

Wagga Wagga WELCOMES Refugee Week

Wagga Wagga's main street will be adorned with flags to mark Refugee Week which runs from 15 – 21 June, celebrating cultural diversity, community harmony, and the tremendous value refugee community members bring to our city.

The series of street flags, which will be displayed along Baylis Street, have been designed by six young people from multicultural backgrounds, who participated in a series of workshops mentored by local artist Sara Wilson.

The project, called WELCOME, introduced the participants to designing on tablets using digital drawing techniques and, as a group, they explored how they could visually represent their cultures.

Council's Cultural Officer Lauren Reynolds says the flags bring vibrancy to the CBD and speak to the Refugee Week 2025 theme; Finding Freedom: Diversity in Community.

"There are four flag designs in this series that are displayed along Baylis Street celebrating the cultures of the participants, with each design featuring three key elements: architecture, food, and a cultural practice or clothing, along with the translation of the word 'welcome'," Ms Reynolds said.

"A fifth flag design will hang alongside the others featuring the word 'welcome' translated into the top ten languages, other than English, spoken by residents in Wagga Wagga including: Yazidi, Malayalam, Mandarin, Filipino/Tagalog, Arabic, Punjabi, Nepali, Wiradjuri/Australian Indigenous Languages, Burmese and Hindi." (Census 2021).

Library Services Manager Christine Bolton said the WELCOME project allowed the participants to express their culture while working together as a group.

"The participants worked with local artist Sara Wilson and explored how they could visually represent their cultures while creating a cohesive design narrative," Ms Bolton said.

"The designs express the artists' deep connection to their heritage and culture while embracing their new lives in Wagga Wagga.

"The word WELCOME is intended as an invitation to all our community to both welcome and be welcomed."

The WELCOME project was developed through a partnership between Council and local community organisation STARTTS (Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) with the skills workshops taking place at the Wagga Wagga City Library.

The Wagga Wagga City Library offers programs and initiatives for refugees and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including a Multicultural Youth Group and weekly Language Café sessions for English development. For more information visit waggalibrary.com.au

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Media Opportunity

What: Hear about the WELCOME project and the flags along Baylis Street for Refugee Week 2025.

Who: Library Services Manager Christine Bolton, Cultural Officer Lauren Reynolds and participants of the WELCOME project (TBC).

When: Friday 13 June, **9am**.

Where: Wagga Wagga Civic Centre forecourt (front of Council admin building, Baylis street).

Contact 6926 9190 or media@wagga.nsw.gov.au

About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of more than \$236M.

The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300km road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as 'the City of Good Sports'.

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