



MEDIA RELEASE – 92.1 FM
Monday, 17.12.07 : 1-2 pm

“Migrant Resource Centre (Sth) Inc – Update”
Interview outline with Vikki Miteff

1) Vikki : I would like to introduce Simon Fountain our second MRC guest for today. Simon is the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care Project Officer and he would like to start off his interview with a request:

Simon: Thank you Vikki. As part of my program I visit aged care homes and meet migrant residents who live in these homes. As the listeners know the majority of people who have migrated to Australia worked hard to buy and own their house. They prefer to live in that home until there is no option for some to go into residential care. Many of the people who live in nursing homes are very frail and without traditional family support.

I would ask the 92.1 FM audience who have a family friend or someone you know in an aged care home to consider visiting them in this Christmas and New Year period. They may have only been a neighbor or a friend of your parents. But the simple act of taking time away from your shopping and socializing to visit a friend or elder is a great thing to do.

Many of these residents are confined to the smaller world of their nursing home environment. For some of these people we know Christmas can be a sad time. If you feel unwell and unable to enjoy the food and drink most of us enjoy it is not a fun experience. Or if you have few family and friends this time can be characterised by a feeling of loss and loneliness.

If you are able to come and press someone's hand, speak their language, talk and laugh about old times, bring some traditional food for that person to enjoy or even play some traditional music then their Christmas will be a happier one. I would like to encourage anyone who would be interested in being a community cultural representative and regularly visit people in aged care homes who come from different cultures please call the Migrant Resource Centre on 6234 9411 and ask or leave a message for Suzanne.

This request is supported by the CD that I have brought in to play today called "The Fig Tree". It is a musical companion to the Melbourne author and story teller Arnold Zable's book of the same name. The Fig Tree celebrates the journeys of Australian migrants and refugees including his and his wife's ancestors who came from Eastern Europe and the Greek Islands. Arnold believes everyone has a story to tell and it is the telling and receiving of these stories that makes us human. He says: "We are, in Australia a land of immigrants and indigenous people, a new world with an ancient past, a land of many melodies"

I would now like to play a track from The Fig Tree called "Song of Songs" sung by Maria Farantouri (track 2)

2) Vikki: Now Simon I believe you are going to remind our listeners of some of the secrets to healthy and independent ageing ?

Simon: Yes Vikki it is worth repeating..... that a little bit of home help as early as possible will see you stay healthier and living in your own home longer. We admire the dignity and independence our client's repeatedly show who say they don't need help. This of course is entirely their choice but all the research and our experience shows that people should be open to receiving a little help earlier than they think they need it. And apart from the practical help of gardening, organising doctors appointments, house repairs and cleaning of gutters you become part of the health system when you start to receive HACC services.....even if it joining in and enjoying a part of a day at a Day Centre. The Migrant resource Centre has 3 Day Centres for Chinese, German and a Multicultural Day Centre on Fridays. In this way people at the MRC and other services get to know you and can discuss what you need when the time comes. It is all about using services that you have paid for many times over with your taxes.

Vikki: What is the second idea you want to highlight today ?

Simon: The next idea to is to actively plan for your older age. By discussing and planning with your partners, children, friends and accountants/solicitors while you are still healthy will give you more choices, better services and peace of mind.

Important planning steps include:

Financial and family planningmost of us will need money to live on as well having our own home, money to pay for home services. or a plan to pay for residential care Remember to update your will.

Consider appointing a Power of Attorney or an enduring Power of Attorney.

Make sure you are receiving all the Government services and discounts you are entitled to ?

If you plan to consider residential living you will need to consider:

Not to leave it to the last minute.....due to the long waiting lists you may not get your first choice and may be living away from family and friends

To shop around and visit nursing homes with someone who can explain the costs. Ask your own questions and see what the environment looks like.

Seek advice from both Centrelink and independent financial adviser on the value of your home and how you would protect your assets and finance the move.

Consult a lawyer with retirement village/aged care experience.

As part of that process you can ring the Residential Respite Booking Service on: 1800 059 059 and book a tour of a nursing home. This service can provide fact sheets, assist with transport and organise residential respite as well.

Or you can ring the Migrant Resource Centre on: 6234 9411 if you or your communities would like to learn more about available aged care services. We recognize it can be a very confusing system (particularly if you don't have the internet at home) so we are happy to follow up any questions you have. My PICAC program is happy to meet with ethnic organizations and communities and provide information sessions, forums and networking opportunities free of charge.

I feel a song coming on Vikki.....

Vikki: The next song chosen from The Fig Tree CD is called "Anytime the Wind Can Change" sung by Kavisha Mazzella (track 5)

3) Vikki: I believe the last topic you would like to discuss today Simon is the popularity of the MRC PICAC programs multicultural events program for 2007 and what to expect for 2008 ?

Simon: Yes the appeal of music is universal. It reaches people at a gut level and is effective at nurturing a greater tolerance and understanding of the migrant experience. Most other residents and staff who attend these concerts are moved by the energy and joy of the music. I have inherited the initiative of the Multicultural Afternoon Teas, German Afternoon Tea, Italian Choir, Chinese Tea Club and Polish Spotkanie & Mass. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both the German and Italian choirs and all the performers who so generously gave up their time this year to be involved with the PICAC program. It has been a great privilege to work & learn from you.

The Multicultural Afternoon teas are held monthly at different aged care homes that have migrant residents. Guests from other homes and community members can attend. This year's performers included the German & Italian choirs, a Klezma duo who played gypsy music, A harpist and a group playing old fashioned English, Latin & German songs. Next year we have more of the same with a special Polish Concert and an accomplished Chinese luteist providing entertainment

The German Afternoon teas will be held bi-monthly. The German Choir and the other performers will perform in German and English and there are always delicious cakes and biscuits.

The Italian Choir has another full schedule for 2008. One of the alarming developments from this year was an invitation for me to sing with the choir. Interestingly at our last concert a younger resident was so enthused by the performance he has requested to sing with the choir next year.

The Chinese Tea Club will be held four times next year. It will feature performances from school children and typical Chinese dim sum and teas.

There are 3 Polish Spotkanie or Polish Lunches next year that follow Catholic Mass. A traditional Polish meal is served and there is normally a Polish sing along or seasonal theme facilitated by the Polish Sisters from the Polish Welfare Office

If anyone would like to learn more about these events they can ring the MRC on: 6234 9411 and speak to reception. Or alternatively if you are a performer or musician from a migrant background who would like to volunteer your time we would love to hear from you.

Another interesting aspect of this year's program has been the decision to see if both choirs can record a CD of their songs. If any listener has any links to the recording industry we would like you to contact us.

Well Vikki that wraps up my gig.....thank you very much for inviting us back to 92.1 FM..... it has been fun.....

Vicki: The last song from Simon's CD is called Doyna & Freylekhs performed by Klezmania (track 16)

Vicki: Cedric, I know that there is a lot of good work going on can you please give a quick summary of the highlights of the year from your perspective.

Cedric: Thank you Vikki. There is much to reflect on and be thankful for in 2007.

First of all I started at the MRC on Tuesday April 2nd, 2007. Being superstitious the Board kindly agreed to change my start date of Monday 1st April (April Fools day) to Tuesday.

The one thing that you will notice about the MRC, is that it is an organization of very talented individuals whose passion to serve our community is very evident by the interactions that we have with our clients across a multiplicity of program areas. My thanks to all my staff and volunteers, without whose dedication and loyalty we would not have been able to produce such a wonderful community service in 2007.

I have progressively learned about my organizations capability and the talents of our staff and volunteers throughout 2007. I have been both humbled and enlightened by my experiences that has led to our 41% growth in funding. Vikki, I'm pleased to announce that since April 2007 the MRC was successful in 71% of its funding applications. This means that we have won more than 2 in every 3 funding submissions that we have applied for – what a fantastic achievement !! This is something that all the staff and volunteers should be very proud of. This now means that we have begun to create some of the critical mass to be not so single point sensitive when it comes to funding. This often poses challenges to many community organizations.

Some of the larger projects that have commenced as a result of this additional funding include:-

- Statewide Suicide Prevention Project for CALD communities in Tasmania that has enable us to create a statewide presence in the Phoenix Centre – thanks to Dept of Health and Ageing
- 7 additional aged care packages with associated infrastructure grants in the Clarence region for our Frail and Aged Program area courtesy of the Department of Health and Ageing
- Continuation of the FACSIA program in the Phoenix Centre for a period of 18 months
- Expansion of the Community Partners Program to give a statewide presence – Suzanne Feike talked about this a few weeks ago on your program Vicki
- Expansion of our Settlement Services Program by developing emergency management procedures with Emergency Management Australia and key partners such as Tas Police, Tas Fire, State Emergency Services, Department of Health and Human Services

Having secured new funding at such a rate means that we also need to focus on delivering against our new contractual commitments. To that end, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Kiros Zegeye to the Migrant Resource Centre Leadership team as Process Strategy and Development Officer. Part of Kiros's new role will be assisting the Leadership team in developing more comprehensive service and project management methodologies so that we can improve our service offerings and enhance our client outcomes. Kiros will also retain his position reporting into Anne Hamilton in the Settlement Grants program.

I am also pleased to announce that because of our growth, we are now in a position to offer our staff more interesting career paths. As an example there have been a total of four internal appointments from our existing staff base to new positions in the last few months. This is a fantastic story to tell Vikki as the Leadership decided that people are one of the strategic pillars of our organization.

In essence 2007 has been a significant period of growth for the MRC by leveraging our existing staff capabilities. I think most of the Leadership team and in fact the staff feel much more empowered to make a difference. I actively encourage the staff to conceptualise, initiate and develop new capabilities for our organization where we see a need for, or a gap in existing services. This has certainly been a key factor in our funding success.

Music Break – Natalie Gauci – Australian Idol

Vicki: Cedric, I attended the Migrant Resource Centre Volunteer end of year thank you lunch recently. Can you tell me more about the wonderful community groups that support the MRC

Cedric: Thank you Vikki. I would like to share a quote with you by Winston Churchill that reads as follows:-

“We make a living by what we do, but make a life by what we give”

I would sincerely like to thank the volunteers of the MRC (in excess of 80 volunteers) that so freely give of themselves to make life better for our clients. On November 26th, we had the great pleasure of thanking our volunteers where we served in excess of 55 meals and distributed thank you gifts to our volunteers.

Relative to other industry volunteering services the MRC is one of the few organizations where volunteers stay long term, many usually leaving for employment, or to live interstate or overseas.

We are heartened by the fact that so many volunteers come to us by word of mouth and recommendation in service of our migrant community groups and in particular our humanitarian entrants

Useful Snippets on Tasmanian volunteering Landscape

- Of Tasmanian aged 15 years or over 20.1% had spent time doing unpaid voluntary work
- Greater Hobart represented 48.8% of all Tasmanian volunteers
- Main age group of volunteers is between 35-64 years representing 60% of volunteer population
- 83.1% of Tasmanian volunteers stated Australia as their country of Birth
- Migrant groups volunteer proportionally more than those born in Australia
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Useful Snippets on MRC volunteering Landscape

- Volunteers recognized at Hobart City Council:-
- Tim Mangan – befrienders (Phoenix)
- Alison Borojani – HACC
- Top Gear – Barry Hall and Frank Scarf
- MCot Angels in particular Vikki Mittef for their work in supporting our Humanitarian Entrants and Refugees
- Volunteers recognized at Glenorchy City Council
- German Choir
- Staff volunteering – in excess of 250 hours for Refugee Week celebrations and in excess of 100 hours to put on this fine spread
- Xmas Pageant – Award for Best Community Group.....made possible by volunteers and community groups
- Vikki, it is also important to note that the Migrant Resource Centre operates on a volunteer Board of Management. My special thanks to the Board Members, Otto de Vries, Barbra Blomberg, Paul Patel, Maureen Rudge, Sajini Sumar, Alison Burrows Cheng, Michele Forsberg, Lyn Andersch and Martin Modinger for their

continued support of our organization. The new Board of Management was ratified in our Annual General meeting on Thursday October 18th

Vicki: Cedric, apart from the Volunteers who have contributed to your success in 2007 are there any other community groups or service providers that you would like to thank?

Cedric: Thank you Vikki. This is always a tricky question – because there are often many people to thank and ultimately someone gets left out. I will try to mention as many people as possible but at the risk of forgetting anyone – please know that the Migrant Resource Centre has valued your support in 2007 and look forward to your continued support in 2008.

Firstly I would like to thank our funding Agencies:-

- Department of Immigration and Citizenship – in particular the Tasmanian Doug Walker's Team of Barnaby, Matt, David, Frances, Mary and their support staff
- Department of Health and Ageing – in particular the Tasmanian teams of Helen Reid and her team including Angela, Tracey Currie and her team
- Department of Health and Human Services – Janet Carty and her team
- Department of Premier and Cabinet – in particular Minister Michelle O'Byrne Marguerite Scott, Janet Ong and their support staff
- Rotary Clubs of Hobart – event sponsorship

Secondly I would like to thank associated service providers, associated government organisations and local councils

- Centacare – in particular Georgina McLagan and her team
- Colony 47 – Therese Taylor and her team
- Relationships Australia – In particular Yabbo Thompson and Peter Callander
- Anglicare – Chris Jones and his team
- Independent Health Care Services - Matthew Vickers and the 23 health care workers
- Hobart City Council – Lord Mayor Rob Valentine, Eva Ruzicka, Penny Saile and her team
- Glenorchy City Council in particular Adriana Taylor, Narelle Calphy and their support teams
- Red Cross – Xmas care packages and tracing services
- Clarence City Council – Julie Andersson
- Kingborough Council – Sue Wiley and Julie Hall
- Esset Training
- Aged Care Assessment team of DHHS
- Department of Infrastructure Energy and Resources
- Motor Accident Insurance Board

- Country Womens Association – Shirley Morrisby
- Tafe Tasmania – in particular David Taggart
- Steps Employment – in particular Phil Leed
- Employment Plus – in particular Tracey Milbourne
- Tasmania Police – in particular Inspector Craig Waterhouse and his band of merry Tasmanian multicultural liaison officers

Community Groups:-

Vicky – I would also like to thank all of the ethnic community groups that have contributed to our wonderful year. My special thanks to

- International Wall of Friendship Committee
- Multicultural Council of Tasmania – in particular Davor and Marcella Perovic
- MCOT knitting angels
- Glenorchy Cultural Diversity Committee
- Mental Health Council of Tasmania – Cedric elected as a Board Member – special congratulations to Michelle Swallow the new CEO
- 92.1 FM – particularly your program Vikki for enabling us to represent our community groups and keep them informed

Individuals:-

- Lisa Singh – Labour Member for Denison who has actively patronized MRC events

Vikki, I was privileged to observe the coming together of the African Community groups at the MRC to deliver a positive message in light of the Kevin Andrew's comments. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of the teams and support organizations that assisted with this. We look forward to the New Year where we hope this will be formalized such that we will have one united African Community voice. This will assist us in lobbying for better services and infrastructure for Tasmania.

For all of you that have helped us in 2007 – we express our sincere thanks and look forward to your continued support in 2008.