

A Year in Review - 2023 Highlights



River Nile Learning Centre Graduation 2023

Organization Context

The River Nile Learning Centre, established in 2008, is a charitable organisation specialising in adult education and holistic support services for refugee, asylum seeker, and migrant women.

River Nile Learning Centre (RNLC) provides hope and educational opportunity to refugee, migrant and asylum seeker women to acquire the language, life and work skills to thrive in our community. Our primary goal is to equip our students with the skills that will build their confidence, supporting them to continue their education, seek employment and have greater community involvement.

We offer free, pre-accredited foundation English, digital and numeracy classes. Our courses are flexible and tailored to develop the literacy, numeracy and digital skills of women with low levels of English. We pride ourselves on offering a welcoming and relaxed learning environment, together with holistic support. In pursuit of this, we have a dedicated social worker on staff to extend vital assistance and connect our students with the essential services beyond.

In addition to our core offerings, we provide a range of supplementary services to further support our students. These include driving lessons for every student, access to our food bank, provision of Myki passes to facilitate attendance in classes, swimming lessons available during the school term, excursions each term, workshops and information sessions, as well as comprehensive job readiness training.

All RNLC services are provided completely free, with no recurring Government funding, and made possible thanks to the support of volunteers, regular donors and philanthropic groups to whom we're most grateful.



2023 Victorian Multicultural Commission Awards

2023 Winner of the Victorian Multicultural Commission Award for Excellence for Pre-Accredited Community Based Training

We are proud to announce that in 2023, the River Nile Learning Centre (RNLC) was honored to receive the prestigious Victorian Multicultural Award for Excellence for Vocational Education and Training. This award recognises RNLC's exceptional dedication to providing pre-accredited community-based training, underscoring our commitment to excellence in education and community engagement. Winning this award is a testament to the hard work and passion of our students, staff, volunteers and board members, and it motivates us to continue striving for excellence in all that we do. We are grateful for this recognition and remain committed to empowering refugee, asylum seeker, and migrant women through education and support services.



RNLC Education Program

In 2023, RNLC continued to deliver a comprehensive education program. We offered multiple education courses independently, covering areas such as Foundation English, healthy eating and nutrition, and

digital literacy. Additionally, we partnered with North Melbourne Language and Learning to provide courses including Digital Essentials, General Pre-accredited Language Levels 1 & 2, and numeracy.

Attendance: Throughout the year, attendance remained strong, reflecting the dedication and enthusiasm of our students. We were consistently able to run two classes simultaneously, both of which were filled with eager learners. The presence of our dedicated volunteers further enhanced the learning environment, providing invaluable support to both teachers and students. Volunteers not only assisted in classrooms but also worked with small groups of students outside formal class settings.

Student Numbers: We witnessed a steady increase in student numbers over the course of the year, with a mix of returning and new students enrolling in our programs. By the end of 2023, we were delighted to report a total of 68 enrolments, indicating the growing demand for our services and the effectiveness of our educational offerings.

The Education Program at RNLC in 2023 was characterized by a commitment to excellence, a supportive learning environment, and a dedication to meeting the diverse needs of our students. We look forward to continuing our mission of empowerment and education in the years to come.



Engagement and Wellbeing

Our Social Worker: Our social worker played a crucial role in supporting our students throughout 2023. They provided invaluable assistance in navigating various aspects of life, including citizenship applications, childcare enrolments, access to healthcare services, legal support, financial literacy, advocacy, and family violence support. This comprehensive support has fostered a safe environment where students can fully engage in learning without the stress of daily life, contributing to a positive and supportive learning atmosphere.

Holistic Support: Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we were able to continue providing holistic support to our students in 2023. This support included the provision of Myki passes for public transport, driving lessons, and access to our food bank, ensuring that students have the resources they need to focus on their education and personal development.

Engagement Activities: At RNLC, we recognise the importance of actively engaging students in our programs. Our aim is to create a sense of community and belonging among students, encouraging their participation in both learning and extracurricular activities. These activities include regular excursions, class parties and celebrations, as well as swimming and fitness classes. By fostering a sense of community and encouraging friendships, we aim to create a supportive environment.

Personal Development: In addition to academic learning, we prioritize the personal and professional development of our students. In 2023, we organised various workshops and invited guest speakers from organisations and service providers to address the needs of our students. Workshops on job readiness helped students in their job search and securing employment, while training in barista courses and First Aid enhanced their job skills. Collaborative sessions on mental health, wellbeing, and women's health further contributed to their holistic development.

We are committed to continuing our collaboration with partners and service providers to ensure that our students are aware of and have access to all available support services. By working together, we aim to empower our students to reach their full potential and thrive in their communities.



RNLC Digital mentors and program coordinator

RNLC Digital Sisters Program

In 2023, RNLC secured funding from Good Things Foundation Australia for our Digital Sister Program. This initiative has been instrumental in empowering our students and expanding our reach within the community. Through this program, RNLC hired two of our students as staff members, serving as bilingual 'digital mentors'. These mentors undergo specialised training by our coordinator, focusing on digital skills such as identifying and avoiding scams and creating PowerPoint presentations. Once upskilled, our mentors play a crucial role in teaching these skills not only to our students but also within their own communities. This innovative program not only enhances digital literacy but also fosters a sense of empowerment and community engagement. Building on the success of its inception in 2023, the program will continue into 2024.



Student Feedback

Throughout the year, we actively sought feedback from our students. The overwhelming consensus was that RNLC provided a safe and supportive environment for learning. Students expressed gratitude for the care and support they received from both staff and volunteers, highlighting RNLC as a vital lifeline where they could escape the daily stressors of life and focus on their education and personal development. Additionally, students praised the quality of teaching and appreciated the customized curriculum tailored to their needs. Importantly, students emphasized the significance of RNLC's well-being offerings, particularly highlighting the support provided by our onsite social worker and the accessibility of services such as the food bank, driving lessons, and Myki passes. Students reported that these services provided them with a sense of agency and independence, significantly alleviating stress and anxiety, and motivating them to focus on their studies with renewed determination.



Special Thanks

We extend our deepest gratitude to our exceptional volunteers who generously supported us throughout the year in various capacities including classroom assistance, foodbank management, social support, administration, HR, and more. A particular acknowledgment goes to our Volunteer Coordinator and Board Member, Amanda Turnbull, for her invaluable efforts in sourcing and coordinating volunteers, ensuring the smooth functioning of our programs.

Additionally, we would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to our partners and donors whose unwavering support makes all of our initiatives possible. In particular, we would like to thank:

- Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation
- Sidney Myer Fund & The Myer Foundation
- City of Melbourne
- North Melbourne Language and Learning
- Bennelong
- Perpetual
- Scanlon Foundation
- Australian Communities Foundation
- Department of Health
- Department of Families, Fairness, and Housing
- Good Things Foundation
- VicHealth

Your generosity and partnership have been instrumental in advancing our mission of empowering refugee, asylum seeker, and migrant women through education and support services. We are profoundly grateful for your continued support and collaboration.

Give the tax-deductible gift of education!

Your contribution can make a difference in the lives of refugee and asylum seeker women and their children. By providing them with language, life, and work skills, you can help them thrive in our community.

Your donation is tax-deductible.

Electronic Funds Transfer River Nile Learning Centre

BSB: 033 132 Account No. 308 382

Online via PayPal which provides an instant receipt

<https://www.rnlc.org.au/donations>

RNLC is an ACNC Registered Charities, endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office for charity tax concessions and as Deductible Gift Recipients. All donations of \$2 and above are tax-deductible.



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