

MEDIA RELEASE

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Replica camp to bring refugee life close to home

Very few Australians get the chance to hear, feel and see what life is like in a refugee camp.

REFUGEE CAMP IN YOUR CITY, Médecins Sans Frontières' 1000 square-metre replica camp, will give people the chance to walk into a camp site modelled on refugee camps in countries such as Chad and Sudan.

Experienced field staff will be on-hand at the camp to lead the guided tours and tell their stories about refugee camp life and the vulnerability of life for people who have fled their homes.

"Millions of people around the world have been forced to live in refugee or internally displaced persons' camps due to war and conflict," says Médecins Sans Frontières Australia's Vice President of the Board of Directors, Dr Nick Coatsworth, currently a Senior Medical Registrar at Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney.

"It is often hard to describe to people what it is actually like to physically be in a refugee camp. I have worked in Sudan, Congo Brazzaville and Chad. REFUGEE CAMP IN YOUR CITY comes close to the real thing. There are utensils from the field, items made by refugees and tour guides with field experience, some who have recently returned to Australia."

After travelling around the world for more than a decade, REFUGEE CAMP IN YOUR CITY will this year visit:

- **Adelaide** – Victoria Square – 20-27 September 2009 - 9am-5pm (last tour)
- **Melbourne** – Treasury Gardens – 3-11 October 2009 - 9am-5pm (last tour)

Both camps will offer information about Médecins Sans Frontières – an international medical humanitarian organisation that assists victims of armed conflict, epidemics and natural disasters. Guides will discuss a range of issues affecting refugees, such as malnutrition, disease and women's health.

"Providing medical assistance to internally displaced people living in refugee camps in areas of conflict and poverty requires the work of more than just doctors, surgeons and nurses," said midwife Margaret Bell. "Field staff teams are also made up of project managers, logistical experts, water engineers, builders, accountants, mechanics and people from many other professions with the kind of skills and dedication needed in the field."

Margaret, who has worked for Médecins Sans Frontières in South Sudan, Darfur and Nigeria, will be the Guide Coordinator for the camps in Adelaide and Melbourne.

Experienced field staff will also be available to talk to people interested in working for Médecins Sans Frontières at information nights held in Adelaide on Wednesday 23 September and in Melbourne on Thursday 15 October.

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