

# CASE STUDY: Justice Education Program



**CatholicCare provides the opportunity for refugee women and men to meet members of the legal and justice system, and to build connections with other participants.**

## AT A GLANCE



**Target Participants**  
Migrants from a refugee background



**Aim**  
A 6-week program providing information on a range of topics including: the Australian legal system, Legal Aid, family relationships, Centrelink, etc



**Organisations Involved**  
CatholicCare & Dandenong Magistrates Court



**Location**  
Melbourne, Victoria



**Funding**  
DSS Refugee Settlement Services and Cabrini Health.

For the past six years CatholicCare, in partnership with the Dandenong Magistrates' Court, has been running a Justice Education Program for newly-arrived refugees. The Justice Education Program in Dandenong is free for participants and in addition to its educational purpose, provides refugee women and men with the opportunity to meet members of our legal and justice system, and to build connections with other participants.

Last November, CatholicCare's CEO Netty Horton and Magistrate Pauline Spencer joined 25 refugee women attending a session on family violence. The session was presented by Gabrielle Fakhri from the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, who has been a social worker, cultural trainer and capacity building worker for 40 years.

While the session was specifically focused on family violence, Gabrielle also answered questions on topics relating more broadly to family relationships.

'The women in the session said they feel like they've lost control of their children since they started attending school. This is a common issue I've seen across different cultural groups,' said Gabrielle.

'The children are encouraged to report family issues including family violence to their school, so when the parents are trying to discipline their child by say, taking an iPad from them, the kids threaten to do them in to the school and make a complaint about abuse.'

Gabrielle explained to the group the importance of good family relationships and the role they play in taking back control of the children and raising good kids. She also explained the rights that both children and parents have, and why these are essential for keeping children safe. 'They were a great group – so inquisitive and they asked lots of questions,' mentioned Gabrielle. 'I'd love to do this again. When we asked the group for feedback they said they loved it, and they were eager for more information.'

The Justice Education Program receives support from the Federal Government DSS Refugee Settlement Services and Cabrini Health.

*'What impressed me about the session was the way the presenters tailored the content to the newly-arrived refugees,' said Netty Horton. 'The language was very simple to understand; there was no jargon or technical language. I could see the women absorbing the information and one woman even commented, "After these sessions, I go back to my community and I tell the others what I have learned."*

**Netty Horton**

CEO, CatholicCare

**For More Information Visit:**

<http://scoa.org.au/sector-collaboration/newsletter-archive/february-2019/around-the-sector-february-2019/justice-education-program-catholiccare/>

<https://www.catholiccare.org/>

