

**CRS Scholarships – 20 June 2017-06-21**  
**Introductory remarks by Mr Doug Hynd, CRS President**

I would like first of all to acknowledge the First Peoples of this area and pay respect to their elders past and present, thanking them for their stewardship of the land.

What is Canberra Refugee Support?

Canberra Refugee Support is a Canberra-region, not-for-profit, volunteer organisation that has been operating since 2000, whose purpose is to be a good neighbour to refugees and asylum-seekers. We assist refugees to settle in the Canberra region and connect to the community. We provide support, advice and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. We work in partnership with other organisations and community groups. Out of our experience we provide advice to policy makers and their advisors so that we can improve the level of effectiveness, appropriateness, equity and access of services for asylum seekers and refugees.

The particular aim of the scholarship program

The purpose of the scholarships to be awarded today is to acknowledge and provide public recognition for meritorious performance and to encourage and support outstanding refugee students. Each scholarship recipient receives a cash grant and an award certificate to mark the occasion. Through this program we want to say to recipients we welcome you, we acknowledge what you have achieved so far and we look forward to what you will contribute to your family and to this community.

This year we have named the scholarship program: *The Geoff McPherson CRS Scholarship Program* in honour of Geoff who is not only the Founding President of CRS, but the person who inspired the establishment of the program and worked hard over many years to make it the success that it has become. Geoff is our special guest this morning and we also welcome his wife Elizabeth. Having said that they are special guests, I should also acknowledge that they are both still very active in CRS programs in providing ongoing support for people going through difficult times. To leave your home, your land, your family is not easy but their generosity of spirit has eased that burden and provided a warm welcome to a new country for many.

About the scholarships:

The scholarships have been made possible by generous donations from the Canberra community. The contributions have come from businesses, community groups, and from individuals. Many, but certainly not all are listed on your program. From CRS, thanks everyone in the Canberra community who has contributed to our scholarship program this year. The generosity of spirit in this community is something to celebrate.

I also want to acknowledge the ongoing support of the ACT Government's Office of Multicultural Affairs particularly their role in facilitating consultation and cooperation on issues to do with refugees and asylum seekers.

Some of our contributors have requested that their contributions be put to particular purposes or for a special recognition; and CRS has accommodated these requests within the overall program. In this year's program, particular scholarships have been awarded:

- By the South Woden Uniting Church and
- By Soroptimist International of Canberra

South Woden Uniting Church has a particular relationship with Canberra Refugee Support. The church has directly and generously supported a range of CRS programs. This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the church, and a number of scholarships have been dedicated to the ministers who have served the church. There are six ministers whom we have been asked to recognise:

- Rev Geoff Bridge who was the first minister, serving from 1967 to 1973.
  - Rev Granton Hay who served from 1974 to 1979.
  - Rev Geoff Hunter who served from 1980 to 1985
  - Rev Carol Morris who served from 1986 to 1990 and
  - Rev. Geraldine Leonard served from 1996 to 2000.
  - Also included is Rev David Webster, who although not in long-term placement with South Woden, helped out more than once when South Woden was between ministers.
- This year it is appropriate that I also make mention of two special matters concerning the scholarships
    - Soroptimist's International, Canberra, has generously donated to the Program for several years. This year's donation is to further the education of five women.
    - For the past two years donations have been made in memory of Margaret McLeod, a former CRS member. This year a further donation for this purpose has been made.
  - Finally, thank you all for attending today - whether you a scholarship awardee, or are simply here to show your welcome, your support and your encouragement for the scholarship recipients.