



# media alert

Date: 7 July 2014

## **African Refugee families marvel at Melbourne marine life.**

There were smiles all round as Refugee African families came together to marvel at Melbourne Aquarium's marine life on Sunday 6 July.

For the kids, the excitement began on arrival when they were given their entry armbands and had their photo taken with Sammy the Seahorse, Tommy the Turtle and Mitchell the Grey Nurse Shark.

On walking into the Aquarium families were met by the Bay of Rays where they got to see Elephant Fish and other sea creatures up close. From there it was onto the Mangroves and Rockpools to hold shark eggs, starfish, coral and sea sponge. The hardest part of the day was deciding what to see next! The choices were endless. There was the Croc Lair, Coral Coves, Seahorse Pier, Ocean Discovery and the always popular Penguin Playground.

The African Families Day is an annual event hosted by CatholicCare Melbourne that brings whole families together – mothers, fathers and children – to share a day out and enjoy quality time with each other.

For the families it is also a chance to catch-up with each other after the African Dads and Kids Camp. As Project Coordinator Kate McKernin said *"It's great for us to get the fathers together on the camps to discuss how to address the many challenges they and their children face in adapting to this new culture, and how to renegotiate their own roles, but to be able to bring whole families together for a day out is wonderful"*.

The Camps are run in partnership with Victoria Police to help refugee families strengthen their family relationships as they adjust to their new lives in Australia. The Camps are full of fun bonding activities that allow fathers and children to spend one-on-one time with each other. Strengthening the family unit is crucial in enabling refugee families to successfully settle in Australia, and these camps play a critical role in allowing that to happen.

**If you would like to donate to the African Dads and Kids program and help fund the next camp at Lake Dewar from 7 - 9 November, please contact CatholicCare on 9287 5555 or go to [www.ccam.org.au](http://www.ccam.org.au) If you would like to know more about this camp email [africandadsandkids@ccam.org.au](mailto:africandadsandkids@ccam.org.au) or ring Kate McKernin on 0418 446 692.**