



Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

MEDIA RELEASE

16 June 2014

Refugees Celebrated Year Round at Anglican Church

The arrival of refugees is celebrated quarterly by the Anglican Parish of Belmont North/Redhead with welcome picnics.

The picnics are hosted by parishioners to show genuine welcome and care to refugees and their families, the last group being the Afghan interpreters who worked with the Australian Army.

Up to 30 refugees are picked up from their homes and driven around Newcastle's beautiful harbour, the beaches and Christ Church Cathedral, followed by a picnic at Redhead.

"Being in a place of such beauty and peace again after years of war, destruction and lack of freedom moves some to tears, regardless of faith" said Marilyn Deas, a parishioner of the Anglican Church.

As we celebrate Refugee Week, Marilyn is aware of how lonely these people are in a new country, when their only contacts with our community are with service providers.

"Our new friends are just so thankful, yet we feel more blessed just to be with them and witness their joy in such simple things that we take for granted."

"Negative public perceptions about refugees and asylum seekers create wrong impressions about how welcome these people are in our country and the purpose of these picnics is to really show genuine welcome and care from ordinary Australians to counter these perceptions."

Many of the wives of the interpreters are expecting their first baby without the support of mothers and extended family. Women from the parish put together bundles of baby clothes and other items from donations of cash and the Parish Op Shop, helping 15 young expectant mothers so far.

Although the parish has picnics four times per year, they unfortunately cannot take all the newly arrived people over the year. Some refugees want to come on a picnic every month, but resources do not allow this.

If you can support this project, contact the Parish on 4945 4573 or email: mar.dea@bigpond.com

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