



Building students into leaders

SIMON GLADMAN

SCHOOL students of mixed cultural backgrounds strengthened their leadership skills in a Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues and Australian Red Cross program in Geelong.

Twenty North Geelong Secondary College students, either refugees or migrants from countries such as Germany,

Iran, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand and Vietnam, took part in the Leaders of Today program.

They worked on skills in a range of areas such as communication and public speaking, while also studying what it meant to be a leader.

Year 11 student Mayong Akoon, originally of Sudan, said the program was a major confidence booster.

"It's helped me gain a lot of skills that might help me in what I want to do in the future — political science," he said.

"I've gained a lot of confidence in doing teamwork and I will learn how to be a good public speaker."

More than 280 Victorian students have participated in Leaders of Today since it was established in 2001.

Centre of Multicultural Youth Issues project officer Rachel Murray said it was vital for such students to have strong voices.

"We recognise the incredible leadership skills that exist in the migrant and refugee community and our program helps them realise the potential that is within them to be community leaders," she said.