

Hills Gazette

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2013

LESMURDIE



Mahshid Mohammadzadeh enjoyed speaking to the students and sharing her story.

Students hear of refugee's journey

Julian Wright

FEW people would know the trauma and desperation of having to flee their war-torn country in a boat to seek refuge in a foreign land.

Mahshid Mohammadzadeh (23) endured the journey from Iran to Australia and in just her fourth month in Perth, shared it with Mazenod College students at a recent visit.

Ms Mohammadzadeh spoke of her experience, which included leaving her father behind and living in two detention centres, which she described as "tough".

She spent 13 hours on the road travelling to the dock to

board the boat that took another 13 hours to get her to Australian shores with close family members to start a new life.

"I came here with my mum, younger brother, gran and aunty, who is sick; it was a tough journey," she said.

"My father stayed behind in Iran, we are in contact sometimes."

Conditions while she lived for three months in detention centres waiting for a visa were not always the best.

"Living in detention centres was really hard. I was in two; one in Adelaide and one on Christmas Island - that one was not good," she said.

"It has been a huge adjust-

ment, there are so many differences in culture. It will take some time to get used to it."

Ms Mohammadzadeh said she had been learning English, but it was difficult for her mother. "Because my brother and I are younger, it is easier for us to learn, but my mother speaks little English," she said.

It was her first school visit as part of a program to educate students on the plight of refugees.

She said she enjoyed speaking with the boys and sharing her story, but her journey was not over yet. She looks forward to studying or finding employment.