

MEDIA RELEASE

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A Warehouse for the Wagon

West Welcome Wagon has acquired a warehouse in Sunshine West to further its work in welcoming new asylum seekers into our community. Moving in this August, volunteers from the Wagon will be excitedly sorting, storing, packing, and distributing vital material aid donations for asylum seekers in Melbourne's west.

Asylum seeker needs for food, furniture, linen, and support services are filled by West Welcome Wagon, a not-for-profit, registered charity. Volunteer coordinators from around Melbourne's west donate time, and until now, space to the Wagon by offering up portions of their homes to help with storing, sorting, and distribution of essentials. Unfortunately that model was unsustainable, creating the need for a centralised space from which to operate.

The use of a warehouse will mean that the Wagon will be able to accept more donations and be more efficient in storing, sorting, packing, and delivering items. Having a safe, physical space of their own will encourage more volunteers to join the organisation and to help with the important work done in the local community.

"We are thrilled to be able to provide such a great service to our local asylum seeker neighbours. It's such an exciting time for the organisation to be moving towards a more sustainable model where our dedicated coordinators are able to share the load. The new space will also allow us to assist a greater number of asylum seekers moving forward," said Marnie Kelly, President of West Welcome Wagon.

Ms Kelly said that since it was formed in 2013, West Welcome Wagon had delivered essentials to more than 700 asylum seeker families but was now struggling to provide help to all those that need it due to lack of space. The use of a warehouse will allow the grassroots organisation to update its operational model and reach out to more asylum seekers in need.

"West Welcome Wagon is hoping to reach \$33,000 in donations, which would cover most of the first year's rent of the warehouse, as well as enabling them to continue their vital aid to local asylum seekers. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible and can be made here: www.givenow.com.au/westwelcomewagonhome.

To find out more visit www.westwelcomewagon.org.au or www.facebook.com/WestWelcomeWagon or email info@westwelcomewagon.org.au

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