

Community to benefit from new deal

Mambourin and The Migrant Hub will today enter an agreement for The Migrant Hub to operate Mambourin's Café and Sensory Gardens in Recreation Close Werribee which will see benefits for the community.

Mambourin promotes independent living by offering employment, education and training services to adults with a disability. Mambourin operates at several sites located throughout the western region of Melbourne, and in the broader community in which the service users live, work and recreate. Mambourin's slogan is "Empowering People" and they strive to help people with disabilities to be valued members of our community and to enhance their self-esteem.

The Migrant Hub has been providing appropriate services to the migrant community by encouraging and supporting them to be better integrated into mainstream society and become more active citizens of Wyndham. The society The Migrant Hub strives for is one in which as many members as possible become active citizens. The more active citizens there are, the stronger the community becomes, and the happier its residents will be.

MiHUB Café is a social enterprise of The Migrant Hub. As a place to eat, a place to meet and a place to build community, MiHUB Café provides a unique experience. It has showcased a business model whereby a café and community space coexist, indeed complementing each other. The Migrant Hub was urgently seeking alternative facilities as the building they are currently using is scheduled for demolition on 14 March, 2011.

Mambourin has until December 2010 been operating a Café within the Mambourin Sensory Gardens located at 2 Recreation Close Werribee. This Café's primary purpose was to provide meaningful employment and ongoing training to people with disabilities. The Café was closed in December 2010 because it was no longer financially viable due to insufficient passing trade.

The Migrant Hub has negotiated an agreement with Mambourin to operate the Café and Gardens, initially for a six month trial.

Under the agreement reached, The Migrant Hub will operate the Café and Gardens as a third party operator at arms' length from Mambourin, but under Mambourin's careful control and gaze. Bookings for the Café and Gardens will be directed through The Migrant Hub while Mambourin will be responsible for bookings of Ison House. As a part of the deal, The Migrant Hub will keep the rent to a minimal level providing an in-kind contribution to the maintenance of the Gardens. Importantly, the Migrant Hub has agreed to find ways to involve Mambourin's service users in the operation, an outcome which was critical to Mambourin's needs.

“This is very exciting news”, said Rohan Braddy, Mambourin’s Chief Executive Officer. “We firmly believe that this is an opportunity to build on the hard work that has been put into these Gardens and Café over so many years to create something truly wonderful for, and with, the people that we support and the wider community”, Mr Braddy said.

The Migrant Hub is equally enthusiastic. “This is such a wonderful outcome for us. We were faced with such an uncertain future, but this outcome exceeds best hopes”, said Walter Villagonzalo, President of The Migrant Hub. “It allows us to continue almost without faltering so we don’t lose any of the momentum we have worked so hard to generate, and in an environment that will lend itself brilliantly to our community activities”, Mr Villagonzalo said.

The MiHub Café hopes to be open for business at its new location on 21 March 2011.

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