



## Chandra Chhetri

Chandra Chhetri left Bhutan with his family as a young man at a time when many of the Bhutanese in the country were forced to flee due to religious and political persecution.

His family relocated to Nepal in 1993, where they lived in a refugee camp until they were accepted to come to Tasmania in 2009.

Chandra, his wife and two daughters now live in Hobart and are very happy with their progress so far. Chandra says that initially he was very hopeful that when he reached Australia everything would be good, he would have a good job and be financially secure but when he arrived he found out things were not quite as easy as he had hoped and that it was not so easy to find work in Hobart.

“It was a bit of a reality check” Chandra said.

Chandra and his wife both attended English classes at Migrant Education at the Tasmanian Polytechnic . In the first year Chandra had the opportunity to join the Work It Out course and requested any kind of entry level work for his work experience placement.

Work It Out is a Migrant Education course for humanitarian entrants and migrants to learn about Workplace English and become familiar with Australian workplace culture and practices. Through the course the students have an opportunity to gain some work experience in the local workplace.

The course coordinator was mindful of Chandra’s skill set and his strong work ethic and placed him at Woolworths’ Supermarket at Shoreline on Hobart’s Eastern Shore. Before Chandra started his work experience at the store he attended a weekend induction course which he participated in enthusiastically.

This Migrant Profiles initiative is supported by Skills Tasmania to tell employers about the commitment, enthusiasm and skills that many migrants can offer to the workplace.

*“Work It Out” is a Migrant Education work preparation program funded by the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship through the Adult Migrant English Program.*

At the workplace Chandra started in the fruit and vegetables section, unloading stock and working in the store room and then moved into groceries and perishables and in-store fruit and vegetables. He impressed the manager of the store with his hard work and great attitude and when the Work It Out course was finished, Chandra was offered permanent part time employment which he accepted immediately.

Although he had fairly minimal hours at first, his work ethic was well recognised and he was frequently offered additional work. He worked at Woolworths as much as he could and also did some casual interpreting work for a local translating and interpreting company.

Chandra sees his job at Woolworths as a valuable first step. When asked what he thinks of starting with entry level work he says, "I think it's a really good way to begin and it gives you a chance to practice your English and to learn jargon, as well as an opportunity to network and to make friends at work.

"Those friends can then offer help and advice as well as friendship," Chandra says.

Chandra says that he saw his friends and workmates working while studying and it gave him hope for further achievements in the future.

Financial security has made a huge difference to Chandra and his family. He has been able to pay for driving lessons, buy a car and the family has been able to get off Centrelink benefits very quickly.

Chandra sees this as a great thing, a sign that he is financially independent but also because he wants to contribute to the community that has helped him in the past.

"Getting a job is a huge relief and I can feel more relaxed and enjoy life more with that worry off my shoulders," he says.

Chandra says he found the Work It Out course very helpful. He learned where to look, how to look and how to approach workplaces for work. It also provided very valuable Australian workplace experience where he was monitored and supported in the workplace.

He was rewarded for his hard work and good attitude with full time employment after a time and has now been working almost two years.

Chandra's message to other employers is to overlook the different language and cultural backgrounds of migrant applicants and to look at what they can do for the business and what diversity they will bring to the workplace.

He says, "Give them a trial, and don't just assume that they won't be able to do the work. You will be pleasantly surprised!"

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