

Media Release: 1 November 2018

## Migrants blamed for infrastructure woes

**Professor Stephen Castles and Chancellor Professor Peter Shergold AC at International Metropolis Conference, Sydney**

Acclaimed social researcher **Professor Stephen Castles** says migrants are being used as scapegoats by politicians as they exploit the increased feeling of vulnerability of their constituents and frustration with infrastructure at **International Metropolis Conference**, held in Sydney this week.

“While 28% of our population comes from overseas, it’s always been that the latest group is to blame for the problems we face on the day.

“In the 50’s it was the Italians and Greeks, in the 60’s it was the Vietnamese who were blamed for crime, the drug trade and so on.

Professor Castles’ message is timely as yesterday the NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, announced that she wanted the state to return to ‘Howard-era immigration levels’, which would mean halving the state’s migrant intake, due to concerns about population expansion.

Yesterday she appointed a three-member panel to develop a NSW population policy to take to the federal government next year.

"It is becoming increasingly clear that the current high rates of population growth are putting even more pressure on our infrastructure," she said in a statement.

As reported in The Guardian (31 October 2018)<sup>1</sup>, permanent arrivals in Australia are the same as the time under Howard, however net overseas migrants have been driven by students, tourists and skilled migrants.

On the plight of refugees and asylum seekers Professor Castles says that while these groups get a lot of attention, in numbers they only constitute a very small part of our intake, the largest part is from skilled migration, people with permission to come here, work and stay permanently.

“We have to change the perceptions that economic migration is good and persecuted migration is bad, it is terribly short-sighted. Across the world, there are 30,000 people a day who must leave their homes to seek asylum, and Australia only takes roughly 15,000 people a year.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/oct/10/gladys-berejikilian-calls-for-immigration-cut-but-it-could-cost-nsw>



International  
Metropolis Conference  
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“Refugees have made a huge contribution to economy and society, and it isn’t fair not to recognise that.

“Australia used to be a leader in human rights, and now we have become a leader in violating human rights.

The International Metropolis Conference, Sydney is the largest migration and multicultural event in the world. It continues until Friday 2 November.

[www.metropolis2018.com.au](http://www.metropolis2018.com.au)



Professor Stephen Castles



International Metropolis Conference, Sydney

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## Notes to Editors

For more information or to interview those featured in this press release, please contact:

Marlise Beasley, Account Director, ZADRO via [marlise@zadroagency.com.au](mailto:marlise@zadroagency.com.au) 0423 624 013  
Felicity Zadro, Managing Director, ZADRO via [felicity@zadroagency.com.au](mailto:felicity@zadroagency.com.au) 0404 009 384

**Limited Media Passes are available** for relevant and interested parties and are subject to approval. If you would like to apply for a media pass, please contact Marlise Beasley on [marlise@zadroagency.com.au](mailto:marlise@zadroagency.com.au)

## #Metropolis2018

### About the Event

**The International Metropolis Conference** will be held at ICC Sydney | 29 October – 2 November 2018.

Metropolis 2018 is the only platform to bring together international, national and local migration influencers alongside academic, government, practitioner and community perspectives to highlight the latest research, challenges, insights and successes in migration, diversity and integration.

Metropolis 2018 is important as the thought leaders and brightest minds of the migration sector will come together to drive enterprise, innovation and social change. We will see and hear the stories of lived experience centre-stage at our event, and we will encourage debate on the hard questions, whilst seeking important new solutions.

Metropolis is committed to sharing the intricacies of 21st century migration, to shape 21st century solutions.

### **The Conference Chairs are:**

- Violet Roumeliotis, CEO, Settlement Services International and Telstra Business Woman of the Year 2018
- Dr Bulent (Hass) Dellal AO, CEO, Australian Multicultural Foundation
- Hakan Harman, CEO, Multicultural NSW

**The conference theme is *Global Migration in Turbulent Times*. It will focus on the following eight sub-themes:**

1. Enterprise, Innovation and Employment – catalysts for social change?
2. Migration and Mobility – the dynamic shifts in the Asia-Pacific region
3. Displacement and asylum – new dimensions driving an old phenomenon
4. Visible and powerful – migrant voices in a connected world



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5. Conflicting agendas? National, local, regional and global responses to the governance of migration
6. Religious diversity – a bridge or a barrier to belonging?
7. Migration and inequality – complex challenges under the microscope
8. Australia a multicultural paradise – myths and realities

For all conference and program information [www.metropolis2018.org.au](http://www.metropolis2018.org.au)