



Media Release

13 February 2009

DAREBIN MAYOR TO CELEBRATE MULTICULTURAL AGED CARE GRADUATES

In taking a lead role in diversifying the aged care workforce to ensure that older migrants in the northern regions can receive culturally and linguistically appropriate home support, Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC) is proud to announce that Councillor Diana Asmar, City of Darebin Mayor, will present 16 bilingual home support workers with their certificates at the graduation ceremony on **Thursday 19th February**.

“In 2011, one in two people aged over 65 will speak a language other than English in Melbourne’s northern metro region,” explained **SMRC’s Aged and Disability Special Projects Coordinator Ms Nikki Marshall**, “this is why the language and cultural background of home support workers is such an important asset, ensuring a cultural matching between care recipients and support workers.”

“Prior to this, I hadn’t worked for 10 years while looking after my family,” said **SMRC Multicultural Home Support Worker and graduate Ms Lily Iurato**, “and I didn’t know I was capable of looking after older people. Now I am surprised by my ability to do this job. When Mum had some falls a number of years ago, there was a stirring in my heart to do this work and now I feel like I have got the heart to help older people, to help them live the way they want to, and not to tell them what to do.”

The graduates, which speak Italian (including several dialects), Greek, Macedonian, Spanish, Croatian and Samoan (languages representative of major cultural backgrounds of the aged living in northern suburbs), have completed the 10 month long course combined *Certificate III Home and Community Care* and *Certificate III Aged Care*, as part of a new and innovative training partnership, bringing together home support workers from Darebin Council and SMRC for first time.

“Darebin originally approached SMRC because they knew of our innovative experience in developing flexible training programs, and now, with our own RTO, Spectrum Education & Training (SET), we are in the position to tailor to the needs of our particular group of workers coming from a migrant background. The training program has been specifically designed to build on workers’ experiences and skills in caring for older people and to be accessible to workers who may have limited formal education and for whom English is second language, providing much needed support to older people who come from diverse cultural backgrounds,” explained **Ms Marshall**.

The new graduates will provide in home support to older people in the City of Darebin and in northern metro Melbourne, including Cities of Whittlesea, Hume, Banyule, Yarra, Moreland and Nillumbik.

EVENT DETAILS:

EVENT: *Graduation Ceremony*

DATE & TIME: Thursday 19 February 2009, 6pm

VENUE: Darebin Council Chambers, 350 High Street, Preston (corner Gower and High Street)

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: Photo opportunity can be arranged prior or on the night

Media Contact: Cristina Marras 0429 707 547

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