



Integrated Settlement Plan for Victoria

2005 Annual Report

Prepared by the

Victorian Settlement Planning Committee

July 2006

This Report was prepared on behalf of the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee by the VSPC Secretariat. Any comments or enquiries about the VSPC or this report can be directed to the Secretariat at the following address:

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Message from the Chair

The 2005 Annual Report marks the final year of the 2003 – 05 Integrated Settlement Plan. The Report summarises the activities undertaken by the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (VSPC) and its Working Groups for the period January 2005 to December 2005.

The report features a range of achievements emanating from VSPC Working Groups and the work undertaken by VSPC member agencies against the principles outlined in the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society. The activities and major achievements in this report provide a 'snapshot' of a diverse range of projects and deliverable outcomes. As with past reports, some of the projects featured have involved the cooperation of several agencies across three tiers of government. As a result, "settlement" issues have become better coordinated and a more familiar and user-friendly concept to individuals and agencies.

New and emerging communities remained a high priority for the VSPC in 2005, with the VSPC dedicating its August meeting to examining all agencies' responses to the needs of the most recently arriving, predominantly Sudanese refugee entrants. This arrival cohort has been recognised in all quarters as a highly disadvantaged group with many distinct needs. The work undertaken in 2005 in this area has successfully led towards the development in 2006 of VSPC Working Groups with a distinct focus on a range of African–Australian settlement issues.

One of the most prominent features of settlement for 2005 was the continuing and growing interest shown in all parts of regional and rural Victoria in attracting migrants and refugees. Promised initiatives in the form of resettling refugees directly into rural communities were formally realised in October 2005 with the first arrivals of Congolese refugee families into Shepparton. This was achieved within a highly coordinated planning infrastructure in which VSPC members and Shepparton service providers worked together to optimise community readiness and a smooth initial settlement for the newcomers.

I am pleased to present the 2005 Annual Report on the Integrated Settlement Plan for Victoria.



*John Williams
Victorian Settlement Planning Committee
May 2006*

The Victorian Settlement Planning Committee

The Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (VSPC) is a partnership of Federal, State and Local government agencies and community organisations that plans for the effective delivery of settlement services in Victoria.

The collaborative work of the VSPC focuses on the initial settlement needs of those who have recently arrived in Victoria. However, the VSPC also recognises that settlement is an ongoing process and that certain groups may have additional needs in years to come. These groups include women, youth, older persons and refugees - particularly survivors of trauma and torture.

The VSPC ensures these local and state issues are incorporated into the settlement planning process, within the planning framework of the *National Integrated Settlement Strategy (replaced in 2006 by the National Framework for Settlement Planning)* and the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*.

The National Integrated Settlement Strategy

Settlement services provided by government and community organisations across Australia were coordinated through the National Integrated Settlement Strategy (NISS) - a planning framework which aimed to link and improve the services available to migrants and refugees in Australia at local, regional, State/Territory and national levels. The framework:

- clarified who is responsible for providing services;
- encouraged agencies to coordinate delivery of services;
- targeted resources to avoid gaps and duplication; and
- achieved better outcomes for migrants and refugees by targeting services and making them more accessible to clients.

The NISS focused on encouraging mainstream agencies to consider the needs of migrants and refugees when planning their services. A key component of the NISS was the work of State and Territory Settlement Planning Committees. In Victoria, this committee is called the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (VSPC).

The Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society

The *Charter* is the Commonwealth's strategy for ensuring that the diverse needs of all Australians are met by culturally responsive government services. The *Charter* has been endorsed by Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and by the Australian Local Government Association. The VSPC's activities are therefore developed in the expectation of active cooperation from Commonwealth, State and Territory and Local government agencies and organisations.

Settlement Plans

The primary task for the VSPC is to address identified settlement priorities at the State level in a coordinated and cooperative way. By jointly considering what is already being done to address those needs and what might be done to address them more effectively, VSPC members are in a better position to inform their own agency's resource usage and to maximise its effectiveness by targeting service gaps and avoiding unnecessary duplication.

The VSPC meets quarterly but much of the coordination work is done through working groups that meet regularly to identify, implement and report on projects undertaken by the VSPC. This work is structured through the VSPC's Integrated Settlement Plan for Victoria: a statement by members of the Committee which sets out the priority settlement needs to be addressed, how those needs will be met, who is responsible for meeting those needs and how outcomes will be measured.

The Integrated Settlement Plan for Victoria 2003 - 2005

The Integrated Settlement Plan for Victoria 2003 - 2005 has been a plan of action for the effective delivery of services essential to the settlement of migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants in Victoria. The Plan covers a three-year period, to enable the cycle of consultation, planning, action, reporting and evaluation to occur and inform the work of the VSPC in a dynamic way.

This Report marks the third phase of the Plan. This phase incorporated fifteen projects to be undertaken by the VSPC between January and December 2005. Many projects build on the work of earlier working groups/projects to resolve some longstanding settlement issues.

The annual Operational Plan for 2005 comprising the list of projects for Phase 3 appears on page 65 of this Report.

The Annual Report on the Plan

The VSPC reports annually on the implementation of its Integrated Settlement Plan. This reporting provides an opportunity for the VSPC's activities to be scrutinised and serves to reinforce the commitment of members to cooperative planning processes.

This report contains three parts:

1. Report on the progress of Operational Plan projects;
2. Reports from VSPC members on their agency's achievements under the seven principles of the *Charter*; and
3. Two case studies that illustrate settlement issues and the systemic response.

Victorian Settlement Planning Committee Members

(as at December 2005)

COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

Mr John Williams (Chair)
State Director, Victoria

Mr Con Pagonis
Director, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs

Centrelink

Ms Maria Axarlis-Coulter
Area North Cental Multicultural Services Manager

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Mr John Reen
Manager, Quality Management Unit

Department of Family and Community Services

Mr Neil Mahoney
Deputy State Manager, Victorian State Office

Department of Health and Ageing

Ms Annabel Thorpe
Manager, Joint Planning Unit, Victorian State Office

STATE DEPARTMENTS

Department of Education and Training

Ms Ros Beaton
Manager, ESL Strategy Team, Office of School Education

Department for Victorian Communities

Ms Barbara Mountjouris
Director, Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs

Ms Irene Tkalcevic
Manager, Multicultural Employment Program

Department of Human Services

Ms Sue Casey
Manager, Diversity Unit

Victoria Police
Mr Anthony Abate
Manager, Multicultural Advisory Unit

Department of Justice
Dr Ben Okai
Coordinator Disability Policy, Diversity Issues Unit

STATE AGENCIES

Adult Multicultural Education Services
Mr Brian Paterson
Chief Executive Officer

Mr Michael Cox
General Manager Education (AMEP)

Ms Susan Chou Allender
Manager, Community and Settlement Services (IHSS)

Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria
Ms Kavitha Chandra-Shekeran
Community Consultant (CALD)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Municipal Association of Victoria
Ms Clare Hargreaves
Senior Policy Adviser, Social Policy

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

MRC Directors' Network
Ms Margaret Rutherford
Director, MRC North West Region

Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc
Mr Paris Aristotle
Director

Northern AMEP Consortium
Ms Sue Beshara
Manager

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
Ms Carmel Guerra
Director

Accommodation and Housing

Working Group Member Agencies:

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
Department of Human Services, Office of Housing
Geelong Ethnic Communities Council Inc. / Diversitat (formerly Geelong Migrant Resource Centre)
Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)
Migrant Resource Centre North West Region
South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre
Tenants' Union of Victoria

Project Chairs/Coordinators:

Project 1:	John Muller	DIMIA
Project 2:	VSPC Secretariat	DIMIA
Project 3:	VSPC Secretariat	DIMIA

Information

Working Group Member Agencies:

Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)
South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre
Department of Human Services, Office of Housing

Project Chairs/Coordinators:

Project 1:	Tim Rose	DIMIA
Project 2:	Kristin Stempf De Vargas	DIMIA
Project 3:	Tim Rose	DIMIA

Employment

Working Group Member Agencies:

Adult Multicultural Education Services
Centrelink
City of Banyule
City of Greater Dandenong
Department for Victorian Communities (DVC), Overseas Qualifications Unit
Department of Education, Science and Training
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, including Trades Recognition Australia
Department of Family and Community Services
Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria

Family Day Care Victoria Inc
FKA Children's Services
Northern AMEP Consortium
South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre
VETASSESS
Victorian Children's Services for Ethnic Groups (VICSEG)

Project Chairs/Coordinators:

Project 1:	Inaam Barakat	DVC, Overseas Qualifications Unit
Project 2:	Karen Scobell	FaCS

Language Services

Working Group Member Agencies:

Adult Multicultural Education Services
All Graduates
Association of Hospital Interpreters
Australian Society of Interpreters and Translators
Centrelink
Department for Victorian Communities, Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs (VOMA)
Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)
On Call
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)
Skilled Quest
Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)
Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service (VITS)

Project Chair:

Project 1:	VSPC Secretariat	DIMIA
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Refugee Youth

Working Group Member Agencies:

Adult Multicultural Education Services
Australian Catholic University (ACU)
Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI)
Centrelink
Department of Education and Training, Office of Learning and Teaching
Department of Education, Science and Training
Department of Family and Community Services
Department of Human Services, Juvenile Justice
Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
Department of Justice, Crime Prevention Victoria
Ecumenical Migration Centre (EMC)

Melbourne City Mission
Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)
Northern AMEP Consortium
Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE
North West Region Migrant Resource Centre
Refugee Education Partnership Project
Victoria Police, Youth Advisory Unit
Western Young People's Independent Network (WYPIN)
Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVIC)
Youth Substance Abuse Service

Project Chairs:

Project 1:	Mardi Stow	VFST
Project 2:	VSPC Secretariat	DIMIA
Project 3:	Nick Chiam	DVC
Project 4:	Carmel Guerra	CMYI

Planning

Project Chair:

Settlement Planning and Information Unit DIMIA Victoria State Office

Integrated Settlement Plan for Victoria for 2003 – 2005

Report on Phase Three, January – December 2005

This section reports on the third phase of the VSPC's Integrated Settlement Plan for Victoria 2003 – 2005, that is, the fifteen projects undertaken by the six working groups and the VSPC Secretariat, on behalf of the VSPC between January and December 2005. During this period, the VSPC undertook projects in five priority areas:

1. Accommodation and Housing;
2. Information Provision;
3. Employment;
4. Language Services; and
5. Youth and Families.

In this section, the following terms are used:

ISSUES:	This refers to the priority settlement issues raised by the community.
PROJECT:	A description of the project identified by the VSPC in order to address the issues raised.

ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING PROJECT 1

ISSUES:

- ⇒ To reduce over-reliance on Public Housing, migrants need more information about subsidies and other forms of assistance such as the Bond Loan, which improve their access to the private rental market.
- ⇒ Identify obstacles peculiar to refugees and migrants in accessing private rental such as access to the Bond Loan. Seek practical solutions to these obstacles.

PROJECT:

Undertake a pilot project with selected refugee communities in the eastern and southern suburbs of Melbourne to develop a best practice model. A research project will examine preferred methods of existing information flows and preferred assistance with accommodation. Research will also consider the potential impact of support services on private rental criteria and aim to tap into information channels and provide training. The last phase of the project will be a support program for assisting new arrivals to access and maintain positive housing outcomes in the private rental market.

PROGRESS:

- In 2005 the working group completed its report on the practices of Migrant Resource Centres in placing migrants into private rental accommodation, having noted during the previous year (2004) that there was some degree of systematisation of MRCs' dealings with Real Estate agents.
- The idea of applying for funding to the Estate Agents Guarantee Fund (which had funded the *New Country, New Home* campaign) was developed.

- o Following changes to the Estate Agents Act 1980 in May 2004, and discussions with the newly created Victorian Property Fund, the group was reconvened and agreed upon one model with a strong service delivery component and also a research component. The group then lodged an application with Victorian Property Fund for an education and networking project.

STATUS:

The project is ongoing. In December 2005 the working group was awaiting the outcome of its funding application. In March 2006 the funding application was approved and \$85, 750 was granted for the education and networking project, which will be developed during 2006.

ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING PROJECT 2

ISSUES: ⇒ *Improvement in housing, with a special focus on larger new-arrival families must be addressed by a range of service providers and authorities.*

PROJECT: Assess housing needs for larger families

PROGRESS:

- o Statistics were sought in 2004 from the Office of Housing initially to identify some key indicators on the availability of larger dwellings (4+bedrooms) amongst public housing stock.
- o In 2005 the Migrant Resource Centre North-West Region undertook an analysis of housing options available for large families in the Outer Western Region and produced a report: *An Assessment of Housing Needs and Barriers for Larger Families in the Brimbank Area.*
- o The Report concluded that:

Recently-arrived larger families have special needs and face a great number of barriers in being able to access appropriate and affordable housing:

- Whilst this group was previously accommodated in public housing, private housing rental is now the only option for most.
- Some improvements in accessing appropriate private rental has been made as service providers engage and work together with real estate agents but many more improvements are necessary.
- For any real change to occur, changes would need to be made to government policy.

STATUS:

The project will continue in 2006.

ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING PROJECT 3

- ISSUES:**
- ⇒ *Lack of appropriate housing to suit larger families in rural areas*
 - ⇒ *Lack of housing stock both private and public in rural areas*
 - ⇒ *Lack of information about accommodation availability in rural areas*

PROJECT: Explore strategies for meeting the accommodation demands in rural and regional Victoria

PROGRESS:

- In line with the role, the Rural and Regional Settlement Planning Officer sought to identify the various information points regarding accommodation in rural communities. The issue of accommodation is a complex one, with regions having different circumstances i.e., aged farming property, newer property that is either too small or too expensive. Generally however, through 2005, accommodation was met either by sponsors of Visa Class 202 holders or by the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme providers. Some anecdotal evidence exists that overcrowding of accommodation was taking place in some regions but generally access to housing via the private rental market has been facilitated.
- Nevertheless, issues of discrimination in the housing sector, lack of ability to meet bond costs, and lack of appropriate housing will continue to be an issue as the rural and regional sector continues to encourage more arrivals both through the various skilled migration schemes and the humanitarian scheme.

STATUS:

2005 has been about understanding the needs in the rural sector. The 2006 operational plan will continue to look at the issues in more detail. These issues include the continuing need to: improve understanding between refugees and real estate agents; stay abreast of Office of Housing initiatives in the rural sector; and look at obstacles to home ownership amongst newly arrived refugees.

INFORMATION PROJECT 1

- ISSUES:**
- ⇒ *Need for access to accurate information in rural/regional areas*
 - ⇒ *Lack of coordinated information exchange amongst service providers*
 - ⇒ *Lack of information about government and non-government services*
 - ⇒ *Information does not have a regional/locality based focus*

PROJECT: The VSPC will provide advice and assistance to service providers and community groups in regional Victoria to establish and maintain local area strategies by which issues affecting migrants' access to settlement services can be addressed.

PROGRESS:

Since the introduction of the Settlement Planning Officer (Rural and Regional) position within the VSPC Secretariat, and throughout 2005, the incumbent has promoted better communication between key rural and regional stakeholders and service providers to provide information and knowledge regarding rural migration programs, as well as strategies for meeting the holistic settlement needs. This has included:

- o the direct support in 2005 of three new Local Settlement Planning Committees (LSPCs) in Colac, Mildura and Swan Hill;
- o the strengthening of information dissemination and communication between rural city councils throughout Victoria; and
- o working directly with key stakeholders to develop appropriate strategies for meeting humanitarian arrivals needs locally.

STATUS:

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs recognised the importance of the role and has maintained the position. The incumbent will continue to work closely with rural stakeholders to ensure information is provided accurately on settlement issues through the Local Settlement Planning Committee network.

INFORMATION PROJECT 2

ISSUES: ⇒ *“Welcome to Victoria” Kits need to be regularly updated so they are current, reliable and reflect the wide range of services available.*

PROJECT: Continue cooperation of an inter-agency working group to review DIMIA’s on-line Settlement Kits and make recommendations about content and links to additional websites.

PROGRESS:

- o As in previous years, an inter-agency group including VSPC members consulted twice during 2005 (May and November) to consider corrections, updates and enhancements to the Welcome to Victoria Kit. An upgrade to the IT infrastructure now allows the updates to be done on-line via the Automated Settlement Information Kit Update Tool (ASIKUT) and work on translations to be commenced more quickly.

STATUS:

The project will be ongoing in 2006 to ensure continuous improvement and integrity of the *Welcome to Victoria Kit*.

INFORMATION PROJECT 3

ISSUES: ⇒ *Need in rural areas to explain what appropriate settlement is.*
 ⇒ *Lack of strategic planning framework to assist rural communities.*
 ⇒ *Information does not have a regional/locality based focus.*

PROJECT: To develop and promote a ‘How to...’ for country communities assisting migrant and refugee settlers. The *Victorian Welcome Toolbox* will outline steps to sensitise communities to the needs of migrant and refugee settlers and equip communities with the tools to respond to those needs. To achieve these aims the Toolbox will:

- o outline key migrant and refugee needs;
- o provide case studies and good practice solutions to common hurdles to successful settlement;

- identify local stakeholders in responding to settlement issues;
- promote participation in local collaborative planning forums or the formation of local settlement planning committees;
- provide formal avenues for rural and regional settlement forums to have ongoing communication with the VSPC; and
- offer ongoing support from DIMIA Victoria's settlement planning resources, including advice on managing forums, information for migrants and settlement data.

PROGRESS:

- Throughout 2005 work progressed on the key document, *A Victorian Welcome Toolbox*. The document outlined the important aspects of settlement especially for humanitarian entrants. As well as the main document, a number of supplementary publications were included in the pack to further build knowledge. These included: *Beginning a Life in Australia Booklet – Welcome to Victoria*; Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) Information folder; Model for assessing translating and interpreting requirements; *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*; *A Good Practice Guide for Culturally Responsive Government Services*; *Resource Gateway: for teachers working with refugee young people in Victoria*; *Good Practice Principles- Guide for Working with Refugee Young People* and a guide to the role of police in Australia.
- Final feedback sessions were held with DIMIA-funded rural community project officers in June 2005 and final approval sought from VSPC members in August. The Toolbox was formally launched by the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs at the November 2005 VSPC meeting held in Shepparton.
- The document was then disseminated to all rural and regional stakeholders including local councils, DIMIA funded community project officers and other key agencies in rural and regional Victoria. Over 100 copies have now been distributed and the document is now accessible via the DIMIA internet site.

STATUS:

The project is complete, however, the Rural and Regional Settlement Planning Officer will review the content on a yearly basis to ensure currency.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECT 1

ISSUES ⇒ *Undertake further action and advocacy to address barriers to recognition of overseas qualifications, including trades.*

PROJECT: Liaise with key stakeholders in order to investigate strategies to improve the process of and access to overseas skills and qualifications recognition.

Facilitate the dissemination, both pre and post arrival, of information regarding the recognition of overseas skills and qualifications.

PROGRESS:

- The working group developed a website resource for assessment of overseas qualifications. The website is intended for use by overseas qualified professionals, paraprofessionals, tradespeople and technicians. The website resource serves as an information portal through which users can access information and links to websites to assist with the recognition of overseas qualifications. This project will soon be placed on departmental websites.

STATUS:

This project will continue in 2006

EMPLOYMENT PROJECT 2

- ISSUES:
- ⇒ *The shortage of childcare places acts as a barrier to migrants entering the labour market generally.*
 - ⇒ *Existing childcare options are sometimes culturally inaccessible.*
 - ⇒ *For those who are prevented from accessing the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) through difficulties obtaining childcare, their settlement prospects can be adversely affected in both the short and long term.*

PROJECT: Investigate and promote new models to address Childcare shortages and cultural relevance.

PROGRESS:

- PANEL DISCUSSION: Working Group members led a panel discussion at the Family Day Care (FDC) group training retreat held in Marysville on 2 March 2005. Attended by FDC administrators from all over Victoria, there was intense interest in the scenarios of cultural "conflict" that were workshopped and the ways that some of them could have, or had, been resolved.
- CHILDCARE SURVEY: The Working Group investigated *Awareness and Attitudes to Childcare Options* by conducting a survey, which was circulated to AMEP providers, MRCs/MSAs, DIMIA funded settlement agencies and all Seminar attendees. Responses to the survey confirmed very long waiting times for Long Day Care but corresponding lower awareness of other styles of childcare. It also confirmed that, despite the difficulties cited in obtaining childcare, parents were nevertheless exercising choice when accessing childcare. Further analysis of the survey was published in the Working Group's Achievements 2004-05 Report.
- MANUAL: The Working Group collaborated to compile learnings from its activities together with research by FKA Children's Services into a single resource to enhance the ability of FDC Schemes to recruit, retain and support CALD carers and to provide culturally and linguistically inclusive FDC environments. The project work to create this resource was undertaken by FKA Children's Services and funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCSIA). The resulting 40-page *Cultural Diversity and Accreditation in Family Day Care* Manual provides practical information for FDC Schemes to support CALD carers to meet accreditation requirements into the Quality Assurance (QA) system and has been distributed to all 73 new and existing FDC schemes in Victoria.
- TRAINING: Training of FDC field workers and co-ordinators was conducted in three locations during November 2005 to introduce them to the *Cultural Diversity and Accreditation in Family Day*

Care Manual. The three sessions were positively received, with participation by 27 out of Victoria's 72 FDC Schemes and a strong representation from rural areas. The feedback received via the evaluation indicated that the participants were very happy with the opportunity for practical application of the resource and the opportunity to link Cultural Diversity in with Quality Assurance requirements

- The convening of the VSPC Childcare Issues Working Group enabled a productive dialogue and exchange of issues between stakeholders, provider administrators and other interested parties.
- While it was never expected to make any major adjustments to budgeted items such as childcare places, entitlements or training placements, or to alter any regulations governing the sector, the Working Group was able to build capacity in the Family Day Care sector, after identifying the latter as a potential source of sustainable growth in the supply side of Childcare. The exercise revealed that the efforts and success rates in tapping the potential of CALD carers across the State were very different, but that many Family Day Care schemes not already experiencing success were interested in doing better. This was achieved by professional development activities such as the Seminar (2004), Panel Discussion, and Manual Training, and supported by the Manual as an ongoing reference.

STATUS:

This project is complete. The Working Group's Final Report was tabled to the VSPC in February 2006.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECT 3

ISSUES: ⇒ *Rural and regional areas indicated interest in attracting workforce from small and emerging communities to fill labour shortages.*

PROJECT: Assist in building appropriate strategies to ensure smooth transition for new migrants into the rural workforce. Liaise with employers/employer groups to understand the settlement needs of newly arrived and refugee workers.

PROGRESS:

- The Victorian Government's *Jobs for Victoria* program operated a number of initiatives in 2005 which addressed the issues delineated by the project. These included: Community Jobs Program (including both the Jobs and Training and the Employment Initiatives components), the Jobs For Young People (JYP) Program, and the Community Regional Industry Skills Program (CRISP) - Communities. While new funding is not available for these programs, some projects are still being completed.
- These programs have been replaced by Workforce Participation Partnerships which will place increased emphasis on the most disadvantaged job seekers, on their pathways to sustainable employment, and on flexibility to respond to local, regional and industry labour and skills needs.
- The Regional Jobs Package, a short term one-off funded project, was successfully delivered in 2005.
- *Community Regional Industry Skills Program (CRISP) – Communities*
CRISP aims to strengthen rural and regional communities by providing targeted funding to address skill shortages, creating sustainable employment and industries in country Victoria.

CRISP - Communities provides assistance to communities to develop innovative approaches to meet the skill requirements of local industry in country Victoria. In 2004-05 the CRISP Communities funded 30 projects that addressed skill shortages and gaps in labour supply.

- *Workforce Participation Partnerships*
Workforce Participation Partnerships was launched on 23 November 2005. It will provide sustainable jobs for Victorians who face difficulties entering the workforce, and assist employers to meet their skill and labour needs.

The program supports creative, flexible solutions to local, regional or state-wide skill needs that provide sustainable employment for unemployed Victorians. The new program will assist Victorians facing significant barriers to employment, including people from CALD communities, refugees and recently arrived migrants, and eligible residents of Neighbourhood Renewal areas, many of which are rural. Partnerships can include a wide range of partners including industry, unions, local government, employment services, training providers, and community organisations.

STATUS:

This project is complete.

LANGUAGE SERVICES PROJECT 1

- ISSUES:**
- ⇒ *Need for access to appropriate language services to ensure Non-English Speaking Background migrants are able to gain timely access to services.*
 - ⇒ *Lack of interpreters in newly emerging languages.*
 - ⇒ *Lack of information about language services and the importance of using accredited interpreters.*

PROJECT: The Language Services Working Group will continue to track new and emerging languages, in consultation with language service providers and purchasers, promote the importance of using appropriate language services in mainstream service delivery and provide advice on working with interpreters.

PROGRESS:

- While the original working group has not met since late 2004, the VSPC Secretariat, through its representative on the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) Regional Advisory Committee has liaised on issues affecting the delivery of accredited and timely interpreting and translating services. Some of the issues have included:
 - revalidation of the interpreting profession; working with education providers towards an increase of potential interpreters entering the profession;
 - professional development days, and
 - promotion of opportunities within the interpreting industry including both State and Commonwealth government subsidising education and accreditation in demand languages. (Commonwealth Government support forthcoming as recommended through the Review of Settlement Service for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants - Recommendation 53.)
- The VSPC Secretariat has also liaised with the Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS) to promote the service to service providers and other key users of language services.

STATUS:

The project will move forward in 2006 with the VSPC Secretariat reconvening the working group.

REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE PROJECT 1

ISSUES: ⇒ *A set of service principles does not currently exist for professionals working with refugee young people. Hence, they lack a framework establishing consistent services across the sector, responsive to the situation of refugee young people.*

PROJECT: The Refugee Young People Good Practice Principles Working Group (RYPGPP) will further investigate the service needs of newly arrived young people from refugee and refugee-like backgrounds and identify good practice principles and strategies to address those needs.

PROGRESS:

- The working group, comprising membership from the NGO and government sectors, produced a written resource on principles for working with refugee young people. The completed document, known as *Good Practice Principles: Guide for Working with Refugee Young People*, was developed as a tool to improve the way all services work with refugee young people. The Good Practice Principles were built around three core values that underpin what workers do: understanding, trust and social justice and access. For each value a number of principles were specified with suggested strategies for implementation. Case examples have been used to demonstrate how these values and principles can be applied.
- The Guide was printed (500 copies) through funding from the Office of Youth Affairs, VOMA and DIMIA.
- The GPP guide was launched by the Hon Jacinta Allan, Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs at the Diversity in Health Conference on 19 October 2005. In addition, drawing on her own experiences Faten Mohamed spoke about the importance of the Guide to assist workers in responding to the breadth of needs of refugee young people.
- The GPP guide has been distributed to a range of agencies/departments and is available on the DIMIA website. http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/_pdf/GPP_July2005.pdf It has also been used as a reference point in a number of consultations in the sector in developing service responsiveness to refugee young people.

STATUS:

With the production and launch of the GPP Guide the project is now complete.

REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE PROJECT 2

ISSUES: ⇒ Lack of quality assurance around CALD Youth and Family Services as exists for the Aged Care sector

PROJECT: Investigate the development of a Cultural Planning tool for Youth and Family services.

PROGRESS:

- Stakeholder and agency consultations were undertaken by FaCS in the course of its 'Review of the Family Relationships Services Program' (FRSP), which identified a number of particular population groups seen as poorly served by the Program.
- Agencies consulted in the course of the review frequently reported that they did not deliver adequate services to people of non-English speaking background. Figures suggested that people whose first language is not English account for only about 2.5 per cent of FRSP clients overall, whereas they represent around 15 per cent of the Australian population. Nevertheless, there are numbers of FRSP agencies providing programs designed to reach out to various culturally and linguistically diverse communities. For example, Centacare Broken Bay's Men and Family Relationships program ('Hey Dad') is one of a number of Men and Family Relationship initiatives that involve work with such communities. Centacare Catholic Family Services in Melbourne has also been successful in working with CALD communities to provide family relationships education and support.
- Despite the fact that there are some successful or promising initiatives in place, there was recognition within the sector that the task of providing adequate services for CALD communities was great, and that existing resources were not adequate for the purpose.
- Given the distinctive issues and barriers that may affect people and families of non-English speaking background, it was widely accepted that it was not sufficient simply to try to make existing services more accessible to these different client groups. Rather, FRSP agencies need to develop innovative approaches designed to take account of diverse communities. Among other things, this is likely to require working with and through credible ethnic community organisations – as a number of FRSP-funded agencies have begun to do. Another approach has been for the FRSP to fund agencies serving CALD communities directly, such as the Migrant Resource Centre at Preston (Melbourne) and the Australian Greek Welfare Society. In light of the potential sensitivity of family relationships issues, the point was often made that the first step may be to find effective ways of engaging community members – probably around something less contentious such as parenting education, men's health, family recreational activities or the like.
- The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) advised that a report commissioned by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in collaboration with AGD, entitled *Partners in Any Language*, contained a range of recommendations on what could be done by relationship counselling services to improve access by CALD clients.

STATUS:

The project is complete.

REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE PROJECT 3

ISSUES: ⇒ *Focusing on young people in transition (aged 12-24) focussing on education, retention rates and pathways to employment.*

PROJECT: Study and collate current practice in the coordination of education and training programs for refugee young people.

PROGRESS:

- The working group developed an issues paper "Learning Pathways for Refugee Young People".
- The issues paper was published and distributed to relevant government agencies and education providers in January 2005. The document identified the key learning barriers facing newly arrived refugee young people, particularly those moving through compulsory education to training and employment.
- The group also developed a Transitions Timeline/Framework Map (July 2005) document which identified and examined various pathways from the time youth arrive in Victoria to Employment (Full-time, Part-time, Casual) or, alternatively, "fallen through the gaps".

STATUS:

The group expects to launch a framework for action for workers and policy makers supporting transitions by refugee young people in mid 2006.

REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE PROJECT 4

ISSUES: ⇒ *Innovative crime prevention project*

PROJECT: Monitor and provide continuing guidance to the Independent Person's Program established under the Crime Prevention Victoria initiative. (Reference Group and Watching Brief)

PROGRESS:

- The Youth Referral Independent Persons Project (YRIPP) Steering Committee was invited to the Victorian Government's Community Safety and Crime Prevention Awards in May 2005. YRRIP won the award for "Enhancing Safety in Indigenous and Diverse Communities", which was presented to Carmel Guerra (Director, CMYI) by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon Tim Holding.
- YRIPP's key achievements for 2005: established the State-wide infrastructure for 24-hour police callouts of Independent Persons; developed a comprehensive training manual for volunteers; trained over 100 volunteers; established a 24-hour legal advice line, staffed by Victoria Legal Aid solicitors; attended over 200 police interviews to support young people, around 20% of whom were Indigenous and 10% CALD; and referred approximately 50 young people to health and welfare support services to address risk factors associated with offending.

STATUS:

In 2006, the project will continue developing a bilingual information brochure for Police on understanding the role of the Independent Person.

PLANNING PROJECT 1

- ISSUES:**
- ⇒ To improve coordination between service providers (where appropriate) by the identification of target group settlement patterns.
 - ⇒ To identify gaps and duplications in services provided by mainstream agencies.

PROJECT: The Victorian Settlement Planning Committee will contribute to a needs-based planning framework to inform the provision of funded settlement services.

PROGRESS:

- The VSPC Secretariat collated identified settlement needs arising from community consultations, settlement worker reports, and reports from other planning forums. The needs were documented regionally and matched with arrival statistics then compared against existing services and which agencies funded those services. Analysis was conducted as to whether existing services were adequately meeting those needs or whether they required further adjustments or participation by other agencies.
- The resulting draft copy of the Needs Table was made available for review and comment by stakeholders, mainstream organisations and community groups. Feedback from the review process was incorporated into a final document for endorsement by the VSPC.
- The draft copy of the Needs Table was presented to the VSPC membership for endorsement at the August 2005 meeting. Following endorsement and the inclusion of further feedback, the Needs Table was referred DIMIA National Office to inform the DIMIA funding of migrant and settlement services in Victoria.

Local Settlement Planning Committee Evaluation

- Acting on the concerns raised by Directors of two Migrant Resource Centres, DIMIA agreed to auspice an evaluation of the activities and membership of Local Settlement Planning Committees (LSPCs). Concerns included the perception that LSPCs no longer focused on strategic activities and had become information sharing sessions. Additional concerns about the level of membership of LSPCs and the communication between the Victorian Settlement Planning Committees and LSPCs were also raised.
- DIMIA's Settlement Planning Unit developed a questionnaire, which was sent to twenty Local Settlement Planning Committees in both metropolitan and non metropolitan areas. The responses were analysed and formed the basis of the evaluation of the activities and membership of Local Settlement Planning Committees.

STATUS:

The needs-based planning activity will continue in 2006. The LSPC evaluation will be completed during 2006.

Summary of Major Achievements and Developments

Breadth of representation from government agencies and community groups.

VSPC projects and working groups continued to include individuals from a wide range of agencies and organisations, including Government Departments, NGOs, funded agencies, associations and private companies. As part of Victoria's contribution to DIMIA's Needs Based Planning Framework, VSPC agencies participated in the review and endorsement of the Needs Table that had been developed in consultation with community sector stakeholders. This broad participation promotes integration of services and better coordination of new projects. The VSPC itself welcomed a new member in 2005, AMES IHSS Consortium.

Local Settlement Planning Committee Evaluation

In response to concerns raised by the sector, the VSPC Secretariat undertook an evaluation of the activities and membership of Local Settlement Planning Committees. DIMIA Settlement Planning team developed a questionnaire, which was sent to twenty Local Settlement Planning Committees in both metropolitan and non metropolitan areas. The responses were analysed and formed the basis of the evaluation of the activities and membership of Local Settlement Planning Committees. The activity will continue during 2006, with the report due to be tabled at the May 2006 VSPC meeting.

Publications, Reports and Campaigns

The Good Practice Principles Guide

Good Practice Principles: Guide for Working with Refugee Young People (GPP) was developed as a tool to improve the way all services work with refugee young people. The Good Practice Principles were built around three core values: Understanding, Trust and Social Justice & Access. The Guide was printed (500 copies) through funding from the Office of Youth Affairs, VOMA and DIMIA. The GPP guide was launched by The Hon Jacinta Allan, Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs at the Diversity in Health Conference on 19 October 2005. The GPP Guide has been distributed to a range of agencies/departments and is available on the DIMIA website.

The Childcare Issues Working Group

The Working Group investigated awareness of, and attitudes to childcare options by conducting a survey, which was circulated to AMEP providers, MRCs/MSAs, DIMIA funded settlement agencies and all Seminar attendees. Working Group members also led panel discussions at the Family Day Care (FDC) group training retreat held in Marysville on 2 March 2005. The learnings from its activities were compiled together with research by FKA Children's Services into a single resource to enhance the ability of FDC Schemes to recruit, retain and support CALD carers and to provide culturally and linguistically inclusive FDC environments. The resulting 40-page *Cultural Diversity and Accreditation in Family Day Care* Manual provides practical information for FDC Schemes to support CALD carers to meet accreditation requirements into the Quality Assurance (QA) system and has been distributed to all 73 new and existing FDC schemes in Victoria.

Welcome Toolbox

The publication *A Victorian Welcome Toolbox*, which explains to rural communities the important aspects of settlement especially for humanitarian entrants, product was formally launched by the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs at the November 2005 VSPC meeting in Shepparton.

The Toolbox has been disseminated to all rural and regional stakeholders including local councils, DIMIA funded community project officers and other key agencies in rural and regional Victoria. Over 100 copies have now been distributed and the document is now accessible via the DIMIA internet site.

Bond loan education and networking project

The VSPC working group developed a model for an education and networking project with both a strong service delivery and a research component, which the Victorian Property Fund approved in early 2006 as an \$85,750 education and networking project

Housing options for larger families

In 2005, the Migrant Resource Centre North-West Region undertook an analysis of housing options available for large families in the Outer Western Region and produced a report: *An Assessment of Housing Needs and Barriers for Larger Families in the Brimbank Area*.

Rural and Regional Settlement

The VSPC held its November 2005 meeting in Shepparton, to show support for rural settlement and specifically in recognition of Shepparton's Regional Humanitarian Pilot, where a number of Congolese refugee families are being settled directly. This occasion gave local stakeholders the opportunity to participate in a VSPC meeting and enabled VSPC members to familiarise themselves at first hand with the attributes of that city as a resettlement locality.

DiVersified

DIMIA's Settlement Planning and Information Unit produced a redesigned and more comprehensive settlement bulletin, renamed DiVersified. Diversified was published quarterly during 2005 and carried items of news and information related to settlement issues, from DIMIA and other government Departments and community service providers. Circulation grew to more than 2500 recipients.

Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society

Reporting on Principles by VSPC Members

What is the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*?

The *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* is the Commonwealth's strategy for ensuring the diverse needs of all Australians are met by culturally responsive government services.

The *Charter* was formally launched by the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in July 1998 and has been endorsed by Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, as well as the Australian Local Government Association. Thus it represents a nationally consistent approach to the delivery of culturally responsive government services.

The *Charter* represents an approach to access and equity emphasising the building of cultural diversity into the strategic planning, policy development, budgeting and reporting processes of government service delivery. These principles apply to services provided by government agencies, community organisations and commercial enterprises.

The *Charter* summarises seven principles central to the design, delivery, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of quality government services in a culturally diverse society. These are **access, equity, communication, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability**.

The first four principles are about ensuring that clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds face no barriers to receiving government services; are treated fairly; are given clear information about their entitlements and obligations; and are assisted by client service staff in ways that meet their particular needs.

The remaining three principles are about ensuring that service providers: get results for their clients; assist their clients in a timely way; and report to Parliament on the outcomes they have achieved for their clients.

Reporting against the *Charter*

For the purpose of this report, VSPC members were asked to report on their agencies' achievements under the seven principles of the Charter during the period January – December 2005. Members provided some "snapshot" examples that demonstrate the strongest achievements of the organisation. Where possible, members have included qualitative and quantitative performance information.

Some of the examples are pertinent for more than one principle.

1. Access

Government services should be available to everyone who is entitled to them and should be free of any form of discrimination irrespective of a person's country of birth, language, culture, race or religion.

AMES

AMEP

In 2005, AMES continued its drive to bring the AMEP as "close to home" as possible in Victoria to ensure eligible learners had the opportunity to access the program. AMES has supported this by the work of Field Officers whose role is to locate learners with an AMEP entitlement and work to achieve the most effective access strategy with local education providers to suit those learners.

Skilled migrants

AMES continued to support the settlement of skilled migrants and refugees from CALD backgrounds in Victoria by providing a holistic service to assist skilled professional migrants achieve their career goals. In 2005, 124 skilled migrants registered with the Employment Skills Centre – a high percentage were engineers, accountants, IT professionals and business administrators from India, Sri Lanka, China and South America.

Centrelink

High Quality Translation and Interpreter Services

During 2005, approximately 155 on-call interpreters were booked daily covering 98 languages. There were around 39,000 on-call interpreter bookings. The Victorian Language Services Coordinator and Multicultural Service Officers (MSOs) monitored the use of on-call and sessional interpreters on a regular basis to cater for customer needs. There was an increase in the use of 'on demand' telephone interpreter service to assist with incidental customer contacts and unscheduled appointments. This service and the *Centrelink Multilingual Call* 131202 continued to be heavily promoted to Victorian customers and communities.

The efforts to identify and procure interpreters in the languages of the emerging communities including African languages, through liaison with community groups, training and employment providers, ethnic media and on-line job search sites, proved to be highly successful with the engagement of over 50 new interpreters from Victoria covering 48 different languages.

Enhancement to the Centrelink mainframe enabled staff to choose from a more extensive range of languages to reflect customers' individual preferred language and interpreter needs.

Support for Rural and Regional Communities

To support the recent trends in settlement in rural and regional centres, a network of Multicultural Contact Officers has been established in Area West Victoria. These staff cooperate with Multicultural Service Officers (MSOs) to provide advice to community workers as well as to Centrelink staff on issues involving multicultural services. Centrelink representatives including MSOs met with settlement workers and community agencies from rural and regional Victoria to brief them on Centrelink resources and referral processes to improve service delivery to refugee groups and new migrants supported by the State Government Regional Migration Incentive Fund (RMIF). Centrelink was actively represented on a number of RMIF committees and contributed to the DIMIA regional settlement strategies in Shepparton, Wangaratta, Sunraysia, Warrnambool, Colac and Geelong.

Promotion of Self Service options

The promotion of self service options has continued as a Centrelink priority and during the year presentations were delivered to customers undertaking AMEP and LLNP classes and as part of community information sessions. To support the delivery of information about self service channels, Victorian MSOs developed a presentation specifically aimed at DCALB customers. A report was prepared documenting the Victorian DCALB self service communication strategy, recognised as 'best practice'. The strategy contributed to a noticeable increase in the number of migrant and refugee background customers accessing Centrelink services on-line and over the telephone.

Outsourcing and Outreach arrangements

Centrelink continued to be actively engaged in the community through representation on numerous inter-agency and community bodies. This included active membership on the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee and its working groups, Local Settlement Planning Committees and Ethnic Communities Councils.

All Victorian MSOs and Centrelink staff with particular expertise delivered Centrelink services and information sessions in community agency settings on a regular basis. This information included services and assistance related to the range of payments, portability of payments overseas, debt management and participation. This work was undertaken in cooperation with numerous agencies including English language and vocational training providers, MRCs, community houses and during network meetings of community workers. Links were maintained with the state government's Neighbourhood Renewal program across several municipalities, through the conduct of outreach activities. An example of the benefit of effective partnerships between Centrelink and English language providers was the maintenance of a smooth transition for students moving from AMEP to LLNP, to overcome language barriers to support their pathway to participation.

DE&T – Office of Learning and Teaching

ESL students enrolled in schools outside the metropolitan area continued to be supported during 2005. A number of schools in non metropolitan Victoria received ESL funding to provide on-going support for ESL learners. In some areas, such as Mildura, Shepparton, Wodonga and Warrnambool, school data was aggregated and funding provided to a cluster.

New arrivals programs in Geelong and Shepparton supported 85 new arrival students. Primary and secondary newly arrived students needing ESL support in other non-metropolitan and the metropolitan fringe areas received assistance through the *Isolated ESL Student Support Program*, which consisted of two forms of support:

Direct – funding is provided to release an ESL-qualified teacher on staff, or to employ an ESL-qualified casual relief teacher, to provide ESL support to the student.

Mentor – where an ESL-qualified teacher is not available, funding is provided to enable a staff member to attend an English language school or centre for mentor support, during which areas such as monitoring ESL development, resource selection and teaching strategies are covered. The participating school also receives funding to employ a casual relief teacher while the staff member supports the newly arrived student.

Eighty seven students from 54 schools accessed the *Isolated ESL Student Support Program* in 2005. In addition a number of schools in non metropolitan Victoria received ESL funding to provide on-going support for ESL learners.

DEWR

DEWR acknowledges the barriers affecting job seekers of CALD backgrounds and is committed to providing customised service delivery for different client groups. Language can be a significant obstacle for migrant job seekers when using services to find work and DEWR has implemented a number of strategies to overcome this.

DEWR produces five brochures which explain the role of the Job Network and the services it delivers to job seekers in 21 different languages. These brochures are readily accessible from the internet and there are also printed versions. The brochures available are:

- o Job Seekers: Your Guide to Job Network
- o Employment Services Code of Practice
- o Service Guarantee
- o Job Placement
- o Specialist Services

DEWR also provides interpreters to assist CALD clients with enquiries in person or over the telephone. Job Network Members are able to request interpreters for interviews with job seekers. Telephone services, such as Wageline and the Employment Services Customer Service Line are often assisted by the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS). Within the DEWR Victorian office, a Bilingual Register is kept that contains a list of 17 staff members who speak 11 different languages. These staff members are available to be called upon for interpreting services for clients.

DEWR not only strives to extend the accessibility of its services to all job seekers, but also recognises the need to educate its providers about culturally and linguistically sensitive etiquette. The CALD Toolbox is an information guide available to all Job Network Members. It includes background information on Australia's current immigration situation, a list of services and resources available for migrants and refugees, the barriers to services job seekers face and strategies to overcome them, and guidelines on helping CALD clients find work. It also provides assistance in promoting the benefits of CALD clients to employers and highlights the importance of partnerships with community groups and understanding the local trends related to CALD job seekers.

DoHA

In 2005 there were 354 new aged care places approved for funding to deliver aged care services to Victorians who are primarily from CALD backgrounds.

DHS

Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2005-2008.

Launched October 2005, this Plan recognises that the complex health needs of people from a refugee background require a focused approach. A significant and new initiative profiled in the Plan is the Refugee Health Nurse Program which funds nurse positions (4.5 EFT) in 8 selected community health centres ('sentinel sites' for refugee health) to provide comprehensive health and social needs assessments to refugee clients, promote social connection by coordinating social support and orientation programs and supporting other health service providers to develop refugee specific initiatives and culturally appropriate practices.

DIMIA

Visa Services and Citizenship has established a Client Reference Group for Victoria that includes education providers, migration agents and other stakeholders and will function as an external representative group to provide advice and comment on the quality and appropriateness of DIMIA's service delivery in Victoria and within the national network. It will also examine alternative models of service delivery including opening hours, outreach programs, e-services and the appointment system.

A Regional Humanitarian Settlement Pilot Program for up to ten Congolese families in Shepparton was developed during 2005 and was formally launched by the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs on 17 November 2005. A local Committee was established to coordinate access to local services and to promote the successful settlement of this new community.

TIS National has actively supported access to information by non-English speakers by consulting and planning to ensure that contract interpreters are recruited for those languages where demand is growing, particularly in new and emerging communities.

DoJ

The Department of Justice (DoJ) is in the process of finalising a three-year *Cultural Diversity Plan* that will provide comprehensive strategies for improving multicultural communities' access to and knowledge of the legal system. The DoJ *Cultural Diversity Plan* will be publicly launched in June 2006.

DoJ launched the *Justice Translations* website on 26 August 2005. The development of *Justice Translations* followed the successful development by DHS of the *Health Translations Directory*. The aim of the website is to enhance the accessibility of translated justice related information in Victoria. *Justice Translations* can be found at: www.translations.justice.vic.gov.au

EOCV

Simply Your Rights in 19 different languages

In 2005 the Equal Opportunity Commission launched a new package of resources in 19 different languages called *Simply Your Rights*. The *Simply Your Rights* kit includes information about the EOCV and anti-discrimination legislation in a user friendly fact sheet format and an accompanying CDROM. Focus testing with these communities has revealed great acceptance of the material and the new format.

MAV

Get out there! (City of Darebin)

This program was designed to give older adults and new migrants the confidence and knowledge to use public transport. It was a three stage program, with both stages 1 and 2 involving the community in delivering the program to their peers. Older adults and new migrants were recruited and trained as volunteers to help others in their demographic to use trams/trains/buses. These volunteers were paired with people in the community who registered to find out more about public transport in a practical sense.

Neighbourhood House Initiatives (City of Casey)

Throughout 2005 Casey's 12 Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres have been actively engaged in increasing access to their programs and facilities. Each Neighbourhood House or

Community Learning Centre received a specific grant in addition to their general operating and staff costs, and were assisted to identify a particular access need in their community. A wide range of projects has resulted from these initiatives and there has been increased access by the CALD communities of Casey.

Bus Tours (City of Whittlesea)

A number of orientation bus tours were organised and conducted for newly arrived migrants and refugees, who have settled in the City of Whittlesea.

Northern AMEP Consortium (NAC)

The Northern AMEP offers the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) from 13 locations of nine member organisations, giving eligible clients access to AMEP in TAFE, Higher Education and ACE (Adult Community Education) settings in the northern Melbourne region. Newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants completing their AMEP hours may then exit to a wide range of State-funded English language, pre vocational and training programs and to DEST's Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program.

The Northern AMEP organisations are NMIT, RMIT, Kangan Batman TAFE, Meadow Heights Learning Shop, Moreland Adult Education, Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education (PRACE), Olympic Adult Education, Wingate Ave Community Centre and Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre.

Northern AMEP Youth Programs

A feature of the Northern AMEP provision is the innovative programs for youth (18 to 26 years of age) at a number of sites. These continue to build participants' awareness of and access to services such as health, recreation, housing and mentoring, as well as pathways to further study and employment. The program model has a focus on developing the capacity of mainstream services to understand and respond to the needs of refugee youth.

VICPOL

City of Kingston Project

In 2005 Victoria Police was a partner in a City of Kingston program developed for young people from local New and Emerging Communities, focussing on the role of Victoria's Emergency Services.

The Program was open to youth across all of Kingston's New and Emerging Communities, and included orientation days at both the Oakleigh Fire Station and the Victoria Police Academy. Participants were provided with advice on fire safety and street safety. At the completion of the program participants attained a level one basic First Aid Certificate.

The Multi-Faith Council

In September 2005, the Hon Tim Holding, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon APM launched the first known Multi-Faith Council dealing exclusively with policing issues. The Multi-Faith Council was established in response to the ever increasing role of faith in our communities, and the relevance this has to policing services.

In addition to providing spiritual and support services, faith groups play a key role in all communities across Victoria. They are often at the forefront of connecting to youth, of undertaking volunteer-based activities, and providing for community engagement. This activity is central to the meaningful development of social capital, and very much in line with Victoria Police's notion of Community

Policing. Membership of the Council is drawn from a range of stakeholders from Victoria Police, Ethno-focused bodies, and faith based organisations.

With the purpose of advancing harmony and understanding across all sectors of the community, objectives of the Council include:

- consulting with and providing advice to religious and faith communities and/or Victoria Police;
- identifying any emerging religious issues or trends likely to create community interest or concern;
- facilitating effective communication between Victoria Police, Government agencies and faith communities; and
- advising Victoria Police on matters of religious significance.

VOMA

Language services

The Victorian Government is committed to recognising and supporting cultural diversity as a valuable economic, social and cultural asset for the State. The Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs (VOMA) has primary carriage of policy in this area, and the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) has responsibility for consultation with the multicultural community.

In 2005, VOMA continued to implement the four-year Language Services Strategy designed to improve the quality, supply and delivery of interpreting and translating services. Some of the key achievements in 2005 included:

- Funding scholarships for 39 students to undertake interpreting courses in Dari, Dinka, Oromo and Tigrinya.
- Supporting the development of a curriculum for a bilingual workers' course, and providing funding for students enrolled in certificate courses for bilingual workers at the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE and Chisholm Institute. Over 35 students were enrolled in these courses in 2005.
- Sponsorship of research into the numbers of speakers of emerging African languages in Victoria.
- Funding the Department of Human Services to deliver a professional development program for mental health professionals to help them work effectively with interpreters.
- Sponsorship of research into how CALD communities access language services within the Victorian health sector.
- Funding seven hospitals and eight community health services to train their staff on how to work effectively with interpreters.
- Funding a research report containing examples of good practice of language services provision in the health sector.
- Funding Victoria Police to develop a multimedia training package for officers assisting them to work effectively with interpreters.
- Developing a national interpreter symbol indicating where people accessing government services can request interpreters.

In addition to these projects, the Language Services Strategy is also addressing ways of monitoring the demand for language services and for improving funding and purchasing arrangements for government agencies which require the services of interpreters and translators to assist their clients.

2. Equity

Government services should be developed and delivered on the basis of fair treatment of clients who are eligible to receive them.

AMES

AMEP Youth Programs - Supporting refugee youth in education

In response to the special needs of the large number of younger refugees arriving in the last 2 years, AMES has greatly increased the variety and the number of youth programs and electives to cater holistically to their education and settlement needs. AMES established youth classes within the AMEP at four of its metropolitan centres (Noble Park, Footscray, St Albans and Dandenong) with 6 classes operating at all relevant educational levels. Classes at Footscray and Noble Park offer young people opportunities for development of English language skills integrated with Vocational Education and Training. In addition, AMES runs Youth Electives within the AMEP at AMES Box Hill and AMES Dandenong which combine English language study with a varied program of arts/crafts, excursions and sports activities of interest to young people and AMES Springvale offers an elective to young people in Vocational Education and Training.

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) Transition

In 2005 AMES built on its successful VCAL partnership with Debney Park Secondary School in Melbourne's West in a Transition to Secondary School Education VCAL program for newly arrived young refugees with interrupted schooling. Students are supported in this program by a Sudanese AMES worker who is able to communicate with them and their parents in their first language. This worker has been instrumental in helping students deal with personal issues related to settlement and in offering pastoral care to these young people, many of whom are unaccompanied minors dealing with household responsibilities alone.

In 2005 AMES partnered with two other metropolitan schools: Cleeland Secondary School in Dandenong and Forest Hill College in Blackburn to deliver a similar program. Community support from several organisations including Blackburn English Language School, Noble Park Language School, SE LLEN, Gateway LLEN, School Focused Youth Services, City of Whitehorse and Lions Clubs has resulted in extension activities such as a day program at the Metropolitan Traffic Education Centre and a residential camp at Mount Eliza. Retention rates over 2005 have been extremely high with waiting lists for some programs. The majority of students have elected to continue with their education in 2006. These programs, which allow young people to experience success and develop engagement in their learning, have been acknowledged by the Victorian Multicultural Commission in its 2005 Awards.

Promoting pathways to employment for culturally and linguistically diverse CALD learners in ACE

At the instigation of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board and in collaboration with ACE providers across Victoria, AMES has developed and implemented a targeted professional development strategy for teachers and tutors, volunteers, staff and members of committees of management to better assist newly arrived CALD learners. Conducted across Victoria in 2005, this program has described and disseminated good practice and model learning programs to maximise the simultaneous development of English language skills and vocational and employment preparedness, make more explicit the pathways/destinations of courses to teachers, tutors and learners and build self-confidence and empowerment of CALD learners to best position themselves to seek, gain and sustain employment. Due to be completed in early 2006, the project will develop and promote resources which support identified good practice, in particular resource templates which can be easily adapted by

providers to suit local situations. The Project will culminate in an AMES – ACFE Conference in early 2006.

Centrelink

Commitment to a coordinated approach for servicing newly arrived refugees.

In line with Centrelink's Refugee Servicing Model, strong relationships were established with the new IHSS provider, AMES and the consortium members, to ensure early access to Centrelink payments and services for the increasing number of refugee and SHP arrivals. This Model includes referral protocols between Centrelink and service providers as well as workflows tailored to the needs and circumstances of refugees. During the implementation stages of the new IHSS contract, Centrelink Multicultural Services staff were instrumental in providing information sessions to the new Case Coordinators and Community Guides. Ongoing liaison has been directed at meeting the settlement needs of refugees including newly arrived Burundian, Burmese, Sudanese and Liberian refugees through better access to the Centrelink Multilingual Call network and referral processes to service providers of education, childcare and employment including Job Network Members. Refugee Contact Officers set up in several Centrelink sites also supported this work. Such assistance continued to contribute to the timeliness of payments and satisfying outcomes for customers, their advocates, settlement workers and support agencies.

In the Geelong and Corio area Centrelink was an active member of the "Making Geelong Home Project" committee along with the MRC (Diversitat) and the City of Greater Geelong. The project was designed to identify settlement needs and issues of the newly arrived Sudanese community. Similarly Centrelink played a key role in supporting the arrival of the African refugees in the Shepparton area as part of the DIMIA rural settlement strategy.

Promoting equity issues and understanding

As in previous years, Centrelink through the work of MSOs and other specialists, played a key role in organising local activities for Refugee Week, Harmony Day, Families Week, Seniors Week, International Day of People with a DisAbility and local celebrations in cooperation with community service, training providers and local government. These events provided an excellent opportunity for staff to engage with external providers in their support of mutual customers.

DE&T – Office of Learning and Teaching

Refugee students

During 2005, initiatives introduced in 2004 to provide additional support for new arrival students on refugee and humanitarian visas with little, nil or severely interrupted schooling entering primary and secondary schools were extended.

Transition coordinators to English language schools and centres continued to support the transition of students from intensive English language programs to mainstream schools, meeting regularly throughout the year to share strategies and approaches.

Bridging programs in primary and secondary schools provided additional support for refugee and humanitarian students in their transition into the mainstream curriculum. Over 60 teachers and regional staff attended a full day professional development workshop where information and strategies for supporting new arrival students were shared.

A web-based resource for schools and teachers providing links to key information about settlement, welfare and educational issues was developed in the Refugee Education Partnership Program, a three year project established to achieve a more coordinated approach across the community education and government sectors to support refugee students in schools.

DEWR

DEWR actively promotes equity in service delivery for all job seekers. The DEWR Service Charter sets a high standard of open-minded, ethical, respectful and courteous behaviour between employees and clients of CALD backgrounds. All DEWR staff, Job Network providers and other contractors are governed by Commonwealth, State and local legislation and to adhere to the high standard of conduct expected in the Australian Public Service.

DEWR recognises the difficulties that people of CALD face in seeking employment. In delivering services to job seekers, Job Network Members are required to assess the individual's circumstances to determine their suitability for work in different industries and occupations. Thus every eligible job seeker has support and resources available to them to assist in job search as well as opportunities for training tailored to their needs and encouragement to broaden their skills.

DEWR recognises pre-migration trade skills and conducts assessments of eligible job seekers through Trades Recognition Australia (TRA). Prospective migrants are able to validate their trade skills prior to lodging a migration application. This service determines the level of training, skills, knowledge and experience of migrants in comparison to an Australian apprentice trained tradesperson. Similarly, TRA administers an Australian Recognised Trade Certificate under the *Tradesmen's Right Regulation Act 1946* to permanent Australian residents who have trained in prescribed metal and electrical trades outside of an Australian apprenticeship.

DoHA

The Aged Care Act 1997 specifies that a range of programs must support people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to maintain their cultural and religious preferences and practices whilst receiving aged care services funded by the Commonwealth.

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency monitors the quality of care that Commonwealth funded residential aged care services provide. As part of this monitoring, the Agency assesses the residential services' evidence that the individual resident's interests, customs, beliefs and cultural and ethnic backgrounds are valued and fostered.

The Charter of Residents Rights and Responsibilities which are displayed in every Commonwealth funded aged care service and are provided to each resident or their representative upon entering a facility, specify that each resident has the right to continue his or her cultural and religious practices, and to keep the language of his or her choice, without discrimination.

DHS

Language Services Policy

Launched in March 2005, this Policy is designed to ensure that Victorians with low levels of English proficiency enjoy the same access to health, housing and community services as the broader community. The Policy outlines requirements necessary to enable people who cannot speak English to

access professional interpreting and translating services when making significant life decisions and where essential information is being communicated.

DoJ

The Department of Justice is committed to developing and delivering services equitably to all Victorians. During 2005, the Department and its statutory agencies undertook the following projects:

The Judicial College of Victoria conducted a program on Horn of Africa Cultural Awareness on 29 April 2005, aimed at increasing judges' and magistrates' awareness of the Horn of Africa community.

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria held roundtable meetings with the Sudanese Jieng Association to engage and evaluate that community's needs. The Centre prepared content to assist community elders to understand the justice system and the role of mediators.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) established Multicultural Liaison Officer positions in each of the four MFB zones. The Multicultural Liaison Officers engage with CALD communities on a full-time basis.

The Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner implemented and evaluated the Coode Island Community Warning System. The project trialled an automated telephone message and information system that included delivery of the telephone message and other material in the person's language of choice. The project involved community members representing major CALD communities. The evaluation process included communication (telephone interviews and surveys) with CALD participants in their first language. One hundred percent of CALD participants who were involved in the trial also took part in the evaluation process.

A six-month *Play it Safe by the Water* campaign by the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner was initiated in November 2005. The campaign included advertising, public relations, multicultural communications in 16 languages and water safety community and school education. The languages selected targeted a mixture of established and newly arrived communities. A key strategy of the multicultural communications was the engagement of 16 community spokespersons or champions, who raised awareness of water safety in their language group through ethnic media.

Victoria Legal Aid's legal information and referral service answered 5,746 calls in languages other than English. This service was offered in 14 languages other than English.

EOCV

A Fair Go for Job-seekers

Age, sex and cultural fit can be a barrier to employment, an enquiry conducted by the Equal Opportunity Commission found. As a result of the enquiry the Commission, in collaboration with the recruitment industry and the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI), produced *A Fair Go for Job-seekers*, a set of best practice guidelines for the recruitment industry and employers.

Recruitment agencies are ideally placed, as a conduit between the job-seeker and the employer, to promote equal opportunity and improve access to employment for all people. The resource included CALD specific information about discrimination in employment based on race and religion.

MAV

Good Neighbour Awards (City of Darebin)

Community members were invited to nominate their neighbours and to highlight the important aspects of neighbourliness and certificates were provided by Council and the police at an awards ceremony. Over 200 people attend the function and 30 good neighbours were identified in the 2005 nominations. There were nominations from all ages and areas of Darebin but an overwhelming characteristic was the diversity and the fact that 80% of 'good neighbours' were from non-English speaking backgrounds. This program is constantly refined with input from the community and the categories to reflect the community enthusiasm, with last year's nomination including an entire street.

Awards for Excellence in Multilingual Communication (City of Darebin)

In September 2004 Darebin Council launched awards which reward internal Council departments in their attempts and achievements in producing inclusive written communication. The awards recognise Best Practice, Good Practice and include an encouragement award. The recipients receive translation vouchers of \$500 for Best Practice, \$250 for Good Practice and \$150 for the encouragement award. The inaugural Award presentation was well attended by Council staff. The awards were presented by the Mayor and generated a positive motivator across the organisation.

Northern AMEP Consortium

Tuition matched to client needs

Northern AMEP has developed a range of services through its AMEP 2003 – 2008 contract with DIMIA, to assist AMEP students either unable to attend language classes or those wishing to intensify their tuition. Due to increased levels of entry of newly arrived migrants into employment, there has been growth in out of hours classes, particularly in the evenings, as well as increased participation in the Distance Learning program. Increased access to the Home Tutor Scheme program has also been facilitated for those who cannot attend classes. A summer school and a winter school have been offered for those who wish to maintain contact and study over the Christmas and midyear breaks. In special cases, Northern AMEP provides qualified teachers who deliver AMEP tuition from people's homes.

The Northern AMEP in the Community initiative has seen the increase of easily accessed, flexible provision and innovative approaches through supported tuition in smaller off-site venues including neighbourhood houses, libraries, leisure centres and senior citizen clubs.

AMEP Research Centre Action Research Projects

Northern AMEP has responded to the settlement and language needs of low-literacy humanitarian entrants (particularly African) by developing a customised curriculum at program sites, and by actively contributing this expertise to the AMEP Research Centre projects to be shared with other AMEP providers nationally.

Bilingual Community Worker Training

Northern AMEP's lead agency NMIT, in partnership with the Victorian Office for Multicultural Affairs, has developed the Certificate III in English for Bilingual Community Workers to provide pathways to employment for exiting AMEP students. This initiative also increases the pool of staff with bilingual and bicultural awareness working in areas such as health, education and community settlement services. The program model is being disseminated to other TAFE providers and has been the subject of further research funded by DIMIA with plans for extended trials in 2006.

VOMA/DVC

CALD Women's Project

Under its *Valuing Cultural Diversity* Policy, the Victorian Government is working to reduce inequality and ensure that there are systems and procedures in place to enable all Victorians to have access to services. In particular, the Victorian Government recognises the unique challenges faced by women of CALD backgrounds in accessing vital services and fully participating in community life.

To better understand the issues involved, the Victorian Government implemented the CALD Women's Project in 2005, to research the unique needs of CALD women and identify gaps in service delivery.

The project involved a series of metropolitan and regional consultations with over 500 CALD women to seek their views about their priority areas of need. Draft recommendations for consideration by the Victorian Government have been prepared and a formal response from Government is being considered.

This project has been jointly managed by the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Office of Women's Policy in partnership with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria. The project was supported by a reference group consisting of key departmental and community services representatives.

VICPOL

Crime Stoppers Multilingual Project

The Victoria Police Crime Stoppers Unit, with support from Crime Stoppers Victoria Ltd., has introduced the *Crime Stoppers Multilingual Project*.

The aim of the project is to raise awareness of the *Crime Stoppers* program, and to provide non-English speaking individuals with a means to report information on crime. This is achieved by providing community education on the *Crime Stoppers* program, and through the distribution of promotional material.

Services provided by the Crime Stoppers Multilingual Program include:

- provision of Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) to overcome callers' language barriers;
- launch of 22 Multilingual brochures;
- launch of 24 Community Service Announcements;
- launch of Crime Stoppers Multilingual Website;
- launch of Crime Stoppers information DVD; and
- consolidation of over 40 partnerships with non-English newspapers.

Outcomes of the Crime Stoppers Multilingual Program have included:

- greater inclusion of CALD communities in mainstream services/activities;
- reduction in feelings of isolation and powerlessness amongst CALD community members; and
- an increase in the number of calls to Crime Stoppers, resulting in an increase in the rate of crime solved.

3. Communication

Government service providers should use strategies to inform eligible clients of services and their entitlements and how they can obtain them. Providers should also consult with their clients regularly about the adequacy, design and standard of government services.

Centrelink

Welcome to Centrelink CD

As part of the commitment to deliver concise and clear information to newly arrived migrants and refugees the 'Welcome to Centrelink' CD and fact sheets initiated by Victorian MSOs was produced as a national product in August 2005. The audio visual presentation provided an easy to understand guide to Centrelink payments, services and assistance in nine new and emerging language groups. The content was also made available in fact sheets extending to 35 languages. Promoted extensively by MSOs, other Centrelink staff and external stakeholders to relay important information to customers and communities, the product has been used in a range of settings including AMEP and LLNP classes, information sessions for community groups, individual customers and small family groups. Excellent feedback was received from customers and service providers including IHSS workers. Work has continued in order to identify further potential for this audio visual resource, extending both the content and range of languages to meet the needs of the community.

On-line Multilingual Products

Centrelink increased the range of multilingual publications available on its website to 102 products in 63 community languages. MSOs continued to promote the translated products, the Centrelink Multilingual Call Centre and the Centrelink website during all outreach activities.

Consultations were held with the State Library of Victoria to consider incorporating the Centrelink multilingual resources in the Vicnet *My Languages* web portal. Linkages to Centrelink's website are now available through *My Languages*.

Service promotion through ethnic media and Centrelink community publications

MSOs and other staff continued to promote the availability of Centrelink articles in the ethnic press - comprising weekly editorials in over 40 national newspapers, produced in 28 languages and the fortnightly programs on SBS radio produced in 20 languages. MSOs also supported the delivery of Centrelink information via community radio.

The Journey

Centrelink's quarterly newsletter providing updates on Centrelink payments and services continued to be popular amongst community workers and groups. The publication is distributed on-line and via mail to over 1,300 recipients across Australia.

Victorian Migrant Advisory Committee

Centrelink continued to provide secretariat support for the Migrant Advisory Committee (MAC) convening quarterly meetings chaired by the ECCV chair. During 2005 the MAC meetings provided a forum for information, discussion and feedback on a range of matters including a presentation on the federal Budget measures, with an emphasis on the impact for DCALB communities; promotion of Centrelink Multicultural Directions 2005-09; issues and procedures for dealing with youth servicing, homelessness and refugee servicing and supporting job seekers in the lead up to and during the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games. The forum provided feedback to Centrelink state and national

levels and to other government departments. The MAC has over 90 individual and organisational members including representatives from DIMIA, DEST, FaCS, DEWR, AMES, MRCs, CMYI and ethno-specific groups.

Supporting Training and Employment pathways for migrants and refugees

In line with the Commonwealth government's 'Welfare to Work' reforms, Centrelink staff supported by Multicultural Service officers actively assisted migrant and refugee customers, including those with limited skills and those with overseas skills and qualifications, on their pathways to participation. This was done through the timely and regular referral of customers to Job Network members and English language providers and the organisation of a number of seminars and 'Employment and Training Expos' held across the state in cooperation with other stakeholders including DEWR, Job Network members, the state government Overseas Qualification Unit, employer bodies, training providers, community agencies and local government. Examples of such expos were those run in Brimbank, Shepparton, Hume and Frankston. An outcome of the Job and Careers Expo organised by Centrelink, Brimbank Council and the North West MRC was the commencement of the production of a DVD on employment options in Brimbank utilising the services of students of Victoria University. It is expected that the DVD will be launched in June 2006.

Late in 2005, planning was underway for the conduct of Jobs Expos to coincide with the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games. Centrelink staff including MSOs contacted service providers including those servicing migrants and refugees, to participate in the expos.

During the year, Victorian Multicultural Services staff provided input to a number of national projects and the development of papers looking at the barriers experienced by particular groups of DCALB customers including mature age jobseekers, women and youth of Muslim background and people with disabilities. This input contributed to the development of strategies to meet needs. Addressing the barriers faced by working age DCALB customers was an ongoing priority for Centrelink in the lead up to the implementation of 'Welfare to Work Reforms' in July 2006 and beyond. This work also included the development and implementation of the 'Welfare to Work' multicultural communication strategy.

DEWR

DEWR is committed to delivering its resources and services to all members of the public through a variety of communication methods. DEWR's primary communication mechanisms are the internet, brochures and use of telephone advice services. Wageline and the Employment Services Customer Services Line are widely utilised by customers, receiving between 900 and 1,200 calls per day and assisted by TIS when appropriate. DEWR's marketing and communications section, whose principle role is to explain and facilitate access to the Department's services, can also assist with issues arising from CALD clients.

DEWR has a representative on the Victorian Migrant Advisory Committee (MAC), a Centrelink auspiced forum for organisations and individuals including DIMIA, DEST and ethno-specific groups to collaborate and discuss issues affecting people from CALD backgrounds. DEWR also has a representative on the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (VSPC) auspiced by DIMIA.

DEWR also advertises its role and services through the ethnic media from time to time in order to reach a wider section of the CALD population.

DoHA

The National Health and Medical Research Council issued a document *Communicating with Patients – Advice for Medical Practitioners* which promotes the best practice approaches for communicating with people from CALD backgrounds.

The Department's website includes several brochures and other information material which can be downloaded in a number of community languages.

DIMIA

With the establishment of an Offshore Humanitarian Processing Centre in Melbourne in April 2005, responsible for the processing of Special Humanitarian Program applications from persons resident in the Middle East, an extensive round of consultations was held in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne with community representatives and service providers on the new processing arrangements.

TIS National consulted widely in each State and Territory with major clients and stakeholder agencies representing people from non-English speaking backgrounds to promote TIS services and to obtain direct feedback on delivery issues.

In order to ensure that clients from varying backgrounds, including international students, as well as Australian employers, are informed of skilled migration options, Regional Outreach Officers, Industry Outreach Officers working with industry groups, and a Skilled Migration Promotions officer have worked closely together throughout 2004-05.

The Promotion and Regional Initiatives team continues to provide information sessions to a wide variety of stakeholders in a variety of locations, including regional Victoria. This has included sessions for employers and to explain the recent changes to the regulations allowing Temporary Protection visa (TPV) and Temporary Humanitarian visa holders to apply for mainstream visas. This ensures that clients and employers around Victoria are fully aware of their entitlements as well as available options for alleviating the skills shortage.

Together with the Victorian Government, the Promotion and Regional Initiatives team hosted the 'Australia Needs Skills' expo on 15 October 2005. Numbers exceeded expectations with an estimated 5000 attendees. A total of 12 employer-sponsored visa options information sessions, and 11 general skilled migration sessions and a number of industry-specific sessions were conducted. This expo provided direct access to industry employers, recruitment agencies and regional government organisations for potential migrants from various backgrounds, including international students. Information strategies to promote the event included advertising and discussion forums on community language radio stations in languages other than English.

TIS National promotes its services through widely distributing multilingual posters, "language cards" and other publicity material. It also makes information about TIS services widely available to all service providers through its website at www.immi.gov.au/tis; through a biannual newsletter "Talking TIS"; advertising in all White Pages nationwide; and presentations at various forums. TIS also continues to utilise the TIS DIMIA network across all states and territories for information dissemination and to collect feedback from major clients and stakeholder agencies.

DIMIA conducted a special Refugee Day Citizenship Ceremony to enhance the level of understanding about citizenship within newly emerging communities of humanitarian entrants.

In 2004-05, Visa Services' Student Liaison function was tasked with upgrading information services to Education Providers and migration agents and also with obtaining feedback on services and needs.

Visa Services and Citizenship conducted outreach to the Philippines community in Shepparton about Sponsored Visitor Visas during 2005 as part of a strategy to identify information needs in particular communities.

Family Residence also conducted community information sessions to better inform representatives about DIMIA processes and operations so they could in turn better serve their constituents.

Onshore Protection Victoria held a number of meetings and information sessions in Melbourne and Adelaide with practitioners and community representatives involved in the preparation and lodgement of Protection Visa applications to keep them informed of ongoing processing and policy developments.

Victoria's Settlement Planning and Information Unit (SPIU) published its first edition of an improved illustrated magazine, *DiVersified*, in June 2005. This newsletter for Victoria's Multicultural and Settlement Services sector keeps members of the public and settlement and community partners informed about immigration, government, rural and regional, refugee and other issues of interest.

Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Program in Victoria conducted consultations locally with service providers, community members and other departments about the changes to the Community Grants program. Participants were provided with a discussion paper and encouraged to make submissions on the proposed changes.

DoJ

The Department of Justice has undertaken a number of initiatives during 2005 to ensure that CALD communities are aware of services that they are entitled to access:

The Justice Translations website contains over 1000 resources in 45 languages, including a wide range of information on Victoria Police, courts and tribunals, victim's services, family violence and consumer rights.

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) translated its brochure and information sheets into 24 community languages.

The Victims Support Agency produced brochures, information sheets, posters and small cards in 12 community languages.

Consumer Affairs Victoria identified "high interest" areas for communities who spoke languages other than English, translating nine information fact sheets as a result.

The newly established Multicultural Consumer Unit (MCU) within Consumer Affairs Victoria provided regular presentations on SBS radio and ensured that media releases were translated into a number of community languages. MCU also produced a number of newspaper features. In total over 100 radio interviews and newspaper features were produced.

Consumer Affairs Victoria also conducted 284 information sessions to 13 different CALD communities.

The Problem Gambling Communication Strategy is designed and tailored for specific communities, including CALD communities, to address the core issues related to problem gambling. Communication activities include advertising, information materials, media releases, interviews and editorial (radio and press).

MAV

Interfaith Council (City of Darebin)

The City of Darebin launched its Interfaith Council on 29 June 2005 following extensive community consultations held throughout 2004. The Council consulted the community on its views on faith, importance of interfaith dialogue and what would be the most effective models for interfaith collaboration. Implementing the recommendations of the consultations, Darebin City Council published a *Guide to Faith Communities in Darebin*, and a Multifaith calendar in 2005. As part of the interfaith activities, the Council held an inaugural Iftar dinner in October in recognition of the month of Ramadan. Many activities are planned for 2006 to build on the on-going efforts of interfaith cooperation.

Multilingual Website (City of Darebin)

The Darebin City Council updated, improved and expanded its Multilingual Website in 2005. The site has information on council services in 12 languages. Additional information added in 2005 included the entire parking rules and regulations applicable in the City of Darebin. Other important additions included Frequently Asked Questions covering key information from all departments across Council. Promotion of the website in ethnic press, and radio and through networks followed the improvements and updating to ensure communities are informed of information available in their own language.

Translations (City of Casey)

A number of documents have been translated into various community languages to encourage full participation of CALD residents in a range of community programs and at community facilities. Due to the huge diversity in Casey, languages are chosen according to the length of time in Australia and the age group being targeted. Accordingly, some documents are translated into as many as 25 languages depending on the content. Also throughout 2005, a concerted effort was made to consult via interpreters and using language specific PowerPoint presentations on a range of issues including Youth, Ageing Positively and general council issues. The Casey website provides options for generic information on youth services, volunteering, many council services and community centres to be accessed in several community languages.

Northern AMEP Consortium

Northern AMEP Newsletter

Launched in October 2004, this newsletter was distributed quarterly in 2005 to over 450 agencies, local government officers, ethnic community organisations and settlement support agencies throughout the region, and featured information about AMEP students and their settlement experiences.

In 2005 the Northern AMEP expanded its promotion of the program. Multilingual posters and three multilingual DVDs explaining Northern AMEP services were developed and distributed through the region. The latter included English course readers and materials. As well, case studies and new brochures were developed.

Northern AMEP also provided information sessions and held consultations with key community leaders and community groups to build their knowledge of their entitlements and to assist maximum participation in the AMEP.

VICPOL

Family Violence DVD

In early 2005, Region 3 (North) Multicultural Liaison Unit, in partnership with North West Region Migrant Resource Centre, the Council Against Violence, and Channel 31 *Bizce Boyle* program, created a DVD for the Turkish Community, focussing on issues of domestic violence. The DVD highlighted a range of issues, including factors that contribute to domestic violence; current statistical data on family violence incidents; the psychological impact of family violence on all involved; and information about obtaining intervention orders.

The main objective of the DVD was to inform the Turkish Community of the law in relation to domestic violence, the services available to them and of the role of Victoria Police in dealing with incidents of family violence. The DVD proved highly successful and is considered a valuable resource within the Turkish Community. It has been screened on the Channel 31 *Bizce Boyle* Program, and has been broadcast Australia wide on UBI pay TV Turkish Channel – *Vizyon*.

Region 2 Brochure

The Region 2 Multicultural Liaison Unit launched a brochure promoting the services of their Unit, to the local community and support agencies.

The brochure lists ways in which the Unit can provide assistance, including:

- provide advice on all police and related issues;
- provide referral to the appropriate Victoria Police member, unit, squad or department;
- attend, consult and liaise with agencies, groups or communities, building partnerships and creating trust;
- attend and participate in events, activities, forums, camps and excursions;
- organise, facilitate and provide organisations, at little or no expense, with visits to AFL matches, Victoria Police Academy, police stations, the Victoria Police Air Wing, Mounted Branch, Water Police, or a local Magistrates Court;
- attend festivals or functions; and
- deliver presentations.

The brochure provides contact details of Multicultural Liaison Officers and has been distributed in a number of ways including: printed article in the Ambassador Newspaper; displayed in the Multicultural Liaison Unit window; posted in foyers of Regional Police Stations, Support Service Agencies and Community Groups; email copy to Support Agencies and Community Groups; and handouts at presentations, forums and meetings.

4. Responsiveness

Government services should be sensitive to the needs and requirements of clients from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and responsive as far as practicable to the particular circumstances of individuals.

AMES

IHSS Services

AMES began delivery of IHSS services across Victoria on 1 October 2005, in partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, Redback Security Services and Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (Eastern Metropolitan Melbourne Region). In regional Victoria AMES is working in association with Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE, Colac Adult and Community Education, Geelong Adult Training and Education (GATE) and the City of Warrnambool. AMES' approach emphasises responsiveness to the needs of new communities and a feature of its delivery model is the role of Community Guide. These guides are members of recently arrived communities who are employed to use their linguistic skills, cultural knowledge and personal experience as refugees to support new arrivals in the most immediate and effective way. In Shepparton, AMES is working closely with the Regional Humanitarian Settlement Pilot Steering Committee (DIMIA) to ensure that the successful "whole of community" approach established by the pilot continues to deliver outcomes to new arrivals.

AMES Community Enterprises

AMES continued to build on the successful model for community enterprises to provide access to economic participation, employment and training for the most disadvantaged members of refugee and migrant communities. The United Wood Cooperative, a woodworking enterprise of older refugees from the Horn of Africa (Victorian Community Support Fund) began mentoring activities for younger disadvantaged jobseekers of refugee backgrounds. In partnership with the Horn of Africa Communities Network, *The Ambassador* (a community owned newspaper in seven Horn of Africa languages) expanded with continued support from William Buckland Foundation, Eliza McPherson Trust and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation as did the AMES/BSL Cleaning Enterprise (a "hands on" work-training program in the Brotherhood of St Laurence with the Victorian Community Support Fund).

New enterprises were established in 2005. One of these is the *Sorghum Sisters*, an enterprise partnership with Carlton Primary School with support from the Department of Family and Community Services. Three other enterprises supported by the Department for Victorian Communities are: *Smart Cuisine*, a school canteen enterprise designed to encourage and promote healthy food choices for children, with support from Westall Primary School and the City of Kingston; *Spicy Girls*, a corporate catering enterprise in partnership with the Arabic Women's Network; *Babushka's Delight*, a catering enterprise specialising in Russian cuisine in partnership with the Russian Welfare Council. The *Magic Green Clean Company*, is a Sudanese community based enterprise specialising in green cleaning services with support from Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau.

Supporting community capacity building for new communities

AMES has continued to support capacity building projects for new and emerging CALD communities both through AMES Community Grants Scheme and in partnership with the Victorian Multicultural Commission. Community organisations benefiting from grants in 2005 included some of Victoria's newest communities such as the Somali Community of Victoria, the Sudanese Community of Victoria,

the Tigrinya Community Association of Victoria, the Sudanese Women's Group of Victoria, the Bosnia-Herzegovina Society and the Australian Chollo Community Inc.

AMES continued its support for leadership development activities and the celebration of cultural diversity through *AMES Multicultural Women's Camp* which focused on reflecting on resettlement experiences and included workshops on parenting and leadership.

Centrelink

Assurance of Support

Centrelink continued to support applications from prospective assurers under the Assurance of Support program through the work of the centralised team based at Windsor. Customers were also assisted with their initial enquiries by staff working in Call Centres and Customer Service Centres. MSOs and other staff actively contributed to raising awareness of the changes relating to Assurance of Support, through information sessions and distribution of information products to community groups, migration agents and settlement service agency workers. Information sessions were conducted for non-fee charging Migration Agents highlighting the protocols between Centrelink and the Migration Institute of Australia. Feedback from these sessions was conveyed to the national Multicultural Services Branch.

Youth Servicing

Centrelink Victoria MSOs, Youth Service Officers and other staff continued to contribute to the implementation of the national Youth Servicing Strategy by supporting the effective delivery of payments and services to DCALB youth and students and by participating in a range of community committees including LLENs and reference groups at local, state and national levels. Young customers were referred to youth servicing projects such as the inter-agency 'YP4' initiative to address youth homelessness and the JPET program. Centrelink staff from the inner North offices were encouraged to use the database of training and employment options designed to assist them with servicing young migrant and refugee students and jobseekers.

Servicing of customers on Temporary Protection visas (TPV)

During 2005, Customers on TPV were supported through ongoing cooperation between the three Victorian Areas and DIMIA. This resulted in the effective servicing and efficient processing of Centrelink payments and referral of customers to relevant settlement services and English Language and vocational training programs including those provided by the state government. This level of support was also provided for customers moving from TPV to permanent visas and the Return Pending Visa (RPV).

Debt Prevention

The promotion of the Centrelink Debt Reduction Strategy to all customers including those of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds remained a high priority and was a key component of the "Keeping the System Fair" campaign. These messages were disseminated via multilingual information to community groups and broadcasts on SBS radio.

DEWR

DEWR does its utmost to improve and implement services based on feedback from all stakeholders. Job seekers can expect a guaranteed level of service due to the Service Guarantee, a major feature of the Job Network arrangements and the *Workplace Relations (Improved Protection for Victorian Workers) Act 2003* makes specific references to outworkers, a number of whom are migrants.

DEWR has a number of employment services especially targeted at job seekers from CALD backgrounds and is currently in a preparation phase prior to either extending existing contracts or offering them to new providers from mid 2006. Job Network providers can be offered contracts as specialists, one of which is those agencies which have special expertise in dealing with CALD job seekers. Currently there are two specialist CALD Job Network members AMES and Spectrum Employment Services.

DoHA

In late 2005 the Minister for Health announced that an additional Medicare Benefit schedule item would be introduced in 2006 to encourage GPs to provide comprehensive health assessments for refugees and other humanitarian entrants within six months of their arrival to Australia.

DHS

Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2005-08.

Launched in October 2005, this Plan recognises that the complex health needs of people from a refugee background require a focused approach. A significant and new initiative profiled in the Plan is the Refugee Health Nurse Program which funds nurse positions (4.5 EFT) in 8 selected community health centres ('sentinel sites' for refugee health) to provide comprehensive health and social needs assessments to refugee clients, promote social connection by coordinating social support and orientation programs and supporting other health service providers to develop refugee specific initiatives and culturally appropriate practices.

DIMIA

Staff from the Family Residence section provided information sessions to service providers during 2004-05 about new domestic violence provisions aimed at enhancing service to victims of domestic violence.

DIMIA staff participated in client contact training, which includes cross-cultural awareness training.

TIS National organised for a client satisfaction survey to be undertaken during the 2006 calendar year to gather information about service levels and standards.

DoJ

The Department of Justice undertook the following projects during 2005:

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria increased the diversity of its mediator panel by recruiting and training 17 new mediators from Victoria's CALD communities, drawn from rural and regional areas of Victoria. A mentoring program was also developed for the new recruits.

Consumer Affairs Victoria established a Multicultural Consumer Unit which has visited different groups within the Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Vietnamese communities.

Corrections Victoria ensured that its Privacy Policy reached as many prisoners and offenders as possible, by translating the Information Privacy brochure into several languages, chosen on the basis of current available data on the birth country of origin of Victorian prisoners.

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) provided fire safety literature in a number of different languages targeting a number of CALD communities from newly arrived to established communities. CFA's summer and winter fire safety campaigns incorporate brochures which are available in 12 languages on the CFA website.

The Problem Gambling Partnership Strategy aims to bring together people and organisations to improve their understanding of problem gambling issues and their ability to help people and their families affected by problem gambling. A project within this strategy, run in conjunction with Basketball Victoria, provided community education and information activities for CALD women.

EOCV

Addressing systemic discrimination involves the entire Commission, not only those dealing with complaints. The Commission conducts education and training in workplaces and helps organisations implement best practice strategies to prevent discrimination and harassment from occurring. Ongoing community consultation with people from CALD communities ensures the Commission is sensitive to the issues they face and is able to undertake projects of relevance.

Supporting the Rights of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Victorians Celebrating Cultural Diversity

The Commission once again took part in *Celebrate our Cultural Diversity Week* which was held 17-23 March 2005. The Commission decentralised activities by contributing to celebrations and discussions outside the Melbourne CBD. Human Rights Forums were held in Shepparton and Dandenong targeting students, teachers and migrants. The forums enabled the Commission to consolidate relationships with local State secondary schools within the Shepparton Network of the Goulburn-North East Education Region, with community organisations such as the Ethnic Council and Cutting Edge Uniting Care and with the City of Greater Dandenong.

FaCS

FaCS is responsible for a broad range of social policies and support affecting Australian society and the living standards of Australian families. FaCS is committed to developing strategies for advancing multicultural aspects of policy design and delivery and ensuring they are responsive to our culturally diverse population.

Family Relationships Services Program (FRSP)

Two specialised FRSP services for newly arrived migrant families were established in Victoria during 2005. The main types of services funded under the FRSP are: Family Relationships Counselling; Family Relationships Mediation; Children's Contact Services; Contact Orders Program Conciliation Services; Men and Family Relationships Services; Family Relationships Education; Family Relationships Skills Training; Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy; Specialised Family Violence Services; and Regional Primary Dispute Resolution.

Newly Arrived Youth Support Service (NAYSS)

The Newly Arrived Youth Support Service (NAYSS) initiative provides combined Reconnect and Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET) services to newly arrived young people aged 12 to 21 years from CALD backgrounds, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. NAYSS providers help these newly arrived young people to improve their level of engagement with family, work, education, training and the community by using a variety of strategies such as counselling, family mediation and practical support in ways that are culturally and contextually appropriate. NAYSS participants have

access to the full range of services provided by both Reconnect and JPET. Targeted 'multi function' services are located in areas where there are high levels of settlement by newly arrived young people, as identified by the DIMIA Settlement Database.

MAV

VMC Standing Committee activities

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) actively participated in and contributed to the deliberations of the Standing Committee on Local Government and Cultural Diversity in 2005.

Key achievements of the Standing Committee in 2005 include:

- o The extension of the 12 month fixed term memberships of the Committee to 24 months;
- o The continued promotion of the recommendations contained within the VMC's Report *Access, Services, Support, Respect: Local Governments Responses to Cultural Diversity in Victoria*;
- o The meeting of the Committee's Chairperson with the Chair of Best Value Commission in relation to the capacity of Best Value to support local governments addressing and responding to cultural and linguistic diversity within their communities;
- o The agreement by the Grants Commission to a broader application of the "low English proficiency" cost adjustor in future Grants Commission funding;
- o The meeting of the Committee's Chairperson with the Executive Director, Local Government to discuss the Minister of Local Government's response to the VMC report: *Access, Services, Support, Respect: Local Governments Responses to Cultural Diversity in Victoria* and agreement that Local Government Victoria assist the Standing Committee in staging forums for the 11 metropolitan fringe local Councils on developmental plans to respond to cultural and linguistic diversity.

CEGS 2005

The Municipal Association of Victoria, in partnership with the Department of Human Services, supported and resourced the implementation of the Culturally Equitable Gateways Strategy. Through a CEGS Leadership and Sectorial Development position, the MAV promoted good practice and worked closely with CEGS funded councils to build the capacity of their HACC core service responses to elderly people from CALD backgrounds.

Key areas of work for the MAV CEGS in 2005 included:

The MAV CEGS *Summary of Commonwealth and State Language Services Policies and Resources* was a practical report to support CEGS workers in developing and/or reviewing language services policy and practice in HACC. (Promotion of good practice in language services.)

The *MAV Review of CEGS Funded Councils in the First 18 Months of CEGS* report captured the key areas of work undertaken by councils in CEGS. The report promoted good practice by identifying and reporting on strategies implemented by councils in CEGS, outcomes achieved from these strategies and listing key resources developed through CEGS to support the development, implementation, monitoring and review of culturally responsive HACC services.

Information on Emerging Communities (City of Darebin)

Each month throughout 2005, the Darebin City Council held a community profile session featuring one of the emerging communities in Darebin. The sessions were delivered mainly by the Northern Migrant Resource Centre and attended by Council staff and other local service providers. The sessions proved

to be highly popular and featured an authentic meal cooked on the premises from the community in focus. The sessions covered information on history, background, migration and settlement issues, culture and customs, networks and community structures.

UN Room (City of Darebin)

The City of Darebin UN room is an established office space with computers, printer, fax, telephone, desks and storage space to be used by emerging communities requiring access to office space to undertake administrative tasks and build their capacity to function independently. The UN room was established in response to identified need in the community for office space for new and emerging groups not financially able to access office space. The UN room was designed in consultation with the groups to meet their needs. It is offered along with community grant assistance to meet the cost of stationery, printing, postage and other administrative costs incurred by the groups. The UN room helps groups to use the office facility to undertake the organising of their affairs, events and meetings.

Connecting Casey's CALD Women Project (City of Casey)

This project was developed in response to a need for a Home Visitation Service identified by Maternal and Child Health Outreach staff. A group of 27 volunteers was recruited and trained, who now visit the most recently arrived and isolated mothers in Casey.

Staff Training (City of Whittlesea)

- Organised Multicultural induction training for new staff;
- Participated in the review of the induction training;
- Organised the Managing Diversity Training for new staff;
- Submitted draft Language Aides Policy proposal to Director of Community Services;
- Organised training on 'Understanding Islam' in collaboration with the Migrant Resource Centre for staff working at TRAC and Mill Park Recreation Centre.

Refugee Week (City of Whittlesea)

During Refugee Week 2005 two performances of the African Drama Group were organised for two local schools. This event was organised in collaboration with Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC) and Whittlesea Multicultural Issues Network. These performances were documented on DVD and copies were provided to all parties. Also photographs taken were displayed in the reception area of the City of Whittlesea.

Community Profiles (City of Whittlesea)

Council worked collaboratively with the Migrant Resource Centre, Darebin and Moreland City Councils to prepare and promote the community 2006 profile calendar, a training resource for staff and local service providers. The *SBS World Guide* and *One People Many Journeys* publications were purchased as staff references.

Northern AMEP Consortium

Needs of Skilled Migrants

The needs of over 350 skilled migrants have been addressed by Northern AMEP lead organisation, NMIT, in its partnership with the Department for Victorian Communities through training, counselling and work placement assistance offered through the Overseas Qualified Professionals Program.

Bilingual Workers training

NMIT continues to respond to the language needs of arrivals from new and emerging language groups, particularly from African countries. In May 2005, NMIT participated in the DIMIA consultation to

identify pathways from the AMEP into training, leading to accredited interpreter status. Further contributions to DIMIA research has led to the development of an intensive interpreter preparatory program which will be trialled in 2006.

NMIT, in partnership with VOMA, has developed and evaluated training programs bridging to NAATI-accredited courses as well as training bilingual community workers. Findings have been shared with NAATI, DIMIA and with other training providers both in Victoria and interstate. NMIT produced a VOMA funded research report that was disseminated to NAATI and other training providers and has further contributed to a DIMIA funded report to further progress this issue with a view to broadening the trial program in 2006.

Building School Awareness, Preparedness and Literacy

Northern AMEP providers are working with families, particularly mothers with pre-school children, to increase their ability to successfully engage with schools. This has been done by working with programs such as *Best Start* and *Communities for Children* and Northern AMEP providers have ensured sensitive practice around engaging CALD communities. The model they developed has been evaluated and identified as good practice by *Communities for Children*. It includes strategies using bilingual playgroup facilitators and content, whilst developing both children's and mothers' literacy and increasing their confidence in engaging with the Australian school system. The model introduces families to community services and resources, particularly those that assist with children's development, and build their readiness for school.

Northern AMEP in the Community and Liaison with communities

Northern AMEP in the Community focuses on the delivery of AMEP classes through its location of AMEP classes in community settings. It introduces and directly links participants to community services, resources and facilities including libraries, leisure centres, child and maternal health centres and health and dental care services. Current partnerships include a range of strategies occurring through Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education, Reservoir Leisure Centre, Darebin Community Health Centre, City of Hume, Wingate Ave Community Centre's integrated services, Moreland Adult Education's co-tenancy with Northern MRC and Banyule Community Health Centre.

VOMA

Refugee Support Package Brokerage Program

The Victorian Government allocated \$4.7 million to its *Refugee Support Package* in 2005 to give refugees the resources and confidence to overcome the barriers they face to services and participation. The package has two components: the Refugee Brokerage Program and Refugee Nurse Initiative.

VOMA is establishing the Refugee Brokerage Program through local community partnerships involving local councils, community-based services and refugee community leaders in provincial and metropolitan areas with substantial refugee populations.

The program funds projects in six locations where significant numbers of refugees are settling, including Shepparton, Warrnambool and four metropolitan areas: Northwest (Brimbank and Hume); West (Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay); Inner (Moreland, Mooney Valley, Yarra and Melbourne); and Southeast (Greater Dandenong and Casey).

Refugee Nurses are being funded in community health services in eight locations across Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Regional Migration Incentive Fund

The Victorian Government allocated \$3 million over three years (2004/05 to 2006/07), as part of its \$6 million Skilled Migration Strategy 2004-2007, to support eleven regional communities to develop and implement local strategies to attract and retain skilled and business migrants.

The 11 targeted regions represent a partnership between 37 local government areas in regional Victoria. Lead agents are in the Geelong, Warrnambool, Horsham, Mildura, Swan Hill, Wodonga, North-east, Bendigo, Goulburn-Murray, Ballarat and Gippsland regions. Each region's strategy addresses common themes, including activities to attract migrants; engage business and communities; link migrant support services; and strengthen partnerships across government, industry, community, education and service sectors.

Community Jobs Program – Employment Initiatives

The CJP-EI is a component of the Victorian Government's *Jobs for Victoria* initiative. The aim of the program is to enhance the employment prospects of the long-term unemployed and those at risk of long-term unemployment by increasing the access of recently arrived migrants and disadvantaged groups to the labour market. The Program funds organisations to assist job seekers:

- from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have been in Australia less than two years (or TPV holders up to three years); and,
- who are disadvantaged because of relatively high levels of local unemployment, limited access to services (including Job Network), and/or target group characteristics.

In 2004/05, more than 70% of CJP-EI funding (around \$1 million) was allocated to projects that specifically targeted recently arrived migrants and people from CALD backgrounds.

Community Jobs Program – Jobs and Training

The CJP-JT is another component of the Victorian Government's *Jobs for Victoria* initiative. The program enables job seekers to improve their prospects of gaining ongoing employment or moving into further education and training within their local communities. In 2004/05, more than 30% of CJP-JT funding (around \$2 million) was allocated to projects that targeted recently arrived migrants and people from CALD backgrounds.

Community Regional Industry Skills Program – Communities (CRISP - Communities) is another component of the Victorian Government's *Jobs for Victoria* initiative. CRISP-Communities provides one-off funding to local, not-for-profit organisations for projects in rural and regional Victoria to address skill shortages. In 2004/05, four projects targeted recently arrived migrants and people from CALD backgrounds to address skills shortages in the Barwon South West, Gippsland and Hume regions. Over \$160,000 was allocated to these projects.

Workforce Participation Partnerships

The CJP-EI, CJP-J&T and CRISP programs were replaced in December 2005 by the new *Workforce Participation Partnerships* (WPP) program, with over \$24 million in funding available until the end of June 2007. This new program has a major focus on assisting unemployed jobseekers from CALD backgrounds.

VICPOL

New and Emerging Communities Forum

In 2005, Victoria Police, in conjunction with the Victorian Multicultural Commission, facilitated a series of workshops across metropolitan Melbourne, involving police and representatives from Melbourne's new and emerging communities. The main objective of these workshops was to provide an opportunity

for community representatives to engage with Victoria Police on a proactive basis, and develop meaningful partnerships. The communities' response to the workshops was encouraging with a larger than expected number of participants contributing enthusiastically to the workshops. Topics discussed included family strengthening, youth engagement, road safety and recruitment of police from CALD backgrounds.

To advance the issues raised at the workshops, a further meeting was held at the Carlton office of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria. Speakers presented on the previously identified issues to an audience of community representatives, service providers, and Victoria Police members. The forum also provided a platform to announce the New and Emerging Communities Fund. The objective of the Fund, established in partnership with the Victorian Multicultural Commission, is to provide small grants for projects that foster community engagement between Emerging Communities and Victoria Police, at a local district level. The New and Emerging Communities Forum is an ongoing program with further workshops planned for 2006.

5. Effectiveness

Government service providers should be 'results oriented', focused on meeting the needs of clients from all backgrounds.

AMES

AMES Education delivered education and training in a very wide range of programs. More than 10,000 CALD background learners participated in AMES Adult Migrant English Program and 1700 in the Special Preparatory Program. Other AMES programs included the DEST Language Literacy and Numeracy Program with over 2300 jobseekers assisted, state government-funded Vocational Education and Training (VET) Programs and the Victorian Certificate in Applied Learning (VCAL). One hundred and twenty-seven newly-arrived young people from refugee backgrounds were provided with alternative pathways to work or study.

In 2005, *AMES Employment* assisted 26,037 job seekers through the Job Network, with 65% being from CALD backgrounds. Almost 10,000 were successfully placed in employment. AMES success with CALD jobseekers is due in large part to its multicultural staff with 65% of staff speaking a language other than English.

Centrelink

Customer consultation

Centrelink's independent customer satisfaction surveys are conducted by an external research company. During the reporting period, Centrelink surveyed over 60,000 customers nationally; of these, around 7,600 were from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with an 82% overall satisfaction level.

Customers were also encouraged to use the Customer Relations line and Centrelink Multilingual Call to provide feedback. Feedback was also welcomed during outreach sessions to community groups.

Staff training and development

Over 2005, all new recruits participated in induction training that included multicultural customer servicing skills. These sessions were reinforced in the workplace using a range of resources including

an on-line computer assisted learning package. Victorian Multicultural services staff were involved in the delivery of training to both new recruits and existing staff. 2005 saw the development and implementation of the 'Working Across Cultures' training material aimed at assisting Centrelink staff in multicultural servicing. The modules are part of the accredited Customer Interaction Learning Program. Where appropriate, MSOs also encouraged staff to participate in cross-cultural training and seminars organised by community providers in community settings including MRCs and local government. Participation in this training has been particularly useful for developing skills in servicing new and emerging communities.

Multicultural Services staff were encouraged to undertake the national learning program consisting of accredited multicultural servicing competencies. The quarterly MSO Newsletter, which provides up to date information and examples of best practice, included articles about the work of Victorian MSOs and was promoted as a useful resource for MSOs and customer service officers.

The multicultural section of the Centrelink Agents, training package ensures that Agents are aware of the needs of DCALB customers in rural and remote areas. Agents used the generic Multicultural Services Computer Assisted Learning package as part of their training.

DEWR

DEWR measures its results by regularly analysing the figures concerning placement of job seekers into jobs and Job Network members' success in filling employment vacancies. In Victoria, 23% of job seekers are from CALD backgrounds. In the year ending December 2005, over 9,400 long term (13 week) jobs were achieved in Victoria for CALD job seekers. This represented an increase of 25% over the previous 12 month period. These job outcomes represent 20% of the 48,100 long term job outcomes achieved in Victoria. Victoria achieved 35% of the national total of long term job outcomes achieved by CALD job seekers.

DoHA

For the first half of 2005, the Department of Health and Ageing provided transitional funding for the 11 projects funded by either the Community Settlement Services Scheme (previously administered by DIMIA) or the Ethnic Aged Services Grants (previously administered by DoHA). This funding amounted to \$489,710. Both of these schemes ceased in mid 2005 and were replaced by the 'Community Partners Program'. Effective from 1 July 2005 13 new projects were funded under the CPP for a total amount of \$490,600.

The Department also funds the 'Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care' program which assists residential aged care services to provide culturally appropriate care as well as assist older people from CALD communities to have greater access to care and the capacity to make informed decisions about aged care. Total funding for this program in 2005 amounted to \$378,400.

DIMIA

TIS National maintains detailed data on client demand in all community languages to better design and deliver its services. It consulted widely in each state and territory with major clients and stakeholder agencies to promote its services and obtain direct feedback on delivery issues. TIS strengthened its relationship with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) to identify strategies to improve service provider training, such as provision of "Working with Interpreters" workshops.

The Complaints Handling Officer in DIMIA Victoria provides induction training for new staff to make them aware of the communication difficulties which can escalate into complaints if not handled correctly. The training aims to make new staff more sensitive to access and equity issues, particularly in Client Service roles.

DoJ

The Department of Justice remains committed to providing effective services for all Victorians. During 2005 the Department and its statutory agencies undertook the following projects:

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) established a communication plan on the availability of mediators from CALD communities and translation of DSCV publications.

Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) is currently conducting an access and equity audit to identify and reduce impediments that prevent access to VLA services.

The Victorian Community Council Against Violence implemented five major family violence projects under the *Safer Streets and Homes* strategy. The projects included funding for community education programs to prevent family violence in the established Turkish and the newly emerging South Sudanese communities.

MAV

Access and Equity Initiatives (City of Casey)

A number of innovative new projects were funded through the Access and Equity Initiative Grants Program in 2005. These included an introduction to Australian nutrition for Sudanese women who lacked confidence to buy many ingredients for meals due to their lack of knowledge of English. A dietician from the Community Health Service led cooking classes after taking the participants to a range of retailers and markets. All participants reported that they are become more confident in their daily living activities and getting to know the local area.

Northern AMEP Consortium

Northern AMEP has increased its service to more newly arrived migrants and refugees for the second time in its second year of the contract. Its reach to a wider number of clients has been assisted by growth in the flexible and accessible delivery of Distance Learning, the Citizenship program and the Home Tutor Scheme.

In 2005, more than 2000 AMEP learners participated in Northern AMEP tuition in the northern suburbs region. Northern AMEP Consortium member organisations also provide state funded education services and English language and vocational pathways programs exceeding 1.3 million tuition hours annually for learners of CALD background in the northern Melbourne region. These programs include Vocational Education and Training, VCAL, ESL, Overseas Qualified Professionals program, LLNP and bridging programs such as the Bilingual Workers training and are available for post AMEP tuition learners. The needs of the AMEP clients are helping Northern AMEP providers to change and better customise state government funded programs for post AMEP new arrivals.

VOMA/DVC

Refugee Student Working Group

VOMA in collaboration with the Department of Education and Training (DET), Department of Human Services (DHS), Catholic Education Office (CEO), Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST) and Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) has established a Refugee Students Working Party to identify the social and learning needs of refugee students and to explore ways to address these needs.

To assist the Working Party to identify the significant challenges faced by a growing number of schools in supporting refugee students, VOMA organised a local community workshop in Noble Park in August 2005. The workshop attracted representatives from the three levels of government, community organisations and government and non-government schools in the region. The key issues identified included the need for greater information sharing and stronger links between schools and the range of community services in the region.

Further consultation was undertaken through a survey of community services and schools in St Albans on the needs of and support provided to newly arrived refugee young people. The responses included five key issues:

- i. the need for more translated education resources;
- ii. greater promotion of existing good practice;
- iii. the availability and accessibility of resources for teachers/students;
- iv. engaging refugee families to understand how the Victorian education system works; and
- v. the need for more welfare workers at school.

Given the important role identified for schools in these consultations, the Working Group will, in 2006, build on existing models of full school servicing to develop the concept of *School as a Hub* for supporting refugee students and their families.

VICPOL

Participation in AMES

Multicultural Liaison Officers from Region 5 (South East) regularly attended the major AMES sites within the Region to present on issues of Crime Prevention, Public Safety, Road Safety and the Role of Police in the community. This initiative, whilst assisting new arrivals with settlement issues, fostered community engagement and contributed to a greater mutual understanding of policing and community expectations.

Victoria Street Traders and Police Initiative

In 2005, the Region 1 Multicultural Liaison Office, in partnership with Richmond and Collingwood Police Stations, initiated a project to raise the perception of public safety in Victoria Street, Richmond. The Project was initiated in response to concerns by local traders of an increase in drug activity resulting in a decrease in the number of shoppers in the area. The program involved distributing a questionnaire to traders in the area of Victoria Street, between Punt Road and Church Street, Richmond. The questionnaire sought information on the traders' perceptions of safety and their views of police presence in the area. Each police member at Richmond was assigned four shops along Victoria Street, and tasked with engaging the shop traders whilst on foot patrol duties. Members were required to discuss the project with traders and register any identified issues. Foot patrol duties along the strip were increased and a number of arrests were made. Following the initial police operation along Victoria Street, a follow up questionnaire was distributed to traders. This questionnaire indicated an overwhelming increase in trader confidence, increased perceptions of safety amongst the traders and a return of shoppers to the area. The project also enhanced police and community relationships in the Richmond area.

6. Efficiency

Government service providers should optimise the use of available public resources through a user-responsive approach to service delivery which meets the needs of clients.

AMES

AMES developed and implemented a 10-year Strategic Plan 2004-2014 which will guide the organisation under the leadership of the AMES Board. AMES continues to monitor its performance through its quality system, its range of client and staff surveys conducted both internally and by external agencies and through the use of its on-line quality system to monitor all complaints. A complaints register is available to all AMES clients at every location and information about this process and grievance procedures are available in a range of community languages to clients. A twice-yearly Complaints and Compliments Report is maintained and published on AMES Intranet. The AMES Board closely monitors performance and includes within its membership a representative of AMES' client community. AMES Annual Report is presented to the Victorian Parliament and available on AMES website.

Centrelink

Service offer to DCALB customers

When servicing DCALB customers, Centrelink customer service officers are expected to offer the services of an interpreter as appropriate, distribute multilingual information fact sheets and promote the range of service channels available including telephone and on-line services. This is aimed at assisting customers to understand the options available, their obligations, rights and responsibilities and participation expectations.

Efficient and effective use of Language Services

Centrelink has continued to increase the use of on-site sessional interpreters for high demand languages including those of new and emerging communities. Apart from the booked appointments, customers were also assisted for same day walk in enquiries. Victorian staff made a significant contribution to efficiencies in the cost of language services through the quarterly monitoring of usage and expenditure and via the promotion and continued growth in the use of Centrelink On-Demand telephone interpreter services for incidental enquiries and the use of on-call telephone interpreters for selected booked appointments. The use of telephone interpreting has been an effective alternative in rural and regional sites.

Staff paid Community Language Allowance (CLA) were regularly called upon to utilise their second language skills to support customers. There is ongoing encouragement of suitable staff to sit for the nationally recognised test to receive CLA and monitoring of the extent to which CLA recipients are using their language skills.

DEWR

DEWR utilises a variety of resources to present information to job seekers, employers and community organisations in an accessible and user-friendly manner. The DEWR website and the website at www.workplace.gov.au/ conveys relevant and up-to-date information relating to employment, careers, labour market information, workplace relations and wages and conditions.

DEWR makes extensive use of Client Satisfaction surveys to seek the views of users of both departmental and contracted services to ensure that services meet the needs of individual clients, including those from CALD backgrounds.

DEWR has also had a large number of brochures printed about *Work Choices*, explaining the Government's new approach to workplace relations and its desire to simplify existing workplace arrangements and awards. Over time, DEWR will offer seminars on these changes for interested groups.

DoHA

The Department's website and other publications encourage service providers to make use of the Translating and Interpreting Service that operates to assist people from non English speaking backgrounds access government funded services.

DHS

Development of a Department of Human Services *Refugee Health Strategy* commenced in 2004.

DIMIA

DIMIA Victoria encourages all staff to use TIS as required and new staff are made aware of and encouraged to use the skills of bilingual staff on the Community Language Allowance register. Complaints handling staff are made aware of communication difficulties and special needs of CALD clients and they also access TIS or bilingual staff where necessary.

In the 2004/05 program year TIS National consistently achieved or exceeded PBS standards of:

- Answering 90% of calls for telephone interpreting service within 30 seconds;
- Connecting 90% of calls to interpreters (in the main community languages) within 3 minutes; and
- 90% of interpreter jobs will be done by a NAATI-accredited/recognised interpreter.

DoJ

As well as improving access to reliable justice information for CALD communities, the DoJ Justice Translations website enables efficiencies in the production of translated materials.

MAV

Action Plan (City of Casey)

The Casey Refugee and Culturally Diverse Youth Action Plan is a result of a partnership between the City of Casey and the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues. The Action Plan ensures that young people of CALD background have equitable access to services and programs in the municipality and those services are provided in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner. Components of the Action Plan implemented in 2005 included CALD training for Council Officers and a forum specifically targeting CALD young people. This has led on to the funding of a full time Multicultural Youth Officer Position.

Partnerships (City of Casey)

Joint partnerships have enabled development of new networks to collaborate on the needs of recently arrived migrants in the Casey community. Through shared resources and smoother referrals, there have been cost savings in time and money. In the case of the Home Visitation Service, additional

funding was identified and enabled the program to be extended throughout Casey after the initial trial stage in Doveton.

Policy development and planning (City of Whittlesea)

A multi-faith planning meeting was organised to inform faith leaders of the need to plan for future venues of worship and input was provided to the review of Council's multicultural communication strategy.

Access and Equity Strategy review (City of Whittlesea)

Prepared draft proposal for a Multicultural Plan for adoption by the City of Whittlesea.

Victorian Multicultural Issues Network (City of Whittlesea)

Provided feedback to the Vicnet Senior Citizen's Surfers project, based at the State Library.

Victoria's Awards for Excellence in Multicultural Affairs 2005 (City of Moreland)

Moreland City Council received the inaugural Local Government Award for Excellence in Multicultural Affairs. Council demonstrated significant and consistent leadership in the area of multicultural policy development. It had undertaken a number of major initiatives and improvements that promoted and strengthened multiculturalism in Moreland. Key achievements include:

- The development and implementation of Council's Language Aide Scheme.
- The implementation of a Communication Strategy that ensures participation and is inclusive of Council's CALD community.
- The development of a culturally appropriate action plan within Aged Services to ensure that meals served and home help services delivered meet the needs of Moreland's culturally diverse community.
- The development of networks and committees to promote dialogue, participation and access to Council decision-making processes, which reflect the diverse needs of Moreland's community, such as the Moreland Interfaith Gathering and the Moreland Multicultural and Settlement Services Network.
- The provision of financial support, officer time and in-kind support to local community groups such as the Moreland Ethnic Communities Council.

Research and Development Project (City of Moreland)

A research and development project 'Communicating with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities' was undertaken by Moreland City Council in 2005. The project was undertaken to evaluate Council's effectiveness in communicating with CALD communities and to develop strategies and tools to strengthen the effectiveness of the communication process used. The project made the following recommendations which have been adopted by Council:

- Adopt a comprehensive Moreland Language Services Policy that would enable a consistent and professional approach across the organisation in relation to language services and would include comprehensive details about translating and interpreting services including written protocols and guidelines and a multicultural communication toolkit for staff which would be incorporated into Council's broader communication toolkit;
- Establish a Moreland Multicultural Advisory Committee;
- Explicitly incorporate communication with CALD communities in the Best Value Continuous Improvement Process;
- Strengthen its human resource management policies with respect to cultural diversity;

- Develop practical communication resources to meet the needs of the CALD community such as visually aided handouts and material such as storyboards and DVDs and ensure that signage in the customer service centres and other Council buildings assists residents to navigate the Council offices;
- Include engaging with CALD communities in the upcoming review of the Moreland Community Consultation and Engagement Strategy;
- Develop a framework that consolidates the collection of ethnicity data and language services data across Council business areas.

Northern AMEP Consortium

The Northern AMEP consortium receives public funding for the AMEP and has achieved its targets and performance contract requirements with DIMIA. It reviews and reports on these annually.

Northern AMEP member organisations provide both Australian and state government funded ESL programs. The needs of the exiting AMEP clients are a prime consideration for change and better customisation of its state government funded programs. State government funded programs are planned, continually reviewed and adapted to be responsive to the needs of post AMEP new arrivals particularly for those from Africa.

VICPOL

Community Services Partnership

Victoria Police Multicultural Liaison Officers in Region 5 (South East) have developed strategic partnerships with local branches of government departments. These include Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Department of Human Services and Centrelink, to ensure the most efficient allocation of available resources in delivering services to the community.

Joint agency collaboration of the DHS Refugee Minor Program is one such example where Victoria Police works with DHS in the planning and facilitation of activities, as well as providing transport to clients wishing to attend venues.

7. Accountability

Government service providers should have a reporting mechanism in place which ensures they are accountable for implementing Charter objectives for clients (for example, by reporting on this in annual reports or other types of report).

AMES

AMES developed and implemented a 10-year Strategic Plan 2004-2014 which will guide the organisation under the leadership of the AMES Board. AMES continues to monitor its performance through its quality system, its range of client and staff surveys conducted both internally and by external agencies and through the use of its on-line quality system to monitor all complaints. A complaints register is available to all AMES clients at every location and information about this process and grievance procedures are available in a range of community languages to clients. A twice-yearly Complaints and Compliments Report is maintained and published on AMES Intranet. The AMES Board closely monitors performance and includes within its membership a representative of AMES' client

community. AMES Annual Report is presented to the Victorian Parliament and available on AMES website.

Centrelink

Centrelink Multicultural Directions 2005-09 was launched during 2005 reflecting Centrelink's strategic framework and commitment to deliver on its responsibilities under the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society. Multicultural Services in Victoria contributed to the development and promotion of the document.

MSO Reporting Tool and Multicultural Management Information

All MSOs continued to record their activities on the 'MSO Tool'. This included information about staff training and development, the conduct of and feedback from community outreach activities and direct customer assistance. This information, along with other Multicultural Management Information including data on usage of language services, timeliness of claims for payment, referral to services and customer satisfaction results, was compiled by the national Multicultural Services segment and distributed to the Areas on a quarterly basis for further analysis. This data was used in reporting to client departments. Centrelink managers, supported by MSOs, used this data for the planning and delivery of responsive and equitable services to DCALB customers. Victorian Multicultural Services staff provided extensive feedback to the review and enhancement of the 'MSO Tool' and the format and content of the quarterly 'Multicultural Area Performance reports'.

Multicultural customer servicing issues and strategies were included in Centrelink's Business Plans at all levels highlighting the commitment to effective, accessible and equitable services to DCALB customers and the importance of partnerships with other service providers in supporting effective outcomes for mutual customers.

DEWR

DEWR continues to monitor every aspect of its services and products to clients through surveys, feedback and statistical analysis.

The Employment Services Customer Service Line receives complaints, compliments and feedback relating to employment service providers. DEWR uses this information to monitor providers' compliance with the Employment Service Contract. Similarly, issues arising from Wageline calls or complaints may lead to more comprehensive investigations.

DEWR's contracts with providers are quite specific about the obligations they must fulfil; they include a Code of Practice, requirements for dealing with confidential and personal information and the regulations relating to privacy laws.

DEWR is continually consulting with key stakeholders on implementing strategies which are not only responsive to CALD clients but are also aligned with its broader business outcomes.

DoHA

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency monitors the quality of care that Commonwealth funded residential aged care services provide. As part of this monitoring, the Agency assesses the residential services' evidence that residents' individual interests, customs, beliefs and cultural and ethnic backgrounds are valued and fostered.

The Aged Care Assessment Program, which is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing and administered by the Victorian State Government, collects client information that identifies the number of people from CALD backgrounds.

DIMIA

DIMIA Victoria continued to distribute an information pamphlet, in various languages, about making complaints to DIMIA. DIMIA complaints handling staff deployed bilingual DIMIA staff and TIS interpreters to facilitate communication with complainants.

TIS provided statistics and analyses to assist agencies to plan their communication strategies with their non English-speaking clients. The Client Liaison and Promotion unit employed an e-mailbox and a toll-free telephone number to disseminate information to agencies providing services to non-English speakers and to receive feedback to further improve TIS services.

DoJ

The Department of Justice is required to report annually on its multicultural achievements and initiatives to the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs under provisions of the Multicultural Victoria Act 2004.

The DoJ Cultural Diversity Plan, to be launched in June 2006, includes strategies to ensure that the Department and its staff remain accountable for the successful implementation of the Plan.

MAV

Consultations (City of Casey)

The consultation process which was undertaken for the Casey Multicultural Community Centre, to be located in the Cranbourne area of Casey, has ensured accountability. It has allowed groups to provide input into how the centre can best meet their needs, such as room sizes, accessibility and addressing needs in a culturally sensitive manner. Groups have benefited from being involved, leading to a sense of belonging even prior to commencement of construction. At each stage of the project so far, progress and feedback have been reported to Council and to those involved in the consultations.

Northern AMEP Consortium

The Northern AMEP Consortium is directed by the Prime Contractor NMIT and by a management team which meets monthly and is responsible for strategic planning for AMEP in the northern Melbourne region. Membership comprises the managers of the Northern AMEP Consortium partners and subcontracting organisations. The contract monitors equity of access through its quality system and receives a range of client and staff feedback through internally and externally conducted surveys.

Complaints are registered and the grievance procedure is available to all clients, in a range of languages, at all Northern AMEP Consortium locations. Twice-yearly feedback reports are presented to management and to a system of sub-regional planning where AMEP provision is reviewed quarterly.

VOMA/DVC

Multicultural Victoria Act 2004

The [Multicultural Victoria Act 2004](#) came into effect on 1 January 2005. The Act consolidates and expands on existing policy and legislative frameworks by enshrining some important principles of

multiculturalism, strengthening the Victorian Multicultural Commission and creating multicultural reporting requirements for Victorian Government departments. The Act requires each Department to report annually on:

- o the use of language services;
- o communications in languages other than English;
- o any major improvements made or initiatives developed that promote multiculturalism in Victoria and meet the identified needs of Victoria's CALD communities; and
- o the extent to which people from different CALD backgrounds were represented on boards and committees.

The first whole-of-government report under the act was tabled in Parliament in Autumn 2006.

VICPOL

Integral to the Victoria Police Strategic Plan *The Way Ahead 2003-2008* is a set of organisational values to help shape the behaviour of Victoria Police employees and assist in attaining policing standards that are aligned to community expectations.

The Victoria Police Ethical Standards Department serves to investigate all complaints made against police. To ensure this complaint mechanism is accessible to the broader community, brochures providing advice on the process of lodging a complaint have been translated into 10 different new and emerging languages.

PACMAC

In order to maintain a high level of accountability, all programs and initiatives implemented by Victoria Police are subject to a systematic reporting process. The Police and Community Multicultural Advisory Committee also monitors those projects developed by the Multicultural Liaison Units.

The Victorian Settlement Planning Committee's activities between January and December 2005 will focus on:

- *Accommodation and Housing;*
- *Information Provision;*
- *Employment;*
- *Language Services; and*
- *Youth and Families*

The Victorian Settlement Planning Committee will also contribute to a needs-based planning framework to inform the provision of funded settlement services.

The Committee has identified the following strategies or projects to address specific issues raised by the community. These will be undertaken by the Committee in partnership with the community and relevant agencies:

Accommodation and Housing

Promote the access of new settlers, in particular refugees and those with larger families, to the private rental market. (Existing Working Group)

Explore strategies for meeting the accommodation demands in rural and regional Victoria. (New Project)

Information Provision

The VSPC will provide advice and assistance to service providers and community groups in regional Victoria to establish and maintain local area strategies by which issues affecting migrants' access to settlement services can be addressed. (Ongoing)

Continue periodical inter-agency reviews of DIMIA's on-line Beginning a Life in Australia booklets and make recommendations about content and links to additional websites. (Ongoing)

Complete and disseminate the "Victorian Welcome Toolbox" initiative to support service providers and associated community stakeholders in rural areas that are receiving or recruiting overseas migrants. (New)

Employment

Undertake further action and advocacy to address barriers to recognition of overseas qualifications, including trades. (Ongoing):

- *Liaise with key stakeholders in order to investigate strategies to improve the process of and access to overseas skills and qualifications recognition.*

- *Facilitate the dissemination, both pre- and post arrival, of information regarding the recognition of overseas skills and qualifications.*

Investigate and promote new models to address Childcare shortages and cultural relevance. (Existing Working Group)

Assist in building appropriate strategies to ensure smooth transition for new migrants into the rural workforce. Liaise with employers/employer groups to understand the settlement needs of newly arrived and refugee workers.

Language Services

The Language Services Working Group will continue to track new and emerging languages, in consultation with language service providers and purchasers, promote the importance of using appropriate language services in mainstream service delivery and provide advice on working with interpreters.

Youth and Families

Investigate the development of a Cultural Planning tool for Youth and Family services. (New Project)

The Refugee Young People and Transitions Working Group will study and collate current practice in the coordination of education and training programs for refugee young people. (Existing Working Group)

The Refugee Youth and Justice Issues Working Group will monitor and provide continuing guidance to the Independent Persons Program established under the Crime Prevention Victoria initiative. (Reference Group and Watching Brief)

Planning

The Victorian Settlement Planning Committee will also contribute to a needs-based planning framework to inform the provision of funded settlement services.

The VSPC Secretariat will collate identified settlement needs arising in community consultations, settlement worker reports, and reports from other planning forums. The needs will be documented regionally and matched with arrival statistics. The needs will be compared against what services currently exist and which agencies are funding those services, and also analysed as to whether existing services are adequately meeting those needs, whether they need further adjustments or participation by other agencies.

The resulting Needs Table will then be made available for review and comment by the settlement sector. Critical outcomes of this review process are to:

- *Agree on the nature of services most appropriate to meeting each need; and*
- *Identify where different services complement each other (without duplication).*

Following sector input, the Needs Table will be examined by the VSPC at its third quarterly meeting. Examination by the VSPC will be an opportunity to reflect on future

needs and include all members providing input as to how their agency is already or could in the future provide services to meet the identified needs. It is understood that many needs could elicit service responses from more than one service, particularly when different demographics and regions are involved. Critical outcomes of the VSPC's examination of the Needs Table are to:

- *Clarify who is responsible for providing services;*
- *Encourage agencies to coordinate the delivery of services;*
- *Endorsement by the VSPC of the Needs Table to inform the funding of migrant and settlement services in Victoria.*

Following endorsement by the VSPC, member agencies, for example DIMIA would be able to invite grants applications to address these clearly identified – and agreed upon – needs. Advertisements for these grants applications would identify the geographic regions, client groups and needs to be addressed.

Consultations

The VSPC and its member agencies will conduct consultations in 2005 to investigate the service needs of new arrivals in Victoria, particularly those of newly arrived groups and newly establishing communities. The information resulting from these and specific consultations will inform the VSPC's planning for 2005 and beyond.

National Settlement Project

Supporting Settlement in Rural, Regional and Remote Areas. (Continued from 2003)

The VSPC will promote positive settlement outcomes for newly arrived migrants and refugees in rural, regional and remote areas by facilitating better access to services; improving the coordination of services; and improving the communication between existing mainstream service providers to better meet their needs.

1. NORTHERN MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE (NMRC) CASE STUDY

Situation

Throughout the process of capacity building in the previous funded year, settlement workers at NMRC had identified gaps existing in the running of women's groups. In particular, there appeared to be a lack of knowledge and skill amongst the volunteers around co-facilitating these groups with CSSS workers. Issues of governance and finances associated with being part of an incorporated association were also identified.

Moreland settlement workers discussed with community volunteers and Preston settlement workers, the viability of conducting a course for the women, to provide them with some structure and support, in order to better resource them in their role.

Training

This was further discussed with Moreland Adult Education (MAE) to determine if MAE could deliver the course in line with the needs of the participants. It was identified that CSSS workers currently linked to the women's groups would benefit from participating in the course, both as co-facilitators and mentors.

The aim of the course was to enhance and develop the skills of the volunteers, in their roles via community capacity building and further enhance the ability of the community they are linked with, to effectively settle into Australia. Many women identified in the target group were already undertaking a large amount of volunteer work for their community with limited support and resources. The course provided formal structure and support for these women and allowed those who were interested in doing this role an opportunity to become familiar with the theoretical requirements before applying their knowledge on a practical level.

A course outline was developed, in conjunction with MAE, based on the consultations and identified needs. The course components included:

- Introduction to good governance
- Preparing and working as a volunteer
- Coaching/mentoring and managing volunteers
- Financial and risk management
- Strategic planning
- Evaluation of training programs undertaken.

The women's leadership training was conducted 11 October 2005 - 15 November 2005 by MAE. As part of its commitment to capacity building, the NMRC encouraged women community leaders and volunteers from different backgrounds to participate in this training as co-facilitators and mentors. The participants were 15 women (including three staff), from different backgrounds and with different experiences. All except two completed their training to graduation.

The women were made up of new arrivals (six months to two years in Australia) and those who had been in Australia for more than three years. Their backgrounds were: Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Assyrian from Iraq, Chaldean from Iraq, Assyrian from Iran, Somali, Indonesian, Irish and Indian.

The training catered for parents and provided on-site childcare. An appropriate training environment, all training materials and a suitable venue were provided. The course structure successfully covered all the needs of the participants to work as group leaders in their communities. The training level was delivered to target the various educational levels and experiences of the participants.

Outcome

The women found the training very useful as they gained a lot of knowledge both from undertaking the course and from sharing their experiences. The women were happy with the course and had a good time together. They also gained an understanding about how other communities function and how the new and emerging communities can learn from those that are more established. For example, newly arrived women were afraid to enrol in swimming and water safety activities due to their refugee experiences with water. After discussing these concerns with established groups they understood the benefits of participating including recreation, water safety, health, fitness and addressing isolation issues. Such discussions encouraged newly arrived women and made them feel more confident. In fact, two participants from the group now organise swimming classes for the aged Assyrian community.

Most women reported feeling more confident about their role as leaders or volunteers in the community and one participant went on to enrol and successfully gain a place in a Welfare Studies Diploma at NMIT, while another participant enrolled in a Diploma of Interpreting through RMIT. A further participant gained more confidence in volunteering, which provided her with an opportunity to work in the NMRC Aged team.

The group was also provided with the knowledge and awareness about the support and services that NMRC provides to community groups it is linked with. This was delivered by the settlement planner and the Moreland Team Leader as part of the course outline.

In completing the leadership course the women:

- o gained better understanding of Australian societies and systems, particularly in a community context;
- o were provided with extra educational pathways if they wanted to continue further education in the community and welfare sector;
- o were provided with an accredited Certificate for participants seeking employment in the welfare sector. These units could potentially be credited towards two Certificates – the Certificate IV in Workplace Assessment and Training and Certificate for Community and Event Volunteering;
- o were given an opportunity to meet other women from different backgrounds and create networking opportunities which will further enhance their professional roles;
- o improved their confidence and self esteem in both a personal and professional context;
- o obtained transferable skills for other event/volunteering opportunities, or small group coaching and mentoring.

Conclusion

At the end of the training a graduation ceremony was conducted. The families of the participants graduating were invited to attend the ceremony and they enjoyed it.

Following the course, participants were keen to organise a Multicultural Women's Leadership Group (MWLG). The purpose of the group was to continue the links and networks the women had made with each other and to continue providing a mentoring and support role to each another. This group is in turn being facilitated by the NMRC. The MWLG have since met once in February and March and will

continue to meet once a month at MRC Moreland for the remainder of the funded period. The women will continue to discuss the needs of their groups as well as addressing many other issues. The women are keen to seek funding in order to continue obtaining skills and professional development which they can transfer to their own communities.



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 25 November, 2005

MORE WOMEN & DIVERSITY NEEDED IN OUR LEADERS OF TODAY

In hosting a Graduation Ceremony next Tuesday for students who have completed the Women in Community Leadership and Capacity Building Course, the Northern Migrant Resource Centre (NMRC) is calling for more women from diverse backgrounds in the leadership ranks of our society.

The NMRC, utilising funds from its annual Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) grant, engaged Moreland Adult Education (MAE) to stage a Leadership Course specifically for newly arrived refugee and migrant women from across the northern region. The Course involved 11 women from a range of countries – including India, Indonesia, Ireland, Iran, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan - and aimed to foster their leadership skills. Three NMRC staff also undertook the course providing a mentor role for the women, and supporting them throughout the duration of the course.

The Course covered the topics of introduction to good governance, preparing and working as a volunteer, coaching/mentoring and managing volunteers, financial and risk management, strategic planning, leadership skills, amongst others.

"We believe the completion of the course will enhance and develop the skills of the women, in their roles via community capacity building and further enhance the community they are linked to, in settling in Australia. Many women identified in the target group are already undertaking a large amount of volunteer work for their community with limited support and resources. The course provides formal structure and support for these women and allows those who are interested in doing this role an opportunity to become familiar with the theoretical requirements before applying their knowledge on a practical level", said Diana Mastrantuono, Settlement Services Team Leader (Moreland).

Ms Mariam Hormis, a student graduating from the Course, said, "I learnt a lot from the course and it was really of good benefit for me. I've learnt how community groups and committees work and the responsibilities needed. It's not an easy job as I thought before. There's lots of work to do". Another student, Ms Mary Cummins said, "I found I learnt a lot and it made me more aware of things. I have already been able to practise what I've learnt as well as giving me more confidence with the work I do with the Northern Enterprising Women's project (NEW). I appreciate being given the opportunity to share this knowledge with women from so many different cultures."

The NMRC's offices in Preston, Moreland and Whittlesea assists newly arrived refugees and migrants in the northern metropolitan region to settle and integrate into the wider Australian community by delivering settlement services.

2. MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE NORTH WEST (MRCNW) CASE STUDY

Settlement support to new arrivals who have completed their entitlement to IHSS was previously provided under the Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS). From July 2006, this type of support is provided under the Settlement Grants Program (SGP).

Background

A family of six entered Australia in September 2004, under the humanitarian program, holding Visa subclass 202.

The family was proposed by the wife's sibling who is an Australian citizen, living in Australia for four and a half years and who initially entered under Visa subclass 204 (Refugee – Woman at Risk).

The family had lived in a refugee camp in Kenya for the previous 7 years and escaped persecution in Sudan where the husband had been involved in student politics.

Initial Contact and Date

The family accessed the MRC's duty drop-in service in November 2004

Presenting Issue

The family required assistance with accommodation and general settlement support as the relationship between the proposer and the family had broken down. The proposer was no longer able to provide the orientation and accommodation support that had been planned.

Family Composition comprised the father aged 33, the mother aged 25 and four male children aged 4, 5, 6 and 7. The couples' youngest child had a disability. The family depended on Centrelink benefits for their income. The family was repaying a debt of approximately \$10,000 for their travel costs to come to Australia. The assessment further identified that the family had high level needs and required intensive assistance/support in order to have successful settlement outcomes.

The family also:

- o had low English language proficiency;
- o lacked knowledge of the complex health system (i.e. physio, occupational therapy, homecare, etc);
- o were required to deal with a number of health services as well as other service providers who were providing specialist services such as special English, life skills, etc;
- o required appropriate safe and affordable accommodation.

Intervention

The role of MRC worker in this instance was to work with the family to provide the following support and assistance:

Securing accommodation. The MRC NW has nomination rights to five transitional housing properties in the Brimbank area. At the time that the family was seen, a Transitional Housing Property was available and the family was offered the property. They accepted and were signed up to the transitional property. An exit housing plan was developed including an application for public housing. The family has been accepted on to the Office of Housing Early Housing Wait List.

Settlement Support and Information. This work included explaining the local health service system and linking the family to key service providers in the area including the Community Health Service, the

Disability Advocacy Service (for their son's support needs) and orientation to the transport routes and processes that had to be used to access these services. This happened over several contacts with the family. A key part of this support included explaining the use of interpreters and that the family was able to access interpreters at no cost.

The family was provided with practical assistance such as understanding banking and Automatic Teller Machines, utilities payment options and planning a budget for the repayment of the travel loan. This also included introducing the family to the local financial counsellor to provide greater specialist support around the management of their loan.

The family was linked to Sudanese church groups and social groups in the local area and introduced to other families to ensure that they had links to local and informal social support.

The MRC worker also acted as a point of reference providing cultural information / consultation to the service providers working with the family. This included clarifying cultural preferences, potential community supports for the family and providing general background regarding the situation that the family had been in prior to arrival in Australia.

Outcomes 12 Months after initial arrival

Once the family acquired safe and affordable accommodation, they were better able to tackle other settlement challenges and over the past twelve months demonstrated less reliance on assistance.

During their stay in the transitional property, the family received intensive settlement support and their ongoing settlement progress was monitored. The family currently awaits Public housing and remains on the Early Housing list.

The family is better able to navigate and access various social systems such as health, education and child care.

Importantly, the family has developed strong support networks with the Sudanese and broader communities.

List of Acronyms used in this Report

ACFE	Adult Community and Further Education
ACU	Australian Catholic University
AGD	Attorney-General's Department
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
AMES	Adult Multicultural Education Services
ASIKUT	Automated Settlement Information Kit Update Tool
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CEGS	Culturally Equitable Gateways Strategy
CFA	Country Fire Authority
CMYI	Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
CSSS	Community Settlement Services Scheme
DCALB	Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Background
DE&T	Department of Education and Training
DEST	Department of Employment, Science and Training
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DHS	Department of Human Services
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
DoHA	Department of Health and Ageing
DoJ	Department of Justice
DVC	Department of Victorian Communities
EHAI	Early Health Assessment and Intervention
ELC	English Language Centre
EMC	Ecumenical Migration Centre
EOCV	Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria
ESL	English as a Second Language
FaCS	Department of Family and Community Services
FRSP	Family Relationships Services Program
HACC	Home and Community Care
HACN	Horn of Africa Communities' Network
IHSS	Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy
JPET	Job Placement, Employment and Training (Program)
LLEN	Local Learning and Employment Network
MAU	Multicultural Advisory Unit
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MFB	Metropolitan Fire Brigade aka Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board
MIC	Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)
MLU	Multicultural Liaison Unit
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
MSO	Multicultural Service Officer (Centrelink)
NAATI	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NISS	National Integrated Settlement Strategy
NMIT	Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (Technical and Further Education)

OQU	Overseas Qualifications Unit
PBS	Portfolio Budget Statement
RMIF	Regional Migration Incentive Fund
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SEAAC	Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council
SPC	Settlement Planning Committee
SPIU	Settlement Planning and Information Unit (DIMIA)
SPP	Special Preparatory Program
TIS	Translating and Interpreting Service
TRAC	Teenage Recreation into the Community
VCOSS	Victorian Council of Social Service
VFST	Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture
VICPOL	Victoria Police
VICSEG	Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups
VITS	Victorian Translating and Interpreting Service
VMC	Victorian Multicultural Commission
VOMA	Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs, Department for Victorian Communities
VSIC	Victorian Schools Innovation Commission
VSPC	Victorian Settlement Planning Committee
VU	Victoria University
WYPIN	Western Young People's Independent Network
YACVIC	Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
YRIPP	Youth Referral and Independent Persons Project

END OF VSPC 2005 ANNUAL REPORT

NOTES