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Department of Home Affairs

Commonwealth Coordinator-General
for Migrant Services

The Refugee and Migrant Services Advisory Council

An employer's guide to working with refugees

Unlocking new sectors of Australia's
workforce talent

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What kinds of opportunities could we open up in our business?

Chair Foreword

‘Story Book’ Project

Employment plays a vital role in integrating refugees into the Australian community and is significant in assisting refugees to build a new life for themselves and their families. Having a job allows refugees and their families to become self-reliant and provides a sense of economic security and belonging.

Not only do businesses that employ refugees help to ensure the success of Australia’s settlement program but they also reap the benefits that come from a diverse and inclusive workforce. Besides demonstrating a commitment to corporate and social responsibility, employing refugees allows businesses to tap into a pool of motivated, skilled, resilient and adaptable employees.

Many businesses have already developed their own strategies to support refugee employment. The aim of this story book is to highlight some examples of businesses that have successfully engaged refugees; I hope that it may act as a roadmap for others.

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to employing refugees, the range of businesses included in this story book shows that with the right commitment and investment there will be a strategy that will work for your business. That strategy could include direct employment or involve offering mentorships or internships, while providing valuable work experience opportunities.

I hope the examples contained in this publication demonstrate the benefits of employing refugees for both employers and employees, and encourage other organisations to consider how they might offer refugees a pathway to integrate into the Australian economy, society and community.

Paris Aristotle, AO

Chair

Refugee and Migrant Services Advisory Council



CareerSeekers helps GHD find qualified and experienced job seekers

‘Having people in our teams who come from diverse backgrounds helps us to design better infrastructure’

Established in 1928 in Melbourne, GHD is one of the world’s leading professional services companies, employing more than 10,000 people in over 200 offices. The company provides engineering, architecture, and environmental and construction services to private and public sector clients.

GHD’s commitment to diversity led it to partner with CareerSeekers, a non-profit organisation that reduces barriers to employment for refugees. GHD works mainly with the CareerSeekers’ mid-career program, which offers paid internship opportunities to mid-career professionals who are looking to re-establish their careers in Australia.

Since 2016, GHD has welcomed 39 CareerSeekers interns around Australia. Refugees have worked across nearly all teams within the business, including IT, Finance, Building Services, Power and Automation, Transport, Architecture, Systems Assurance, Geotechnical and Tunnels, Environmental Management, Engagement Communication and Communities.

‘In a competitive talent market, it’s important that we don’t underutilise the talent and experience of refugees and other humanitarian arrivals’

While GHD initially partnered with CareerSeekers to give back to the community, Jill Hannaford, General Manager Technical Services, APAC & Australia, says employing refugees has been of huge benefit to the business.

CareerSeekers and GHD have developed a successful two-way relationship that allows GHD to regularly secure talented candidates. In particular, GHD has found refugees to fill technical

skills gaps that exist in the infrastructure sector around Australia. While GHD has a great pipeline of graduates, it often has a talent gap at mid-career levels. The mid-career program helps GHD address this staffing challenge.

‘More of our refugee employees will be future leaders in the business, there’s no doubt about that’

Twenty of the 39 CareerSeekers interns GHD brought on have transitioned into permanent roles, and many have become leaders within the organisation.

GHD has found that employing people from diverse backgrounds has helped it to engage with global organisations, and connect and communicate with the wider Australian community. GHD builds infrastructure in communities, for communities, so reflecting those communities in its own workforce is important.

GHD’s advice to businesses interested in employing refugees



Traditional recruitment processes may not be a good way of accommodating refugees who can lack local experience or have CV gaps as a result of their experiences. There’s a lot to be said for engaging with specialist organisations like CareerSeekers. They are great at challenging any misconceptions you may have and can connect you to potential employees who have appropriate skills and experience.



Milad Butros, one of the CareerSeekers
employed at GHD

Image supplied by CareerSeekers New Australian Internship Program

Hazeldene's Chicken Farm

A poultry production business with a large and committed refugee workforce

'Our refugee workers are such committed and loyal employees – they are a pleasure to have as part of our workforce'

Hazeldene's is a family-owned vertically integrated regional poultry producing business in central Victoria. It does everything from farming to processing and distributing, and supplies both retail and wholesale markets with poultry.

Hazeldene's has been employing refugees since the 1970's and began a relationship with the Karen community in 2012. Now it employs 120 Karen and 20 Afghani refugees.

Refugees are largely employed as process workers, with a small number having moved into leadership roles.

'The Karen refugees that were initially employed showed themselves to be good workers. We decided to take more on and have not regretted it'

Initially, a group of refugees approached Hazeldene's for work. The business decided to employ refugees to fill vacant roles.

Hazeldene's has continued to develop strong relationships with the Karen and Hazara communities – with religious leaders, community advocates, health groups and others. It is through these channels that refugees hear of Hazeldene's and are attracted to the growing communities in the Bendigo region.

The refugees have proven to be a reliable and committed workforce that meets Hazeldene's demand for staff. 'We have a multicultural workforce, and the diversity provides a really good team spirit,' says Hazeldene's.

Small adjustments improve communication between refugees and the business

In the beginning, Hazeldene's found communication could be a little challenging. The Karen workers were eager to please and follow instructions but, as a result, they rarely raised issues with supervisors.

Hazeldene's developed strategies to overcome this. It organised small group meetings with Karen staff and managers. This provided an opportunity for the business and the staff to give each other feedback and talk about what was and was not working.

Hazeldene's also considered the induction process carefully. When they start work with the company, refugee employees are paired with someone from a similar background, so they have someone they're comfortable asking questions.

'The refugees want to follow the policies and procedures, and with the mechanisms we put in place to improve communications they are willing to contribute and put forward ideas,' says Hazeldene's.

Hazeldene's advice to businesses interested in employing refugees



Think about strategies you can employ to enhance communication with refugees who are not yet confident in English. Small group meetings with refugee staff and leaders have provided a platform to engage staff, give and receive feedback and build two-way loyalty.

The Minnie Barn in Armidale

A motel restaurant serving delicious Ezidi food

‘If you employ refugees and empower them to operate from the heart, you’ll find that they’ll bring a lot of creativity to the workplace’

The Minnie Barn is an authentic Ezidi restaurant that operates as part of the City Centre Motor Inn in Armidale.

The motel was looking to establish a restaurant that would appeal to its new corporate clientele and stand out from other restaurants in Armidale. It found the solution in the local Ezidi refugee population.

After a chance meeting with someone experienced with refugee settlement in the area, the motel operators had the idea to ask the local refugee population to run The Minnie Barn.

They reached out to Settlement Services International (SSI), a local settlement service provider, to connect with refugees living in Armidale. SSI helped The Minnie Barn find a local refugee with experience as a sous chef in Iraq. The Minnie Barn, with assistance from SSI, supported their new employee to obtain an Australian food handling certificate and get started at the restaurant.

The Ezidi sous chef is now the restaurant’s head chef, a role he could not have held in Iraq because of the persecution he faced. He has created an Ezidi menu that draws in locals and visitors alike. The Minnie Barn also hosts live music.

‘It has been a cool and challenging project, and it’s been a trial and error strategy to see how it can work’

While The Minnie Barn’s operators are positive about the move to employ refugees, they admit that initially communicating with their Ezidi staff presented challenges. The Ezidi staff’s English was

limited and there are very few interpreters available in the area. However, The Minnie Barn came up with several innovative solutions to overcome this challenge – from using pictures to develop a shopping list for the menu to using music and dance to set a positive atmosphere in the kitchen.

‘The Minnie Barn has seen a huge improvement in their Ezidi staff’s English,’ says Kate Mitchell.

The Minnie Barn now stands out from the crowd

The staff at The Minnie Barn have been able to work collaboratively to bring something new to Armidale, and employing refugees has allowed The Minnie Barn to stand out from the crowd. The new Ezidi staff and restaurant have enjoyed a lot of community support and enthusiasm.

Kate Mitchell explains that employing refugees has been great for public relations, even though this was not a benefit sought out by The Minnie Barn. By employing Ezidi staff, The Minnie Barn has attracted much media attention, including national coverage in an article in *The Weekend Australian*.

The Minnie Barn’s advice to businesses interested in employing refugees



Be willing to be flexible in your thinking, because it will require business change. There is always a way to communicate and achieve the outcomes you’re looking for, but it may look different to what you’ve done with other employees.

Wamed Naeem, one of the CareerSeekers
employed at Macquarie Group

*Image supplied by CareerSeekers New Australian
Internship Program*



Macquarie Group

Partnering with CareerSeekers to create opportunities for refugee university students

Through CareerSeekers, refugee university students can take up an internship at Macquarie Group

Macquarie Group has been involved with CareerSeekers's student program since it began in 2016. Through CareerSeekers, full-time university students complete a 12-week, paid summer internship at Macquarie.

The program Macquarie runs with CareerSeekers is demand driven – areas of the business declare an interest in hosting an intern and Macquarie puts in a request to CareerSeekers. CareerSeekers interns are placed in an area that aligns with their degree and are hosted by Macquarie.

'It's an enriching experience for everyone who participates in the program'

Macquarie reports that interns, their managers and their teams all benefit from the program.

Interns learn about what it's like to work in Australia – something not taught on campus. They develop professional networks and work experience that can lead to future career opportunities. Where Macquarie has had an opening and an intern is a good fit, it has offered the intern a role at the conclusion of their studies. In other cases, Macquarie has introduced interns to other employers that are looking for staff.

David Robb, an Executive Director and lawyer at Macquarie, explains that some interns are the first young person in their family to undertake tertiary education in Australia and, having grown up overseas, many are unfamiliar with how career paths are made here. For these refugees, navigating the graduate job market can be challenging. Assistance from CareerSeekers and experience with Macquarie can make a real difference to their career trajectory.

Staff who work with CareerSeekers interns make connections and share stories with them. This experience is an enriching one and improves the

team's understanding and appreciation of the world and its diverse people and their experiences. According to David, the CareerSeekers program is an 'opportunity for managers, teams and colleagues to have their horizons broadened.'

Hosting a CareerSeekers intern can also be a good professional development opportunity for managers, as they learn how to get the best out of a diverse team. David Robb explains that supervising a CareerSeekers legal intern can help lawyers improve their technical skills. As lawyers work through their practice with interns, explaining approaches and concepts clearly, they improve their own understanding of what they are doing and why.

Creating opportunities for refugees contributes to the fabric of our nation

David says, 'Immigration and the refugee experience is a part of the history of our country, so creating opportunities for refugees contributes to the fabric of our nation. Working with refugees, either through CareerSeekers or another route, is not something you will regret.'

What Macquarie has learnt about how to successfully engage refugees



A support network and a good fit between the team and the intern are important to success. CareerSeekers provides interns with training and support both before and during their internship at Macquarie. While at Macquarie, in addition to a line manager, interns are matched with a buddy. A buddy, a line manager and other staff who champion CareerSeekers interns, help set them up for success.

John Holland

Reflecting the community helps John Holland win business

John Holland started thinking about employing refugees to meet social procurement targets

John Holland is one of Australia's leading infrastructure and property companies, and has worked on some of the largest infrastructure projects around the country. Because of the varied nature of the projects and the communities where it works, John Holland is focused on reflecting this diversity in its workforce.

The Victorian Government's Social Procurement Policy prompted John Holland to first consider actively recruiting refugees. The policy encourages businesses to adopt and maintain fair, inclusive and sustainable business practices in order to win government contracts. Changing employment practices to target refugees and other vulnerable job seekers aligns neatly with John Holland's purpose of transforming lives, and as a regular supplier to government, it is also a way for the company to maximise its chances of winning work.

John Holland designed a program for disadvantaged jobseekers that aims to help the business recruit people who face barriers to employment. Refugees are one group targeted by the program, which also focuses on people living with a disability, disadvantaged youth and other vulnerable cohorts.

The program is supported by a dedicated team. The team works to identify opportunities for job seekers, prepare the business and candidate for the recruitment process, and recruit and then support and train program participants.

Working with a network of service providers helps John Holland find the talent it needs

John Holland partners with a range of specialised service providers to deliver the program. Service providers include the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and Refugee and Migrant Talent, as well as less specialised services such as jobactive providers and for-profit recruiters. This network of service providers helps John Holland find and prepare qualified candidates for job opportunities.

Leigh Hardingham, General Manager of Social Procurement and Inclusion at John Holland, says that the business has found many excellent employees with a refugee background through the program. 'John Holland uses the program to fill a wide range of roles, from engineers and administrative assistants to designers and labourers. Many of the refugees referred through the program are highly skilled and experienced, some having held senior roles in large companies overseas,' says Leigh.

John Holland's experience has been that refugee employees often need more support upfront to learn industry-specific language and practices in Australia. With time, however, refugees have been incredibly valued contributors on John Holland projects and many have progressed quickly to senior roles.

Leigh provides an example of a John Holland success story: 'One refugee had worked on major projects for General Electric in the Middle East and USA. She was able to help interpret the project construction needs for the designers. She helped us solve a problem we didn't know we had.'

'Employing refugees allows us to bring our social conscience to work and live it every day'

The program, including its focus on refugees, contributes to John Holland's positive and diverse workplace culture. It contributes to a visibly multicultural office and work spaces. John Holland draws on the program to celebrate and showcase diversity both in the business and in Australia.

The program also helps the business attract talent. Leigh explains, 'The support and inclusion of refugees is a great demonstration to our staff that we care.'

John Holland provides training to staff about the refugee experience, both overseas and in Australia. Such training helps generate support for the program and the refugees who come to John Holland.



John Holland's advice to businesses interested in employing refugees



There are many highly qualified refugee candidates. When you are next filling a role, we recommend widening your recruitment net to include them. This is a more sustainable business model in the long run than trying to place refugees in an ill-matched job.

Allianz

Recruiting, developing and retaining refugee talent within the workplace

Allianz's corporate strategy: a commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce

Allianz Australia's (Allianz) work with refugees stems from a formalised commitment to diversity and inclusion. Head of Social Impact, Charis Martin-Ross, explains that Allianz's strategy is about 'tapping into talent that allows us to deliver to our diverse customers.'

In partnership with Settlement Services International (SSI), Allianz has established two key programs to directly promote refugee employment outcomes: a Sustainable Employment Program and the 'Allianz Ladder' program. The company also sponsors the SSI Allianz Scholarship, which provides financial assistance to skilled refugees to help break down barriers to continuing work in their fields after arrival in Australia. The scholarship helps to fund the activities required to attain local recognition for their qualifications, such as bridging courses, which can otherwise be prohibitively expensive.

Each of the measures Allianz has introduced recognises that refugees have valuable skills and are a source of talent for Australian businesses but face barriers to accessing meaningful work in Australia.

Allianz is committed to creating sustainable opportunities

Allianz's Sustainable Employment Program looks to recruit refugees into permanent positions. The program is demand driven and Allianz starts by

identifying roles within the business – spanning accounting, data science and audit through to marketing and event management – that need filling and might be well suited to a refugee.

SSI helps identify and recruit refugees who can meet Allianz's business need, and it is SSI's familiarity with Allianz's business that has ensured referrals are nearly always a good fit. Allianz has learned that it's critical to identify roles that have structure and enough support for the role to be one a refugee can succeed in. Charis explains that where such roles are identified, SSI has always been able to help us fill them.

Allianz has created a 'community of support' for when refugees start. A buddy, team leader, general manager, sponsor and case manager (who liaises between the refugee and his or her team) are all focused on making the experience a rewarding one for both the refugee and for Allianz.

The 'Allianz Ladder' program is a career experience for young refugees looking for their first job in Australia. Participants engage with professionals in a corporate environment and are trained in design thinking principles to help shape innovative solutions, which they pitch to Allianz senior executives. The program has become yet another source of talent for Allianz.

Working with refugees has contributed to a strong culture that Allianz staff are extremely proud of

Charis sees Allianz's refugee employment program as a core contributor to the business's diversity and inclusion strategy as well as their positive workplace culture. Charis explains, 'internal staff survey results prove the strategy is working and that Allianz's culture is one that embraces diversity.'

Building a diverse workforce is part of Allianz's commitment to reflect multicultural Australia. Diversity sends an important message to all staff – that they can be successful at Allianz regardless of their gender, religion, race, sexuality or any other factor unconnected with their work.

According to Charis, supporting refugees is something staff at Allianz are proud of – our staff 'feel it's an honour to help refugees rebuild their lives.'

Allianz's advice to businesses interested in employing refugees



Ensure that you have organisational support from the top down. This will give your program credibility when approaching business areas for support and ensure the program is sustainable. Additionally, you need to acknowledge and prepare to support refugees' steep learning curves, particularly in their first months when they are tackling everything from jargon and business language through to public transport and office etiquette. It's vital to put in place clear strategies to help navigate this.



ANZ works with the Brotherhood of St Laurence to find committed and talented refugees

‘Refugees in the majority of cases are so hard working and extremely resilient. More often than not they are the best performers in the team’

ANZ’s refugee employment story began in 2007, when two senior managers found out about the Brotherhood of St Laurence’s ‘Given the Chance’ program.

Given the Chance matches disadvantaged jobseekers with paid employment opportunities. It operated initially in Victoria and its success there led The Brotherhood of St Laurence to expand and launch a pilot program in New South Wales in partnership with ANZ. It has helped over a thousand refugees find work.

ANZ saw the program as an opportunity to support people in the refugee community who face barriers to employment and as a chance to harness the diversity of talent that refugees possess.

Through Given the Chance, ANZ runs a six-month paid work placement program that has had hundreds of participants. Refugees are engaged in diverse roles – many work in customer service but, more recently, ANZ has brought refugees into technical roles such as software engineering.

One benefit of employing refugees through the Given the Chance program is the training and services provided by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The Brotherhood shortlists the candidates based on the attributes requested by ANZ, provides a four-day course to prepare selected candidates for the Australian workplace and provides cultural awareness training to the receiving team.

ANZ values diversity in their workforce and sees huge benefits from working with refugees

ANZ has seen first-hand the positive impacts that a diverse workforce can bring to the business.

Many of the refugees ANZ has worked with have held senior positions across the banking industry overseas. These refugees bring energy to their roles

at ANZ and are often great drivers of innovation and new ideas.

Refugees employed in local branches also draw in customers for ANZ. Louise Ellis, Inclusion and Talent Manager at ANZ, recounts how Afghani refugees would queue out the door of a local branch in Melbourne to be served by a member of their community, in their language.

‘Refugees are extremely hardworking and ANZ is seeing fantastic outcomes through the program,’ says Louise. Although the intention is to provide participants with six months’ worth of experience to help them secure another job in the future, Louise explains that ANZ has ended up retaining about 70 per cent of participants. The business has found that managers who have worked with refugees continue to rely on the program to help them build high-performing and diverse teams.

It’s critical to provide refugees with a support network when they join the business

At ANZ this support network includes a line manager who is invested in the program, a professional mentor who is able to connect the refugee with a network and a buddy who is a previous participant in the program. A field officer from the Brotherhood of St Laurence supports the refugee and their team. ANZ has found that this combination of support enables an easy transition into work at ANZ.

ANZ’s advice to businesses interested in employing refugees



Although many refugees come to Australia with a wealth of professional experience, it’s important that initially they are placed in roles that allow them to build their confidence and understanding of the Australian industry. When you onboard a highly qualified candidate, consider fast tracking them once they’ve found their feet.

Paul Malual, ANZ Banking Consultant

Image supplied by ANZ



Oh the Places You'll Go

By Gemma Simpson,
Digital Producer, ANZ

"Thirty years ago, I never imagined I'd work for a bank," says Paul Malual, ANZ Banking Consultant in Melbourne.

"Nobody in my family would think to work there because people don't put money in the bank in the village where I lived."

Paul's local bank branch in Rumbek, South Sudan was destroyed in the Second Sudanese Civil War – a conflict that lasted 22 years and displaced four million people from their homes. As a child, Paul often walked passed the old bank site and wondered about its history.

The road from his home in South Sudan to Australia was a long one but for Paul it was always about education. Many children in South Sudan struggled to access education in the 90s and many families were reluctant to send their children for fear they'd never return.

Paul believes he was lucky as the youngest of four children his parents trusted him to attend school at aged 5. "I remember my first day of school in Sudan. I dropped tears after seeing the large crowd of students sitting under the tree. There were only

two classes, one under the tree and the other in the local church room," he says. He quickly grew to love school and developed a passion for learning.

Paul's father was a local tribesman in the village who never went to school. Gaining an education was new for the family and important to Paul.

When he realised he'd out grown what was offered at his school and there wasn't a secondary school nearby, Paul knew he'd need to leave if he wanted to take his education further.

"Me and my friends decided we needed a better school," Paul remembers. "We didn't have money to support our education so we chose to go to a refugee camp."

Life in the Kakuma Refugee Camp was tough. Paul describes it as a "mixture of pleasure and sadness". He was delighted with the schooling but poor sanitation and even poorer food distribution made it very hard for Paul and his friends.

"When it rained, food distribution centres remain closed. Sometimes it would rain for several days straight, causing many people to miss out on food for days at a time," he says.

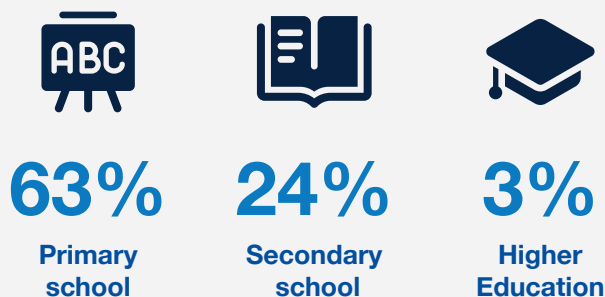
"You don't have a lot of things in the refugee camp and it's probably like prison because you don't

know when you're going to get out. I've never been to prison but in the refugee camp you just stay there. You get food but you don't know when the camp is going to be closed down. You don't know when the war is going to end. So you just stay there indefinitely," Paul says.

Of the 19.9 million refugees under care of the UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) in 2018, 7.4 million were of school age and access to education was limited with around 4 million of these children unable to attend school. Paul was in the minority and he was able to continue his education at the refugee camp thanks to the UNHCR.

Primary education is the most common level of education for refugees. According to research from UNHCR, 2018 saw a sharp increase in the number of refugees going on to higher education, from 1 to 3 per cent. The global number of people progressing to higher education is 37 per cent.

Enrolment of refugees in education



Source: UNESCO (2017), UNHCR (2018)

Setting off

After four years in the refugee camp, Paul was granted a Humanitarian Visa and, equipped with his primary school certificate, set off for Australia. With his family still in South Sudan, Paul made the trip alone. He arrived and met up with his aunt, who had left Sudan before Paul was born.

Paul supported himself through high school, working part time jobs while studying. He furthered his education and studied Business at University. It was during his university studies that Paul learned about the Given the Chance program.

Over the past 12 years, ANZ has worked with the Brotherhood of St Laurence to recruit employees through the Given the Chance program - designed to assist marginalised job seekers into work and foster social benefit and inclusion in workplace communities.

Completing six months of training in the program, Paul was offered a role at ANZ. After taking some time to finish his undergraduate degree, he accepted. Eight years later, Paul is still with ANZ and he has a new degree, a Masters of Applied Project Management.



Paul and his family celebrate his graduation from his Masters of Applied Project Management degree

"You need to take pride in what you do," Paul says. "It's not about ANZ. It's not about other people. It's about you as a person. Because whatever I do I try to do it in the best possible way I can."

Paul's found himself a new home and a new family in Australia. His children are proud of where he works. Whenever they see an ANZ logo they say "That's where Baba works!"

"I want my kids to grow up in an Australian way of life and have a mixed cultural background," Paul says.

"Australia's probably one of the best places to live. You know, others may disagree, but in terms of someone who has been in a war torn country... if I was in Sudan now, I wouldn't be the same. I wouldn't have finished my university degree. I wouldn't be where I am, wouldn't have my family or seen the world. There's a lot of opportunity here."

Colonial First State

Refugees contribute to a diverse and inclusive culture that Colonial First State staff are proud of

‘Working with CareerSeekers is a powerful way to put your diversity and inclusion policy into action’

Colonial First State is a subsidiary of the Commonwealth Bank and has been helping Australians with their investment, superannuation and retirement needs since 1988. Since 2017, it has worked closely with CareerSeekers, providing internships to mid-career professionals with a refugee background.

The business’s employee-led Diversity and Inclusion Committee began the process. The committee saw the CareerSeekers program as an opportunity to directly improve outcomes for refugees, along with boosting diversity and inclusion within the organisation. With a senior sponsor and a pitch to leaders outlining the benefits of the program, the committee was able to get the program off the ground.

Refugees who join the mid-career program are from a wide range of cultural and professional backgrounds. Interns that have joined Colonial First State have worked in finance, risk management, pharmaceuticals, sports journalism and HR management. Scott Henricks, General Manager Operations, says, ‘We have tried to leverage their backgrounds – for example we placed our risk management professional from Iraq in a role that aligned with her skills.’

‘Employing refugees has brought positivity to the team. It has made people more grateful and they work with more motivation’

Colonial First State values the contribution refugees make to its corporate culture and its reputation as an actively diverse and inclusive workplace.

Scott Henricks says employing refugees has led to a shift in the organisation’s culture. Scott has seen the pride that staff take in working for an

organisation that is committed to this initiative. ‘It has a really profound impact on your employees,’ he says, ‘through working alongside refugees who are building a new life here, staff gain a real sense of perspective and appreciation for life in Australia.’ The ripple effect is that staff work with more motivation and appreciation.

A Colonial First State manager, Jack Hunter, presented at a CareerSeekers event on his experience of working with an intern from Rwanda. Jack explained how, working with this particular refugee, he’d learnt about tolerance, understanding, patience, reliance and perspective. Remembering the event, Scott reflected, ‘There was not a dry eye in the house.’

‘Their appreciation and enthusiasm for what we do is effusive and contagious’

Since the inception of the program, Colonial First State has hosted approximately 25 CareerSeekers interns. Scott notes that participants’ diligence, aptitude and commitment is second to none. In recognition of this, the vast majority of CareerSeekers interns have been offered permanent positions with Colonial First State.

Scott explains that ‘longevity of staff has been fantastic.’

Colonial First State’s advice to businesses interested in employing refugees



It’s important for your organisation to have senior champions, who are focused on both the success of the program and the individual refugees. Without these advocates, it will be easy for the program to flounder when the company encounters challenges.

Jack Hunter, Colonial First State, sharing his experience of employing a CareerSeeker

Image supplied by CareerSeekers New Australian Internship Program



New beginnings

How Nivine restarted her career in Australia

By Nivine Baz

Communication and Community Engagement Consultant, GHD

For some people, moving to a foreign country is an exciting adventure, but for others it's their only option to survive. For Nivine Baz, it was the latter. After 33 years of building a life in Lebanon, Nivine had to leave it all behind – her birth country, family, friends and a successful career – and move to Australia because her husband's country Syria was at war. In May 2018, after more than 24-hours of flying, Nivine arrived in Melbourne, Australia from Beirut, Lebanon, along with her Syrian-born husband. We spoke to Nivine to learn more about her career journey before and after arriving in Australia, and the support she gained from the CareerSeekers program.

Life in Lebanon

Nivine graduated from Lebanese University in Beirut with a Bachelor Degree in Languages and Translation. After three years of working in a technical translation agency, Nivine decided to explore her creative side. Shifting careers, Nivine secured a role as Creative Copywriter at international advertising agency M&C Saatchi.

"This was my dream job. I loved coming up with ideas and translating them into conceptual copy and campaigns," says Nivine.

Based in the Beirut office, Nivine built her skills and knowledge over six years, and was then promoted to a senior position at the agency, winning industry awards along the way. Shortly before moving to Melbourne Nivine was offered a role as Associate Creative Director.

Leaving it all behind

With her future prosperity in mind, Nivine's parents-in-law had applied for a humanitarian visa on her and her husband's behalf; this happened well before they got married. Much to her surprise, one day she and her husband received a phone call from the embassy asking them to attend an interview. A few weeks later, visas were granted and they had only one month to leave the country, bound for Australia.

Hello Australia

Nivine understood the key to thriving in Australia was securing a job and re-starting her career. With

qualifications in copywriting and advertising, nine years' experience and fluency in English, she had a lot to offer. However, Nivine applied for more than 100 different jobs without hearing back from one. Then Nivine came across CareerSeekers, a non-profit organisation that supports Australia's humanitarian entrants find and continue professional careers. She attended a one-week job readiness workshop with CareerSeekers and four months later she secured an internship with GHD as a consultant in the Communications and Community Engagement team based in our Melbourne office.

Nivine's first day with GHD in April 2019 was both exciting and daunting. Working in Australia was very different to Nivine's previous experience, but she was excited to develop her career.

"I couldn't believe that my manager was sitting right next to me and I only needed to call her name to speak to her. In Lebanon, I had to make an appointment to discuss anything with my manager."

Nivine's career tips

- Change is healthy, "Think of it as a mind and soul detox!"
- The only truly unique thing about your situation is what you choose to do about it
- Resilience, resilience and more resilience

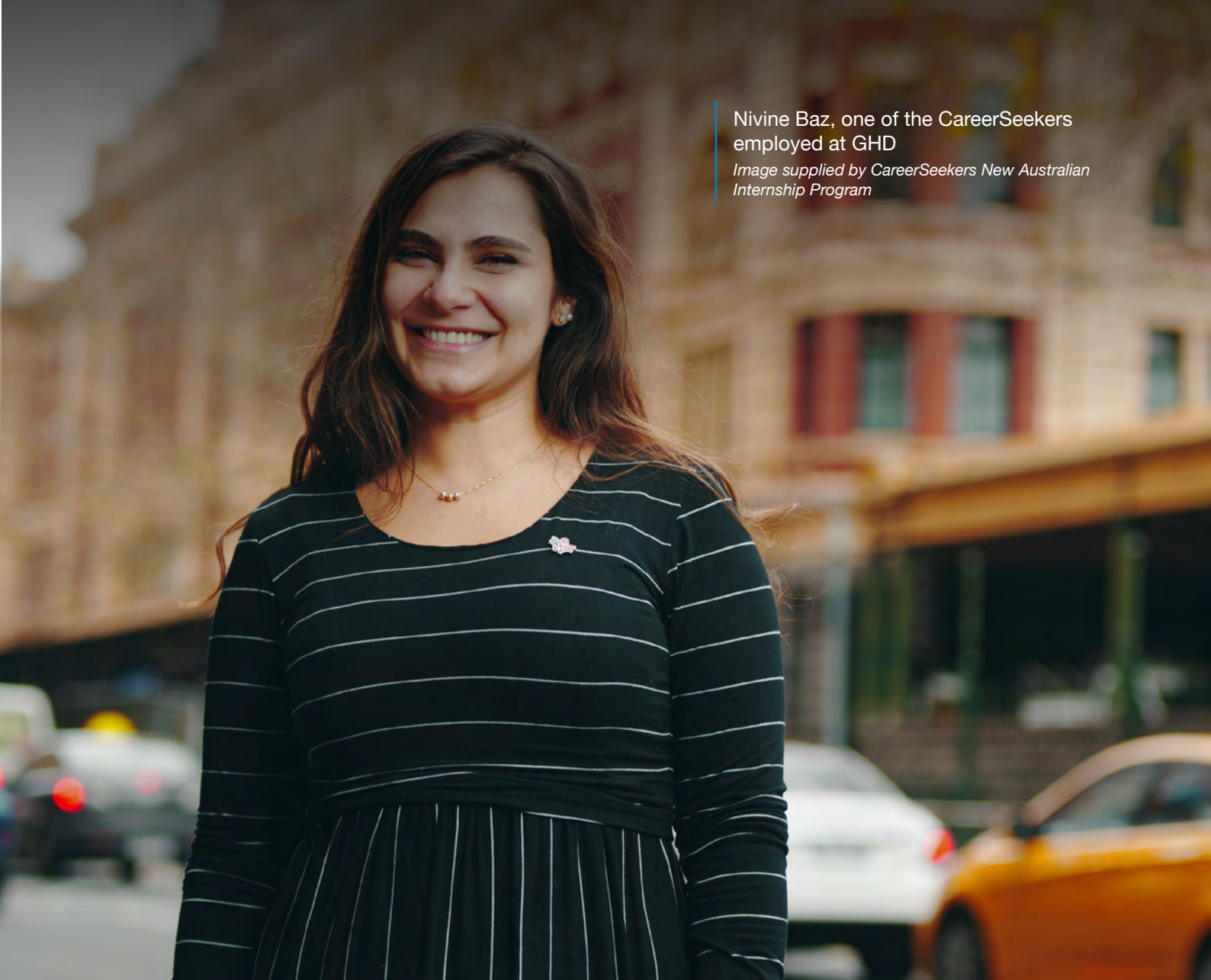
A happy ending

Following her internship at GHD, Nivine was offered an ongoing role. And this wasn't the only good news she received – she also found out she was pregnant.

"I was a little nervous when telling my manager I was pregnant, especially as I'd just received a new contract role – but my manager was just as excited by the news as me," she says.

Nivine's manager, Suzanne Waddell, Technical Director, Engagement, Communications and Communities, Victoria, GHD, can see even more exciting career opportunities ahead for Nivine.

"In a short period of time Nivine has become a highly valued member of our team. Nivine brings unique skills and experiences, which is helping to diversify our offering into brand strategy and campaigns. We look forward to seeing Nivine shine



Nivine Baz, one of the CareerSeekers employed at GHD

Image supplied by CareerSeekers New Australian Internship Program

in her Australian career when she returns from her time away welcoming her baby girl into the world. We are all excited for Nivine and we can't wait to meet her daughter," says Suzanne.

During the past eight months, Nivine has worked on several major projects in Victoria including the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain, the West Gate Tunnel project and North East Link Project.

Nivine is also part of the Creative Studio in the Communication and Community Engagement team where she puts her copywriting skills to work by translating highly complex technical concepts and information into simple, accessible and creative content.

Nivine and her husband will welcome their first child to their family in Australia this December and she plans to return to GHD in July 2020.

"I might not have migrated by choice, but I will work hard and succeed by choice. And today Australia

isn't just a country to me, but a home that I choose, cherish and love."

As part of our commitment to diversity and inclusion, GHD was one of the first companies in Australia to partner with non-profit organisation CareerSeekers, which creates employment opportunities for refugees, many of whom held professional careers in their country of origin. Since the program started, we have welcomed 35 CareerSeekers program participants across our offices in Australia.

GHD's commitment to diversity and inclusion is embodied within our strategy and includes: championing gender equality, cultural diversity, LGBTI inclusion, adapting work practices to capture the benefits of generational diversity, reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as flexible working arrangements for our people.

Advice to businesses on employing refugees

What kinds of opportunities could we open up in our business?

Businesses take different approaches to hiring refugees and it's important to identify the approach that will work best for your organisation. The table below sets out some of the things your business may wish to consider to identify opportunities that are the best fit for both the business and the refugee.

The type of position

Is it work experience, a training opportunity, temporary work placement or a more formal position?

- Work experience opportunities are great in small- to medium-sized businesses that have limited capacity to make more substantial changes to recruitment but want to give refugee job seekers an opportunity to gain Australian work experience and learn about local work culture and language.
- Training opportunities and temporary work placements help refugees access pathways to a permanent job, either within the business or somewhere else. Creating such opportunities can be of relatively low cost to the business and allow real-life assessment of skill and capability.
- You may identify refugees who meet the business needs and are ready to start as an employee. Consider adapting the business's recruitment practices to enhance the chances of engaging a refugee through mainstream processes.

The skills or qualifications required

Does the business need people with recognised Australian qualifications, or could qualifications or experience gained elsewhere be sufficient?

- Refugees with limited prior work experience are usually resilient, innovative and loyal workers who bring great value to some roles.
- Business can engage refugees who have extensive relevant experience, often in the industry and/or supported by an overseas qualification.
- Some organisations specialise in placing refugees who are highly skilled with qualifications that are recognised in Australia.

The English language proficiency needed

Does the refugee need to be highly proficient in English from day one, or can language learning be developed over their time with the business?

- Refugees who are in the earlier stages of learning English can still be a good fit for some roles. Providing employment opportunities to such refugees can help them advance their language learning, including their grasp of industry-specific language. Businesses can make adjustments to ensure refugees with limited English thrive at work.
- For some roles, a good grasp of English is required. Many refugees have excellent English language skills and will be able to confidently communicate at work from the outset.
- You might also consider how a refugee's first language may benefit your business. Some businesses gain a lot from refugees who can better communicate with their diverse range of customers.



Do refugees have rights to work in Australia?

Many of them do. To verify a refugee has a right to work in Australia, businesses can access a free online service called VEVO which checks visa statuses and conditions. VEVO can be accessed at <https://online.immi.gov.au/lusc/login>. If you engage a refugee through an established refugee employment program, program organisers will usually verify candidates have the requisite rights to work.

How do we get started and recruit refugees?

Traditional hiring practices often do not reach refugees. To hire refugees, businesses should try working with non-profits and specialist hiring agencies. Such organisations can help businesses find refugees that meet their needs. Many of the businesses showcased in this booklet started out by contacting an organisation linked in with the local refugee community.

The Australian Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees lists organisations across Australia that can help businesses connect with refugee job seekers.

What do we need to think about once we've recruited a refugee?

Success is best achieved when the employee and the team they will work in are both prepared for day one and supported thereafter. A mentor or buddy system, extra support during induction processes and pre-placement training to management and host teams are just some of the strategies businesses use. Many of the organisations that connect refugees and businesses also help prepare and support refugee employees and their teams. Further information about how to set refugees and teams up for success can be found in the information booklets linked below.

Where do we get more information or support?

A number of comprehensive guides provide more information, including:

- *[A Guide for Employers: Supporting access to employment for people from a refugee or asylum seeking background](#)*
- *[Australian Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees](#)*

Reaching out to an organisation connected with refugee job seekers, particularly one that runs an existing employment program (e.g. CareerSeekers), is also a good place to start.

