

Refugee Employment Experience: Struggles, Strategies and Solutions

On Tuesday July 27, the Edmund Rice Centre (ERC) launched its new research report ***Refugee Employment Experience: Struggles, Strategies and Solutions*** via a virtual event. More than 100 people from diverse backgrounds attended the launch, including representatives of government departments, local councils, businesses, academics, community organisations, refugee community representatives, community and religious leaders, community development practitioners and refugee rights advocates.

The report highlights the refugee perspective on working and looking for work by listening to what refugees themselves say about their job seeking efforts and their experiences in the Australian labour market. The report calls for several changes in how refugees are supported to find employment, including: moving away from the generalist Jobactive model to the provision of more tailored support, shifting the focus of employment support programs from providing training opportunities to creating opportunities to work, and addressing the systemic discrimination refugees face in the labour market.

The report also highlights the role of the refugee community itself as an active and frequently effective provider of support to refugee jobseekers and calls on the service sector to engage more meaningfully with the refugee community as an equal partner in employment support provision. It is hoped that these recommendations will be used to inform relevant stakeholders, including Government and the community sector, and to improve policies and services for achieving better employment outcomes for refugees.

The report launch was hosted and facilitated by Mr Tim O'Connor, ERC Board Member and Impact Manager of Amnesty International Australia. The report was officially launched by Dr Mick Bezzina, Chair of the ERC Board, who extended his deep appreciation to the many participants in the study, including Syrian, Iraqi, Afghan and Iranian refugees, community leaders, key informants and representatives of government and non-government service providers, who offered their perspectives, views and opinions on the employment experience of refugees.

The launch event included a panel in which Dr Altin Gavranovic, Dr Mary Venner and Mr Farhad Arian discussed the content of the report, the study's objectives, and relevant recommendations. The panel discussion attracted significant attention from the audience and led to very useful discussions about the report and the implementation of its recommendations for improvements in refugee employment policies and programs.

The ERC is committed to make the report available on its website and other online platforms for public access, distribution and discussion. To read the report, please visit our website: www.erc.org.au

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