

State, territory and local government

New South Wales - the Community Relations Commission

The Community Relations Commission (CRC) worked in partnership with Sydney's Sutherland Shire Council to develop proactive media and communications strategies following social unrest at Cronulla during December 2005, and helped mobilise immediate and longer term state and Australian Government support and resources to address local issues.

The CRC, in coordination with the council, facilitated a project to engage 12 outreach officers of diverse cultural backgrounds who were available to talk to residents and visitors in the Cronulla area, allaying fears and providing information on local services and methods to report anti-social activity. These officers liaised with police and built up a strong presence in the community.

The Diversity Health Institute (DHI) Clearinghouse in Sydney West Area Health Service is the first example of the application of the clearinghouse model of information centralisation to the area of multicultural health. It is unique in the breadth of information it provides and in its focus on directing the user towards relevant resources, rather than developing the resources itself. It is supplemented by an enquiry service where users can personally contact DHI Clearinghouse staff by email, telephone or fax.

The DHI Clearinghouse website is underpinned by five separate databases: resources; services; research and projects; education and training and events, with each database containing access to predominantly Australian information. Recent statistics recorded over 500 visitors a month from Australia and also North America, Europe and Asia.

The Department of Community Services has conducted a major review of its Multicultural Caseworker Programme, which provides child protection services. New guidelines have been developed to define the role of the Multicultural Caseworker and work conducted to improve the programme structure, provide better support for workers, and increase the number of Multicultural Caseworker positions to be matched with appropriate areas of need.

Bankstown City Council screened a music video called *X.R.O.A.D.S.* (Xploring Road-user Options, Achieving Driver Safety) at Bankstown cinemas. The Council was funded for this project by the Motor Accidents Authority, and supported by the Department of Community Services and sponsorship received from Hoyts Cinemas. Production of the music video involved over 30 young people from different ethnic backgrounds, some of whom had direct experience or exposure to risky driving and road incidents.

The Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability funded the Ethnic Communities' Council for the Saving Water in Asian Restaurants Programme, which was launched in August 2006 to replace traditional wok stoves with 'waterless' wok stoves. By installing a waterless wok stove, there is potential to save 5000 litres of water per day per wok stove. The programme involved the development of multilingual education resources for water efficiency in commercial kitchens.

Boys and girls of different cultural and religious backgrounds, wearing hijabs or sun-hats, became part of a variety of sporting and novelty events called the Greenacre Games. The event was a community harmony and leadership initiative of the Community Relations Commission, NSW Police, the NSW Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation, Greenacre Neighbourhood Centre and seven local schools in the area. The 350 school students from Al Noori Primary, Malek Fahd, Banksia Road, Chullora Primary, Greenacre Public, Holy Saviour Primary and St John Vianney Primary were divided into mixed teams from all the schools to enjoy the day's activities through competing in track and field sporting and novelty events.

Victoria - Victorian Multicultural Commission

From 1 May 2007 the Victorian Office for Multicultural Affairs was merged into the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) to create a single entity devoted to multicultural affairs. The change will strengthen support for multicultural affairs by integrating the activities of the two existing organisations and demonstrates the Victorian Government's continued commitment to strengthening communities.

The VMC undertakes consultations on a wide range of issues in metropolitan and regional Victoria to ensure diverse communities have an opportunity to speak directly with the Victorian Government. In particular, the VMC consults culturally and

linguistically diverse communities specifically about the performance of Victorian Government Departments each financial year. In 2005-06 the VMC consulted with in excess of 700 leaders from culturally diverse communities at 10 different metropolitan and regional locations.

In 2005-06 the VMC Community Grants Programme provided funding of approximately \$3 million through 2350 individual grants to 1600 community organisations to strengthen Victoria's cultural and linguistic diversity.

In 2005-06 as part of the Victorian Government's Social Policy Statement, *A Fairer Victoria*, the government allocated \$4.7 million over four years to provide targeted support to Victoria's recently arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants under the Refugee Support Package.

Queensland - Multicultural Affairs Queensland

Following the launch of a strengthened multicultural policy: *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference* in December 2004, all Queensland Government departments have developed Multicultural Action Plans to foster increased access to government services by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Multicultural Affairs Queensland (MAQ) developed and implemented the Muslim Community Engagement Strategy, in consultation with the Muslim Community Reference Group, to promote positive relations between the Muslim communities and the wider community. Two youth workers were funded to promote interaction of young people across different cultures and religions.

In partnership with MAQ, the Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) funded the development of Queensland content on the history of multiculturalism and contemporary experiences of multiculturalism for the Making Multicultural Australia website: www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au.

To improve support to refugee students, DETA provided additional funding of \$1.6 million to state schools and \$200 000 to non-state schools. Among other initiatives, schools have used this money to fund additional English as a Second Language teacher hours, provide additional teacher aide support, and employ community liaison officers to work with refugee students and their families.

Through its Community Renewal Programme, the Department of Housing delivered 12 projects in 2005-06 that directly benefitted people from cultural and linguistically diverse communities living in renewal neighbourhoods. The projects, valued at \$1.43 million, included Life Skills and Training for Multicultural Communities, Walk with Me – Building Cultural Harmony, the Multilink Learning Centre, and the Family Literacy Project in Carole Park.

In 2005-06 MAQ provided \$3.4 million to support multiculturalism including community development projects and celebrations. The Multicultural Employment Strategy delivered by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, which aims to support job seekers from non-English speaking backgrounds, represents a minimum commitment of \$3.16 million in funding each year between 2004 and 2007.

To strengthen the Queensland Government's response to the health needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Queensland Health launched the Healthier Multicultural Communities Initiative in September 2005. More than \$3.2 million has been committed to delivering this initiative in 2005-08, with ongoing funding of \$2 million allocated to continue it from 2008-09.

Western Australia – Office of Multicultural Interests

The Integrated Services Centres (ISC) Pilot Project enacts a key recommendation made by the Western Australian Across-Government Working Party on Settlement Issues for African Humanitarian Entrants established in 2005 to investigate concerns regarding the capacity of current settlement services to address the settlement needs of African humanitarian entrants. The Working Party oversaw consultations with state government service providers, key non-government organisations involved in humanitarian settlement and African community representatives to identify issues and priorities.

The ISC Pilot Project is a partnership between the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) and the Western Australian Department of Education and Training and Department of Health (DoH), and also involves the Western Australian Department for Community Development and the Western Australian office of DIAC. The Pilot Project incorporates the notion of 'Schools as Hubs' articulated in the Australian Government paper *Measures to Improve Settlement Outcomes for Humanitarian Entrants: Overview Paper for State and Territory Governments*.

The Pilot Project is being conducted at two Intensive English Centre (IEC) primary school sites. The primary areas of focus are physical health, mental health, education and training, and family and community. The target group are adults, young people and children - students of the IECs and their families - who are humanitarian entrants to Western Australia and who are beyond the six-month eligibility period for access to services provided as part of the IHSS.

The Ethnic Youth in Sport Youth Programme aims to address the barriers currently faced by ethnic young people when accessing sporting clubs and engaging in mainstream sporting activities. The programme aims to identify and implement strategies to increase participation, and to encourage interaction between ethnic and non-ethnic young people in sports associations and clubs.

The programme is guided by a working party comprising representatives from OMI, the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR), the WA Sports Federation and the Australian Asian Association. The Working Party has identified key stakeholders and undertaken research and consultations resulting in feedback on barriers to participation for culturally diverse youth and suggested strategies for implementation. Strategies initiated in 2006 were:

- City of Stirling Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth Sport, Recreation and Leisure Project is a three-year partnership between OMI, DSR and the City of Stirling to increase culturally and linguistically diverse participation in sport, recreation and leisure. It focuses on suburbs where there is a relatively high concentration of young people from these backgrounds who have low participation rates in organised sport and recreation.

- Two information sessions were conducted by OMI and DSR to inform ethnic community leaders about DSR's Sport and Recreation Community Grants Scheme which, in 2006, focused on attracting applications from ethnic communities. DSR has since employed a full-time officer for six months to promote the next round of its Community Grants Scheme to culturally diverse community groups.
- DSR, City of Stirling and OMI arranged for 60 free delegate places to be allocated to ethnic community group representatives to encourage their attendance at DSR's annual sporting industry conference, Active 2006. In 2006, the conference focused on how sport organisations and local governments could assist culturally diverse groups to increase their participation in sport and recreation activities, and how sport can help break down racial barriers.
- OMI has had a number of discussions with the Fremantle Dockers AFL team about complementing each other's activities. OMI has assisted with the coordination of an information session for IEC staff on the Dockers' Welcome to the AFL Programme, which aims to increase culturally diverse participation in Aussie Rules football. All attendees signed up for the programme to be implemented at their schools.

The objective of the Inclusion and Integration Grants Programme (IIGP) was to provide one-off funding to community based and non-government organisations to undertake projects designed to build community capacity, and promote integration and active participation by all members of Western Australia's diverse community. The 2006 IIGP First Round comprised three funding categories:

- **Community Based Initiatives:** to support existing and new community based initiatives that promote integration and active participation by members of the community in social, economic or political aspects of life, thereby combating marginalisation and exclusion.
- **Promoting Interaction and Communication:** to promote interaction and communication between and among different religious and ethnic groups from new and emerging communities and the broader community and facilitate ongoing dialogue between groups.

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- Youth Leadership: to promote and enhance active participation by youth, particularly those at risk of marginalisation and exclusion, and provide opportunities for youth from new and emerging communities to interact with the broader community.

South Australia - Multicultural SA

Multicultural SA is the lead agency for a new target in South Australia's Strategic Plan announced by the Premier, the Hon Mike Rann MP, on Australia Day 2007. The new target is to increase the percentage of South Australians who accept cultural diversity as a positive influence in the community. Acceptance of cultural diversity as a positive influence in the community will be measured by responses in a household survey of a sample of the South Australian public.

On 25 March 2006, South Australian Government Muslim Reference Group (SAGMRG) members participated in a special professional development programme aimed at building the skills of Muslim community representatives in managing media interviews and relationships. The next day, an additional media training session was also presented to members of South Australian Muslim communities, nominated by SAGMRG Members.

Forums funded by Multicultural SA, were held in Mount Gambier, Naracoorte and Bordertown to identify ways to make the communities migrant-friendly. These regional towns have been receiving an increased number of migrants and are expecting more, including refugees. The forums coincided with the broadcasting of a series of television advertisements about the benefits of migration in the region. Participants identified the need for cross-cultural awareness and understanding, English language tuition and education about Australian laws and social norms as high priorities for their towns.

Government departments have an important role to play in making new migrants feel welcome in South Australia and ensuring that programmes and services are culturally and linguistically appropriate for both emerging and established communities. Multicultural SA recently set up a panel of cultural awareness training providers to assist government departments in the procurement of appropriate cultural awareness training.

Government agencies can access information about the providers and their services through the government intranet. The providers have been through a thorough assessment process before being offered contracts and the panel will be updated on an ongoing basis.

Northern Territory - Office of Multicultural Affairs

The Northern Territory's first multicultural policy, *Building on the Territory's Diversity*, was released in February 2005, with four underlying principles; valuing diversity, fair access, encouraging participation and mutual respect.

The Northern Territory Office of Multicultural Affairs selected migrants from the African communities in Darwin for a pilot consultation project to determine the communities' self-assessment against the multicultural principles. The project was conducted in collaboration with the Charles Darwin University. The project respondents were selected from the four largest African communities in Darwin: Sudanese, Liberians, Ethiopians and Somalis, and all respondents arrived as refugees through the Humanitarian Settlement Programme.

The highest satisfaction ratings were: economic environment and economic opportunities, climate, safety, educational opportunities for children, interpreter services, social and political stability, family and children's services and Australian lifestyle. The highest challenge ratings were: finding preferred employment, learning English, accessing affordable housing, understanding and accessing health services, maintaining family life and traditional culture, and understanding Australian culture.

The Northern Territory Government has provided strategies to assist with the challenges where possible, in housing, health services, the balance of maintaining traditional culture and integrating into the Australian culture. However, humanitarian entrants continue to have difficulty accessing adequate primary health care, largely due to a shortage of general practitioners in the Territory.

A small percentage of humanitarian entrants find the challenge of resettlement in a different culture, combined with their often traumatic past, daunting. The Territory service providers continue to work with these clients to achieve productive self-sufficiency. The majority of humanitarian entrants settle and integrate into Territory communities and provide a welcome contribution to the Territory's economic and social networks.

Australian Capital Territory – ACT Office of Multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

The ACT Government, through the delivery of services and programmes, is committed to recognising and responding to cultural and linguistic diversity in our community.

A key achievement in 2006 was the development and implementation of the Seven Multicultural Projects initiative which came about as a result of redirecting funding away from peak bodies to community based programmes.

The seven projects include: a youth forum; a pre-employment preparation programme for migrants; governance and leadership training; English language classes; an apprenticeship and traineeship programme; a targeted Work Experience and Support Programme; and a pilot bus service for isolated culturally and linguistically diverse people.

Ongoing opportunities for recognising and responding to cultural and linguistic diversity include the Work Experience and Support Programme, the Overseas Qualification service, the Register of Multicultural Advisers, support to the ACT Muslim Advisory Council and the ACT Multicultural, Language and Radio Grants Programme.

Local government

In 2005-06, a number of local governments worked effectively with their communities to deliver services to clients from diverse backgrounds.

Darebin City Council

Darebin City Council established its Interfaith Council, a collaborative partnership with over 100 faith leaders, in June 2005. The Interfaith Council resulted from comprehensive consultation with local organisations, community and religious leaders and the Darebin community. The benefits of the establishment of the Interfaith Council include assistance to religious leaders who directly support the settlement of members of their community, including newly-arrived members of their congregation from South Sudan and West African countries. The Interfaith

Council has provided an opportunity for collaboration and better understanding between new arrivals and the wider Darebin community and has enabled Darebin City Council to work with previously hard to reach segments of the community.

The Interfaith Council resulted from comprehensive consultation with local organisations, community and religious leaders and the broad Darebin community. The community sent a clear message to the Darebin City Council indicating its support and interest for such an initiative.

The benefits of the establishment of the Interfaith Council include assistance to religious leaders who directly support the settlement of members of their community, which include newly arrived members of their congregation from South Sudan and West African countries.

The establishment of the Interfaith Council has enabled Darebin City Council to work with previously hard-to-reach segments of the community.

City of Ipswich

The City of Ipswich's Building a Better Lifestyle through Community Harmony project has tackled prejudice and intolerance, and enhanced cross-cultural understanding among young people in the city. The project is funded under the Living in Harmony programme. The population in Ipswich has residents who come from 115 countries and speak 84 languages. The council designed and implemented a project to promote community harmony and cross-cultural understanding among young people in the city. The initiative brought together schools, government and non-government agencies, community organisations and the whole of community who supported the project.

Activities included a poster competition that depicted the diversity of cultures through four themes: justice, equity, fairness and friendship; anti-racism creative workshops within primary and secondary schools, and a resource book for schools.

City of Wollongong

The Wollongong City Council Interpreter Service is an innovative response to the needs identified by the community and other stakeholders, and provides an important service in the Wollongong, Kiama and Shellharbour areas.

The project was developed as a locally based Interpreter Service employing local accredited interpreters to provide cost effective and efficient language services in Wollongong and neighbouring areas. The service is available to clients from culturally diverse backgrounds, the private sector, and local and state government services requiring interpreter support for their clients. A panel of interpreters covers 22 community languages. In addition, interpreters have knowledge of specific cultures which can assist local businesses in developing niche markets in the area and overseas.

Holroyd City Council

How to Vote is a community education project designed to familiarise culturally and linguistically diverse communities with the process of voting, counting of votes, privacy and voting system transparency, personal details protection, anonymity and to encourage voter responsibility. The workshops were held during the period from September to November 2006.

Language support for the workshops included Dari, Arabic, Farsi, Dinka and Mandarin. A number of community organisations and the State Electoral Office provided generous and enthusiastic support.

North Sydney Council

A series of information sessions on family law for new Japanese, Korean and Chinese migrants was held by North Sydney Council in May 2006.

The North Sydney Mayor supported the sessions as migrants to Australia faced a number of challenges, including the need to familiarise themselves with local laws and practices. The sessions provided information on legal issues relating to family life including rules about disciplining children, that domestic violence is a crime in Australia and their rights, should they separate from their partners.

The sessions were run in association with the Lower North Shore Multicultural Network and the Lower North Shore Domestic Violence Committee. Presentations were provided by solicitors from the Law Society of New South Wales and a panel of experts was on hand to answer questions.

The session for the Japanese community also included the launch of a new Japanese brochure for victims, families and friends affected by domestic violence.