

8 March 2012

Media Release

Talking Difference offers opportunities for expression in regional Victoria

An exciting multimedia project developed by Museum Victoria designed to facilitate conversations about cultural difference has kicked off a regional tour in Shepparton.

Museum Victoria's *Talking Difference* Portable Studio at Shepparton Library is offering people in Shepparton an opportunity to share ideas and dialogue about cultural identity and tolerance during the SheppARTon Festival period until 20 March.

Talking Difference is an online media project aimed at promoting diversity and challenging discrimination by encouraging people to create new works in film, sound, images and text. The project is expected to help strengthen the community further by widening understanding and acceptance of cultural differences.

The Studio is part of the VicHealth *Arts About Us* Roadshow touring regional Victoria in 2012. VicHealth has funded 18 *Arts About Us* projects over three years to develop arts-based programs, shows and exhibitions that celebrate cultural diversity and help people understand the harmful impacts of race-based discrimination. The Studio will also tour other areas including Lakes Entrance, Bairnsdale, Horsham and Mildura alongside other events in those communities over the next five months.

The *Talking Difference* studio is a welcoming, enclosed space, where people are drawn into virtual dialogue about cultural difference and diversity. The studio features new technology, including a touch screen, HD camera, microphone and lights, to allow people to view multimedia content produced by others and to respond with their own video, audio, text and drawing. A team of local people will create video questions in a workshop at the beginning of the tour and invite others to create content in the Portable Studio.

"The strength of *Talking Difference* is that the communities involved are effectively taking charge of new technologies to create their own conversations about diversity and difference", said Tatiana Mauri, Community Engagement Manager, Immigration Museum.

"Through the project, people not only become new media makers but also become champions for sharing ideas and dialogue about cultural identity and intercultural understanding".

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter encouraged local residents to visit the *Talking Difference* Studio at Shepparton Library to share their thoughts, experiences and ideas.

"VicHealth is really excited to support the Studio to encourage dialogue about the benefits of cultural diversity and the harm caused by race-based discrimination. We hope Shepparton residents embrace the chance to have their say in this unique and creative way," she said.

Member for Shepparton, Jeanette Powell, said it was great to begin the regional tour in Shepparton.

"It is appropriate that this project has come to Shepparton with our diverse, interesting and harmonious multicultural community," Mrs Powell said.

"It will promote understanding and respect amongst the many people from across the world who now call Shepparton home."

Talking Difference at SheppARTon Festival is a partnership between Greater Shepparton City Council through the Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity Project, VicHealth Arts About Us, Museum Victoria, Artistic Merit and Goulburn Valley Regional Library Corporation.

Talking Difference Portable Studio at Shepparton Library. Marungi St, Shepparton until 20 March 2012

For further media information, interviews or images, please contact:

Emily Tate, The Launch Box, on 0452 236 740 or Emily@thelaunchbox.com.au

Amanda Linardon, Museum Victoria, on 03 9927 2737, 0400 130 307 or alinardon@museum.vic.gov.au



Photo opportunity

Thursday 8 March at 10am

Talking Difference Portable Studio - Shepparton Library. Marungi St, Shepparton

Ms Jeanette Powell, Member for Shepparton will be kicking off the regional tour of the Talking Difference Portable Studio with a morning tea and tour of the portable studio. Local people from diverse backgrounds will record their story and be available for interview and photos.

The following representatives will be available for photos/interviews:

- *Ms Jeanette Powell MP, Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs*
- *Ms Jerril Rechter, CEO, VicHealth*
- *Ms Gillian Hoysted, Corporate Services Director, Museum Victoria*
- *Mr Charles Gentner, CEO, Goulburn Valley Regional Library Corporation*
- *Local community members filming their story in the Talking Difference Portable Studio*

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