



Media Release



Monday 7 April 2008

GILLARD LAUNCHES NEW TRAINING CENTRE FOR MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Acting Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, MP, in her capacity as the Federal Minister for Education, Employment and Social Inclusion, will this week formally launch the northern suburbs' newest registered training organisation, Spectrum Education & Training (SET). SET has been established by the Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC) as a non-profit social enterprise to primarily provide courses to the area's many migrants and refugees and assist local employers to deal with skills shortages.

SET was set up in response to the identified gap in the marketplace of vocational courses appropriate for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Through the delivery of its services, in particular employment services, to migrant and refugee communities, the SMRC identified a great need for improved methods of both delivering training and assessment. Many of its clients were dropping out of courses because the course did not reflect their skill level or did not provide the support they needed. In its first year, SET aims to initially provide Certificate II & III level training, as well as short courses, to over 200 students, predominantly in the skills shortage areas of Home & Community Care (HACC), Aged care, Hospitality, Children's services, as well as Language, Literacy & Numeracy and Computer training. It has already attracted the interest of local employers. Darebin Council's Home and Community Care staff, many of whom are migrants employed to service the area's ageing migrant population, are currently completing a joint *Certificate III in Aged Care and HACC*, to meet industry requirements.

"Many of our staff who speak English as a second language have not had formal education and often struggle with the language demands and teaching styles of traditional training courses. Being able to train these staff through SET's courses, which are responsive to their learning styles, is terrific for us. They are employed for their life experience, commitment and bilingual skills, and the Certificate gives them good theoretical grounding," said Pam Keeble, Darebin Council's Service Development Team Leader.

SMRC CEO, Stephanie Lagos, saw it as a great fit for SMRC's vision. "SET will help SMRC achieve its vision to help generations of migrants and refugees integrate and reach their full potential and it's also complementary to our employment service. Given that SET was established to promote greater access to life-long education, with a socially inclusive approach, it seemed appropriate to invite Julia Gillard as a Minister with all the intersecting portfolios – education, employment and social inclusion".

Mill Park resident, Hanin Kete, arrived in Australia 7 years ago, leaving Kuwait after the first Gulf War in 1991. Ms Kete really appreciated the 1-1 support she received at SET whilst she undertook the Certificate III in HACC. "I undertook another course at TAFE prior to this. However, as my English was very limited I found the course very hard and the teacher didn't have time to spend with everyone. Whilst my English is much better now, it was great to get 1-on-1 assistance at SET. I learnt a lot about aged care, but also grew in confidence from the class presentations - like I have come out of my shell. I feel ready to apply for jobs and Spectrum can help with this in the same building. At SET, the staff and students provide support, help with homework, interactive learning – not just reading things, but having discussions, watching DVDs and doing role-plays".

Newly appointed SET Centre Manager, Neil Barlow, emphasises that SET is pioneering a new way of doing courses. "Our students will undertake these Literacy courses parallel to their main course. The students are not improving their English in isolation. So, they're not just learning how to ask for directions, but learning, for example in aged care, 'how to ask a client if they would like their tablet now'. Learning of both course material and their English is integrated and vocationally relevant, so they're as job-ready as possible. In essence, SET's courses are designed to prepare our graduates to be job-ready, continue to higher studies or start a traineeship, in skill shortage areas".

DATE & TIME: Thursday 10 April, 10.30-11am

VENUE: SET, Level 1, 1100 Pascoe Vale Rd, Broadmeadows. (Opposite Hume Global Learning Centre. Entrance adjacent to the Office of the Federal Member for Calwell, Maria Vamvakinou, MP.)

CONTACT FOR COURSES: Shalome Knoll, Student Liaison Officer, 9301 7400 or check out Courses on SET's website – www.spectrumvic.org.au

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www.spectrumvic.org.au