

# REFUGEE WEEK IN MARRICKVILLE



**Marrickville Council launched Refugee Week in partnership with Metro Migrant Resource Centre at Marrickville Library on Friday 18 June.**

This year's theme was *Freedom from Fear*, recognising the 30 million people in the world who have been forced to leave their homes to seek safety.

All the guest speakers at the launch referred to theme, including Deputy Mayor Councillor Fiona Byrne. "We are very lucky here in Australia that we are able to welcome refugees into a safe environment and give them the opportunity to settle in an area free from fear," Councillor Byrne said. Marrickville Council has been a refugee welcome zone since 2003.

Marrickville Citizen of the Year Sister Aileen Crowe is a tireless advocate for refugees. She urged people to overcome their fear of refugees. "Fear can be paralysing if we succumb to it," she said.

"We don't have to do grand things. A welcoming smile could replace the angry scowl, warm words might replace harsh criticism, compassion rather than rash judgement. Australia is big enough to give a little space to a few people who have experienced harsh and violent treatment in the countries they have fled.

"Words spoken with compassion and care are powerful and life giving. Words spoken in fear are destructive," Sister Aileen said.

Fatmata Bangura, Marrickville Council's Young Citizen of the Year 2008, works closely with refugee communities in Marrickville. She said she felt extremely lucky that she and her family were given the opportunity to escape a war torn country and settle in Australia.

"I would like to say that I would not exchange Marrickville for any other suburb in Sydney. We love the shops, the restaurants, the parks, the Library and all the other facilities we have here," Fatmata said.

She thanked "all the organisations that help migrant families".

"I am standing here today representing the voices of millions of people around the world – asylum seekers and refugees – people without voices," she said.

Tibetan musician Lhamo Dolma also performed at the launch.

Mohamed (left) and Abdulai show off their ball skills at Council's Community Soccer Tournament held during Refugee Week.



## THE MARRICKVILLE COMMUNITY FUND - SUBFUND OF THE SYDNEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

**Giving liberates the soul of the giver, according to acclaimed poet and author Maya Angelou.**

The Marrickville Community Fund will provide a permanent trust where citizens and businesses can donate funds that are then invested in perpetuity.

Marrickville Council is providing initial support to help set up an Advisory Committee that will be responsible for raising the profile of the Fund, canvassing donations, and in time, advising of priorities for grant giving.

Charitable giving is associated with higher levels of health and happiness, increased prosperity, and strong communities, says Sharyn Coughlan Manager Community Development at Marrickville Council.

"The Marrickville Community Fund will allow Marrickville residents to donate money that will benefit local causes. The investment fund keeps on giving long after the money is donated.

"Giving to the Marrickville Community Fund might, for example, create opportunities for participation in an employment program, support a cultural group to perform, or an environmental group to improve the community's response to climate change."

Through the Marrickville Community Fund, residents can give back to their community, address social, cultural or environmental needs, and encourage community participation and growth.

For more information, or to make a tax deductible donation, go to the Sydney Community Foundation website at [www.sydneycommunityfoundation.org.au](http://www.sydneycommunityfoundation.org.au) and follow the links to the Marrickville Community Fund subfund page.

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