

# Hard work pays dividends for Melkie

BY XAVIER SMERDON

MELKIE Kiflue has faced more than his fair share of hardship and adversity, but with the help of others and his own work ethic and determination, the Werribee resident now has a bright future ahead of him.

Born in a Sudanese refugee camp with Ethiopian heritage and orphaned at a young age, 20-year-old Melkie came to Australia three years ago unable to speak a word of English.

Since then he has completed certificate training in the automotive industry, become a mentor to other young people and has hopes of starting up his own business.

Melkie volunteers with a variety of organisations, including the Werribee Community and Education Centre and was the recipient of a Mayoral Youth Award last month.

Melkie said he could not believe how his life had changed since he came to Wyndham.

"When I think back to life in the refugee camp and compare it to life here, it's completely different," Melkie said.

"I never give up and I keep working hard because this is my opportunity."

Terese Vizintin from the Werribee Community and Education Centre said Melkie had become an inspiration to his fellow students.

"He came here with no English and no formal education but after just three years, his ability is amazing," Ms Vizintin said.

Melkie said he would now like to do his apprenticeship so he can become a motor mechanic, open his own garage in Werribee and give other young people an opportunity to better their futures.

"I tell young people we have to work hard," he said.

"Life is not easy and we have our opportunity now."

He is now in the process of trying to find his siblings who he believes are still in Sudan. As late as last week Red Cross had been in touch with him about finding his family.

If you are an automotive mechanic and would like to give Melkie a chance with an apprenticeship please call 9742 4013.



Werribee's Melkie Kiflu has been recognised for his tireless volunteer work and community leadership. 68098

Picture: SARAH MATRAY