

Int	Hi, welcome to Back to Bilby. This is Kim Holly, filling in for Shelley Varcos today as she attends a community radio symposium in Sydney. I am enjoying a bit of a change from my usual program Ear to the Ground, and look forward to talking today to Sally Badawi (make sure she pronounces it as BadAwi), the executive officer of Bilby Community Cultural Council.
SB	Thanks Shelley – I wish I didn’t get so nervous with a microphone in front of me!
Int	It’s hard to believe you might be mike shy...you run your own volunteer radio program...
SB	It’s different when you’re the one being asked the questions!
Int	Sally, you’ve done a lot in a short time, much of it to do with social advocacy and working with not-for-profits. Who was the organization in Melbourne you worked for?
SB	The Humanitarian Hub – it’s wanting to set up linkages between people in the diaspora, resettlers who feel like they don’t really belong to their new country, or the country they’ve resettled from. Working with not-for-profits is a great way to see how people manage change – it may be settling in to new communities, or adapting to a society which is very different to what they have known...
Int	Before the Humanitarian Hub you were working outside of Australia. Tell the listeners a bit about your trip to South East Asia, where you met Harry.
SB	Yes we’ve heard the joke a fair bit! Where Harry met Sally...!!
Int	...that’s Harry Lee, of course, the marketing manager at TrustWind...
SB	That’s right. Harry was working with TrustWind in Singapore, and he decided to have a trip to Cambodia, to see Siem Reap. As it happens I was doing a volunteer placement in Battambang with a women’s refuge and support group. He was taking the river cruise from there to Siem Reap, and

	<p>dropped in to our shop. I had a go at him because he was taking photos without asking permission, and somehow we ended up having dinner together...!</p>
Int	<p>I bet you still have interesting dinner conversations – were you the one who persuaded him to support the Bilby Autumn Festival through TrustWind?</p>
SB	<p>Well not exactly. I must admit I can't stop bringing my work home, but Harry doesn't talk about work much – maybe he can't get a word in once I get going!</p> <p>The Autumn Festival is really a chance for us to highlight the changes that are taking place here. You know, we casually say there are 20 new families here, from the Sudan. How much do you think that will change Bilby?</p>
Int	<p>Obviously we need to welcome new people to the town...</p>
SB	<p>No Shelley, it's not about welcomes and being nice when we see people down the street shopping ...</p> <p>My dad talks sometimes about how it was in Dandenong when he and mum were first married – they didn't really know anyone, even in the English classes they went to. And all the public programs that were set up didn't make sense, didn't have any of their culture, familiar foods, songs and art – the programs were there to help him and mum settle into the Dandenong community, not contribute to it.</p> <p>These people in Bilby now have come from camps, they have nothing except their families. Some of them have never been to school and can't read or write –</p> <p>People expect new refugees to be thankful for everything they receive – do you know how tiring it is to be always saying thank you for everything?</p>
Int	<p>Wow, you really are concerned about this – of course it's going to change the people of Bilby a bit too. After all, Bilby is a pretty conservative sort of place and as you have been saying, these 20 families come from a completely different world that most people can't imagine...How do you think we can help to make this social experiment work?</p>
SB	<p>It's not just a social experiment, it is really about reshaping this community. Bilby won't be going back to what it was</p>

	<p>before....If you look at the websites like the refugee council talking about regional resettlement, one of the most important things is to find a new way for the community to grow or expand – think about how Shepparton or Colac has incorporated refugee resettlement. It’s not just about providing housing, or education programs, although they certainly help.</p> <p>We need to share events, like the multicultural events or a food fair – or going for a tour at Material Designs to see how designs for the African fabrics reflect a very rich culture that we don’t really know anything about – including me, by the way.</p>
Int	Have you travelled to the Sudan, to where your family came from?
SB	<p>Sadly, no – partly because it’s not really safe to travel in the region, but also because I don’t feel I belong there. That’s my point. I belong in Bilby, but I also bring an ancestral heritage that can enrich our community.</p> <p>There’s a great Regional Arts Victoria program that talks about transforming rural or isolated communities by using art events or products. I’d really like to put Bilby forward for some funding to do that, to put together a communal sculpture, or set up a multicultural choir, or...I don’t know yet, but I’m sure at BCCC we can come up with a few ideas!</p>
Int	Is that the main purpose of the Community Cultural Council – to put together applications for special grants?
SB	<p>It’s one of our jobs – another is making sure that government programs are implemented through the Bilby Community Centre. What I talked about before – English language classes, helping with setting up homes, getting people with medical or health issues sorted out. When you live in camps, you don’t know how the real world operates... we are the bridge between the community and these new settlers who have some very special needs. Have a look at the websites that have been set up for Sudanese refugees ...we have links on our website...</p>
Int	Sally, it almost sounds like you think this mightn’t work?
SB	You know me, I love a challenge. I just don’t want your

	<p>listeners to think it's a short term issue. This is long term – there's rural communities who worked out great ways to bring outsiders into their community, but there was resistance at first – change is always confronting...</p>
Int	<p>Well, I get the feeling that you are going to be a major player in helping us all to adjust to this change. Thanks for your time today....</p> <p>I've been talking to Sally Badawi, of Bilby Community Cultural Council. You can get in touch with her through her website, or via the Bilby Community Centre where she works.</p> <p>That's all for this week – join me again next week for another session of <i>Back to Bilby</i>.</p>