

Masks of many tongues

Flags are being worn with pride during Harmony Week celebrations at Armada Dandenong Plaza.

Following the week's theme of 'Everyone Belongs', shopping centre staff will be wearing international flags corresponding to the languages they speak.

On average, each member speaks two languages.

It's a collective vocabulary spanning 21 languages: English, Sinhalese, Arabic, Tagalog, Bisaya, Hindi, Punjabi, Oromo, Spanish, Swahili, Kirundi, Bosnian, Serbian, Afghani, Urdu, Samoan, Filipion, Gujrati, Cantonese Malay and Tongan.

Two security guards speak four lingos each.

The celebrations include safe multicultural installations and activities for all ages and nationalities.

One of the displays is a tree of hands by Dandenong Primary School students. There are also a Smiling World display, Chinese Calligraphy, St Patrick's Day muffins, Coffee with a Cop, a Samoan kids craft station, a Holi photobooth and cultural cooking demos.

"We encourage our local community to try one of the more than 10 international cuisines on offer by our multi-cultural retailers or take part in one of our unique Harmony Week activities or simply visit one of our Harmony Day installations on display," centre manager Mark Tannahill said.

The Harmony Week celebrations are from Monday 15 March to Sunday 21 March.

Details: www.armadadandenongplaza.com.au



Dandenong Plaza security guard Najib displays his multilingual skills on his mask. 230218
Pictures: STEWART CHAMBERS



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