

# Illawarra Refugee Challenge

Keira High School & Wollongong High School of Performing Arts



**“Talking to refugees and learning their stories in person and then showing students through the tours that we are lucky for what we have.”**

– Peer Facilitator

**“Refugees go through a lot to get to another country.”**

- Student Participant

**“I felt greater understanding of what it is like and a stronger personal connection. It’s one thing to read about it but very powerful to meet someone and hear their story.”**

– Community Night

## Summary

The Illawarra Refugee Challenge was successfully piloted in 2015 with Keira High and Wollongong High School of Performing Arts. Using a creative, peer-led approach to cultural awareness, the Challenge drew on similar projects led by Gymea Community Centre and Auburn Council.

## Opportunity

The city of Wollongong aimed to work with young people to raise awareness of refugee issues and experiences. This was through the build of intercultural understanding through a respectful process based on lived experiences.



## Action

The project provided students with the opportunity to learn about refugee journeys and experiences through a tour of a stimulated refugee camp setting.

A range of activities followed including:

- Project development and design with Multicultural Communities Council Illawarra, Wollongong Youth Services and Woonona High School
- Development of the Illawarra Refugee Challenge Resource Kit • Peer Facilitator Training
- Classroom activities
- Refugee conversations
- Challenge event: interactive activity in the classroom
- Community Night: displays and conversations with local refugees

## Achievement

Through the Challenge there has been an increase in awareness of refugee issues, expression of interest in forming a refugee group and gaining new skills and confidence in group presentation and collaboration.

