

Book Launch at the Mercy Hub

Hope Co-op's book *The Shape of Hope* tells the stories of several asylum seekers, from their journeys coming from their home countries to the barriers they have encountered living in Australia. It informs you of the human impacts of government policy in Australia, as well as what actions people are taking to change this.

Young Mercy Links hosted a book launch at The Mercy Hub for *The Shape of Hope* on the Friday evening of April 29th. This inspiring event featured speeches from the Co-op's board members Ali and Sally, with

Sally giving a moving performance of her original song written for her students during her time teaching at St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre. Mujtaba and Sohrab, two of the authors, also gave a reading from the book and talked about the educational disadvantages asylum seeker students face.

Ali and Sally told the story of Hope Coop's origin beginning to address the issue of limited access to higher education. Young students from asylum seeker backgrounds are unable to pursue tertiary education due to being ineligible for government loans, therefore needing to pay the more expensive international student fees upfront before commencing study. Their purpose is to use the proceeds from *The Shape of Hope* towards the Living Support Fund which covers transport costs and a small weekly allowance to enable these students to finish their education.

Additional information about the Hope Co-op or *The Shape of Hope* including purchasing information can be found on their website www.hopcoop.org.au.

**Isabel
Clements,
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