

## MEDIA RELEASE

For Friday 19 October 2012

### **African Australians in Melbourne's west to benefit from new community centre in Footscray**

The Brotherhood of St Laurence and The Anglican Parish of Footscray are proud to launch the African Australian Community Centre, in a heritage-listed bluestone church building in Footscray, a joint venture that will assist African migrants and refugees in Melbourne's west to settle in their new country and build a positive future.

Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Hon. Nicholas Kotsiras, will officially open the Centre this **Friday 19 October, at 30a Pickett Street, Footscray, from 4pm**, in an event that also includes performances by a Congolese dance group and the parish choir.

The Centre's Coordinator, Abraham Mamer, recently honoured at the African Australian National Awards as one of the country's most influential African leaders, says it will deliver programs and services based on the needs of the local African community and in time will be run entirely by the African community.

'The Centre offers activities that address the needs of newcomers to the area. For example, our Mama's Plus group is a great support for single mothers and their children who may be isolated in their new country,' Mr Mamer said.

'We are also focused on assisting young people to settle here, to help reduce isolation and to foster connection within their community.'

Activities for young Africans will include homework help, peer-to-peer youth mentoring, education and training advice, interview preparation, job search support and assistance navigating the Australian legal system.

After nearly two years of renovations of the original St John's Church in Footscray Parish, the century-old, heritage listed, bluestone building has been restored as the [African Australian Community Centre](#)'s new headquarters. Facilities available to the general public include a community hall for function hire, a children's playground and a community garden.

The African Centre originated as the Sudanese Welfare Ministry in 2005, before becoming a Brotherhood and Anglican Parish Footscray partnership in 2008 and expanding its services to the wider African community.

In addition to contributions by the Brotherhood and The Anglican Parish of Footscray, funding was provided by the State Government (including the Community Support Fund, Office of Multicultural Affairs and Heritage Victoria), Flora and Frank Leith Trust, the Anglican Foundation and the Maribyrnong City Council.

**When: 4pm, Friday October 19, 2012**

**Where: 30a Pickett St, Footscray**

#### **Photo opportunities:**

- **Performances by the Footscray Multicultural Choir, and Leona Kakima, a Congolese musical troupe**
- **Hon. Nicholas Kotsiras and Abraham Mamer unveiling the commemorative plaque.**

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