



media alert

10 December 2015

Growing skills for newly arrived refugees

CatholicCare Melbourne, with Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services, and Warrawong Farm, will host a celebration to mark the graduation of 10 Burmese refugees who have participated in a pre-accredited horticulture course.

CatholicCare's Green Patch program was established to provide an opportunity for newly arrived refugees to connect with the land and grow familiar produce for the family table. It came about from a partnership forged in 2013 between Warrawong farm owners, John and Mila Little, who provided the plot of land, and CatholicCare, who run refugee settlement services. Funding from Scanlon Foundation has helped to fund the further development of the garden and establish a chicken coop on the site.

Recently, the program has expanded to include horticulture training for Green Patch participants.

"We have always been keen to build Green Patch as a pathway to further training and employment" said Nick Collins, Senior Manager at CatholicCare. "Our partnership with Djerriwarrh Community and Education Services has allowed us to do just that."

The 'Taster to Farming' is an eight week program that has been developed by Djerriwarrh to provide participants with an introduction to horticulture techniques. Topics include: farm safety, water usage, seasonal farming, propagation and organic farming. The course was offered free of charge to refugees, with the workshops held in 'The Cottage' at the farm.

Finding a job is one of the highest priorities for newly arrived refugees and an important ingredient for successful settlement. The 'Taster to Farming' program provides an introduction to further learning opportunities and the acquisition of skills and qualifications to enhance employment prospects.

Event details:

What: Graduation and celebration for horticulture training participants

When: Friday 11 December

Time: 11.30AM to 12.30PM, followed by barbeque lunch

Address: "The Cottage" at Warrawong Farm, 1200 Exford Road, Eynesbury

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