

# Bridging The Gap

Refugee, New and Emerging  
Student Communities at Western  
Sydney University

Thank you



## Background



## Office of Widening Participation



## Our Program



## Community Engagement and Participation



## Uni 'Campfire' Chats



## Uni Taster Day



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- Guarantee access to contribute to the efforts of access, equity and social justice
- Aim to promote and provide all potential students with the opportunity of access and successful participation of higher education
- Provide support to assist students in successful completion of study
- Assist in recruiting learners to higher education in financial, physical, emotional, social and/or cultural



## Community Education Liaison, Refugee, New and Emerging Communities Program

- Provide support regarding access to higher education
- Develop engagement with community groups and stakeholders
- Create networks of opportunities for non-traditional students
- Create positive opportunities for engagement and social learning, identity-based, career programs
- Collaborate to develop long-term systems, connections and collaborations
- Reduce barriers to higher education



- Encourage and motivate students currently studying at Western
  - Provide targeted support (Academic assistance, jobs on campus, welfare)
- The Curriculum
- Provide a sense of community
    - Shared discussions, friendships, mentoring
  - Promote resilience
    - Overcoming barriers and challenges



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- Multilingual skills
- Area with large cultural/social diversity
- Many from disadvantage backgrounds

- High percentage with history of trauma
- Language challenges
- Competing priorities/obligations
- Loss of identity/educational opportunities



# Office of Widening Participation

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## Who are we?

- Undertake activities to contribute to the ideals of access, equity and social justice
- Aim to promote and provide all potential students with the opportunity of access to, and successful participation of higher education
- Provide support to assist students in successful completion of study
- Assist in removing barriers to higher education: financial, physical, emotional, social and/or cultural



# Our Program

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## Community Education Liaison: Refugee, New and Emerging Communities Program

### What we do:

- Provide options regarding access to higher education
- Enhance engagement with communities, community groups and stakeholders
- Create awareness of opportunities for non-traditional students
- Create positive opportunities for engagement and learning through university based retention programs
- Collaborative approach involving students, communities and stakeholders
- Reduce barriers to higher education





# Uni Taster Day

## What do we do?

- Bringing communities to Western and bringing Western to the community
- Programs developed through collaboration and consultation with community groups and stakeholders
- Programs aimed at prospective students and their families



## A typical 'Taster Day'

- Transport and lunch provided
- Opportunity to engage with Western staff and students (student ambassadors, academic and professional guest speakers)
- University campus tour
- Inspirational sessions
- Feedback



# Uni 'Campfire' Chats

## What do we do?

- Encourage and motivate students currently studying at Western
- Provide targeted support (Academic assistance, jobs on campus, welfare)

## The 'Campfire'

- Provide a sense of community
  - Shared discussion, friendships, mentoring
- Promote resilience
  - Overcoming barriers and challenges



# Community Engagement and consultation

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## What do we do?

- Attending and participating in community events
  - Blacktown Refugee Welcome Picnic
  - SSI Youth Collective - E3 Youth Forum
  - Community forums, dinner and cultural festivals



## Investing in the Community

- Provide information and targeted support
  - Scholarship workshops, aspiration building
  - Community presence
- Overcome cultural barriers



# Thank you

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Any questions?