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Migrant women learn to sew together

Brighter future ahead

EDUCATION

BY KAYLA OSBORNE

MIGRANT women across western Sydney are taking advantage of fee-free TAFE courses to help them settle into the community and learn some new skills.

The course helps to equip women in Campbelltown, Cabramatta and Guildford with basic skills in fashion design, enabling students to get a foot in the door to the industry.

Campbelltown resident Thiakra Abdullah fled to Australia from Iraq and has had a difficult time adjusting to life in a foreign country.

The 53-year-old is halfway through the eight-week TAFE NSW course delivered at Focus Connect Campbelltown.

"The sewing classes have helped so much in giving me a circle of friends in the community who are in a similar

position to me," Ms Abdullah said.

"Now when one of my four boys need a button sewn or to fix a hole in their pants, I have the skills to do it and I'm so proud of myself."

The TAFE NSW Statement of Attainment in Produce a Simple Garment is delivered at local community centres.

The course gives them the ability to pathway into the Certificate II in Applied Fashion Design and Technology at TAFE NSW Lidcombe and Macquarie Fields.

Up to three-quarters of the humanitarian entrants that came to NSW in the last ten years settled in the greater western Sydney region.

TAFE NSW helps to connect refugees and migrants with training and employment pathways with initiatives such as sewing workshops.

TAFE NSW also offers English language skills in

the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) funded by the Australian Government, which provides up to 510 hours of free English lessons and childcare to eligible migrants and refugees.

Students learn about Australian society, culture, customs and working in Australia.

Fashion teacher Fiona Kemp said the course has had a transformational change for the women participating.

"These women not only learn the hands-on skills to use a sewing machine and sew their own garment, but they have made friends and met more people in the community," she said.

"The workshops are designed to give women a taste of the skills they'll learn in the Certificate II in Applied Fashion Design and Technology fashion course and give them the confidence."



CONFIDENCE: Campbelltown resident Thiakra Abdullah fled to Australia from Iraq and has gained a new sense of community from TAFE NSW's sewing course.