



the women's
the royal women's hospital

Media Release

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Premiers Award for Community Harmony at the Women's

At Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence, The Royal Women's Hospital has received the Premier's Award for Community Harmony in recognition of its services tailored to meet the specific needs of culturally diverse women over many years.

The Chief Executive of the Women's, Dale Fisher, accepted the prestigious award on behalf of the hospital at a ceremony at Government House on Tuesday 21 September.

The award recognizes the outstanding achievement of an organization that has developed programs, strategies or activities, which further cross-cultural and cross-religious harmony in Victoria.

The Women's was nominated for its language services, specifically for its 2009-10 project, *Bilingual Staff at the Women's - Language Aide Pilot Project*, run in partnership with the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

Each year, the Women's cares for women from 165 countries who speak 60 different languages and follow 42 different faiths. Approximately 29 per cent of inpatients, and 42 per cent of women who give birth at the Women's, are born overseas. The top five countries of origin are: India, Vietnam, Lebanon, Somalia and China.

"A hospital visit can be daunting, and 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," Ms Fisher said.

"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."

Approximately a quarter of staff at the Women's were born overseas, from about 76 different countries. The Language Aide pilot program, launched in March this year, harnessed this diversity by accessing bi-lingual staff to offer assistance to patients and visitors who speak English as their second language, to help them make appointments, find their way around the hospital or learn about available services.

**For more information contact the Royal Women's Hospital Media Manager,
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