’ was further nurtured by Tour Guides sharing not only memories of trauma but of the things they had loved about their homes.



Students write reflections in the debrief room at the end of the tour, 2017

**Q: What is the effect of that change?**

All teachers described a deepened understanding and awareness of refugee experiences and an increased interest amongst students to continue to learn more and take a more active role in debating refugee issues and sharing information. Many students said they would or had talked with families about what they saw and learned on the visit. One teacher reported receiving seven emails from parents following the excursion to RCIMN 2018 thanking the school for 'giving the kids the experience'.

A teacher who had brought classes to RCIMN for several years in a row said that following a visit students continue to raise the experience in class discussions for the rest of the school year.

The increased sense of connection and responsibility for the human rights of refugees that had developed at all schools encouraged students to actively look for ways to keep contact with the Tour Guides themselves or make contact with other refugee groups and organisations such as House of Welcome. Fundraising for refugee organisations took place at a number of schools following a visit to RCIMN. A teacher described a Year 6 event for book week not long after the RCIMN in which every child in the class wanted to focus on refugee stories.

*“One boy got up and said in class ‘When that young man was taking us through the refugee camp he said we had to choose things we would take with us at the last minute and write it on our little piece of paper. I was lying in bed last night thinking about that and how it really upset me in that moment. But when you have that in your mind a year later or even three years later, I thought - that impacts on people for their whole life long.’”*

– School teacher

*“Some students got together after the visit and said ‘what can we do for refugees?’ and started their own little group who meet up at lunchtime and come up with ideas from what they experienced at Auburn. It has been really, really positive.”*

– School teacher

*“Out of all of the educational experiences that the kids are having, this has generated incredible conversations and calls to action and fundraising and all sorts of things. They were really, really impressed by the experience.’ (Parent comment to teacher).”*

– School teacher



*“They set up stalls throughout one building on the different texts – made food, written empathy responses, interviewed people in the school community and made beautiful images and artworks like boats overcrowded with refugees. A lot of parents came.”*

– School teacher

Daily cooking items from a Somali refugee tent display



#### 4.2.4 IN DEPTH DISCUSSIONS: RCIMN PROJECT PARTNERS

*“The communities were at the centre of the original consultation in 2014. It felt like the community guided the process. Council had the structures, the community made it come alive.”*

– Project partner

Semi-structured in-depth discussions were held with 9 people representing project partner and local refugee community groups all of which had, with a single exception, participated in the 2014 community consultation processes. Their participation had included the 2014 storyboarding workshops which defined ongoing RCIMN project objectives and content.

As took place with other stakeholders, in depth discussions focused on the social impact of RCIMN, examining the hopes and motivation for involvement, the observed results of that involvement, the factors that contributed to results and the ongoing social impact.

### EMERGENT THEMES

Project partners and community groups described a continued commitment to the original RCIMN project objectives and their observations of the project’s social impact that strongly mirrored the overall responses to other stakeholder groups:

1. Raise awareness or refugee issues and human rights
2. Build empathy and connection
3. Counter negative media misconceptions

## THEME 1: RAISING AWARENESS

Raising awareness about the refugee experience was identified by all partner and community representatives as a major reason for taking part in RCIMN. This was both the major objective articulated across communities in the initial community consultation that took place in 2014, and the response from all stakeholder groups consulted the 2018 qualitative study. Project partner and community groups identified additional RCIMN outcomes that they believed extended the project's social impact.

### Community specific experience

In addition to raising awareness about broad issues of human rights and shared refugee experience community representatives pointed out that refugee experiences are not the same for everyone. The telling by each refugee community of its specific or particular history, experience and needs was seen as a necessary part of increasing public awareness. This included sharing knowledge of culturally significant and valued traditions as well as experiences of persecution or refugee flight that were seen as particular to an individual community's experience (such as long years spent in refugee camps, dangerous boat journeys or incarceration in off-shore detention).

While the sharing by Tour Guides of their personal stories was seen as a key way for raising awareness of particular community experience, additions to content that RCIMN had included in response to community input such as the 'mudhif' - a traditional Iraqi marsh house, and the Somali tent were cited as important contributions.

*"We want to share our experiences, narrate that story. Wherever you come from, every community has their story."*

– Project partner

*"We involved the women, the house became a real focus for the women – narrating their stories, talking about their own experience – how they used to build those houses – everybody wanted to be part of it – all these years later they bring their kids to see what they have experienced. The kids are surprised."*

– Project partner



*“When they came to live here they got involved in work, work, work. Until then they think Council collects the rubbish, charges you rent, has the library. Kites are something unique to Hazara people and on the community day, they see the kites and that this is something that Council does! Coming to such things people understand that Council is not just about collecting rubbish or cleaning my street.”*

– Project partner

### **Two-way awareness, Council and communities**

Community members pointed out that awareness is not a one-way process and that at the same time as raising the awareness in the broad community about refugee and humanitarian issues, refugee communities need to learn more about their local community. Activities such as the Celebration Day 2018 were seen as effective in increasing refugee communities understanding of their Council and local community.

### **Building empathy and connection**

While project partners and community groups identified a sense of connection between visitors and refugee communities that was consistently identified by all stakeholders, they noted additional aspects of this area of social impact.

*“After the tour kids are more positive to their mum and listen to instructions...“Now I understand where you come from.”*

– Project partner

### **Inter-generational connection**

For people from refugee backgrounds whose children have been born or grown up in Australia, RCIMN was seen as a unique and important way for children to gain insight into the refugee experience of their own families. By bringing their own children to tour RCIMN,

community members described being able to show rather than simply tell their children about aspects of the refugee journey, and the heritage and understanding that they wanted their children to know about. Participation in an RCIMN tour was seen to increase the respect and understanding that children had for their parents, who had been through such experiences, and to have a positive impact on family wellbeing.

*“We are living in a disconnected world these days. We need to find those opportunities to connect.”*

– Project partner

### **Cross community connection**

At the same time as community partners wanted share their community’s particular refugee experience, learning about the experiences of other refugee communities and making connections with those communities

was seen as a valuable ongoing impact of participation in RCIMN. This process was supported by connection with other Cumberland Council activities through participation by people from across refugee communities in events and activities such as Africultures, Auburn Festival, the Cherry Blossom festival and the Celebration Day that accompanied the RCIMN open days.

Relationships that formed through participation in RCIMN had led to active inter-community involvement in other kinds of religious or cultural festivals connected to public events such as Nawrouz. These kinds of social and cultural connections were seen to increase the capacity of refugee communities in Cumberland to take on active roles and find their place in broader community life. This was seen to have a positive impact on psycho social wellbeing across communities.

### Inter-agency connection

All project partner organisations and community groups identified increased knowledge of each other's services and processes and corresponding increases in their efficiency in providing support services to refugee communities as an important impact of participation in RCIMN. Links made between Council, project partners and community groups allowed for a range of operational activities to be better supported or delivered more effectively. In some cases, this meant community groups better understood how to help their members access the right services to assist their needs. Services were also better able to promote use of their service or distribute information to the people who need it.

*“Through the refugee camp I met the lawyers and started to have a relationship with them so if I had a question I knew who to ask.”*

– Project partner

### Challenging negative stereotypes

By providing refugee communities with a platform to tell their stories, partners and community groups had opportunities to engage with local communities. The RCIMN tour itself and events such as the 2018 Celebration Day and the One Good Thing publicity campaign were cited as effective ways to increase mainstream and local community interest and understanding of refugee issues and experience.

The celebration day was seen as a way to help the broader community to see the value that refugee communities bring to the local community, and an opportunity to connect with local populations and challenge negative media stereotypes.

*“The one small thing - it was good to hear those stories. People always love to hear stories first hand.”*

– Project partner

*“It's a lot more close to the heart.”*

– Project partner

*“People asked me ‘Where is Bosnia?’ Then they said ‘So refugees are not only from the middle east!’”*

– Project partner

*“We can show the other side, the positive side of the community – our own businesses, positive citizens.”*

– Project partner

*“The CEO of one executive health service said ‘Why can’t we have this in our area?’”*

– Project partner

*“Every time we do it we always get a comment like ‘You should bring it out to our hospital.’”*

– Project partner

### **Applying new awareness in the workplace**

In addition to the scheduled school tours and the general public tours that took place on open days, RCIMN offered scheduled professional tours on two consecutive Wednesdays. Tours were largely attended by a range of people in health services including doctors, nurses and other allied health workers, school teachers, and Cumberland Council staff and Councillors.

Since 2015 NSW Refugee Health has promoted participation in RCIMN through health networks and taken part in delivering parts of a tour for health professionals. An additional tour component for RCIMN 2018 was a role play delivered by NSW Refugee Health that placed tour participants in the role of newly settled refugees being taken through an introductory health screening process. In discussions that took place in debriefing sessions and in the survey responses, participants in the Professional tours indicated a high level of impact from their participation in the tour.

Many health professionals indicated that the experience would influence their work and that they planned to advocate more strongly to meet the needs of people from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds.







Messages of hope left by visitors to refugees and people seeking asylum, 2014

## 4.3 RCIMN OUTCOMES EVALUATION 2014-2018

Since RCIMN began, evaluation of project processes and outcomes has been carried out by the Council team as an integral component of an inclusive, participatory approach that upholds RCIMN objectives. Formative evaluation that took place in the initial community consultation and storyboarding workshops held in February 2014 identified the basis for subsequent project development. Ongoing process and impact evaluation has continued to contribute directly to RCIMN tour content and project processes.

In 2018 Council identified the need for an ongoing evaluation framework that would consolidate and streamline previous RCIMN quantitative and qualitative evaluation processes and increase the capacity for Council to monitor and assess the social outcomes of the project.

Concurrent with the RCIMN Longitudinal Study has been the trial of evaluation tools for inclusion in the ongoing evaluation. In addition to qualitative evaluation carried out in 2018 (see section 3) the proposed ongoing evaluation framework includes a uniform on-site Visitor Evaluation Survey for use with all RCIMN visitors (except primary school students).

This section of the report includes:

- a summary of RCIMN evaluation methodology and overall findings 2014-2018, and
- a thematic analysis of uniform RCIMN Visitor evaluation survey trial 2018.

## 4.3.1 SUMMARY OF RCIMN EVALUATION METHODOLOGY 2014-2018

### EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Council has compiled annual RCIMN final evaluation reports from 2014-2018 to provide project analysis and recommendations for continued delivery.

Consistent Evaluation Objectives have been applied to assess the extent to which overall project objectives and expected outcomes have been achieved.

Since 2014 the project's stated Evaluation Objectives have been to:

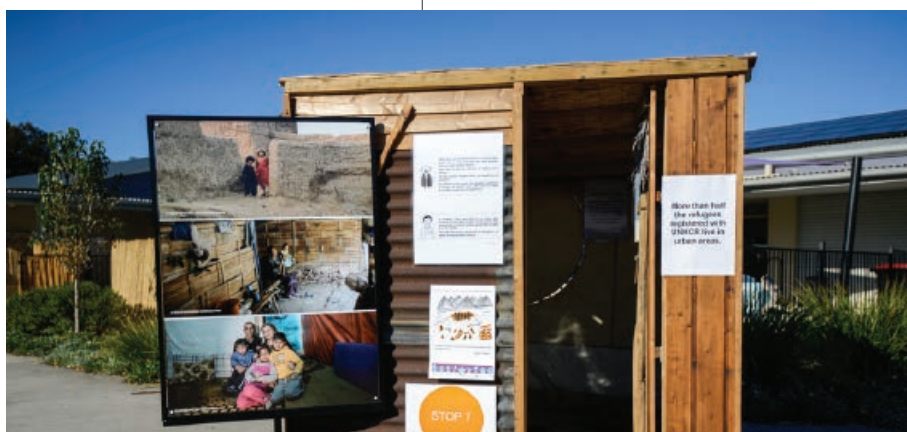
- Document the process of RCIMN
- Enable project partners to better articulate the outcomes and benefits of RCIMN
- Identify the impact of the project on the communities and individuals who were involved
- Assess the effectiveness of the Auburn RCIMN project in achieving its objectives

### IMPLEMENTING EVALUATION

While evaluation objectives have remained consistent since 2014 a varying selection of evaluation tools have been used in different combination between 2014 and 2018 to gather responses from various stakeholder groups. There has been a determined effort to collect direct input from stakeholders and visitors to monitor the social impact of RCIMN, with a range of evaluation approaches used from 2014 to 2018. In the absence of a formal evaluation framework a variety of evaluation tools have been trialled to gather visitation data and qualitative feedback that successfully reflects stakeholder and visitor experience and opinion.

On site visitor evaluation surveys have been carried out each year with different sets of questions asked of different visitor types so that, for example, teachers were asked different questions from health workers and questions varied from year to year. Tools to measure longer term social impact with general visitors and school groups such as *one month post-visit survey* or *three month post-visit survey* have asked varying questions from year to year and have not been carried out every year. Additional evaluation tools such as online Project Partner surveys and Tour Guide surveys have been used in some years but not in others and have followed varying paths of inquiry from year to year.

Nevertheless, while the variation in evaluation processes might have posed some difficulties in making comparative analysis of project outcomes, responses have been so consistent as to allow for overall response patterns to emerge.



#### Evaluation tools

Evaluation tools have included:

#### 1. Evaluation surveys:

Visitor surveys:

- General public survey
- School survey
- Health Worker/ Professional Survey

Tour Guide Surveys:

- RCIMN training feedback
- Accidental Counsellor training feedback
- Overall RCIMN experience feedback

Online Project Partner survey

Staff/Volunteer survey

1 Month Visitor Survey

3 Month Visitor Survey

3 Month Teacher Survey

2. In depth discussions

- Annual Tour Guide discussion sessions
- Annual post project Interviews with project partners
- 1 month post project phone interviews with Tour Guides to assess employment impact

3. Media monitoring

4. Observation (eg daily debriefing sessions, random visitor comments and feedback)

5. 'Message Wall' comments

### 4.3.2 SUMMARY OF RCIMN VISITOR EVALUATION SURVEY FEEDBACK 2014-2018

Feedback from Visitor evaluation surveys 2014 to 2018 carried out with stakeholder and visitor groups has repeatedly indicated a positive shift across all key project objectives as a direct result of RCIMN participation.

The single consistently applied evaluation tool across visitor types across all years has been a set of three questions in Visitor evaluation surveys 2014 to 2018. The questions ask visitors to scale any shift in their level of knowledge before and after a tour against three specific areas of knowledge and understanding:

- My understanding of why people flee their homes
- My knowledge of refugee camps or urban environments
- My knowledge about refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law

Visitors were asked to rate their comparative level of knowledge against each of the three questions 'before a tour' and 'after a tour' by circling the appropriate response:

- I had a high level of knowledge
- I had some knowledge
- I had no knowledge

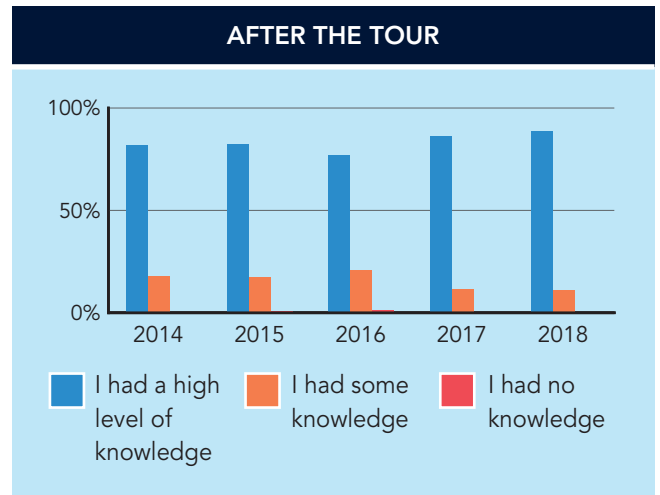
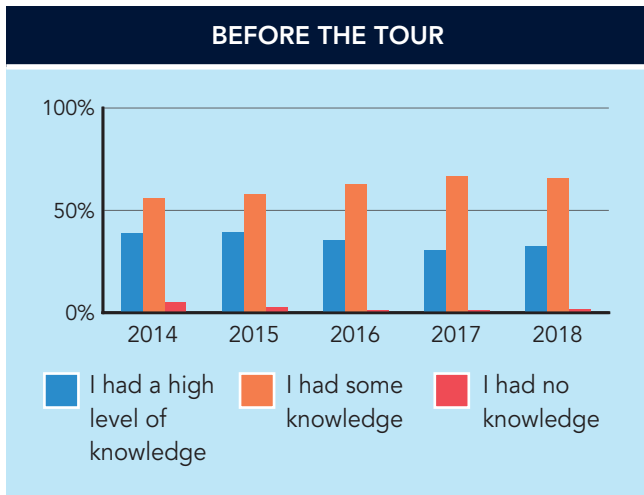
Visitor evaluation surveys were filled in on-site at the close of a tour by visitors in all tours. From 2014 to 2017 feedback from school visitors was provided by teachers accompanying primary school and high school groups rather than from individual students. In 2018 high school students also provided feedback individually on the visitor evaluation survey.

Viewed within each separate year (see Fig.1) data from the survey shows that a high proportion of individual visitors experienced a significant positive change against all project objectives each year.

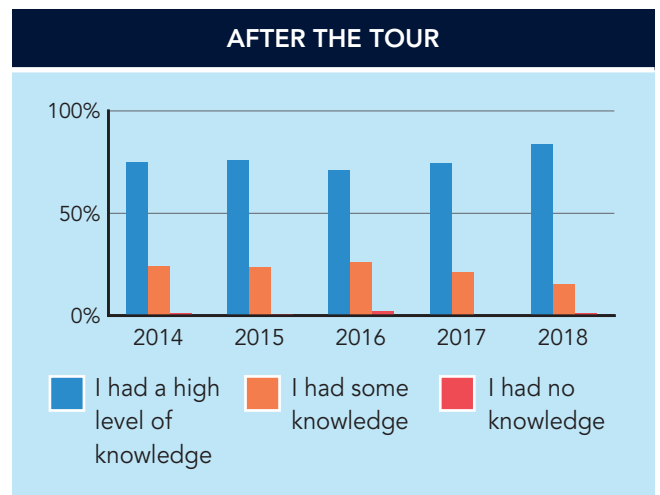
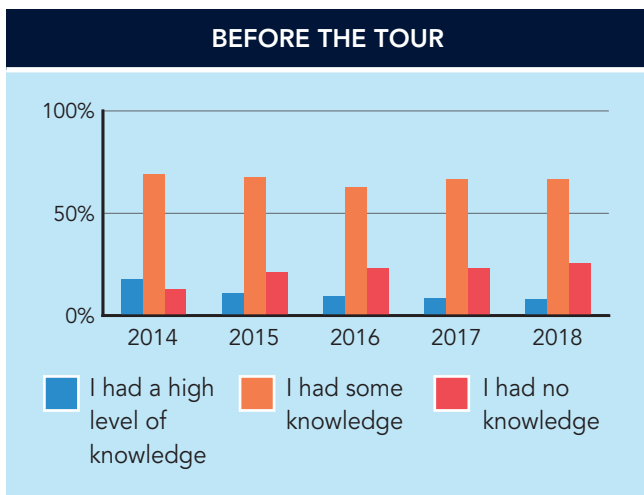
# RCIMN VISITOR EVALUATION SURVEY 2014-2018

## BEFORE TOUR/AFTER TOUR KNOWLEDGE LEVEL

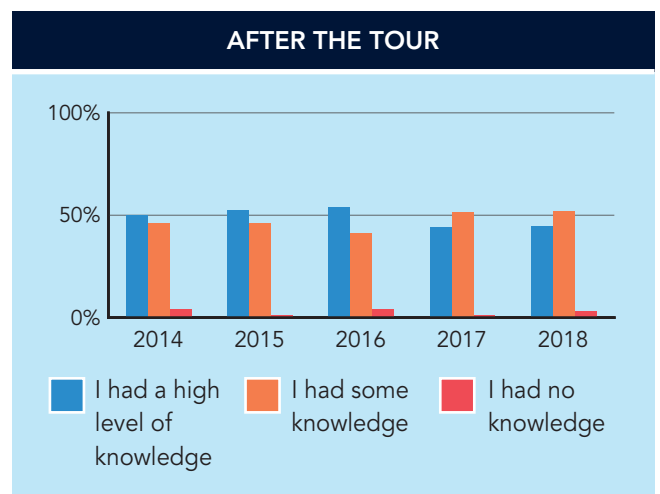
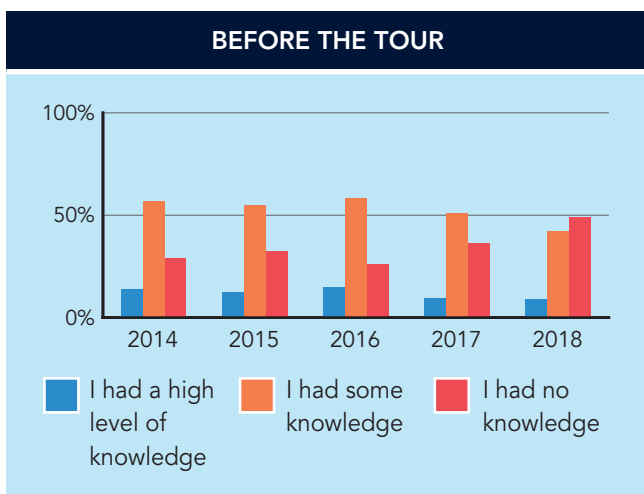
### MY UNDERSTANDING OF WHY PEOPLE FLEE FROM THEIR HOMES



### MY KNOWLEDGE OF REFUGEE CAMPS OR URBAN ENVIRONMENTS



### MY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER RIGHTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW





## HEALTH HAZARD

## ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT

- You will need money to survive.
- Jobs for undocumented workers are often risky, e.g. labouring on construction sites, illegally selling alcohol, prostitution, or working as a domestic servant.
- Your children may need to stop school to work.
- If you are hungry or can't afford to treat your chronic illness you will be less productive and less likely to be employed.
- Without legal status you won't have protection from physical or sexual exploitation.
- Health risks =
  - injury
  - exposure to hazardous materials
  - poor supervision of children
  - STIs and unwanted pregnancy
  - physical and sexual assault.

When viewed across a five-year period, data shows a consistent positive trend each year in the proportional shift that has occurred in visitor knowledge/ understanding against each of the three questions.

Over the five-year period the proportional shift in 'I have a high level of knowledge' against the three survey scaling questions:

*'My understanding of why people flee their homes'*

Before the tour: 31% – 40%                      After the tour: 77% – 89%

*'My knowledge of refugee camps or urban environments' shifted from between*

Before the tour: 8% – 18%                      After the tour: 71% – 84%

*'My knowledge about refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law'*

Before the tour: 9% – 15%                      After the tour: 44% – 54%

Conversely, over the five-year period the proportional shift in 'I have a low level of knowledge' against the three survey scaling questions:

*'My understanding of why people flee their homes'*

Before the tour: 1% – 5%                      After the tour: 0% – 1%

*'My knowledge of refugee camps or urban environments'*

Before the tour: 13% – 25%                      After the tour: 0% – 2%

*'My knowledge about refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law'*

Before the tour: 26% – 49%                      After the tour: 1% – 4%

While the level of shift was fairly consistent against all questions in all years there was a notable spike in the positive shift against 'My knowledge about refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law' in 2018. A likely contributing factor to the shift was the inclusion of responses from individual high school students in visitor evaluation surveys.



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### 4.3.3 SUMMARY OF RCIMN ADDITIONAL VISITOR EVALUATION SURVEY FEEDBACK 2014-2017

From 2014 to 2017 additional questions were asked of school teachers via the Visitor evaluation survey 2014 to 2017. Additional feedback from teachers collected via on-site teacher surveys 2015 to 2017 has been overwhelmingly positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the tour and an immediate impact resulting from a tour visit when measured against project objectives.

Teachers consistently commented that the RCIMN tour as 'Excellent' (84% in 2015, 95% in 2016 and 88% in 2017). In 2016 and 2017, 94% and 95% of teachers indicated respectively that they would bring students to RCIMN again if it was held in the following year.

A high proportion of teachers described the RCIMN tour as 'somewhat' or 'very relevant' to curricula (95% in 2015, 96% in 2016 and 95% in 2017) describing it as 'very relevant' to curricula for Social Justice, Religious Studies, Human Society and its Environment (HSIE), History, Geography, Legal Studies, Economics, English, and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE).

Notably, significant value was attached by teachers to student learning that was not limited to specific curriculum concerns. According to RCIMN Evaluation Reports prepared by Council teachers indicated that it was the 'real life interactive experience' of the excursion that was the most valuable part of the visit. Many teachers reflected that the RCIMN tour was relevant to their school's mission to teach students the principles of social justice, empathy and peace. Teachers also commented that the visit helped students to develop an understanding of themselves and others, of social justice and global issues.

#### **THREE-MONTH POST VISIT SURVEY (SCHOOL)**

A three-month post visit survey was carried out with teachers over a number of years (2015-2017). Although the detail of questions in the surveys and the way that data was recorded varied from year to year, overall, questions sought to identify what schools had done, or planned to do following an RCIMN visit.

Based on RCIMN Evaluation Reports prepared by Council for those years the majority of schools indicated a plan to follow up the excursion by undertaking a class activity or a whole of school awareness raising activity. Teachers listed class activities that would include reflection, discussion and ways to link RCIMN to curriculum content such as watching Council's 'Journeys to Auburn' DVD. Schools talked about possible school awareness-raising activities the students would undertake following the RCIMN including fundraising, inviting guest speakers, finding about local support groups, presentations to school assembly, and articles written in their school newsletter.

Analysis of the responses to the three-month survey completed by teachers attending with students in 2016 indicates that a strong response to learning that supports RCIMN objectives continued in schools three months after their visit. Teachers listed a wide variety of activities that they and their students had or were continuing to undertake to support people from refugee backgrounds or who were seeking asylum. This included activities for fundraising, increasing awareness and debate around refugee issues and building ongoing relationships with refugee support agencies such as House of Welcome and the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS).

## GENERAL VISITORS

The most consistent comment from general public visitors from 2014 to 2017 has been the powerful impact of **hearing personal experience and stories shared by Tour Guides**. The human connection and the interactive nature of the tour was described as giving visitors fresh insight into the refugee experience and was linked to motivation to engage with refugee and human rights issues in the future.

Indicative of social impact on the general visitor were recorded responses in 2017 to the question 'Do you feel you have an individual responsibility to support the rights of refugees?'. According to data 99.17% of respondents for that year said that they felt they have an individual responsibility to support the rights of refugees. Comments accompanying the responses also indicated strong support for the belief that people have an individual responsibility to support the human rights of refugees.

## IMPACTS FOR PROFESSIONAL VISITORS

There were three Professional tours to RCIMN in 2014, 24 carried out in 2015 and an unspecified number in 2016 (53 professional and general visitor tours combined) and 2017 (44 Professional and Visitor tours combined) and 305 in 2018 (Health professionals and other professional backgrounds combined). Surveys for Professional and Health tours were conducted in 2016. Visitor evaluations filled out by people on professional tours in 2018 were analysed separately (see 'Thematic analysis of uniform RCIMN Visitor evaluation survey trial 2018').

Evaluation survey results indicate that the respondents in the Professional and Health tours were somewhat better informed about the issues at the start of the tour than those attending the general visitor tours. At the close of a tour the respondents in the Professional and Health tours recorded a greater level of knowledge and understanding than those on the general visitor tours.

*Community members construct a traditional Iraqi 'mudhiif', 2016*





## IMPACT FOR TOUR GUIDES

In 2018 in depth qualitative evaluation was carried out with Tour Guides (see Section 3 in this report). From 2014 to 2017 informal feedback has been collected from Tour Guides via a debrief session following the close of RCIMN and via formal feedback collected via a written Tour Guide evaluation survey. The proportion of evaluation survey responses received from Tour Guides has varied from 50% in 2014, 38% in 2015, 80% in 2016 and 60% in 2017.

The overwhelming majority of respondents to the survey described being a Tour Guide as 'great' or a 'fantastic' experience. One third of respondents indicated that it had been their first job in Australia. The experience of participating in a formal job seeking process such as completing an Expression of Interest, facing an interview panel, registering for a Tax File Number, superannuation and completing a Working with Children Check were all cited as important ways to increase individual knowledge of life and work in Australia. Learning about Australian job seeking processes by going successfully through a genuine formal job application process was seen as an important benefit of Tour Guide participation in RCIMN.

Many Tour Guides described an increase in their confidence to communicate with Australian people and the acquisition of new skills including public speaking, presentation and communication skills. Increased confidence and know-how in working with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds or in dealing with 'difficult people' were seen as important benefits that Tour Guides had gained. A large number of Tour Guides have returned to work in RCIMN in subsequent years and a small number have gained ongoing work in Cumberland Council.

Written and observational feedback from Tour Guides has demonstrated positive psycho-social impacts of working in RCIMN:

RCIMN processes provided an 'embrace' that gave Tour Guides a safe environment to increase social connection, build up social confidence that they may have lost in their refugee journey, and gain acknowledgement and recognition for their personal stories of survival. Being able to share their stories and to witness the powerful effect that this had on visitors, as expressed directly to Tour Guides or on the message wall, was described by many Guides as an extremely important and positive experience.



*“Being in touch with inner peace and appreciating the process of healing.”*

– Tour Guide 2014

*“This project is best opportunity [for me to] share my memories from detention centre with tours”*

– Tour Guide 2014

## IMPACT FOR PROJECT PARTNERS

From 2014 to 2017 a large number of RCIMN Project Partners representing a very wide range of refugee support organisations and local refugee community groups have had active roles in RCIMN. Some partners have supported delivery of RCIMN tour components, such as RACS, the St Vincent De Paul Society Spark program and The Welcome Studio. Some such as NSW Refugee Health have worked with Council to develop and deliver additional tour components aimed at increasing awareness of refugee issues that can have a direct impact on daily work practice. Community partners have taken part in open days, building the profile and understanding of their own communities, sharing stories and traditions with local residents and RCIMN visitors.

Overall feedback has indicated high levels of satisfaction. For example, in the nine responses to the 2014 Project Partner survey, six respondents described overall involvement in RCIMN as 'fantastic', two said it was 'great' and one respondent described it as 'pretty good'.

Benefits described by Project Partners over the years have included:

- Having contact with members of the public, both for sharing information about refugees and also for hearing their thoughts and views about refugees.
- Exposure and providing information to people about the realities facing asylum seekers, taking back learning to their organisation, and developing better community links.
- Building cross cultural and local community networks by working alongside people from different organisations and communities and learning from each other.



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## 4.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF UNIFORM RCIMN VISITOR EVALUATION SURVEY TRIAL 2018

### 4.4.1 A UNIFORM VISITOR EVALUATION SURVEY

A large number of evaluation surveys had been distributed and collated each year from 2014 to 2017 however the survey questions varied across groups and over time leading to unnecessary complexity and difficulty in collating and interpreting responses and increasing the potential for non-representative patterns of response to emerge.

In 2018, a new 'uniform' Visitor evaluation survey was trialled with all visitors (excluding primary school students). The purpose of the trial was to introduce a single, reliable evaluation survey that could be used consistently across all major visitor groups.

The Visitor evaluation survey 2018 was administered as a single, consistent survey distributed across all visitor groups. It included demographic data questions to support survey analysis and differentiation in analysing results. A major change in implementation of the survey was the collection of responses from high school students as well as from their teachers.

Survey questions included a set of five before visit/after visit scaling questions and four open ended questions seeking visitor comment. Three of the 'before the visit/after the visit' scaling questions that been used consistently with groups in previous years covering three areas of visitor understanding and knowledge:

- *'My understanding of why people flee from their homes'*
- *'My knowledge about conditions in refugee camps or urban environments'*
- *'My knowledge about refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law'*

Two 'before the visit /after the visit' scaling questions were added:

- *'My knowledge of difficulties that refugees and people seeking asylum may face when arriving in Australia'*
- *'My knowledge of ways that individuals can take responsibility to support the rights of refugees'*

The two additional questions were included to address two key project objective areas, 'Develop greater understanding and support for refugees in Australia' and 'Increase support for refugee communities in the Cumberland area (and the broader community)'.

One before the visit/after the visit question, *'my knowledge of human rights'*, was removed. The decision to remove the question was based on a number of factors. The inherent concepts in the question were seen to closely align and therefore be repetitive with a question already included *'my knowledge about refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law'* to address the RCIMN project objective: 'Increase understanding of human rights and international law (right to protection)'. Reducing the number of questions also supported visitors to fill out surveys fully.

Prior to 2018, evaluation surveys were collected from school teachers accompanying school groups rather than from school students. A major change to the RCIMN visitor survey 2018 was the collection of survey responses from high school students themselves in addition to the survey responses of high school teachers.



## 4.5 RCIMN VISITOR EVALUATION SURVEY 2018: RESULTS

Visitor evaluation survey 2018 questions were:

Section one:

Five questions asked visitors to indicate their level of understanding and knowledge before the visit/after the visit as one of three options:

I had no understanding;

I had some understanding;

I had a high level of understanding

against the following five areas:

*'My understanding of why people flee from their homes'*

*'My knowledge about conditions in refugee camps or urban environments during a refugee journey'*

*'My knowledge about refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law'*

*'My knowledge of difficulties that refugees and people seeking asylum may face when arriving in Australia'*

*'My knowledge of ways that individuals can take responsibility to support the rights of refugees'*

Section two:

Four open ended questions:

*'Has anything changed for you from this experience (e.g. your knowledge; feelings; beliefs)?'*

*'Which aspect of the tour made the change/s happen?'*

*'In relation to supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, is there anything you plan to do or change in relation to your work, study or life in general?'*

*'Is there anything else you would like to say?'*

## 4.5.1 OVERALL PATTERNS OF RESPONSE

Visitor responses pointed to significant levels of positive change against all areas of social impact examined by survey questions.

Open ended questions revealed a significant increase in overall visitor knowledge against a number of key objectives and provided insight into which aspects of the tours contributed to the impact experienced by different visitors.

Overall Visitor surveys indicated strong shifts to 'high level of knowledge' after the tour regarding:

- 'Why people flee from their homes' (88.8% up from 32.6%)
- 'Refugee camps and urban environments during a refugee journey' (83.6% up from 25.6%)
- 'Difficulties that refugee and people seeking asylum may face when arriving in Australia' (76.5% up from 15.9%)

A slightly smaller number of visitors indicated 'high level of knowledge' after the tour regarding:

- 'Refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law' (44.6% up from 8.8%)
- 'Ways that individuals can take responsibility to support the rights of refugees (39.3% up from 7.3%)

### VISITOR RESPONSE PATTERNS TO OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

*Has anything changed for you from this experience (e.g. your knowledge; feelings; beliefs)?*

- Increased empathy and insight – 72.1%
- Knowledge of refugee issues – 17.9%
- Move to take action to support refugees – 4.8%

*Which aspect of the tour made the change/s happen?*

- Content/objects/data – 38.5%
- The experience – 19.04%
- Tour Guides' personal stories – 18.2%
- All of it/everything – 16.6%

*In relation to supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, is there anything you plan to do or change in relation to your work, study or life in general?*

- Increase community engagement and awareness of refugee issues – 48.3%
- Volunteering/fundraising – 14.72%
- Advocacy – 9.2%
- Work with refugees/asylum seekers – 2.8%

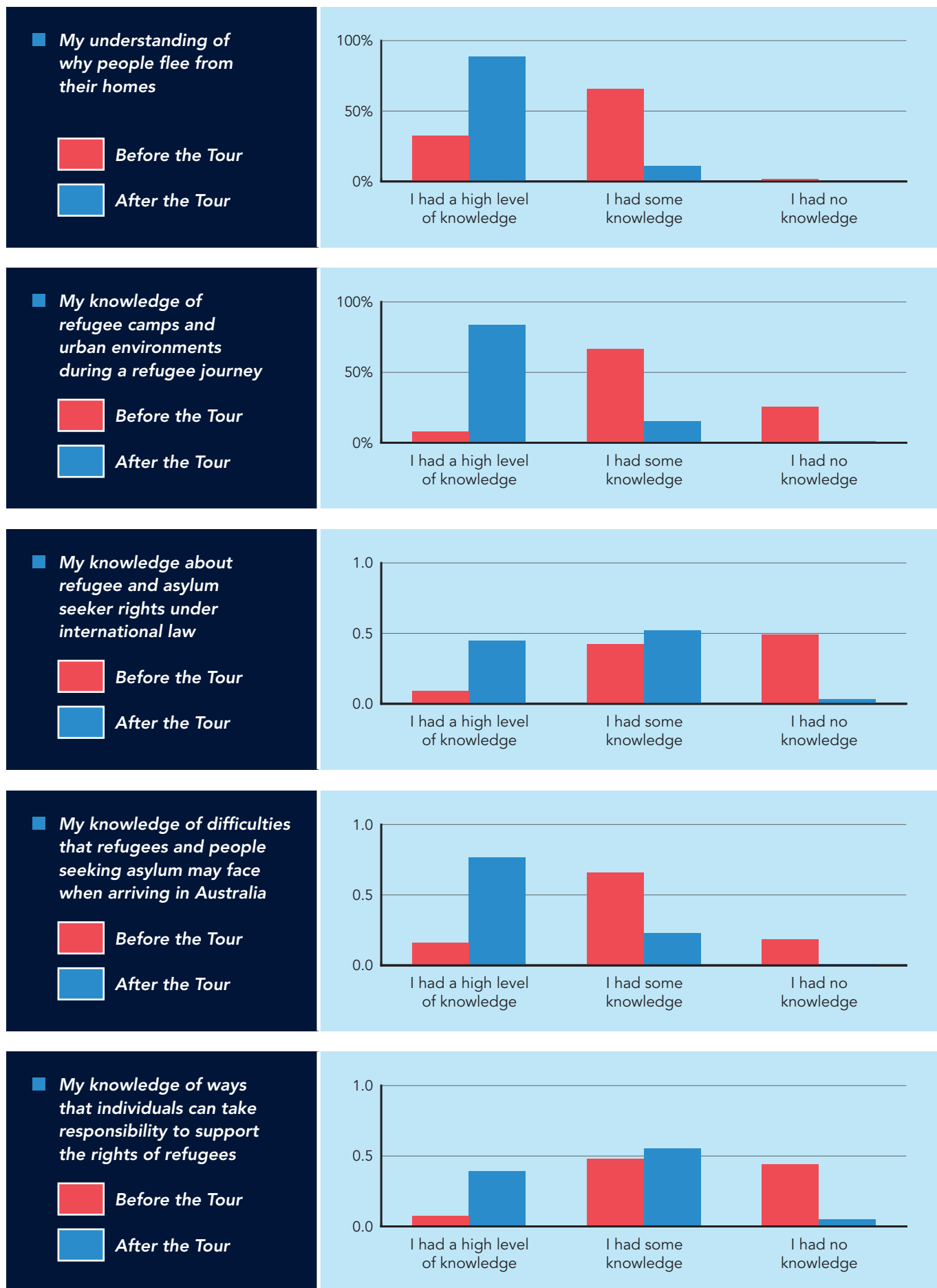
*Is there anything else you would like to say?*

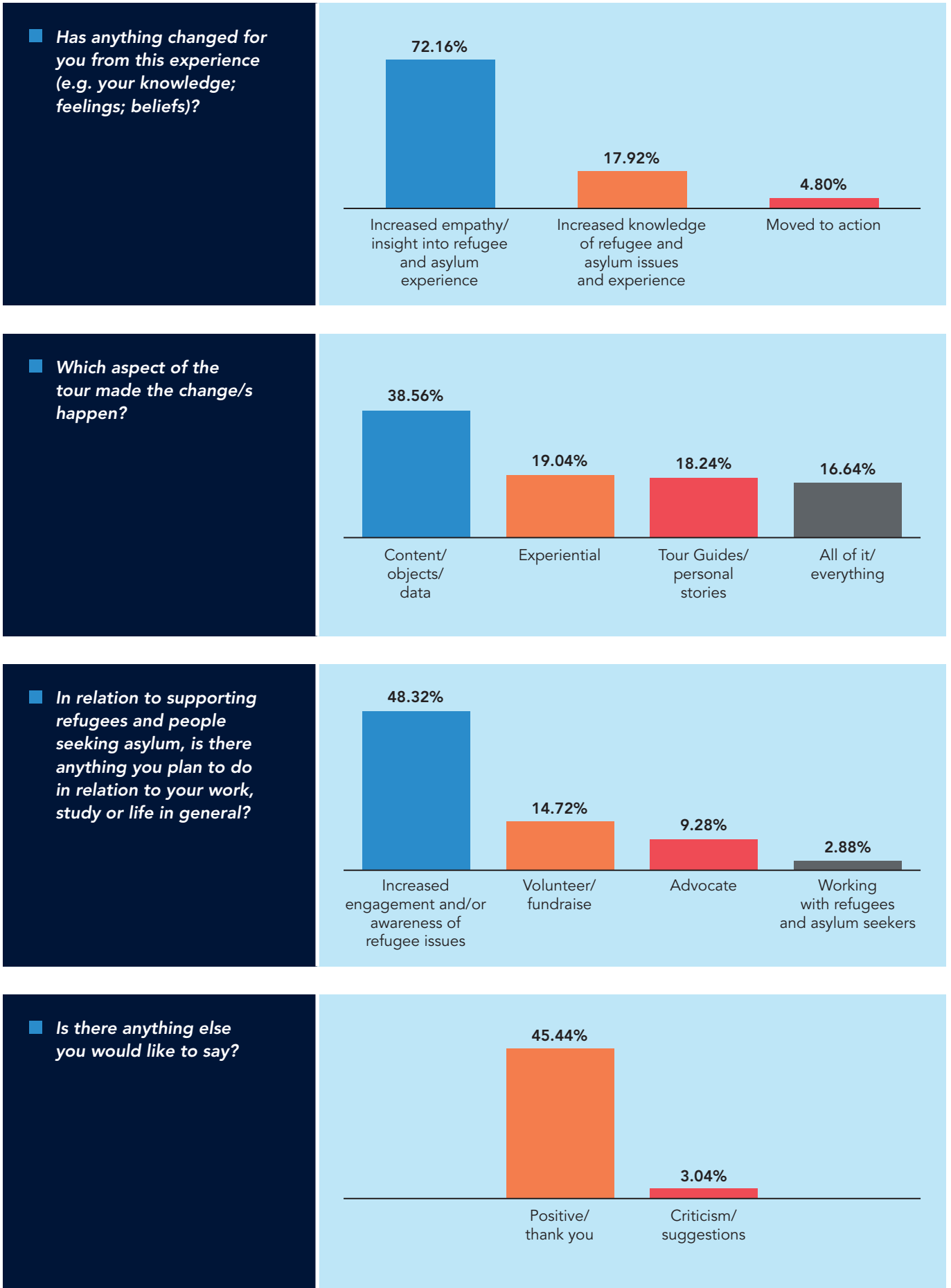
- Thankyou – 45.4%
- Suggestions – 3%



# 2018 VISITOR EVALUATION SURVEY RESPONSES

Figure 2







Students list out the 5 things they would take with them if they had to flee, 2016

## 4.5.2 HIGH SCHOOL VISITOR PATTERNS OF RESPONSE

High School student visitor responses pointed to similar overall levels of positive change against all areas of social impact examined by survey questions. There was distinct variation from overall visitor response in some areas.

High school students indicated a particularly high level of knowledge after the tour in relation to:

- 'Why people flee from their homes' (94% up from 24.6%)
- 'Refugee camps and urban environments during a refugee journey' (89% up from 5%)
- 'Difficulties that refugee and people seeking asylum may face when arriving in Australia' (83.6% up from 12%)

A slightly smaller number of high school students indicated 'high level of knowledge' after the tour regarding:

- 'Refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law' (45% up from 4%)
- 'Ways that individuals can take responsibility to support the rights of refugees' (39.6% up from 3%)

Open ended questions revealed a significantly higher level of increased knowledge around questions of **empathy** amongst high school students who identified the **experiential aspects** of the tour as they main contributing factor. High school students also indicated a higher level of **intention to take practical action than overall visitor responses**.



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### High school student responses to open ended questions were:

Has anything changed for you from this experience (e.g. your knowledge; feelings; beliefs)?

- Increased empathy and insight – 85.9%
- Knowledge of refugee issues – 11.4%
- Move to action – 1.6%

Which aspect of the tour made the change/s happen?

- Content/objects/data – 44.1%
- Experience – 32.7%
- Tour Guides personal stories – 11.3%
- All of it/everything – 9.3%

In relation to supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, is there anything you plan to do or change in relation to your work, study or life in general?

- Increase engagement and/or awareness of refugee issues – 61.5%
- Volunteering/fundraising – 15.3%
- Advocacy – 8%
- Work with refugees/asylum seekers – 5%

Is there anything else you would like to say?

- Thankyou – 40%
- Suggestions – 1%

### 4.5.3 PROFESSIONAL VISITOR PATTERNS OF RESPONSE

Professional tour visitor responses pointed to similar overall levels of positive change against all areas of social impact examined by survey questions. A high proportion of people on Professional tours worked in health services and many school teachers also took part. The connection that people attending Professional tours had with refugee and asylum seeker populations was reflected in the higher levels of knowledge that they began with on the tours. The highest scoring impacts for Professional tour visitors were higher levels of understanding of the difficulties that refugee and people seeking asylum may face when arriving in Australia, and increased empathy. They appeared to start the tours with a better knowledge of legal issues and the experiences that people have in refugee camps and urban environments during a refugee journey than was evident in overall visitation responses.

Professional tour visitors indicated a 'high level of knowledge' after the tour regarding:

- 'Why people flee from their homes' (90% up from 47%)
- 'Refugee camps and urban environments during a refugee journey' (55.7% up from 21.6%)
- 'Difficulties that refugee and people seeking asylum may face when arriving in Australia' (73.7% up from 18%)
- 'Refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law' (55.7% up from 21.6%)
- 'Ways that individuals can take responsibility to support the rights of refugees' (43.5% up from 15%)

#### Professional tour visitor responses to open ended questions were:

Has anything changed for you from this experience (e.g. your knowledge; feelings; beliefs)?

- Increased empathy and insight – 51%
- Knowledge of refugee issues – 25%
- Move to action – 11.3%

Which aspect of the tour made the change/s happen?

- content/objects/data – 31.9%
- experience – 27.5%
- Tour Guides personal stories – 21.6%
- All of it/everything – 4.1%

In relation to supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, is there anything you plan to do or change in relation to your work, study or life in general?

- Increase engagement and/or awareness of refugee issues – 31.9%
- Volunteering/fundraising – 17.5%
- Advocacy – 14.4%
- Work with refugees/asylum seekers – 5.1%

Is there anything else you would like to say?

- Thankyou – 55.0%
- Suggestions – 6%

#### 4.5.4 COUNCIL STAFF PATTERNS OF RESPONSE

The Council staff *visitor evaluation survey* was filled in by a smaller but nevertheless significant number of visitors (28 people over several tours) who had attended Professional tours.

The responses are **distinctly different in the levels of before and after knowledge listed by respondents from the overall visitor responses**. Council staff indicated **particularly high shifts in levels of impact from all aspects of the tour** moving for example from 17.3% of staff indicating a high level of understanding about 'refugee camps and urban environments during a refugee journey' to 86% with a high level of understanding after the tour.

Open ended questions also indicated high impact experienced by Council staff such as a high

percentage indicating **increased empathy for refugees** (39%) and a particularly high level of people indicating that 'all of it/everything', in other words the whole experience of the tour had been the source of the impact.

*“I’m going to take into consideration how to simplify processes for our families.”*

– Cumberland Council staff tour participant

*“Cumberland Council is introducing a new role to help asylum seekers and I am going to help in some way – I just don’t know how yet.”*

– Cumberland Council staff tour participant

Council staff indicated a 'high level of understanding' after the tour regarding:

- 'Why people flee from their homes' 86% (up from 17.3%)
- 'Refugee camps and urban environments during a refugee journey' 78% (up from 8.7.%)
- 'Refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law' (34.7% up from 4.3%)
- 'Difficulties that refugee and people seeking asylum may face when arriving in Australia' (68.9% up from 13%)
- 'Ways that individuals can take responsibility to support the rights of refugees (43.5% up from 8.7%)

**Council staff responses to open ended questions were:**

Has anything changed for you from this experience (e.g. your knowledge; feelings; beliefs)?

- Increased empathy and insight – 39.1%
- Knowledge of refugee issues – 30%
- Move to action – 21.7%

Which aspect of the tour made the change/s happen?

- content/objects/data – 39.1%
- experience – 4.35%
- Tour Guides personal stories – 17.6%
- All of it/everything – 39.1%

In relation to supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, is there anything you plan to do or change in relation to your work, study or life in general?

- Increase engagement and/or awareness of refugee issues – 34.7%
- Volunteering/fundraising – 30.43%
- Advocacy – 14.4%
- Work with refugees/asylum seekers – 8.7%

Is there anything else you would like to say?

- Thankyou – 73.9.0%
- Suggestions – 4.3%

*Tour participants experience a 'Border Guard' simulation as they seek safety in another country during their refugee journey*



## 5. Recommendations for an ongoing evaluation framework

### 5.1 ONGOING EVALUATION FRAMEWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a need identified to simplify evaluation tools, make them consistent and to systematise the processes for collection and collation of usable data.
2. Filling out an on-site evaluation survey is a reflective activity that reinforces what has been learned by visitors and supports project objectives. On site evaluation surveys should continue to be used as a key evaluation tool for the project.
3. Collection of uniform on-site evaluation surveys across visitor types allows for data to be collected that can indicate consistent patterns of visitor response. Uniform on site evaluation surveys should continue to be used in the project.
4. Ongoing evaluation with particular RCIMN visitor groups such as schools or health professionals would strengthen understanding of the project's social impacts by identifying and monitoring substantial and 'actual' rather than simply 'planned' actions that people take as a result of participation in RCIMN.
5. Post visit activities in schools consolidate the social impact of RCIMN and can be supported through ongoing contact with RCIMN project partners. Ways to increase contact between schools and project partners should be investigated.
6. A *partner school approach* would support ongoing evaluation of the social impact of an RCIMN visit by Council. It would also support Tour Guides and project partners such as RACS to extend and strengthen ongoing social impact of the project through contact with interested schools.
7. Post visit surveys to general public have not provided insight that extends understanding of project impact gained from on-site visitor evaluation surveys and should therefore be discontinued.



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## 5.1.1 ONGOING EVALUATION FRAMEWORK TO MEASURE RCIMN SOCIAL IMPACT

Monitoring and evaluation of the social impact of RCIMN is a key strategy for ensuring that it continues to achieve project objectives by identifying attitudinal and material evidence that demonstrates how those objectives are met.

Measuring social impact involves **identifying** and **measuring change** that **results from the project** at an **individual and/or community level**. Indicators of social impact are directly linked to project objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation of the ongoing social impact of RCIMN and its contributing factors will allow RCIMN to continue to meet project objectives at a high level, and further build social connection and community capacity across the Cumberland LGA.

A wide range of qualitative evaluation tools have been used to monitor and evaluate the social impact of RCIMN since the initial community consultation took place in 2014. Evaluation feedback has been gathered from a wide range of stakeholders including local refugee communities, project partners, education visitors, professional visitors, general visitors, Tour Guides, volunteers and Council staff. The RCIMN Longitudinal Study 2018 has identified social impact that has been achieved against all of the project's stated objectives.

All RCIMN evaluation tools 2014-2018 have been reviewed. While some past evaluation tools indicated clear patterns of response that have provided valuable insight into project outcomes, some have had low levels of response or have not provided information that is sufficiently detailed or nuanced to give useful insight into the social impact of RCIMN. For example, the 3-month post-visit survey for general visitors did not provide additional useful information, with respondents largely repeating plans for action that were articulated in the on-site visitor evaluation. In the case of some evaluation tools, particular questions were repetitive or received very low levels of response.

Unnecessary or unproductive evaluation tools or types of questioning have been amended or removed from the proposed evaluation framework and some steps have been added. The framework provides for systematic collection and analysis of RCIMN data against project objectives that will give immediate and longer term insight into the outcomes of RCIMN and evidence of the social impact of the project.

All evaluation tools in this framework identify change and measure social impact by exploring:

1. What has changed as the result of participating in RCMN?
2. What made that change happen?
3. What will happen/can happen/has happened as the result of that change?
4. What will the effect of that change be (for individual visitors, stakeholders, broader community etc) in the short term and longer term?

When placed in the context of accompanying data that is collected such as demographic information, this pattern of inquiry is able to build a rich base of evidence to demonstrate the social impact of RCIMN across all stakeholder and visitor groups.



## 5.1.2 PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To support clarity of analysis against project objectives, it is recommended that:

1. The original stated objectives for RCIMN are differentiated between aims and objectives.
2. All of the original objectives for RCIMN are included with some additional objectives inserted to address content that has been added to RCIMN regarding the administration of the Australian Migration Act and its human ramifications.

Aims and objectives

*AIM 1: To increase support for refugees and people seeking asylum across the Cumberland LGA and the broader community.*

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Challenge popular misinformation that promotes negative stereotypes of refugees and people seeking asylum.
2. Provide an experiential learning environment that increases a sense of human connection between visitors to RCIMN and refugees.
3. Assist visitors to identify practical ways that individuals can support refugees and people seeking asylum in both local and broader community settings

*AIM 2: To create greater connection and sense of empowerment amongst local refugee individuals and communities who are involved in the project including Tour Guides, volunteers and community project partners.*

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Enhance collaboration between refugee support services and local refugee communities
2. Engage Tour Guides, volunteers and community project partners in the design and delivery of RCIMN activities including the RCIMN tour and open days

*AIM 3: To promote greater understanding of the global and local issues that impact on the experience of refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia.*

**OBJECTIVES:**

Increase visitor understanding/awareness of:

- human rights and international law (right to protection ) and practical implications for treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia
- current global refugee and humanitarian crisis issues
- experiences of daily life in a refugee camp
- experiences of daily life during refugee temporary urban settlement
- practical application of the Australian Migration Act to the lives of refugees and people seeking asylum (including onshore and off shore detention and temporary visa status regulations)

### 5.1.3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY RATIONALE

The evaluation tools are designed to:

- Enable consistent qualitative feedback about RCIMN social impact to be gathered from the broad range of RCIMN stakeholders and visitors
- Simplify and streamline previous evaluation approaches that have been used to allow RCIMN for ongoing consistent evaluation of RCIMN social impact
- Support overall project adherence to principles based in a Human Rights Approach, Social Capital and Strengths Based Approach, Community Development Approach

#### LEARNING MORE ABOUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENS

In assessing the social impact of RCIMN from 2014-2017 a large amount of evaluation across all audiences has indicated the nature of post-visit actions that visitors plan to take. Identifying the extent to which such actions are undertaken, the 'actual' rather than simply 'planned' actions is important evidence of the RCIMN social impact.

#### EXTENDING THE PROJECT PARTNERSHIP CIRCLE

A full understanding of the RCIMN social impact requires analysis of short term and long term indicators from key stakeholders and visitors. Booked tours for school visits and professional visits account for most RCIMN visitation. Schools and certain professional organisations (such as NSW Refugee Health) that visit RCIMN are well situated to provide ongoing feedback into how the learning that takes place during an RCIMN tour is practically applied after the visit. Forming an ongoing project partnership with a select group of schools and professional organisations to track specific examples of change that take place across project objectives would provide direct evidence of ongoing social impact.

#### QUALITATIVE EVALUATION PROCESSES CAN ENHANCE PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Qualitative evaluation processes can be carried out in ways that support project objectives and enhance social impact. Filling out an evaluation survey or taking part in a semi structured in depth discussion such as the Tour Guide debriefing discussion for example, are reflective activities that can reinforce learning, empathy or benefits that have resulted from participation in RCIMN. Articulating what has been learned or gained through participation in RCIMN can reinforce what has been learned of gained and promote critical thinking about how to apply that learning in everyday life.





## 5.1.4 EVALUATION TOOLS

Formal evaluation tools proposed for this framework are:

- On-site *visitor survey* (uniform survey for all visitors)
- Annual *Tour Guide debrief* (semi structured in depth discussion)
- Annual *project partner online survey*
- 3 Month *online post visit survey* with:
  - School teachers
  - Professional tour participants
- *Project partnership* to monitor ongoing social impact with
  - Select schools.
  - Appropriate professional body (such as NSW Refugee Health or Auburn Hospital)

Additional information that is collected by Council will add to formal evaluation including documentation and records (eg attendance, decision making) from relevant project meetings held by Council with community/partners and any other relevant contacts that take place throughout the year.

### ON-SITE VISITOR SURVEY (SEE APPENDIX)

The RCIMN *visitor survey* is suitable for gathering feedback from large numbers of respondents and may be used with all visitors (with the exception of primary school students) in the closing stop of the tour. Filling out the survey is a reflective activity that can produce in-depth insights and requires sufficient time to be allocated within the tour stop for explanation of its purpose and individual reflection.

The survey contains

- 5 before/after scaling questions to indicate shift in knowledge and understanding around key issues.

In depth questions that examine:

- What has changed as the result of participating in RCMN?
- What made that change happen?
- What will happen/can happen/has happened as the result of that change?
- What will the effect of that change be (for individual visitors, stakeholders, broader community etc) in the short term and longer term?

Completed surveys are collected at the end of each tour.





## ANNUAL TOUR GUIDE EVALUATION DEBRIEF (SEMI STRUCTURED IN DEPTH DISCUSSION)

A key feature of RCIMN is the central importance that Council has placed on the role of Tour Guides in contributing to the content and presentation of tours. In addition to this, is the importance that Council has placed on providing the 'safety' and support to Tour Guides at every step of the project including recruitment, training, tour delivery and post tour debriefing. The experience of Tour Guides is central to the success that is achieved against all project aims. The post RCIMN *in-depth discussion* with Tour Guides addresses all aspects of RCIMN and is the source of rich insight into how the project meets its aims, objectives and the social impact that it achieves across practical and psycho-social impacts for Tour Guides. Participating in the discussions is a potentially empowering process for Tour Guides allowing them to articulate positive change that has taken place such as growth in self-confidence, significantly increased social connection or reduction in symptoms of anxiety and stress, and the impact that such change will have on their lives in Australia in the short and long term.

The semi structured *in-depth discussion* takes place in a trusted group setting using the same pattern of inquiry about 'what has changed' as used in other stakeholder and visitor evaluation but allowing for deeper reflection to be shared. In-depth discussions should be timed to take place within a short period after the close of RCIMN, so that Tour Guides who choose to participate have sufficient time to reflect on their experience without losing a sense of strong connection to the project that evolved through its daily delivery. *In-depth discussions* should be run by a convenor that is trusted by the group and be offered a times to allow participation by as many Tour Guides as possible who wish to take part with sessions of 6-8 participants to allow for active discussion by everyone.



### **ANNUAL PROJECT PARTNER ONLINE SURVEY (SEE APPENDIX)**

This survey has been administered with a small group of partners each year of project delivery. Because of the small numbers it is an opportunity to seek in depth reflective responses that align with the pattern of inquiry about 'what has changed'. This can provide deeper and more targeted insight than the type of scaling questions to indicate levels of satisfaction that have been used in past surveys.

### **3 MONTH ONLINE POST VISIT SURVEY**

*3 month online post visit survey* questionnaires are proposed to be carried out with school teachers (primary and high school) and Professional tour participants. The pattern of inquiry about 'what has changed' will focus on how learning from the RCIMN visit has been applied in practical ways – what respondents have done as the result of learning that took place.

### **PROJECT PARTNERSHIP TO MONITOR ONGOING SOCIAL IMPACT**

*Project partnership* to monitor ongoing social impact with:

- Select schools.
- Appropriate professional body (such as NSW Refugee Health or Auburn Hospital)

The social impact of RCIMN is inextricably linked with the ways that people put into practice the changes in knowledge and attitude that result from the RCIMN visit over time. Understanding social impact is about understanding human behaviour and therefore any inquiry to measure social impact requires time and flexibility.

The RCIMN Longitudinal study 2018 identified schools and health workers as key visitor groups that demonstrated a strong interest and capacity to take practical action to support the RCIMN objectives. *Project partnership* with one or more primary schools (eg. one government and one non-government), one or more high schools (eg. one government and one non-government) and a relevant health organisation would provide opportunities to track the evolution of social impact of RCIMN. At the same time, ongoing partnership would provide opportunities to extend social impacts by assisting project partners to connect in ways such as:

- Link RACS with individual schools or services that express an interest in learning more about the legal issues for people seeking asylum
- Link health workers with STARTTS training regarding a range of relevant psycho social information to assist in understanding the health needs of refugees
- Link Tour Guides with school and health workers that want to extend learning that took place during the RCIMN visit

Visitors evaluation responses from Cumberland Council staff who attended RCIMN in 2018 demonstrated a high level of interest in applying attitudinal change and increased knowledge about refugee experience into daily work. Tracking change in practice by Council staff who attend RCIMN would be a rich and accessible source of insight into the social impact of RCIMN.

Tracking social impact via partnerships would involve in depth interviews with partner representatives at specified timed intervals as well as ongoing informal two-way communication between Council and partners. Informal ongoing communication between Council and partners would increase insight into the social impact of the project. At the same time it would extend its social impact, but would not always need to be directed by Council itself. For example, on request Council could (as it has in the past) connect Tour Guides or relevant partners to support school activities. Council could consult with relevant health agency to support inclusion of aspects of RCIMN into training for health workers.



## 6. Conclusion

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In 2014 Council's Community Development Team embarked on an intensive community consultation process with local refugee communities to find a way to share their stories of trauma and resilience and build connections with others in the local community. This resulted in development of Refugee Camp in my Neighbourhood. From its inception and at every step of the way over the five years of delivery, the project has exemplified the practice of the community development principles of empowerment, human rights, and inclusion. This ethical base set up for the project in 2014 has continued to inform all aspects of project development and delivery.

*"I wanted to get involved with the community and the good thing that happened was that I met these beautiful people, this beautiful place."*

– Tour Guide

*"Cumberland Council is introducing a new role to help asylum seekers and I am going to help in some way – I just don't know how yet."*

– Community partner

It is hard to overestimate the profoundly positive social impacts of RCIMN for everyone who has taken part. Testimony collected for this longitudinal study from the wide range of participants including community partners, Tour Guides, general public, schools, Council staff, refugee and asylum seeker support agencies, volunteers and more, has repeatedly emphasised the unique value and success that RCIMN has achieved as a genuinely community focused and directed project.

There simply is, as everyone says, nothing else like it.

The longitudinal study and extensive qualitative evaluation in 2018 confirms the positive social impact

that the project has had from 2014 – 2018. The study presents new insights that people gained from their involvement and what it was about RCIMN that helped those gains to happen. For many RCIMN Tour Guides, the embrace that their involvement has provided has been life changing, allowing them to feel connected with other people, to feel part of their community and to take back control over meaning and direction in their life in Australia.

People from widely different backgrounds have visited RCIMN over the last five years, including some whose lives have been closely connected to people from refugee backgrounds, and others who have met someone for the first time who has gone through refugee experiences.

Almost universally, regardless of their level of previous involvement in refugee issues, RCIMN visitors have told of being deeply moved by the truthful personal stories they have heard of refugee hardship and hope.

Most visitors leave saying that they have new or reinforced belief that they themselves have a responsibility to play a part in supporting people seeking refuge and asylum in Australia. School students say they will tell their families and school mates about what they have learned. Adult visitors say they will put into practice things they have learned in the process of acknowledging refugee need and experience. Everyone says they are more aware of what it means, what it feels like to be forced to leave one's home, to enter a future of uncertainty, and to make a new life in a place where it's sometimes hard to find welcome. Visitors to RCIMN leave saying that they want and will do more to make that welcome felt.

The overarching project objectives for RCIMN have been to develop greater understanding and support for refugees in Australia and to nurture a sense of connection amongst local communities and all the people who take part in the project: Tour Guides, volunteers, project partners, Council staff and visitors. The longitudinal study and evaluation of the project has demonstrated its unarguable success in meeting its objectives. Ideas to reinforce and build further on the social impacts that have already resulted from the project have emerged through this study. Making them happen would need all those who have been involved to wear a collective creative thinking cap to identify how the social impacts of a refugee camp in our neighbourhood can be consolidated and supported to grow.

Over the last five years so many visitors to the project have described with eloquence in conversations, displayed in messages posted on the wall, in comments written on feedback forms: things they have learned about human connection as the result of taking part in this unique project.

A reaction often expressed by school children who visit sums it up – refugees are people who are “just like us”.



## 7. Appendices

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*Participants make individual choices when faced with different scenarios on their refugee journey to determine their fate*

1. Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood Visitor Evaluation Survey
2. Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood Project Partner Survey



## 7.1 REFUGEE CAMP IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD: VISITOR EVALUATION SURVEY

Thank you for being a part of the Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood tour. We are interested in learning about your experience of the tour to make sure that it is a useful and relevant experience for all visitors.

### SECTION 1: THINKING ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE OF THE TOUR TODAY...

1. Please circle the statement (a, b or c) to describe your level of knowledge BEFORE and AFTER the tour:

BEFORE the tour:	AFTER the tour:
<p><b>1.1 Regarding why people flee from their homes</b></p> <p>a) I had no understanding at all</p> <p>b) I had some understanding</p> <p>c) I had a high level of understanding</p>	<p><b>1.1 Regarding why people flee from their homes</b></p> <p>a) I have no understanding at all</p> <p>b) I have some understanding</p> <p>c) I have a high level of understanding</p>
<p><b>1.2 Regarding conditions in refugee camps or urban environments during a refugee journey</b></p> <p>a) I had no knowledge at all</p> <p>b) I had some knowledge</p> <p>c) I had a high level of knowledge</p>	<p><b>1.2 Regarding conditions in refugee camps or urban environments during a refugee journey</b></p> <p>a) I have no knowledge at all</p> <p>b) I have some knowledge</p> <p>c) I have a high level of knowledge</p>
<p><b>1.3 Regarding refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law</b></p> <p>a) I have no knowledge at all</p> <p>b) I have some knowledge</p> <p>c) I have a high level of knowledge</p>	<p><b>1.3 Regarding refugee and asylum seeker rights under international law</b></p> <p>a) I have no knowledge at all</p> <p>b) I have some knowledge</p> <p>c) I have a high level of knowledge</p>
<p><b>1.4 Regarding difficulties that refugees and people seeking asylum may face when arriving in Australia</b></p> <p>a) I had no knowledge at all</p> <p>b) I had some knowledge</p> <p>c) I had a high level of knowledge</p>	<p><b>1.4 Regarding difficulties that refugees and people seeking asylum may face when arriving in Australia</b></p> <p>a) I have no knowledge at all</p> <p>b) I have some knowledge</p> <p>c) I have a high level of knowledge</p>
<p><b>1.5 Regarding ways that individuals can take responsibility to support the rights of refugees</b></p> <p>a) I had no knowledge at all</p> <p>b) I had some knowledge</p> <p>c) I had a high level of knowledge</p>	<p><b>1.5 Regarding ways that individuals can take responsibility to support the rights of refugees</b></p> <p>a) I have no knowledge at all</p> <p>b) I have some knowledge</p> <p>c) I have a high level of knowledge</p>

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2. Has anything changed for you (e.g. your knowledge; feelings; beliefs) as the result of the tour experience?

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3. Which aspect of the tour made the change/s happen?

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4. As the result of your participation in the tour today, is there anything that you plan to do to support refugees and people seeking asylum in relation to your work, study or life in general?

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## SECTION 2: PLEASE TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF:

### TYPE OF VISIT:

**School tour:**

High school student    High school teacher    Primary school teacher

**Professional tour:**

Health worker    Teacher    Council staff

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**General public tour:**

**Gender:**    Female    Male

**Suburb/Postcode:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Country of birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you speak a language other than English at home?** \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what language do you speak? \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 3: YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Would you be happy to be contacted in 2-3 months' time to discuss the impact that Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood has had on your personal or work life?

Yes    No

If **yes**, please provide your contact details below:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to subscribe to be a part of the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) mailing list? If yes, we will provide your full name and contact email to RACS.

Yes    No

If **yes**, please provide your contact details below:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

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## 7.2 REFUGEE CAMP IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT PARTNER SURVEY

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did your community/organisation take part in Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood? (please explain who/what/how)

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2. What were the aims for your community/organisation in being involved in this project?

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3. In relation to the aims of your community/organisation, what were the results from taking part (e.g. partnerships, volunteers, supporters, etc)?

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4. What helped to make those results happen?

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5. What will the effect of those results be?

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6. What would you like to see happen further/following from this year's delivery of RCIMN?

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Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood Longitudinal Evaluation  
2014 – 2018  
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