

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



A helping hand for migrants and refugees

Almost 5000 people in the City of Ryde believe they speak English not well or not at all, according to the 2006 Census*. This must make life difficult for these people as knowing the English language allows a person to be independent in the Australian community. These people may also face other settlement issues. Almost 8500 migrants settled in the area between 2001 and 2006*. New migrants and refugees can find it challenging to start a new life in Australia. They may have difficulties gaining employment, understanding government facilities finding education and training opportunities including English classes to improve their English skills.

To support migrants and refugees, Christian Community Aid (CCA) provides settlement services in the Ryde and Hunters Hill areas. This program includes casework, information sessions/workshops, community development, support groups such as a Korean Women's group, and English conversational classes.

CCA's English conversational classes are held in the local area three times a week. Classes cater for all levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. CCA has small, friendly and informal classes in a comfortable learning environment.

Volunteers are vital to the services CCA provides. CCA always needs more people to assist members of the community who are in need.

Christine Palomo, Community Settlement Services Worker, CCA says, "Migrants and refugees should be given a helping hand." She says, "Even people born in Australia can find it challenging to navigate through Australian systems. It becomes even more difficult when you have little support."

"Becoming familiar with the Australian way of life and improving English skills assists with self esteem," says Palomo, "and in general improves a person's life."

ENDS

For further information, contact:

Christine Palomo

Phone: 9858 1377

Email: css@ccas.org.au

* Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census