



# Media Release

31 October 2008

## ASSYRIAN CHALDEAN WOMEN FIGHT CANCER - CALLING IT BY ITS NAME

Assyrian Chaldean women will defeat cultural taboos that want people to refer to cancer as *“the other thing”*, when, on **November 10**, they talk openly about cancer in a forum organised by Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC) and the Cancer Council of Victoria. The DVD *The Hope of Survivors*, with the testimony of five Assyrian Chaldean women who have survived cancer, will be also presented during the forum.

**Edwina Dinkha**, SMRC’s **Settlement Consultant**, was surprised at the number of Assyrian Chaldean women who had someone in the family affected by cancer. “I facilitate the group of Assyrian Chaldean women twice a week, and I realised that many women had been diagnosed with cancer, or had someone in their family who had been affected. This is a very young community”, said **Ms Dinkha**, “they need information but they also need encouragement to talk openly about it. This is the first time that Assyrian Chaldean women will meet to talk about this illness openly. When they talk to each other about someone affected, they never mention the C-word, they always say *“the other thing”*. So, it is really important to break the taboo, and this forum presents a great opportunity to learn about the steps that everyone can take for living a better, healthier and longer life”, explained **Ms Dinkha**.

During the forum, participants will also see *The Hope of the Survivors*, a DVD created by Ms Dinkha as part of her settlement work, containing the testimony of five Assyrian Chaldean women of different ages. “We met and I asked them three simple questions: tell me about yourself, tell me how you found out, and tell me what advice you can give to other women watching this DVD”, explained **Ms Dinkha**. “The aim of the DVD is to help other women cope with their diagnosis and let them know they are not alone out there. For those that can’t make the forum, I encourage them to visit our website where they’ll be able to download the DVD very soon”.

The forum, run entirely in the Assyrian Chaldean language with the assistance of interpreters, is open to women of all ages and aims to raise awareness about the ways in which prevention and early detection can reduce the risk of cancer. Participants will be able to get the advice from experts, as well as meet other women who are affected or who have someone suffering from cancer in their family. Guest speakers will be from the Cancer Council of Victoria, BreastScreen Victoria and from the Moreland Community Health Service.

“This is an important part of our role”, said **Settlement & Family Services Manager, Sonia Vignjevic** “in raising awareness of government programs and services available to newly arrived migrants and refugees. As such a service does not exist in their home country of Iraq, some are unaware that Australia has a free breast screening program, counselling support and resources”.

The forum for Assyrian Chaldean women is a free event but registration is required. To register, call Edwina Dinkha at SMRC on 9384 7902.

### **EVENT DETAILS:**

**EVENT:** Workshop for Assyrian Chaldean women ó Fighting cancer by calling it by its name

**DATE & TIME:** Monday 10 November 2008, from 9.00am to 2.30pm

**VENUE:** St Mary’s Orthodox Church, 56-58 Kyabram Street, Coolaroo

**PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:** A photo opportunity can be arranged

**DVD** in Assyrian Chaldean will be soon available to download from [www.spectrumvic.org.au](http://www.spectrumvic.org.au)

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[www.spectrumvic.org.au](http://www.spectrumvic.org.au)