



27 August 2009

Muslim community 'adopt-a-firey' during Ramadan

MFB Commander Mick Swift and Senior Station Officer Costa Katsikis will be joining active Muslim community member Manar Chelebi of Roxburgh Park for dinner as part of Ramadan on Wednesday 2 September 2009.

Ms Chelebi, a cross-cultural consultant to the MFB, proposed the idea to a gathering of MFB personnel and members of the Muslim community at the second MFB Iftar (evening meal when Muslims break their fast during Ramadan) last year.

The idea is simple in that it involves a Muslim family inviting one or two MFB firefighters to their home to join them for dinner during Ramadan, the Islamic month for fasting.

Dalal Smiley, Manager Diversity Development at MFB says that both Commander Swift and Station Officer Katsikis are very excited and looking forward to the occasion.

"The benefits gained from such interaction are far more impacting than any formal cross-cultural training we could provide.

"We welcomed the idea as it wasn't complicated and had potential for fantastic benefits for MFB's diversity program.

"Our firefighters relish these opportunities to develop closer relations with members of the community who they might only know a little bit about.

"It is a great chance for them to learn about the Muslim community through a personal experience rather than what they read or see in the media.

"This can be vital in dispelling myths and challenging stereotypes."

The MFB is hoping that in future years we will develop similar community interactions with other religious and ethnic minorities.

The MFB is committed to diversity and has a dedicated department that focuses on indigenous, multicultural, disability and gender matters.

For more information about diversity in the MFB please contact the Manager, Diversity Development on (03) 9665 4415 or diversity@mfb.vic.gov.au.

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