



**For Immediate Release**

September 1, 2022

## **Community Forum encourages discussion about challenges facing newcomers**

**New and long-time residents invited to talk about how to make Campbell River more welcoming to immigrants and refugees**

CAMPBELL RIVER – The Immigrant Welcome Centre’s **Welcoming Communities Coalition** invites the public to its annual Community Forum – and this time, they are doing community engagement a little differently.

New and long-time residents of Campbell River are invited to the Sept. 14 event to share their experiences and ideas around how we can make our community more welcoming to immigrants and refugees.

This year, Liz Wootton from Vancouver Island-based Human Nature Development will facilitate the forum using a Ketso workshop. Ketso is an interactive tool kit where participants write their thoughts on “leaves” to create clusters of ideas.

“Using this method, participants can work in parallel and no one feels left out as they might in a typical participation process where they would be asked to speak out,” Coalition coordinator Julie Keumbehdjian explains. “Ketso really encourages dialogue between different groups of people and ensures everyone’s voice is heard.”

The Coalition wants to hear from immigrants, refugees, and other members of the community about the needs, gaps, and challenges faced when settling in Campbell River. The learnings from this forum will build on the Coalition’s 2020 Needs Assessment research project, which found that 46 percent of respondents often or sometimes felt isolated in their first years in the North Island. In addition to making social connections, another main challenge to settlement identified in the report included barriers to employment such as language and the lack of recognition of foreign credentials.

“We are looking forward to hearing first-hand from a diverse group of residents about how we can make our community more welcoming, and to learn if others’ experiences settling here aligns with our research,” Keumbehdjian says.



The Immigrant Welcome Centre envisions a region where newcomers feel welcome, safe and respected, and last year served more than 800 clients in the North Island representing more than 90 countries or origin. The Coalition's work is funded by Immigration, Refugees, & Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

The Campbell River Community Forum is free to attend. Advanced registration is required as space is limited.

Date: September 14, 2022

Time: 2 to 4:30 p.m.

Where: Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex (225 S Dogwood St.)

Register for free at: [CRCommunityForum.eventbrite.com](https://CRCommunityForum.eventbrite.com)

[Learn more on our website](#)

### **About the Welcoming Communities Coalition**

The Immigrant Welcome Centre's Welcoming Communities Coalition is an initiative supporting service coordination, local partnerships, and community-based planning around the needs of newcomers in the North Island. Through community-level research and strategic planning, the WCC identifies barriers facing newcomers, raises awareness around newcomers' ideas, and collaborates with local stakeholders to reduce these barriers. Learn more at [immigrantwelcome.ca/community-leadership/welcoming-communities-coalition](https://immigrantwelcome.ca/community-leadership/welcoming-communities-coalition)

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