Sakineh and Salimeh are sisters. Their parents are originally from Afghanistan but due to war, they moved to Iran where Sakineh and Salimeh were born.

The winters in Iran are very cold and summers are very hot. Their parents used wheelbarrows to carry water and in winter the taps froze.

“We lived in a tent for 10 years then we moved into a hut, which had a kitchen and one room.”

Their father was able to work and so the children were able to travel to the city for school. After school, Sakineh and Salimeh sewed clothes to earn extra money for the family. During this time, two of their sisters and one brother married. Their father also got very sick and died of cancer.

Sakineh and Salimeh’s mother made a decision to move and start a new life in Australia. They arrived in Sydney Airport in December 2015. Despite the fact that they knew no English, they were very happy to be in Australia.

Both sisters enrolled in the Adult Migrant English Program at TAFE Illawarra.

“We didn’t understand anything when we came to TAFE but after six months, we can now speak English.”

Salimeh would like to pursue a career in nursing and Sakineh wants to become a doctor.

“I made a promise to my father many years ago that I would study medicine. I hope to go to Wollongong University and become a doctor.”

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