

OPENING OF THE NEWCASTLE MIGRANT  
RESOURCE CENTRE

WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 1981

ADDRESS BY THE  
MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS

THE HON IAN MACPHEE

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE THIS EVENING AND WOULD LIKE TO  
THANK THE INTERIM COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR INVITATION  
TO OPEN THIS CENTRE.

THE MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE IN NEWCASTLE IS ONE OF A  
CHAIN OF MORE THAN TWENTY CENTRES BEING ESTABLISHED  
UNDER THE GALBALLY REPORT AND OPERATING IN ALL STATES  
AND TERRITORIES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS CENTRE IS A RECOGNITION OF THE  
NEEDS OF THE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN THE NEWCASTLE AREA.

I WOULD LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF THE ETHNIC AFFAIRS  
COMMISSION AND THE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES COUNCIL, BOTH OF WHOM  
ARE REPRESENTED ON THE INTERIM COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT OF  
THE MRC, FOR THE WORK THEY HAVE BEEN DOING ON BEHALF OF  
MIGRANTS.

THE CENTRE WILL HAVE TWO MAIN FUNCTIONS:

- TO ASSIST MIGRANTS, PARTICULARLY NEWLY  
ARRIVED MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES TO GAIN ACCESS  
TO EXISTING COMMUNITY SERVICES AND  
RESOURCES; AND

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- TO PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-HELP PROGRAMMES IN THE INTERESTS OF MIGRANT WELFARE AND SETTLEMENT.

WHILE THE COMMONWEALTH IS PROVIDING FUNDS FOR MRC'S AND THREE ARMS OF GOVERNMENT ARE REPRESENTED ON MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE LEADERSHIP AND DRIVE WILL MAINLY COME FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF ETHNIC AND COMMUNITY GROUPS.

THE CENTRE WILL OPERATE WITH A HIGH DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE FROM GOVERNMENT CONTROL. IT WILL DETERMINE THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND SETS ITS OWN PRIORITIES; THE CLEAR MESSAGE OF THE GALBALLY REPORT WAS SELF-HELP AND THE SUCCESS OF THIS CENTRE WILL DEPEND ULTIMATELY ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE COMMUNITY PITCHES IN AND HELPS ITSELF.

MANY OF US WERE ONCE MIGRANTS OR THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANTS. THE PEOPLE WHO MOST NEED OUR HELP ARE NEW ARRIVALS, PARTICULARLY REFUGEES.

THE CITY OF NEWCASTLE WAS ONE OF THE EARLIEST PARTICIPANTS OUTSIDE THE CAPITALS TO TAKE PART IN COMMUNITY REFUGEE SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

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UNDER THE SCHEME, WHICH BEGAN IN LATE 1979, REFUGEES BYPASS MIGRANT HOSTELS AND MOVE DIRECTLY INTO THE COMMUNITY IN THE CARE OF GROUPS WHO UNDERTAKE A BROAD RANGE OF SUPPORT IN:-

- . INITIAL ACCOMMODATION
- . ASSISTANCE IN FINDING EMPLOYMENT
- . ENGLISH LESSONS
- . GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE COMMUNITY

SINCE 1979 ALMOST 1,700 REFUGEES HAVE BEEN SETTLED IN AUSTRALIA UNDER CRSS.

THE TARGET OF 2,000 APPROVALS FOR 1980/81 PROGRAM YEAR MAY EVEN BE SURPASSED.

I WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CATHOLIC PARISH OF TORONTO, WHICH UNDER FR. TONY STACE HAS SETTLED 5 VIETNAMESE FAMILIES.

I WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNISE ALSO THE EFFORTS OF THE RED CROSS WHICH PROVIDES SERVICES TO REFUGEES GENERALLY AND THOSE UNDER THE SCHEME.

THE ROLE OF THE POLISH ASSOCIATION OF MAITLAND IN THEIR EFFORT IN GENERATING COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR EAST EUROPEAN REFUGEES IS ALSO TO BE COMMENDED.

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DUE TO RECENT EVENTS IN EUROPE A GREATER NUMBER OF EAST EUROPEAN REFUGEES, PARTICULARLY POLISH REFUGEES, ARE APPLYING AND COMING TO AUSTRALIA.

WE DO TAKE A GREAT DEAL OF CARE IN SETTLING REFUGEES HERE IN AUSTRALIA.

A CONSULTATIVE PROCESS DOES EXIST FOR EXAMPLE, BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS AND INTERESTED GROUPS WHICH ALLOWS FOR SUCH FACTORS AS THE AVAILABILITY OF ACCOMMODATION AND EMPLOYMENT TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE ACCOMMODATION SHORTAGE IN THE HUNTER VALLEY AREA IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AND THE SHORTAGE OF SOME WORKERS PARTICULARLY IN HEAVY INDUSTRY IN NEWCASTLE IS ALSO BEING CONSIDERED WHEN SELECTING REFUGEES FOR PLACEMENT IN AUSTRALIA AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL.

I WOULD LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN PLAYING A PART IN THE SETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES AND COMMEND, IN PARTICULAR TO COMMUNITY GROUPS, PARTICIPATION THROUGH THE COMMUNITY REFUGEE SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

THE MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE NEEDS THE SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AS A CENTRE FOR ALL MIGRANTS, IN ALL ITS ENDEAVOURS. I TRUST THAT IT WILL HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE NEWCASTLE COMMUNITY.

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I NOW DECLARE THE CENTRE OPEN. TO MARK THE OCCASION I WOULD  
LIKE TO PRESENT THE COMMITTEE WITH AN AUSTRALIAN FLAG, A  
PORTRAIT OF THE QUEEN AND A CASSETTE OF THE NATIONAL  
ANTHEM.