NSW UNIVERSITIES PLEDGE A PATH TO A NEW LIFE
FOR THE SYRIAN AND IRAQI REFUGEES

Leading NSW universities have joined forces to offer scholarships, financial assistance and other support for refugees on a humanitarian visa, NSW Coordinator-General for Refugee Resettlement Peter Shergold AC announced today.

The major universities in Sydney, as well as universities in Newcastle, Wollongong, New England and Bathurst, have committed to funding scholarships and tertiary education programs for refugees, including the Syrian and Iraqi refugees who will arrive in NSW in the next 18 months.

“We’re delighted to see this strong show of support from our NSW universities,” said Professor Shergold.

“We know that education is the key to unlocking potential, opportunity and jobs. Many refugees have been forced to abandon their studies, and this support from across the state will enable them to rediscover and pursue their dreams.”

Professor Shergold said that further work will be done, where possible, to see existing qualifications obtained from international institutions recognised and accepted in NSW.

The new university programs for refugees include:

- **Western Sydney University** – a contribution of $500,000 to establish the Refugee Scholarship Fund, which will offer scholarships valued at $7,500 per year for the duration of the degree.

- **University of Sydney** – will make available scholarships funded from investment returns on a $500,000 capital pool for the purpose of supporting the needs of refugees from Syria and Iraq.

- **University of New South Wales** – will make available scholarships funded from investment returns on a $500,000 capital pool for the purpose of supporting the needs of refugees from Syria and Iraq.

- **University of Technology Sydney** – ten three-year scholarships for the Syrian and Iraqi refugees, and an increase in the overall number of scholarships available to those with refugee status.

- **University of Newcastle** – a new support program for students from refugee backgrounds to help them transition to university, navigate the tertiary system and develop strengthened language, literacy and numeracy skills.

- **Macquarie University** – a Master of Research/PhD scholarship, in partnership with
Cara (the Council for At-Risk Academics). The first two successful applicants are Syrian refugees.

- **Australian Catholic University** – full tuition scholarships to the University’s English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program, where English language proficiency is an issue.

- **University of New England** – will provide staff to supervise refugee doctors who gain a place at the UNE Medical Centre until they are able to gain full Australian registration, including the provision of English language studies.

- **University of Wollongong** – will work with TAFE, in particular, to identify ways to assist with recognition of qualifications, enabling entry to or continuation of university study, or support the refugees through UoW bridging programs which offer English language or other pathway studies.

- **Charles Sturt University** – $3 million pledged to its Foundation Fund, where the interest earnings from the Fund will be used to deliver a range of perpetual scholarships with a specific inclusion for refugees.

Professor Shergold added that obtaining a tertiary education would ensure that refugees had better job prospects and were more likely to forge successful careers that would reduce dependence on welfare and help to support their families.

"We congratulate the universities on identifying a number of significant new initiatives that will help refugees achieve their potential and fully participate in all the opportunities that NSW has to offer," he said.

"These programs will enable the refugees to build on their skills, education and overseas qualifications and very quickly make a positive contribution to Australian society."

The NSW Government has pledged to resettle at least 4000 refugees as part of the additional Australian humanitarian intake of 12000. Professor Shergold is working to coordinate all levels of government and the corporate, education, community, non-government and vocational education and training sectors to resettle refugees in NSW.

MEDIA:
Lisa Thomas I DPC Media I 0411 481 756