

Attention: COS, news, social affairs, health & community

MEDIA RELEASE

28th April, 2006

Young Leaders of Today

Stronger Voice for School Students from Migrant & Refugee Backgrounds

The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI), in partnership with the Australian Red Cross, is training thirty young people from diverse cultural backgrounds to have a stronger voice in the local community.

The *Young Leaders of Today* program provides leadership skills to year ten students from five schools from the City of Greater Dandenong. The program equips participants with leadership skills that are transferable to their school lives and within their own communities. The year ten students who have been nominated by their school will participate in the program from Monday the 1st to Friday the 5th of May 2006.

As a statewide community organisation, CMYI aims to promote social harmony through inclusiveness and the provision of real choices and opportunities for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The partnership with the Australian Red Cross has been formed to encourage the young people to become more active in their local communities. The Australian Red Cross through programs like this aims to enhance the capacity of the young people to make a substantial contribution to society.

"This program has developed out of a recognition that migrant and refugee young people endure a range of experiences that place them at a distinct disadvantage compared to other Victorian young people," says CMYI Director Carmel Guerra.

"Our program shows that when you encourage leadership and develop skills within an environment that specifically caters for their needs and draws on their life experience, migrant and refugee young people flourish," says Ms Guerra.

Commencing as a pilot program in 2001 *Young Leaders of Today* has been a great success with programs delivered on 10 occasions to 270 young people from 38 schools situated in 14 local government areas across metropolitan, rural and regional Victoria.

"This course could change the way you look at the world and your self-confidence you learn new things, meet people and have fun it was an amazing experience I'll never forget I now want to follow my dreams no matter what"

Student quotes from Young Leaders of Today program

What: Graduation from Young Leaders of Today Program
Who: Year ten students from five schools from the City of Greater Dandenong
Where: City of Greater Dandenong Council Chambers, 39 Clow Street, Dandenong
When: Friday 5th May at 2.30pm

Students will meet with local service providers to discuss getting involved in community projects after the program. They will also meet with their local City Council to find out more about how young people can be involved locally.

Note: The young people will be available for photographs and interviews.

Media: Contact CMYI media advisor Matt Clear of [initi8 communications](http://initi8communications.com) on 03 9755 3252 or 0403 229 094 or matt@initi8.net.au