



**Refugee Communities Association of Australia Inc.**  
*For Refugees | With Refugees | By Refugees*

Dated: 20 June 2023

**Media Release**

**RCAA Australian Citizenship Ceremony and World Refugee Day 2023**

The Refugee Communities Association of Australia Inc (RCAA) today welcomed 150 new citizens from 42 countries from across Melbourne as they took their Pledge of Commitment at the Special Australian Citizenship Ceremony to celebrate the World Refugee Day 2023. Hosted in partnership with the Department of Home Affairs at the Springvale Town Hall, the occasion displayed cultural performances from refugee communities to welcome new citizens, supported by 300 well-wishers and family members as they took the Pledge.

The ceremony was held on World Refugee Day with the theme “Hope Away From Home – a world where refugees are always included”, designed to celebrate and honour refugees from around the world. It’s an international day designated by the United Nations to celebrate the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution.

Ms. Zoe Williams, Regional Director for Victoria and Tasmania, Department of Home Affairs presided the citizenship ceremony on behalf of the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, Hon Andrew Giles MP. Many dignitaries, community leaders and local business who supported the event attended and spoke at the event including the Cr Eden Foster, Mayor of City of Greater Dandenong, Ms. Vivienne Nguyen AM, Chairperson of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, Ms. Kate O’Malley, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR Canberra, Cr Richard Lim OAM and Adiba Ganji, young Afghan Women National Soccer Player.

RCAA Chairperson, Parsu Sharma Luitl JP said "Becoming an Australian citizen is an important step that shows commitment to this country. On behalf of RCAA, we welcome these new citizens, many of whom arrived here as refugees having endured many hardships along the way".

“Refugees are not victims but survivors and fighters, he said. “they’re strong and resilient. They don’t want charity, they want opportunity. We welcome newest citizens and wish them all the best for their new journey as citizens in Australia”.

Addressing the new citizens Nasiba Akram, RCAA Deputy Chairperson said "We encourage all residents in our community to join in celebrating World Refugee Day. Today, I am proud to be part of a society that affords opportunity and equality to every individual."

Vivienne Nguyen AM, while presenting the Citizenship Certificates said the audience that becoming a citizen was a reminder that we all have a responsibility to contribute to a safe, inclusive, and cohesive Multicultural Victoria.

RCAA also invited refugees, refugee communities and their supporters to register for their inaugural conference to be held in Melbourne on 20-21 September 2023.

For more information, please kindly contact RCAA spokesperson Parsu Sharma Luitl JP on 0412 265 317 or by email: [admin@rcaoa.org.au](mailto:admin@rcaoa.org.au)