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Programme that `speaks' to women

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3R (Respect, Relax, Respond), the highly-rated and popular programme dealing with various issues, will start airing its fifth season on TV3 on Aug 4 and Astro Ria on Aug 9.

The new season will feature current and controversial topics such as slimming, incest, unfair legislation, women in Kelantan and many more.

Regular viewers of 3R might be saddened to hear that one of the hosts will be leaving. However, that will be part of the fun as 3R will be having roadshows in seven cities and towns, including Sabah and Sarawak, in search of a fresh face.

The roadshow will also include games, and educating women on safety via a video called Respond.

Women who are vying for the host's job have to be above 18 years. They will have to visit roadshow venues with a Kotex polybag. After a free makeover from Maybelline, they will be auditioned.

Lina Tan, executive producer of the show who directs some episodes said that in the search for the new host no particular feature or characteristic is being sought.

"She must be confident, well-informed about current issues, and able to bring those issues across to our core audiences and thus, reach out to them," she said.

Fifteen finalists will be picked for the final selection in Kuala Lumpur.

The new presenter, once chosen, will make her debut in the 10th episode of season five.

The current hosts at the helm of 3R Azah Yazmin Yusof, Rafidah Abdullah and Low Ngai Yuen.

Tan and the hosts have worked on the programme since its inception in 2000. The programmes have gained popularity not only among younger women, but also among more mature, established women and men as well.

"The presenters earlier started as fresh graduates and were unknown to the public, save for Azah who had experience in commercials. So basically they started without any kind of experience in handling programmes," Tan said.

Tan added that the hosts, previously working with a script, will only ad-lib now, showing the extent of their improvement.

3R is having a very successful run, with an average of 570,000 viewers per episode in the 15-year-old age-group and above in its the 4th season. And that's only for TV3's shows aired on Sundays at 7.30pm, which doesn't include Astro's subscribers who also receive the show via Astro's TV3 and Astro Ria.

Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir, who is also the programme's executive producer, said 3R is successful due to its commitment in addressing issues that affect women's lives.

"Young women are important to us, and they want a programme that speaks to them. Many issues need to be talked about, and TV is the best medium," she said.

For more information on the roadshows, visit 3R's website at www.3R.com.my