

MEDIA RELEASE

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MercyCare traineeships give Aboriginal people new opportunities

A new traineeship program is offering Aboriginal people the life-changing opportunity to gain qualifications and on the job experience at not-for-profit organisation MercyCare.

The trainees have been placed at a number of MercyCare locations to undertake on the job training, and are also supported to study for their Certificate III in Individual Support, Certificate II in Business, Certificate II in Community Services or Early Childhood Education.

Lynley Wilkes started her traineeship at MercyCare's Residential Aged Care facility in Kelmscott in March this year and said it had given her a new direction in life.

"I had been unemployed for a long time, so when I heard that this opportunity was available I jumped at the chance," she said.

"MercyCare helped me transition into the traineeship and working here makes me feel good.

"My workplace is warm, and the manager is very understanding when it comes to some of my cultural protocols, she makes it a great place to work."

Eva Hansen is completing her traineeship alongside Lynley, and said she enjoyed caring for the residents.

"This training is a great opportunity to be role models for the young ones growing up," she said. "They will see the love, care and respect passed on from generation to generation.

"The residents at MercyCare Kelmscott have responded really well to us as trainees, and I feel like I really fit in.

"It's a great feeling to be able to be there for other people, to help them by showing love and learning new skills at the same time."

MercyCare Chief Executive Officer Chris Hall said the traineeship program was part of the organisation's commitment to working with Aboriginal people to create employment opportunities.

"MercyCare is committed to supporting Aboriginal people's aspirations for economic independence, and one of the ways we're doing this is through education and employment," he said.

"This program will provide a unique and valuable opportunity for trainees to develop the skills, experience and knowledge to embark on a career either with MercyCare or other service providers."

However, Mr Hall said the benefits were far from one way.

“MercyCare is enriched by having more Aboriginal people join our workforce and we are becoming much more aware of Aboriginal people’s experiences in Australian society today, their perspectives and culture,” he said.

“We are committed to learning and working together in partnerships that support people and communities to thrive.”

The Aboriginal traineeship program will form part of MercyCare’s second Reconciliation Action Plan, which outlines the organisation’s continued commitment to the critical journey of reconciliation in Australia.

The Reconciliation Action Plan was launched during National Reconciliation Week (May 27 – June 3).

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MercyCare is a leading Catholic provider of aged care, family, health, disability and community services. We employ over 1000 staff and 175 volunteers, delivering more than 40 programs and services, from 35 locations throughout Western Australia.

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