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MUSIC & MEDIA BUSINESS NEWS BY CHRISTIE ELIEZER

HOW OZ RAP GETS ITS STEEL

A piece in the "Sydney Morning Herald" about Sydney's first hip hop festival "Wheels Of Steel" at Marrickville's Steel Park highlighted how rap has become an important voice for kids in the inner-west, especially those with Arabic, Aboriginal and islander backgrounds. Rapper Khaled Sabsabi who runs hip hop workshops told the paper that Arabic kids feeling angry and isolated about being stereotyped and the biases of mainstream Australian media (a frenzy of 6,000 Americans dying in bomb attacks but not so much that an estimated 50,000 Iraqi kids are dying a year from sanctions) are expressing their rage into rap music, setting up bands, starting fanzines and getting into radio. Sabsabi's workshop, the 2168 Project, tries to link hip hop artists with 30 kids from the area. The "SMH" reported that Marrickville Youth Resource Centre's workshops in graffiti art, djing and break dancing attracts 60 kids a week, while breakdancer Matthew Peet (who helped organise "Wheels Of Steel") gets 90 aspirants to his breakdancing classes.