

A different kind of leader

In a white business shirt and well-cut coat, North Geelong Secondary College Manager, Simon Scoullar stood out. He had successfully wrangled a pack of teenagers with wild hair into the Geelong Magistrate's Court. But the kids weren't there as punishment.

As the Magistrate went on to explain, the court would also remain 'a safe place', if they ever needed to return.

'The local media loves to report about the 'crime wave' in Geelong, but what we're dealing with is no more than 20 or so kids', he told the students.

'This court is not a place for punishment, it's a place to turn from one path to another.'

The occasion was a mock trial, the final act in CatholicCare's Justice Education Program for Refugee Youth.

In the courtroom, students acted out a script led by Lauren Hutson, a young lawyer from Barwon Community Legal, and in an attempt to control the raucous laughter, the young man playing the Magistrate accidentally snapped the gavel.

After lots of smart questions and brave public speaking, it was breathtaking to hear the room fall silent. The students dutifully filled out their evaluation forms, carefully considering what they had learned and liked best over the 10 weeks.

As they spilled out of the courtroom, past security and onto the front stairs, regrouping with their friends, Simon from North Geelong Secondary School explained how the students were chosen for the program.

"All the kids are from refugee backgrounds. One is interested in becoming a cop (sic), another wants to study law - and then there's one who's been steered from public graffiti into a space for street art at the Powerhouse', he said.

'What unites them is their influence, whatever they're known for. They are leaders already, in their own unique way. They have influence with their mates, and we're leveraging that influence in the hope they'll speak up... if and when one of their mates thinks it'd be funny to light fire to a bin'.

Below Left: Simon Scoullar from North Geelong Secondary College turning a fist pump into a handshake in the Geelong Magistrate's Court.



Below Right: North Geelong Secondary College students at CatholicCare's Justice Education Program



Scanning the group, it was evident how each of the students, all so different, could be well on their way to becoming a different kind of leader - with culturally-sensitive education from community partners wanting to invest in young people and the future of Geelong.

What's stopping more students from participating?

'We need funding for another bus', said Simon.

'Sir, is it time to go?' the student with the wildest hair called out.

CatholicCare wishes to gratefully acknowledge the support of Collier Charitable Fund, Give Where You Live and Geelong Charitable Fund for their multi-year support of the program to encourage Refugee Youth.

This Justice Education Program is part of [Geelong Settle Well](#)

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