

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **Learning sewing skills in a bid to improve employment opportunities**

A “hands-on” course at ACL College at Auburn is teaching newly arrived migrants and refugees sewing machine skills that could potentially improve their employment opportunities.

ACL Group Managing Director Helen Zimmerman said the four-week sewing machine class provided a practical application of sewing skills, together with teaching English language terminology directly associated with sewing.

“As the largest provider of high quality English language education in Australia, ACL has been working since 1998 to educate and settle newly arrived migrants and refugees,” Ms Zimmerman said

“As part of enhancing that process we are looking at a number of new classes to improve employment opportunities for our students and this is the second series of sewing machine classes following their popularity last year.

“The skills the students learn in these classes could lead to work in a variety of sewing businesses or even self-employment.”

Singer has supplied Auburn ACL College with sewing machines on a loan basis and believes it is a great idea to promote the classes as they provide an important community service.

Singer Managing Director Ernest Arulkumar said that Singer has had a long involvement with this type of community work, both in Australia and overseas.

“We have donated many hundred of sewing machines to refugees, the unemployed in Australia and to disaster areas such as East Timor and PNG,” he said.

“As a migrant from Sri Lanka I know how important this type of help and support can be. I believe that we should help people to help themselves and teaching them a life skill, such as sewing, is a good way to do this,” he said.

“It’s the old adage of if you give a person a fish you feed them for a day but if you teach them to fish you feed them for life.”

Ms Zimmerman said there are two classes, one held on Mondays and the second on Tuesdays, with a total of 28 students from 12 countries of origin including Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, China, Sudan, India, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Turkey, Burma, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

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