



the women's  
the royal women's hospital

## Media Release

**5 February 2010**

### **Action on Female Genital Mutilation**

The Royal Women's Hospital is supporting International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) tomorrow, Saturday, 6 February.

The hospital supports women who have experienced FGM, through its Family and Reproductive Rights Education Program (FARREP).

FARREP workers at the Women's provide cultural support and advocacy to women and their families affected by FGM.

The Manager of FARREP, Helen Makregiorgos, said the Women's has a strong commitment to working with women from a range of cultural backgrounds.

"Women from countries where FGM has been practiced have been attending the hospital for many years," she said.

"We offer a range of clinical services as well as information about FGM for patients, their families and health professionals."

Each year, FARREP sees about 1500 women from FGM-affected communities. About half those women have experienced FGM in some form.

Many of these women require a surgical procedure called de-infibulation, which is provided at the Women's, before they can give birth.

FARREP worker Zeinab Mohamud said that while FGM, or female cutting, is illegal in Australia it is important that the practice is not 'demonised' by the broader community.

"When we explain to the women and their families that FGM is an outdated, cultural practice and not a religious or medical necessity, they understand that it is something they do not need to perpetuate in future generations."

Ms Makregiorgos said the Women's wants to increase understanding of the historical and cultural significance of FGM, and its prevalence world-wide. "We want to work with communities towards the elimination of the practice."

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*For more information please call:*

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