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**DATE** Tuesday 17 February 2009

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### **Media Release - Stepping Out of the Shadows**

On Thursday 19 February Multicultural Mental Health Australia (MMHA) will accept \$2.7 million in funding from the Department of Health and Ageing to continue enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of Australia's culturally diverse communities.

MMHA Chair, A/Prof Abd Malak AM, will join the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, the Hon. Laurie Ferguson MP, to accept the funding at a special event at the SBS studios in Sydney.

"This funding announcement shows the Federal Government's commitment to meeting the unique mental health needs of these communities," A/Prof Abd Malak said. "It allows MMHA to continue its hard work and innovations in multicultural mental health. MMHA will continue building on its partnerships and developing more mental health resources for these communities."

During the funding announcement, MMHA will also launch a stigma reduction training kit and audio series of mental health fact sheets.

Through a partnership with SBS Radio, MMHA produced a series of CDs in over 20 languages on various mental health topics. The Director of SBS Radio, Paula Masselos, said SBS Radio was very proud and excited to produce such an invaluable resource for so many different communities.

"MMHA and SBS Radio identified the need for this series to better reach and extend these important mental health messages to the entire community, especially those with low literacy levels," Ms Masselos explained.

MMHA Consumer Advocate, Vicki Katsifis, said the series is most needed in non-English speaking communities and will help her Greek family.

Ms Katsifis explained that the CDs will be used along with a new mental health training kit designed to help raise awareness and reduce stigma towards mental illness in these communities.

"Such resources were never available when I was first diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Had they been, my Greek family would not have suffered from the shame and stigma towards my illness from our community," Ms Katsifis said. "I hope these CDs and the new *Stepping Out of the Shadows* training kit increases the ethnic community's knowledge about mental illness and encourage people, like myself, to seek medical help."

**When: Thursday 19 February**

**Where: SBS Atrium, 14 Herbert Street, Artarmon, NSW**

**Time: 11am**

***Stepping Out of the Shadows: Reducing Stigma in Multicultural Communities* and the new audio series are now available from MMHA – 02 9840 3333 or [www.mmha.org.au](http://www.mmha.org.au)**

**For further details, please contact:**

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