



## MEDIA RELEASE

To: News Editor  
From: Uniting Church Synod of WA  
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**15 September 2019**

### **Uniting Church WA supports a whole-of-community approach to resettling refugees**

The Uniting Church WA (UCA WA) calls for a compassionate and generous refugee sponsorship program; supporting the introduction of a new Community Refugee Sponsorship model to assist refugees to resettle in Australia.

At the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Synod of WA, held this weekend, the church agreed to write to the Federal Government expressing that support.

The Uniting Church in Australia and the Synod of Western Australia have long expressed their concern at policies that do not protect the human rights of people seeking asylum.

The proposed new Community Refugee Sponsorship model offers a whole-of-community approach to settlement and provides an opportunity for members of the Australian community to directly sponsor refugees to resettle in Australia.

A new community sponsorship model would harness the goodwill and compassion of Australians to increase the number of resettlement places offered by Australia and contribute to the successful settlement of refugees in active and cohesive Australian communities.

Rev Steve Francis, Moderator of the Uniting Church WA, said that a whole-of-community approach to settlement provides better outcomes for individuals, community and government.

“Many members of the WA community feel passionately about increasing Australia’s humanitarian intake as a way to respond to the global refugee crisis,” he said.

“We know people want to help, and have the capacity to do so. A generous and compassionate Community Refugee Sponsorship program is a way we can all welcome refugees into Australia and provide the support they need.”

Lisa Button, the Executive Director of the Community Refugee Sponsorship Initiative was pleased to see this result from the weekend.

'It's wonderful to see Australia's faith community supporting the idea of community sponsorship as a way of enabling compassionate Australians to do their bit helping refugees rebuild their lives in safety. Community sponsorship is also a great way to support the sustainable settlement of humanitarian migrants in regional communities around Australia. In Canada, community sponsorship has enabled the settlement of refugees in over 400 regional and metropolitan locations, with only around 30 of these being large enough to support professional settlement services,' she said.

### **Ends**

*For media enquiries and interviews, please contact Media and Communications Manager, Maggie Johns on 0419 831 576*