



Media Release

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REFUGEE FATHER REUNITING WITH CHILDREN AFTER 10 YEARS

Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC) Ethiopian client, Jemal Ambo, will be finally reunited with his young sons and daughters, 10 years after fleeing Ethiopia in fear for his life. The children will be arriving at Tullamarine Airport on **4th November**.

Mr Ambo fled Ethiopia in June 1998 crossing by foot the border to Kenya, where he stayed in Kakuma refugee camp for over a year. In 2000 his wife Rumana Kedir Osmar joined him with their 2 year old son. Mr Ambo had to leave four of his young children, aged 1, 2, 4 and 7 (2 of these children were born from his previous wife who died in jail while detained) with relatives. Another son, born in 1989, is still missing today. Incapable of going back to the war ridden country, because suspected to be a supporter of the Oromo Liberation Front against the government, Mr Ambo and his wife were granted a Refugee visa to Australia in September 2003.

“There are no words to describe the desperation we felt at leaving our children to be cared for by relatives, and there will be no words to describe the joy of having them finally with us. We didn’t know whether our children were alive, one child is still missing. But we hoped and prayed, and now we are overjoyed at the thought that they will soon be with us” said an emotional Mr Ambo talking with **SMRC’s Case Officer Lyda Dankha**.

“The application to get Jemal’s children to Australia has taken almost 2 years”, explained **Ms Dankha** “and the process has been long and complex because the children, all minors, needed to be issued with an Ethiopian passport. Issuing of passports took much longer than anticipated, and the International Organisation for Migration had to reschedule their flight from the beginning of September to the 3rd of November”.

“It is a great story of family reunion, despite of war and against all odds. Although now”, explained **Settlement & Family Services Manager, Sonia Vignjevic** “with the arrival of the 4 children, further support will be required to help them find suitable and affordable housing in a very competitive rental market”. The family has 5 children in Australia already living in overcrowded conditions.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Family reunited after 10 years

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