



Media Release

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SENIORS CRAFT EXHIBITION FOR MACEDONIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC) and Macedonian Planned Activity Group (PAG) have eagerly drawn on traditional Macedonian history and culture for an exhibition being launched on **Monday 8 September** at the **Thomastown Library** to celebrate Macedonian Independence Day.

The Exhibition will feature craft, patterns and colours to create tapestries, blankets, dolls clothing, vases and frames. Many of the SMRC and Macedonian PAG have a wealth of knowledge and experiences that they wanted to use and pass onto the younger generations who will have the opportunity to share with them the crafts created. Mostly arrived in Australia post World War II, with very limited English and sometimes lacking literacy skills in their native language, this dedicated group of Macedonian seniors have an average age of 80.

“This program is a great way for the ageing Macedonian to share the wealth of knowledge of a different time and place. But it is also an important way for them to feel part of the community, to feel welcomed and appreciated, in a warm and welcoming environment with activities that are culturally appropriate and that boost their self esteem, without taking them out of their comfort zone” said **Ms Jagoda Koteska**, Co-ordinator of SMRC and Macedonian PAG.

Previous activities undertaken by the group include the re-enhancement and the filming of a typical Macedonian wedding, according to traditions, where the bride and the groom were played by over 70s. The video, created and produced by Ms Koteska, will be available at the exhibition.

SMRC and Macedonian PAG is a State Government-funded program of weekly activities that include crafts, English language lessons with bilingual staff, gentle exercise classes, recreational activities around Melbourne.

Cultural appropriateness is guaranteed by the employment of ethnic specific staff. “All PAG activities are ethnic specific, because the program recognises the importance, especially for the elderly, to have someone who knows how to talk, how to greet, according to their tradition”, explained **Ms Koteska**.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

EVENT: Exhibition opening: Crafts by senior Macedonians for Macedonian Independence Day

DATE & TIME: Monday 8 September 2008, 10am-12pm

VENUE: Thomastown Library, 52 Main Street, Thomastown 3074

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