

BCE media release

BCE Media Release –

From the Republic of Burundi to Brisbane — Douce's journey of hope and opportunity at Clairvaux MacKillop College

Douce, a refugee from the Republic of Burundi, is embracing new opportunities and realising her dreams this Harmony Week (18 to 24 March) thanks to a unique Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) program.

BCE's Work and Welcome program creates life-changing opportunities for refugees and migrants, offering meaningful employment across its 146 schools and six offices across South East Queensland.

Douce, BCE's newest Work and Welcome participant, said after fleeing the Republic of Burundi, she found herself in Nairobi, Kenya, awaiting the next stage of her visa application.

Determined to create a better future, she established and successfully ran her own café until she and her family were granted asylum in Australia.

New opportunities

One year on, Douce continues to hone her newfound hospitality genius at Clairvaux MacKillop College, Upper Mount Gravatt.

Clairvaux MacKillop College Principal Wayne Chapman said Douce has been a valued member of the College's Curriculum Hospitality support staff since January 2025.

"We greatly value her positive and hard-working nature," he said.

"Douce is a great fit for our school and a wonderful addition to our tuckshop.

"We are humbled to be one small part of Douce's success within the Australian hospitality sector."

Douce said she values the work she does at Clairvaux MacKillop College, where she gets to "learn new skills".

"I find the staff at Clairvaux MacKillop to be supportive and inclusive," she said.

"The students are also respectfully curious about my life in Kenya."

Thanks to the experience she has gained at Clairvaux MacKillop College, Douce aspires to establish her own café in Australia.

Harmony Week

Wayne adds, "each person and their culture brings a rich beauty to our College community".

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“As we learn about each other, we grow closer together as a College and as humans - and the world needs this right now,” he said.

“Inclusivity is a core practice at Clairvaux MacKillop.

“We are blessed with dual charisms.

“In the traditions of Edmund Rice and Mary MacKillop, we accept all people and celebrate our differences while enabling growth and excellence.

“When students learn about other cultures, it helps shape them into more mature individuals, fostering greater tolerance, empathy, and a broader global perspective as they grow into young adults and engaged members of society.”

BCE’s Work and Welcome program

BCE Work and Welcome Coordinator Enrique Ramirez Chavez said, “through BCE’s Work and Welcome Program, Douce—and many others—are being supported as they build new futures in Queensland”.

“The Work and Welcome program, a partnership between BCE and Multicultural Australia, is an initiative which enables refugees to recover not only skills and confidence but also their dignity,” he said.

“The candidates have fulfilled a variety of roles in their office, including administration, project management, information technology, procurement, and resource development.

“More than 16 refugees have been beneficiaries of work experience with BCE since the program started in 2013.

“After 12 weeks, we can see the impact of the program on each participant, with many proceeding to gain employment with BCE and other organisations.”

BCE’s Work and Welcome program is fully funded by contributions from BCE staff. For more information about Clairvaux MacKillop College, Upper Mount Gravatt or to enrol [click here](#).

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