



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Refugee WEEK '18

CELEBRATING REFUGEES IN BUSINESS AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

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Use of the Coat of Arms

The terms under which the Coat of Arms can be used are detailed on the website titled: It's an Honour (www.itsanhonour.gov.au/coat-arms/index.cfm).

Design

The design concept for Refugee Week 2018 was created by the Production and Design section of the Communication and Engagement Branch at the Department of Home Affairs.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Australia continues its proud history of assisting the world's most vulnerable people through our offshore humanitarian program.

Last year we granted over 20,200 offshore visas, being the largest number since the early 1980s. This included 10,600 places through the Special Humanitarian Program, for those with immediate family links in Australia.

This year we celebrate refugees in business and those engaged in regional employment. Humanitarian entrants continue to play an important role in building an economically successful and cohesive nation. Many have established businesses and otherwise excelled in an array of endeavours. We acknowledge their successes and thank them sincerely for their contribution to building a modern Australia.

I also pay tribute to the officials from the Department of Home Affairs, including at our overseas posts, who make the delivery of the program possible. It is through their hard work that we are able to assist the most vulnerable and persecuted people offshore and maintain the highest levels of integrity in the delivery of this historically important program.



Image courtesy of the Damien Pleming

KAW DOH HTOO

After fleeing a civil war in Myanmar and spending nearly nine years living in a Thai refugee camp, Kaw Doh never expected he would be running his own grocery store in Nhill, Victoria.

“When I arrived in Australia, I remembered being very cold. I couldn’t speak English and couldn’t understand any of the rules. I thought ‘what am I going to do with my life?’” he said.

“I started to learn English, through an Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) program and completed 300 hours of study.”

Once Kaw Doh felt settled into Australian life and established himself in the regional town of Nhill, he noticed that the local supermarket didn’t sell the types of ingredients needed to cook traditional Karen food.

“Many Karen families living in Nhill were working in the community but had to travel to Melbourne to buy the ingredients needed to create traditional dishes. This was very hard for those who have children and that’s why I had the idea of setting up a grocery store.”

Kaw Doh set up his grocery store in the heart of Nhill and has been running it for over two years.

“Now people come and support me, not only the Karen community but the broader local community in Nhill. They are very happy to come and buy food like they’ve had on holidays in Thailand.”

**“Australia is my second
homeland. Australia has
saved my life. For people
who can understand English,
they can get jobs easily.
It’s very good for me and
it’s very good for my
family to grow up in.”**



Image courtesy of the Australian of the Year Awards

BO REMENYI

From a Hungarian refugee to a world renowned leader in paediatric cardiology, Dr Bo Remenyi has certainly succeeded in the face of adversity.

At 12 years old, Bo's family, due to political unrest in Hungary, decided to leave the country and ended up in an Austrian refugee camp before being offered a place through the Australian Government's Humanitarian Program.

Bo distinctly remembers arriving in Adelaide on the Queen's Birthday long weekend in 1988. Australia was not what Bo expected.

"It was an amazing experience, it far surpassed expectations that I had of the country and there was a very warm welcome. And most importantly, our fridge was full of fruit and vegetables. I just remember opening the fridge and I'd never seen a fridge like that before, all this goodness in it," she said.

"Over the next six months, it was just amazing how much effort was put in to ensure that people like myself with no English were integrated into Australian society. Everyone's passion, love and kindness, and also understanding – people understood where we came from without any words."

In Townsville, a high school guidance officer insisted that, with Bo's academic record she should pursue a career in medicine.

"I am so grateful for what my guidance councillor did for me when I was a high school student and she's the reason I got into medicine."

Bo was one Australia's first female paediatric cardiologists and was named the Northern Territory Australian of the Year in 2017 for her work helping young people in remote and regional Australia.

"I really enjoy giving back. I hope that the kids I help are given opportunities like I was and I also try to inspire young people that anything is possible.

"There are a lot of opportunities in our country as long as you choose to engage with those opportunities that are available throughout Australia."



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