



**MEDIA RELEASE - 13 October 2014**

## **Hitching hope to a new wagon in the West**

The grassroots community organisation helping asylum seekers and refugees to settle in Melbourne's West has received a boost, with the hand-over of a much needed new trailer.

West Welcome Wagon (WWW) has today been given a trailer built by offenders at the Metropolitan Remand Centre to replace one that was stolen, having a huge impact on the group's ability to deliver much needed donations.

West Welcome Wagon was established in 2013 by Yarraville resident, Mia McGregor, after she organised donated goods to furnish a home for a local refugee family.

The group's growth has been astounding, with more than 2700 members, mostly located in the western suburbs of Melbourne. It is estimated that in the last year, WWW helped 288 households (913 individuals, including 155 children), delivering more than 500 beds and 102 bikes, providing 460 food hampers and supporting 11 asylum seekers with English lessons.

Mia thanked the Department of Justice for the new trailer and said that the support for WWW showed how strong the community in Melbourne's west is.

"I would like to thank all of our volunteers and coordinators who give their time freely to make our community a welcoming one.

"The material goods are obviously of great importance, but so are the connections that are being made. Neighbour to neighbour, we are letting asylum seeker and refugee families know that there is help and friendship here," Mia said.

West Welcome Wagon has also been supported by a number of community based fundraisers and was recently acknowledged with an award for a partnership called 'Fix the Cycle', winning Best in Region Winner and Best Ongoing Partnership at the 2014 Corrections Victoria Community Partnership Awards.

The partnership provided donated bicycles refurbished by young offenders to WWW for delivery to refugees in need.

"The WWW bikes program coordinated by volunteer Julie Doyle has been another success story for our community group," Mia added.

*West Welcome Wagon Inc (WWW) is a volunteer run, not for profit, incorporated organisation, operating on Facebook. We provide support to asylum seekers in our local community in the West of Melbourne by providing good quality donated items, as well as special projects and community engagement.*

**For media enquiries please contact Mia McGregor via [westwelcomewagon@gmail.com](mailto:westwelcomewagon@gmail.com)**