

MEDIA RELEASE

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Migrant and refugee women share stories of 'their place'

Women living in the Flemington area will share stories, memories, photos and significant objects from their homeland in a display to be held at the Flemington Library in September, to celebrate Adult Learners' Week.

The exhibition, 'My Place', is the result of work done by women attending Jesuit Community College's English language classes in Flemington, come from Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Egypt, China and Vietnam.

Most of the women have been in Australia for several years and are committed to improving their English in preparation for employment or to create connections with the wider community.

'My Place', facilitated by Kensington artist Michele Donegan, takes a story, memory or object from the woman's homeland and links it to their new place, here in Australia, using their English language skills.

Johara, an Oromo woman from the Oromia region of Ethiopia, has written about the coffee roasting ritual and its connection to community. A coffee cup she was given when she married will be on display alongside her story.

"In my village we leave our doors open so that our neighbours will smell the roasting coffee and come in to share it with us. When we came to Australia I was shocked that everyone closed their front door. How can you know your neighbor, or welcome them in, if your door is closed. I miss this part of my home," Johara said.

Artist Michele Donegan said the 'My Place' project was a vehicle for the migrant and refugee women of Flemington to explore their personal history and memory through objects and language. "We are all linked to our place through the meaning it has for us. Without that meaning, place would just be a space we occupy. These women have all come from a very different place, but have been able to make their new place home. In this project, they explore and link their past and present histories through everyday objects and use language to describe the memory and meaning these objects have for them," said Michele.

The display will be at the Flemington Library for the month of September. The women who have contributed their stories for display will celebrate the opening on Friday 6th September at 11am. Library users are invited to join in and meet the contributors.

'My Place' Exhibition

Flemington Library - 313 Racecourse Rd, Flemington (open at 10am every day except Sunday)

Launch event 11am, Friday 6th September 2013

Jesuit Community College is a program of Jesuit Social Services. Jesuit Social Services is a not-for-profit organisation which works to build a just society by advocating for social change and promoting the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged young people, families and communities.

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