



Media Release

Friday, 18 September 2009

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: DEMENTIA AWARENESS FOR ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Talking about food will be used as a memory trigger for migrants suffering from dementia, as part of *The Tastes to Remember* event, which aims to create **CALD Partnership Dementia Working Group**, led by the **North West CALD Partnership** and involving **Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC)** and many other providers.

“Food is a very important part of everyone’s cultural identity. Coming together talking about food, also gives the opportunity to provide information to community members,” said **Ms Nirmala Abraham, SMRC Aged & Disability Services Manager**. “In their countries of origin, many meet either in a family member’s house, a market or a social event where valuable information is shared and passed around and so *The Tastes to Remember* is an opportunity to capture a model that worked back home to provide valuable information to the communities targeted,” said Ms Abraham.

The event, at its third year, aims to engage several migrant communities in a relaxed environment, to raise awareness about the changes to memory associated with dementia and about the services available to assist the communities.

“Support is available but research shows that people from CALD communities are still accessing support services at a lower rate than the general population. This is why it is so important that we create awareness and support, because there is the opportunity to learn from each other via peer support,” said **Ms Eva Wakim, North West CALD Partnership Chairperson**.

A recent report by Alzheimer’s Australia, *Dementia Prevalence and Incidence among Australians who do not speak English at home*, indicates that people from CALD communities are still accessing support services at a lower rate than the general community. The reasons identified as barriers include:

- Language barriers impeding on the access of services. And further to this many members of CALD communities are not familiar with the concept of community support and are not aware that such support is available or have difficulty navigating it.
- Cultural expectation that family and friends will assist solely with care needs.
- CALD communities can have differing perceptions of illness – in this case, Dementia and memory loss.

With this year’s *The Tastes to Remember*, the North West CALD Partnership Dementia Working Group, formed by Alzheimer’s Australia, ADEC, Annecto, Uniting Aged Care, SMRC, Victorian Arabic Social Service, Australian Croatian Community Service and Maltese Community Council of Victoria, will engage the Chinese, Somali, Croatian, Maltese and Assyrian Caldean communities.

“We want both the elderly and their carers to gather together to share ideas and experiences about food, and how it can help triggering memories from the past,” said **Ms Sarah Kang-Scott, Multicultural Partnership Coordinator**. On the day, participants from different communities will share their stories and will have access to translated information about dementia, including services available for both patients and their carers.

Event Details:

EVENT: The Tastes to Remember

DATE & TIME: Thursday 24 September 2009, from 10.00am to 2.00pm

VENUE: Hume Global Learning Centre, 1093 Pascoe Vale Rd, Broadmeadows

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