

migrantvoice

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Edition 8



Welcome to Mackay Centre opens its doors

Mayor Deirdre Comerford officially opens the Welcome to Mackay Centre at the Old Town Hall on Sydney Street.

After much anticipation the Welcome to Mackay Centre has opened its doors. The Welcome Centre was officially opened by Mayor of Mackay Regional Council, Deirdre Comerford last month on November 16.

Gemma Kirby has been appointed the Welcome to Mackay Centre Coordinator and is calling for volunteers!
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Council has an ongoing responsibility to provide communications suitable to the needs of all residents. If you wish to receive information in an alternative format or require an interpreter contact 1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529).



A message from the Mayor Deirdre Comerford

Summer has well and truly arrived and as we get ready for the festive season, it is a timely reminder to prepare for the summer storm season.

A few hours spent preparing an emergency kit and securing your home could mean the difference between life and death. Council's Emergency Action Guide provides valuable information and can be collected from any of our Customer Service Centres or online (www.mackay.qld.gov.au).

On a lighter note, I recently helped open the Welcome to Mackay Centre, located in the Old Town Hall, on Sydney Street (next to the Police Station). I believe this centre will help our new residents from interstate and overseas feel welcome and supported when they arrive in Mackay.

If you are having trouble finding information or looking to join a local community group, I encourage you to visit the Welcome Centre, where you will be connected with the information you need.

On behalf of Mackay Regional Council I wish you a very joyful Christmas and a happy New Year.

Cr Deirdre Comerford.



Welcome Centre now open

If you are looking for information to help you settle into the Mackay Community, then make sure you head into the Welcome to Mackay Centre on Sydney Street and visit Gemma.

The LAMP Program and the Welcome Centre will be holding a Welcome to Mackay Picnic on Sunday, December 8 from 10am until 12noon.

The Picnic will give the community a chance to meet Gemma, the Welcome Centre Coordinator and also a chance to meet other new Mackay residents.

For more information about the Welcome to Mackay Picnic, you can contact Lara or Mia on 4961 9596.

The Welcome to Mackay Centre needs your help to keep the doors open. The Centre will need lots of volunteers to help by having a smiling welcoming face for all the visitors, and to also provide information to assist new residents settling into Mackay life.

If you can volunteer some of your time at the Welcome to Mackay Centre please call Gemma on 4957 7775.

Lamp update ▪ Lamp update ▪ Lamp update



Welcome to our last edition of Migrant Voice for 2012. This has been a busy year for Mia and I and we have enjoyed meeting many new friends and families!

Some of our highlights from 2012 include another successful Multicultural Swimming Program, hearing how the Multicultural Driving Project has helped many of you to get on the road, attending

some fantastic community get togethers including the Filipino Basketball Tournament, Fiji Day, Dandiya Night, Welcome to Mackay Picnic and of course most recently Global Grooves.

We have loved watching community groups grow from strength to strength and begin processes to become formal groups such as the Mackay Indians, the Mackay Papua New Guinea Community and the Mackay Nepalese Community. We have enjoyed helping you during the year and wish you all the best with your future endeavours.

We wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

Lara and Mia



Welcome to Mackay Picnic

**Saturday, December 8
10am - 12noon
Town Hall Park, Sydney Street
(next to the Old Town Hall)**

Bring a plate of food to share, a chair or rug and a hat! There will be games for the children, information for parents and any new arrivals to Mackay. Meet Gemma the Welcome Centre Coordinator.

Please bring along a gold coin donation to help raise funds for the Welcome to Mackay Centre. Call Lara or Mia on 4961 9596.

Staff Profile >

What is your name? Erryn Tomarra

What is your job at council? Multicultural CAMS Officer. My job is to represent the interests and assist in developing the capacity of the Australian South Sea Islander community.

Where are you from? On my mother's side I have German, English and Czechoslovakian heritage and my father's ancestors were brought from Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and Santo in Vanuatu as indentured labourers.

What is so special about next year? 2013 marks the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first South Sea Islanders brought to Australia as a source of cheap labour for Queensland's primary industries (particularly sugar cane).



Islanders were brought from eighty Pacific Islands predominantly Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

How can people be involved in celebrations next year? Many events and activities will be held to acknowledge the 150th anniversary and the significance of the contribution of the Australian South Sea Islander community historically. This will be a wonderful opportunity for the wider community to interact with and learn about the history and culture of the Australian South Sea Islander community. A calendar of events will be available on the council website in the new year.

What is Rent Connect?

RentConnect helps Queenslanders to find and secure a home to rent in the private market.

RentConnect helps people who are able to manage a tenancy but who are struggling to access the private rental market due to non-financial barriers, such as:

- limited rental history
- a lack of skills, knowledge or understanding of how the private rental market works
- a lack of documents required for private rental applications.

Specialist RentConnect officers work together with clients to identify what type of assistance they may need.



RentConnect officers can:

- provide advice on how to find a suitable rental home
- show how the rental application process works
- help prepare a rental application and organise paperwork
- provide advice on how to make a good impression when submitting applications
- help access financial assistance offered by the Department of Housing and Public Works, such as a bond loan or rental grant
- link clients to community services and real estate agents.

Did you know?

Artspace Mackay runs BMA Kidspace on the first Tuesday of every month and it's free to come along.

BMA Kidspace is for toddlers under five and their mum or dad to make art with a local artist and to have a sing and a dance with local performers. For information call Artspace on 4961 9772



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The Australian South Sea Islander Children's Dance Group perform at Global Grooves Festival.



The South American Community hold another successful food stall at this year's Global Grooves.

World Cafe

English Conversation Group

If you are interested in improving your English conversation skills and meeting other people, you should join our group. Each week, we talk about different topics such as living in Mackay, preparing for a natural disaster and health care. We have monthly cooking sessions too. We are currently working on developing and publishing a cookbook with recipes that have been shared by people in the group.



When - Every Tuesday

Where - George St Neighbourhood Centre, George St

Time - 10.30am to 12 noon

Please call before coming, contact Lyn on 4957 2626.

Remember these dates:

Every Friday

9.00 - 11.00am

Multicultural Play Group.

For info call 4957 2626.

Saturday, December 8

*Welcome to Mackay Picnic
Old Town Hall Park, Sydney
Street Mackay*

Friday, December 7

Many Cultures Storytime

Christmas Party, Gordon

White Library. For info call

4961 9387.

Saturday, December 15

*Christmas in the Gardens.
Botanical Gardens, Lagoon
Street, Mackay - Free entry.*

e-news!

Sign up online for regular news updates.

www.mackay.qld.gov.au/about_council/newsletters

Migrant Settlement Program

The Migrant Settlement Program at the George Street Neighbourhood Centre is a free service to help eligible migrants who have arrived in the last five (5) years. The program provides information about driving, health services, public transport, schools and child care, renting, staying safe and making friends.

Access to services in the community - employment, English classes, Centrelink, housing and volunteering. Help making appointments eg Doctors and government departments.

For more details or to make an appointment phone the Migrant Settlement Worker on 4957 2626.

Useful Contacts

> Migrant Settlement Services

Phone: 4957 3088

> Local Area Multicultural Partnership Program

Phone: 4961 9596

Email: lamp@mackay.qld.gov.au

> Welcome to Mackay Centre

Phone: 4957 7757