

<https://www.dailymercury.com.au/news/the-best-thing-about-mackay-unveiled/3678388/>

Daily Mercury



EVERYONE BELONGS: Lyn Pascual, Marilyn Catral, Melendres Sotto, and Ela Meglente performed a dance during the Harmony Day celebrations at Jubilee Park yesterday. Emma Murray

LOCAL FACES

The best thing about Mackay unveiled



by [ANGELA SENG](#)

22nd Mar 2019 4:00 AM

Subscriber only

MARILYN Catral says the best thing about Mackay is its people.

"They're so friendly, helpful and many have taught us Australian lingo," she said.

"I have an Australian friend who teaches me all the slang and helps me pronounce words."

Mackay residents yesterday celebrated Harmony Day outside the Jubilee Community Centre.

Harmony Day is an Australian Government program that focusses on the message "everyone belongs".

Recognised since 1999, it's a day to reinforce the importance of inclusivity in communities across Australia.

Mackay's vibrant event showcased local singers, dancers, world music and exotic cuisine.

The dancers, all migrants from the Philippines, met at the weekly World Cafe event held at the George Street Neighbourhood Centre and became fast friends.

"We were approached through World Cafe to create something to perform at Harmony Day. We like to give back to the community and share our culture - so whenever we are asked to help with a program like this we make time to create a presentation like this," one of the dancers, Ela Maglente said.

Lyn Pascual choreographed a dance that was shared with the crowd and said the group of woman spent time together dancing, going out to listen to music and having meals together.

The women all said they were happily settled in Mackay and their only complaint was the weather, that as Melendres Sotto pointed out was "just as humid as the Philippines".

That certainly was true of the day but it did not hinder any of the festivities. After the performances, people of all cultures, ages and race shared in a potluck meal made up of food from all cultures, including the Aussie favourite sausage on bread.

Councillor Ross Gee said events like this were proof of how diverse Mackay truly was. "Hearing all the positive feedback from migrants gives me faith in our community," he said.