



Friday 13 March 2009

# Media Release

## **SPECTRUM'S CHOIR TO CELEBRATE HARMONY DAY IN HARMONY WITH JEWISH AID AUSTRALIA**

Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC)'s Multicultural Choir of senior citizens will unite voices with Jewish Aid Australia, as a part of the interfaith and multicultural celebration of Harmony Day on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

"Jewish Aid Australia contacted us after reading an article published on *The Age* last Christmas, when the choir visited several nursing homes to cheer up residents singing Christmas carols," explained **Spectrum's Aged and Disability Services Manager, Nirmala Abraham**, about the artistic partnership with Jewish Aid Australia, "and we are delighted to be part of this multicultural celebration."

With the eldest member aged 82 and an average age of 60, the choir was created in 2006 by Ms **Abraham** as a way to engage elderly people with an activity that makes them feel confident and valued. "Singing during Harmony Day fits perfectly with SMRC's mission of bringing cultures together and sharing different stories," said **Ms Abraham**.

The 45 member multicultural choir is formed by elderly community members from nationalities that include Assyrian Chaldean, Chinese and Vietnamese. The choir meet for rehearsal once a month and cover a repertoire that includes traditional songs in several languages, church hymns, as well as Australia's favourites like *Waltzing Matilda*. Choir Conductor, **Mr John Edgar**, accompanies the choir with the organ, guitar and drums.

"The elderly participants love coming together to sing and share in this great cultural exchange through singing. The choir gives these elderly participants an identity of their own and they really look forward to participating," said **Ms Abraham**, "it is their moment of stardom and I hope we will be able to continue operating this innovative successful community building model, which operates on a voluntary basis," added **Ms Abraham**.

"The choir has become for them a very important way to socialise," explains **Shemiran Gevergizyan, Choir Co-ordinator**, "coming from different countries, and with limited English knowledge, it is sometimes difficult to talk with one another. But they have fun and enjoy each other's company. And watching them singing, you feel their joy and happiness!"

### **EVENT DETAILS & PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:**

**EVENT:** Multicultural Choir of senior citizens to sing during Harmony Day event

**DATE & TIME:** Sunday 15 March between 12.30pm and 1.30pm.

**VENUE:** Alma Park, between Alma Road and Dandenong Road, East St Kilda

**PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:** A photo opportunity can be arranged prior to the event

**Media Contact:** Cristina Marras 0429 707 547

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