

## **Interview Transcript - Radio 2ME (1638 AM)**

**Helen Zimmerman, ACL Group Managing Director**

with

**2ME presenters Michel Tabet and Claude El Khouri**

**9 October 2007 - 9.30am**

**Duration: 7 minutes**

**Introduction by Michel Tabet:** Today we have the road safety DVD that will help all new migrants to Australia understand the road rules. In Sydney, I would like to welcome Helen Zimmerman from ACL being interviewed directly from the office to further discuss the Adult Migrant English Programme and the road safety DVD.

**Michel Tabet:** Good morning Helen

**Helen Zimmerman:** Good morning Michel

**MT:** First we would like to know more about the Adult Migrant English Programme. What exactly is your support for people coming from overseas or living in Australia at the moment?

**HZ:** Thanks Michel. The Adult Migrant English Programme is a Federal Government program and we have been delivering it in Sydney since 1998 and all migrants and refugees are entitled to up to 510 hours of English tuition to assist them in their settlement in Australia, in integrating in the community, in seeking work.

**MT:** Yes Helen and as we have at the moment you have got a new program about road safety, DVD. Can you explain to us the story about it?

**HZ:** I'm delighted to. Certainly in Australia it is something if you have come from a country that's very different, there is a lot to learn and as well as learning how to use the banking system, the school system, the education system, how to find work. We also realised that it's very important if you are going to be part of the community that you're able to drive on the roads and drive safely.

**Claude El Khouri:** Helen, where can we find this DVD?

**HZ:** You can contact us on 1300 798 111 and we'll make arrangements to get the DVD to anyone who's interested.

**MT:** Helen, as we know too many people coming from different countries, most of them, probably a large amount of people doesn't speak English very well. So the first step you take them is teach them English then the DVD will come second part. How can you explain it?

**HZ:** That's right. When people arrive their first concerns really are settling into Australia and so we assist them through another scheme, the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme to settle into their local community. Part of that settlement is helping them enrol in English classes and we have people who have no English at all up to people who have sort of minimal survival English. Our job is to work with them to learn the English that they need to integrate into the Australian community. We are also helping people with the English they need for work and obtaining employment. We've got an Employment Pathways Unit that we set up to improve people's prospects of finding work and working on English language but also working with industry and providers. Our largest group of languages spoken, the first one, is Arabic so our largest group of migrants and refugees speak Arabic. We also find that we have large numbers from Iraq, China, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Sudan and the sixth largest is from Lebanon.

**CEK:** How many people you helping each year roughly?

**HZ:** This last year we provided classes to over 10,000 students both in Sydney and in South Australia. And of that there were probably around 2,000 of those would have been young people in 18 to 25 and that's an age group that really it's important to make sure they are learning safe road safety and that when they go for their licence that they're well prepared both with the English and understanding road rules.

**MT:** Helen, do you have another program for the future for the migrants?

**HZ:** We've got quite a few actually we are working on. A lot of them relate to making sure that people get the preparation and employability skills and the linking for work. Also for those that are isolated we do a lot of work in distance learning and home tutor for those that find it difficult to get to classes. We've done this DVD in association with a media company called Media PR and they're keen to do more. In fact one of the ones that they have worked on as well is safety on the waterways and they are working on something in relation to safety on Australia's beaches.

**MT:** From ACL Group Managing Director Helen Zimmerman, thank you very much for this information and we hope to talk to you in the future for the other program.

**HZ:** I'd be delighted. Thank you very much.

**MT:** Thank you Helen.

**Ends**