

Thursday, 29 March 2012

Australian unions say Welcome to Australia to asylum seekers and new migrants

Australian unions are proud to support the Welcome to Australia campaign to make asylum seekers and new migrants feel welcome to our country.

ACTU President Ged Kearney was today announced as an ambassador of Welcome to Australia, which aims to develop diversity, compassion, generosity and a commitment to give all individuals a fair go in our communities, workplaces and institutions.

Ms Kearney said she was proud to support the initiative, which celebrated the fact that Australia's cultural diversity has helped shape our nation's story.

"Migrants have made an enormous contribution to Australia's economy and workforce, and continue to do so," she said.

"Australian unions extend a warm welcome to everyone who has come to our shores from afar, and pledge to continue to fight prejudice, bigotry, and xenophobia wherever we encounter it.

"Welcome to Australia is a wonderful initiative that seeks to promote wider understanding of our rich diversity.

"It also aims to support newly-arrived Australians to feel welcome here, by helping to familiarise them with Australia's culture.

"We know we can learn so much from each other and our experiences no matter where we were born.

"Australians were lucky to be born into a nation as prosperous as ours, while many of those who seek asylum here come from vastly different lands and experiences.

"We are fortunate to be able to open our communities and our hearts to these people who deserve the same opportunities.

"In turn, we can learn and gain wider experiences by welcoming into our communities those from other cultures."

Ms Kearney encouraged all Australians to support Welcome to Australia's "Walk Together" event on Saturday, June 23 to start Refugee Week.

The event, to be held in capital cities and regional centres, recognises Australians all share a common journey, regardless of how they arrived here.

For more information, go to www.welcometoaustralia.org.au

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