



Media Release

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STEPHANIE LAGOS STEPS DOWN AS SPECTRUM CEO

After twelve years as CEO at Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC), Stephanie Lagos will be stepping down from her role as CEO after pioneering and leading many changes, at a time of much change in the sector and a difficult political climate for migrants and refugees. Ms Lagos has been with the organisation for fourteen years, initially joining the organisation in 1994 as its Settlement Co-ordinator and becoming CEO in 1996 and overseeing many name changes and a growth that has seen its services expand beyond northern metropolitan Melbourne.

“It’s been a sincere honour to have been Spectrum’s CEO. However, after much contemplation about my career interests and the need to establish generational succession at SMRC, it is time for my work to draw to a close. During my time, I have enjoyed many wonderful relationships with people from all tiers of government, multiple NGOs, and volunteer community groups, who all share Spectrum’s goal of generations of migrants and refugees reaching their full potential. I have deeply appreciated their dedication, commitment and collaboration as we have tried to improve the lives and opportunities of migrants. I believe that it is our joint efforts in settling these arrivals that has contributed to the northern suburbs’ reputation as the region of choice for many newcomers.

“I am really proud of my joint achievement, together with the wonderful past and present staff and Board Members, of building this organisation from a small community centre to a multi-site, multi-service organisation that has benefitted many generations of migrants and refugees – expanding from just a settlement service provider to services in whole of life services - youth services, family relationships, aged care, employment service and our two new social enterprises offering training and an immigration legal advice. I want to thank everyone for their assistance and support – it has been a truly team effort and I will leave with many positive experiences and memories. I have full confidence that Spectrum will remain a cutting edge leader in its work with migrant and refugee communities”, said Ms Lagos.

“Having been a migrant myself, I have great empathy and admiration for the clients we have worked with. In recent years, some refugee groups have endured a very difficult political climate, but I am confident in their resilience and Spectrum will continue to advocate with and for them to ensure that they feel empowered and part of Australian society. We cannot have social inclusion when migrants feel left out and services aren’t responsive to their needs. Whilst we have pioneered a number of initiatives in increasing the educational and employment opportunities for migrants, I am still troubled about the limited opportunities for skilled migrants”, said Ms Lagos.

The Chair of SMRC’s Board of Management, John Unger, paid tribute to Stephanie’s leadership and legacy, which has seen Ms Lagos oversee the growth of the organisation from 10 to just over 215 employees since 1996.

“We thank Stephanie for all her efforts and congratulate her on her decision to pursue new interests. She will be missed, but deserves to be able to put her significant knowledge and skills to practice in other fields. She will be a great loss, however her values around innovative, client-centred services, building on the innate strengths of people, will remain a hallmark of Spectrum’s approach. She will be missed by staff, clients and stakeholders alike – a local MP once remarked that she is a local institution and many would agree. Stephanie has assisted SMRC to go from being one group to a one-stop shop - her foresight has ensured the SMRC’s viability as a financially sustainable and relevant service. She has led partnerships with a range of organisations and her ability to think outside the square, pioneer different ways of doing things, be responsive to trends as well as client needs, has ensured the SMRC is a leader with its work with migrant and refugee communities”, said Mr Unger.

Ms Lagos will be ending her tenure on the 31st August, 2008. The recruitment process will occur during this time and in the interim between her departure and the appointment of a new CEO, the current Finance & Corporate Services Manager, Rosemary Kelada, will be Acting CEO. Further details about an event to provide an opportunity for stakeholders and members of the community to honour the contribution of Ms Lagos will be made known soon.