



# Media Release

19 January 2010

## SPECTRUM'S MULTICULTURAL CHOIR SINGS IN AUSTRALIA DAY EVENT

Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC)'s Multicultural Choir of senior citizens will cheer up the elderly residents of the St. Bernadette's Aged Care Facility, Sunshine North, as a part of the Australia Day Celebrations this Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010.

"It is great to have been invited to sing in this culturally diverse facility," said **Ms Shemiran Gevergizyan, Choir Co-ordinator**, "and it is great that the members of the choir get to bring joy to people who might be their same age, and sometimes even younger. Singing for Australia Day fits perfectly with SMRC's mission of bringing cultures together and sharing different stories," said **Ms Gevergizyan**.

With the eldest member aged 83 and an average age of 60, the choir was created by Spectrum in 2006 as a way to engage elderly people with an activity that makes them feel confident and valued. The 45 members of the choir, with nationalities that include Assyrian Chaldean, Chinese, Vietnamese and Filipino, meet for rehearsal once a month. The choir has a repertoire that includes church hymns, traditional songs in several languages, as well as Australia's favourites like *Waltzing Matilda* and a tribute to the late Michael Jackson, *The Earth Song*. Choir Conductor, Mr Rolando Limun, 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 Gevergizyan**, "it is their moment of stardom, and we have recently received quite an interest from the media, including *The Age* and *3RRR* radio. I hope we will be able to continue operating this innovative and successful community building model, which operates on a voluntary basis," added **Ms Gevergizyan**.

"The choir has become for them a very important way to socialise," explains **Spectrum's Aged and Disability Services Manager, Nirmala Abraham**, "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!"

"We are a multicultural and diverse facility" explained **St. Bernadette's Aged Care Facility Manager, Ms Penny Iddon**, "as we have residents from different cultural backgrounds such as Maltese, Italians, Polish, Filipino, Irish, Indians, Spanish. We have special events for every month and also cultural day celebrations where we acknowledge different events for a particular culture. This is in celebration of Australia Day and we are delighted to be associated with Spectrum's Multicultural Choir for this truly multicultural celebration."

### Photo Opportunity can be arranged.

**DATE & TIME:** Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2 pm  
**VENUE:** St. Bernadette's Aged Care Facility  
17 Park Drive, Sunshine North

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

[communications@spectrumvic.org.au](mailto:communications@spectrumvic.org.au) – [www.spectrumvic.org.au](http://www.spectrumvic.org.au)