



Media Release

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CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES: SPECTRUM'S WORKSHOP FOR ARAB YOUTH

To empower Arab youth to challenge community stereotypes, Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC) is facilitating the workshop *Arab Identity & Wellbeing* for youth in the northern suburbs, on **Friday 27th February 2009**.

"A series of focus groups and interviews with Arab young people indicated that identity issues and prevailing negative stereotypes were a source of psychological distress," explained **Mr Tymur Hussein**, SMRC Program Coordinator. "Arab young people's identity has become increasingly politicised since the tragic events of 9/11 and the subsequent War on Terror and Second Gulf War. Events at home, such as the Cronulla Riots and comments made by Sheikh Taj El-Din Hamid Hilaly in 2006 triggered debates within the general community of the perceived compatibility of Australian and Arabic culture. This undoubtedly impacts on the identity development and wellbeing of Arab-Australian youth. The aim of this workshop is to empower young Arab people to reflect upon wisdom and practice within Arabic culture and how it can favourably impact on their life in Australia," said **Mr Hussein**.

The workshop leads on from the *Raising Mental Health Awareness in the Arabic Community* workshop held by SMRC last year. "An employee of the SMRC met with a community member who was grief stricken as a young man from his community group just committed suicide. The community leader informed that he knew the young man was depressed but was not sure how to respond, and asked SMRC whether some type of training could be conducted," explained **Mr Hussein**.

The workshop *Arab Identity & Wellbeing*, aiming to tap into Arab young people and Arab young adults living in the Whittlesea, Darebin and Moreland municipalities (although all are welcome), will provide an opportunity for young Arab people to explore:

- Elements of their identity;
- What role ethnic and Australian culture play in constructing who they are;
- Influence of global events on personal identity;
- What this means on a day-to-day basis.

Arab Identity & Wellbeing is a free event but registration is required. The afternoon will include information sessions, activities, guest speakers, and prizes. Dinner is provided. To register, call Tymur Hussein on 0403 526 275 or email tymurh@spectrumvic.org.au.

EVENT DETAILS:

EVENT: *Arab Identity & Wellbeing* – youth workshop on Arab identity

DATE & TIME: Friday 27 February 2009, 4.00-8.00pm

VENUE: Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre, 251 High Street, Preston

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: A photo opportunity can be arranged

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