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UN High Commissioner for Refugees praises Australia's refugee resettlement services

UN High Commissioner António Guterres today paid tribute to Australia for the welcome and services it provides to refugees in communities around the nation.

Visiting Sydney today, Mr Guterres praised Australia's refugee resettlement program, and said he was impressed by the work being done on the ground by service providers.

"Australia has one of the best refugee resettlement programmes in the world," Mr Guterres said during a visit to Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre.

"I personally conveyed this message to the Minister for Immigration when I had the pleasure of meeting him in Canberra earlier this week and, visiting communities in Sydney today and Melbourne yesterday; it has been easy to see why Australia has such a good reputation for its settlement programme."

Mr Guterres has also met members of the Centre for Multicultural Youth and other refugee community groups during his visit.

"It has been wonderful to speak to refugees and former refugees about their experiences since being welcomed to Australia."

"Australia has a proud history of welcoming refugees into the community, and that has been reflected in many of the personal stories I have heard first hand this week."

"It has been a pleasure to be in Australia, and I look forward to continued and close cooperation with the Government and civil society to help refugees here and world wide."

Mr Guterres will speak at an event this afternoon hosted by Australia for UNHCR on the importance of government and donors maintaining generous support for humanitarian projects in the face of the global financial crisis.

Contact: Ben Farrell, 02 6281 9104, 61 407 971 686 or Alex Donato, 612 6281 9108, 61 423 942 928.