

From Kabul to Queensland—Dr Masooma’s Pilgrimage of Hope

Dr Masooma Karimi, a refugee from Kabul, has stepped into a new chapter at St Elizabeth's School, Tarragindi this Term 3, joining the team through Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) and Multicultural Australia's transformative Work and Welcome program.

The initiative empowers refugees to rebuild their lives through meaningful employment and community connection across BCE's six offices and 146 schools.

A doctor and former teacher - and now St Elizabeth's school officer - Dr Masooma said she was forced to leave her home country Afghanistan after the Taliban took control on 15 August 2021.

“There was so much chaos that followed,” she explained.

“People were desperately trying to board planes, many losing their lives in the process.

“As an educated woman, I would have no life there, so I knew I needed to get out and continue to make a difference in other people’s lives.”

Dr Masooma adds her journey to Australia was not without difficulty.

“When we arrived in Pakistan, we were fraught with challenges and crowded conditions,” she said.

“I tried my best to contribute to society as much as I could, working as a doctor.

“In August 2024 my family and I were granted Australian Humanitarian Visas.”

St Elizabeth's School Principal Jenna Webb said, since joining the team at St Elizabeth's Dr Masooma has made a profound impact on the lives of students and staff.

“As part of our Staff Formation Day ‘Pilgrims of Hope’ (Friday 5 September), Dr Masooma bravely shared her powerful story of leaving her homeland Afghanistan,” she said.

“Dr Masooma’s presentation offered a deeply personal perspective on resilience, education, and the pursuit of safety that makes all of us human.

“She also spoke of her family and early career as a teacher and later a doctor when she graduated from Kateb Medical University in 2021.”

Jenna adds her presentation was truly inspiring and eye opening for our staff.

“A photo of her in her medical uniform in Afghanistan, taken before the Taliban's resurgence, served as a poignant reminder of the life she once led,” she said.

“Her story not only enriches our school's cultural fabric but also inspires staff and students alike to reflect on the global realities of displacement and resilience.”

BCE media release



Dr Masooma now aspires to continue to pursue her medical career in Australia, specialising in cardiology.

"I want to make use of every opportunity available to me in Australia," Dr Masooma said.

"I want to contribute positively to society and help make the world a better place.

"I would like to thank BCE and St Elizabeth's School for this opportunity to work as a School Officer.

"To know I am supported as I regain my confidence in the workplace in a foreign country brings me great joy."

About Work and Welcome:

The Work and Welcome program is a self-funded social justice initiative.

Thanks to the contributions of all BCE staff, we can help people like Masooma.