

Re-establishing livelihoods
and rebuilding lives through
Deakin CREATE refugee
career clinics



CREATE

Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education

What is Deakin CREATE?

The Deakin Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education (Deakin CREATE) is an applied research centre that builds knowledge and understanding of how best to support people from a refugee background to rebuild their careers after leaving their home country. We do this by helping to build pathways for them to engage in meaningful employment and have access to vocational training and tertiary education.

The work we are leading is building towards a national response to ensure people from refugee backgrounds are supported to successfully integrate into host societies. Deakin CREATE is helping refugees to stand on their own two feet, building their own social and economic capabilities to enrich their lives and the communities they are a part of. A significant part of this response is the creation of the CREATE career clinics.

What are the CREATE career clinics?

The Deakin CREATE career clinics form a cornerstone to our program of helping people from a refugee background re-establish their livelihoods in Australia.

Each career clinic consists of seven weekly sessions, where people from a refugee background are teamed up with leaders and mentors from the business community to assist them in finding employment. These began as in-person engagements and have moved to the virtual world in 2020, allowing us to reach even more people from a refugee background and the volunteer mentors.

In addition to this one-on-one support, clinic participants are also supported with access to a range of career tools – from engagement with professional mentors, to support with job searches and interview techniques, to development of resumes and LinkedIn profiles.

Each career clinic supports between 15 and 20 people from a refugee background. Deakin CREATE is currently running nine career clinics per year in Victoria for 3 years (2020–2022), which will support around 150 people per year from a refugee background to build their confidence and capability to securing a new role in Australia, commensurate with their skillset.

How is this making a difference?

So far, Deakin CREATE has delivered six career clinics, with 100 people taking part. Of these, approximately 30 have secured meaningful employment across industries including logistics, pharmaceuticals, academia, administration, health, optometry, legal, accounting and social work.

Considering the current restrictions resulting from COVID-19, this is considered an outstanding result.

We are also doing follow-up work to further understand how the clinics have impacted the lives of both participants and professional mentors who volunteer in the clinics.

Part of the clinic follow-up is to ask participants to share their experiences. Given below are some key insights we have gathered.

Mentee

‘I learned about the importance of LinkedIn. I didn’t have a profile prior to starting the clinic.’

‘Before CREATE, I was applying for the sake of applying but now I understand the role better before I apply.’

‘My mentor was really helpful, and I still keep in touch with him.’

‘One of the most useful things I learned from CREATE was the use of networking, as I did not realise how important networking was in finding a job here in Australia.’

Mentor

‘Especially during lockdown with working from home, it was good to focus my attention on something else and gain perspective.’

‘It made me actually articulate everything I had learned since graduating university, and how much of my success had come down to people skills.’

‘I’ve been reflecting on inclusivity in learning and participation design – and how framing instructions and setting flexible, respectful negotiated outcomes can influence success.’

‘The experience helped gain another perspective on diversity & inclusion and how refugees can bring strength to our workforce.’

What are our future plans?

Resilience, creativity, innovation, problem solving and perseverance are some of the common characteristics found in many people from a refugee background – core competencies to succeed in any business. However, while the career clinics are proving to be a huge success, the scale of the challenge to support people from a refugee background with access to them is beyond our current resources. There are at least 150,000 people (having arrived in Australia between 2010–2019) from a refugee background working age in Australia right now – the impact the clinics could have is significant.

As such, we seek to launch an additional 12 clinics career clinics across Australia by the end of 2022 – ideally at least 3 each in Sydney, Perth and Brisbane. We are seeking both funding and mentors to help us rebuild the lives of at least an additional 200 people from a refugee or asylum seeker background. With further support, we can deliver more clinics than the initial twelve.



A case study from one of our previous mentees

My name is Ali, I was born in Pakistan, and completed my Masters in Mass Communication as well as a Law degree from University of Balochistan. Due to internal conflict and targeted killings, I left my country of origin, Pakistan, to seek asylum in a safe place. I arrived in Australia here on 9th December, 2019. I faced many hardships to find a job even though I applied for many positions. Unfortunately, I was not successful.

Luckily, I registered myself to Deakin CREATE career clinic online session that was for 7 weeks. The clinic was designed very professionally that covers different related topics to build our career in Australia. I have learned a lot from the course and now I can say how to search for a job and their preparation, resume and cover letter writing, to know about the Australian workplace, interview techniques, and how to enhance connection in a professional way.

In the career clinic, I liked having a Mentor who is highly qualified, professional and inspired to guide the Mentees. That is amazing. It was a highly educated and professional team which gave huge knowledge and guidance to represent their experience and expertise, with great opportunities to also meet people who have refugee backgrounds.

Every topic was so helpful for me to find a job as I practically applied those all steps which were taught to me during the clinic, with the help and supervision of my Mentor. All steps lead me to get a position.

Soon after completion of my course with Deakin CREATE Clinic, I got a job in my area of experience in the legal sector where I have other opportunities to learn more and enhance my capacity.

—Asmat Ali: Legal Resources Support: ASRC

How can you help?

If you share our passion for helping skilled people from a refugee background re-establish their livelihoods and rebuild their lives, we would love to hear from you.

You may be a philanthropist who is motivated to help those who have so little, change their lives for the better. Or you may be part of a company that want to support similar goals, and is interested in engaging your workforce as mentors in the career clinics.

Financially supporting the clinics

An investment of \$150,000 will ensure delivery of twelve career clinics. It is also possible to support a discrete number of career clinics in a specific location; the investment (corporate or philanthropic) required to run a single 7 week career clinic is \$15,000.

Providing mentors for the clinics

For each clinic we require around 10 mentors. Each mentor will be assigned 1–2 mentees. All mentees coming through our clinics have postsecondary qualifications (from diplomas to PhDs). We estimate the mentor commitment to be on average 2–3 hours per week. Made up of a 1 hour online session with the other mentors and mentees, facilitated by the CREATE team. In these sessions the team will work through job readiness skills, the Australian work culture, CV writing, cover letters, addressing key selection criteria, networking, and interview skills. Each week the mentees will have specific tasks to work through with their mentors. Additionally, we encourage the mentors to support mentees by providing further advice on job networking opportunities as well as professional and industry specific insights on careers pathways.

We maintain consistent contact with the mentors throughout the 8 week program (2 hour Induction and 7 week program) commencing with a mentor only induction into the refugee situation globally as well as exploring the Australian context for refugees and people seeking asylum. The team at CREATE also provide a range of customised learning materials, such as links to useful websites, activities, CV templates, examples of cover letters, etc.

As a supporter of the career clinics, you will be provided with regular opportunities to meet skilled refugees from our network and be acknowledged for your support across a number of channels related to Deakin CREATE.

We look forward to you joining us in our mission to help people from a refugee background re-establish their livelihoods and rebuild their lives.

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