

## MEDIA RELEASE

23 September 2016

### **Portraits in Pink at Campbelltown: An exhibition of breast cancer survivors from an Indian and Sri Lankan backgrounds in New South Wales**

4 – 21 October 2016

HJ Daley Library, 1 Hurley St, Campbelltown NSW

Commencing Tuesday 4 October 2016, HJ Daley Library at Campbelltown will host a photo exhibition featuring portraits of breast cancer survivors from Indian and Sri Lankan backgrounds living in NSW.

The free exhibition, an initiative of the Pink Sari Project, will feature portraits of 14 breast cancer survivors taken by 14 professional photographers from Indian and Sri Lankan backgrounds. The photographers have volunteered their time to address a “culture of silence” on breast cancer in the two communities which, according to the Cancer Institute NSW, have some of the lowest screening rates for breast cancer in the state.

*“Having a regular breast screen is key to early detection and treatment of breast cancer. These women have shown tremendous courage in sharing their stories and should be proud of these beautiful portraits which serve the important purpose of initiating conversation about breast screening amongst Indian and Sri Lankan communities in NSW,”* Sarah McGill, Director of Screening and Prevention at the Cancer Institute NSW said.

The Pink Sari Project is a community initiative that aims to increase awareness of low participation rates in the BreastScreen NSW program among Indian and Sri Lankan women in New South Wales and encourage them to screen regularly.

Breast cancer survivor, Behroze Bilmoria, agreed to be photographed in order to encourage other women in the community to have a mammogram. *“My mother died of breast cancer at 58 years of age. My grandmother and her two sisters also died of breast cancer. I was 68 when I was diagnosed. Regular mammograms are absolutely essential for all women over 50. My two daughters have a mammogram and ultrasound every year. There is no shame and very little pain. But it saves your life. Today I am healthy, happy, 75 years old and the biggest joy in my life is that I am a grandmother – which was what I wanted to live for.”*



When asked why she got involved, photographer Prashant Bhardwaj says, “Working with initiatives like the Pink Sari Project gave me an opportunity to understand a part of our society which most of us are not aware about, or have little knowledge of. Being able to work in any capacity with such projects is a way to gain knowledge, increase sensitivity, and find opportunities to contribute.”

The Pink Sari Project is led by the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service (MHCS) in conjunction with BreastScreen NSW and Refugee Health Service, and supported by an interdisciplinary academic team from the University of Technology (UTS). The Project is funded by the Cancer Institute NSW.

For more information **Pink Sari Project: Phone: 02 8753 5005**

[www.facebook.com/thepinksariproject](http://www.facebook.com/thepinksariproject)

**HJ Daley Library at Campbelltown**

<http://www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/RSF/ServicesandFacilities/Libraries/BranchLibraries/HJDaleyLibrary>

## **MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES**

The photographers, breast cancer survivors and curator, are available for interview and photo opportunities.

**Breast Cancer Information:** [www.bsnsw.org.au](http://www.bsnsw.org.au)

**Visakesa Chandrasekaram**

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**Pink Sari Project is a project by NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service (MHCS)**

**Curator of Exhibition: Kevin Bathman**

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**Interview Opportunity – Rashmi Vanza (Survivor) languages spoken: Gujarati**

“Never did I imagine, just two days shy of my lung bronchoscopy, that I would be given the news that I have breast cancer. Within ten days, I had a breast biopsy, lung biopsy and bronchoscopy and right mastectomy. With positivity, one can fight it and it’s not the end of the world. I simply have to carry on fighting.”

**Interview Opportunity – Palu Malaowalla (Survivor) languages spoken: Hindi and Gujarati**

“As a doctor, even I didn’t find my lump and I’m lucky that the mammogram saved my life. I have learned from a recent breast cancer forum that only 50% of the female population in our community are having the mammogram done. I was shocked and worried. People think that if you don’t have a family history you won’t be affected, or it doesn’t occur in women who breast fed. These perceptions are not true.”

**Interview Opportunity: Sanjeev Singh (Photographer) languages spoken: Malay**

“As the child of a cancer survivor (my mother had uterine cancer in 2011), I understand the trauma, emotions and stress that both the patient and their families go through during the diagnosis and treatment for cancer. From my mother’s experience, I realised that a lot of older women in ethnic communities lack the resources and information to educate themselves in understanding their bodies better and recognising early symptoms. I feel this project is a beautiful and non-threatening way to create dialogue and awareness of breast cancer.”

**Interview Opportunity: Prashant Bhardwaj (Photographer) language spoken: Hindi**

“I have been associated with non-profits for over 5 years now, and see this association as my way to giving something back to the society that I belong to. With the project, I was able to spread awareness at my level and make a little but positive effort in that direction. This assignment and the learnings from it would also help me bring this up in my network in India.”

**#portraitsinpink #pinksariproject**





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