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MEDIA RELEASE

Vinnies welcomes report on refugee experiences

The National Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia welcomes the release of *Foundations for Belonging 2021 Insights on newly arrived refugees: Women and Digital Inclusion, September 2021*. This report tracks the experience and contributions of newly arrived refugees in Australia.

St Vincent de Paul National President, Claire Victory said refugees have contributed in immeasurable terms to the social and cultural fabric of Australia for decades. What this report reflects is the evolving policy, practice and evidence base for refugee settlement in Australia, and further emphasises the benefits of accepting refugees into our communities.

‘The study, which adds to the existing evidence base by highlighting the crucial role of social connections and rights and responsibilities in settlement, integration and belonging, is very welcome, especially at a time when our borders are not as welcoming as they once were. The focus on the strengths and contributions of refugees is timely,’ Ms Victory said.

The report presents findings from a second wave of research carried out with newly arrived refugees in Australia. The data was collected as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted communities in Australia and around the world.

During this period digital technologies became even more important in daily life, work and study. Consequently, this second wave provides insights on digital inclusion among newly arrived refugees in Australia.

The report concludes that:

- Permanent protection is the central pillar for refugees gaining access to equal rights, equal opportunities to fulfil responsibilities and a pathway to Australian citizenship.
- Volunteering opportunities should be open and accessible to refugees and responsive to refugees’ strengths and demonstrated willingness to volunteer.
- Younger refugee women can act as ‘digital enablers’ within their communities to help and support older members of their communities to find information by accessing and using digital resources.

A copy of the report *Foundations for Belonging 2021 Insights on newly arrived refugees: Women and digital inclusion, September 2021* can be found [here](#)

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.

MEDIA CONTACT

0475 068 209 or media@svdp.org.au

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