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NSW GOVERNMENT COMMENCES TALKS FOR SYRIAN AND IRAQI REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

The new NSW Coordinator-General for Refugee Resettlement has commenced initial discussions with relevant community, education and private sector groups to support the resettlement of Syrian and Iraqi refugees in NSW.

Professor Peter Shergold AC, appointed to the role last month by NSW Premier Mike Baird, said he was pleased to assume the role and looked forward to preparing for the arrival of the first refugees, expected before the end of the year.

“This will be a staged process over approximately 18 months and NSW will settle at least 4,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees. The humanitarian crisis occurring in the Middle East is unpredictable and Australia and NSW are working within that context,” Professor Shergold said.

“These people need our help, and my role is to coordinate a holistic approach with government agencies, community groups and the private sector all pitching in to offer the best services we can for these refugees.

“We are working with experts in refugee settlement on the best possible approach and there is a lot of work ahead of us. The refugees are coming to Australia to build new lives and leave the worst behind them.”

NSW already settles more than 4000 refugees each year. These additional refugees will come from Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan following mandatory health and security checks. The Commonwealth Government will then consider a range of factors in determining where they will be resettled.

“We can expect to see Syrians and Iraqis from a range of backgrounds, work experience, level of skills and qualifications and English language proficiency,” he said.

“The availability of accommodation and services such as health, counselling and pathways to education and local business opportunities will be critical to successful resettlement.

“We’ll be looking at family or community links as well as reaching out to corporate Australia to identify meaningful employment opportunities.”

Professor Shergold said he was heartened by the response from the community, which has already registered nearly 300 offers of support, English lessons,
friendship, accommodation and professional services including healthcare and counselling via the NSW Government web page ‘I Can Help’.

“People and communities around the state have indicated their willingness to welcome our new arrivals, and to do what they can to assist,” he said. “We are humbled by this outpouring of support from all corners of our state.”

For more information, visit www.nsw.gov.au/icanhelp.

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