



Media Release

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Language Aides at the Women's

Non-English speaking patients at the Royal Women's Hospital will get extra help to navigate their hospital experience, thanks to a new initiative launched today.

The Language Aide pilot program has recruited eight staff to offer assistance to patients and visitors who speak English as their second language.

The accredited Language Aides can help people make appointments, find their way around the hospital or learn about the range of services available.

The Chief Executive of the Women's, Ms Dale Fisher, said a hospital stay can be daunting.

"Our experience tells us that it is even more difficult for women who speak English as a second language to access health care and navigate a complex health system.

"At the Women's we continually strive to remove the barriers women may face in accessing healthcare, to make their experience a positive one where they feel welcomed, safe, cared for and understood," Ms Fisher said at the launch.

The Language Aides, who are accredited with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), are not part of the hospital's official interpreter service.

Ms Fisher said the program supports the objectives of the Women's Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Action Plan. The Women's cares for women from 165 countries who speak 60 different languages and follow 42 separate religious faiths.

"Twenty nine per cent of our inpatients, and 42 per cent of our maternity patients, are born overseas with the leading countries being India, Vietnam, Lebanon, Somalia and China," Ms Fisher said.

The Language Aide pilot program was officially launched by Ms Fisher; Ms Liz Beattie, Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs; Mr George Lekakis, Chair of the Victorian Multicultural Commission and Ms Elleni Bereded-Samuel, a member of the Board of the Women's.

As part of the launch, the official party also signed the Victorian Multicultural commission's Community Accord – an initiative designed to demonstrate their commitment to the principles of the Multicultural Victoria Act 2004.

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For more information please call:

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