

What a delight to see the former Convent of Mercy/Sacred Heart College, Ballarat East come to life as 'a welcome centre'!

The **Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council Inc** whose Vision and Mission statement says - 'to actively promote and develop goodwill, understanding and harmony within our culturally diverse community' - is occupying a section of the property as 'their hub' – a place where people can gather for many reasons – meetings, parties, exhibitions, markets, entertainment and what many people like to participate in – a tour of the section of the property available to the BRMC.

Recently I was privileged to participate in a meal and conversation with a group of about twenty-five young people of various cultural backgrounds – all architects and doing further study in the area of architecture at several Universities around Australia. I understand they had been invited by the BRMC to participate in conversation as to 'what they would dream' for the building/hub giving them the opportunity to put theory and practise together. Part of their interest was 'the story' of the building during the time of the Sisters who lived and worked there and beyond, and the life of the school and boarders.

The meal took me back to the vast difference between this group eating and what they ate, and the room in which we ate in a former life being the Sisters' dining room. I could not make sitting on the floor my choice yet I did enjoy the meal from a chair! This meal was prepared by the mother of one of the group – rice, vegetables, Halal meat. The girl herself is Syrian, and when she has finished her course has to return to Syria.

I left the group amazed at its diversity, their interest in our history/story and excited for those participants in the BRMC Inc as they dream their dream to welcome all of us into their world.

Geraldine Mugavin RSM

