



DiVersified

Spring 2008



Walking in Harmony for Diversity

On 4 May 2008, the Essendon Football Club (EFC) and numerous multicultural communities and organisations came together before the Round seven clash with Port Adelaide for the Walk in Harmony from Flemington Community Centre to the Dome.

Established by the EFC in 2007 and sponsored by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, the Walk in Harmony aims to use Australian Rules Football to bring together culturally diverse communities with the wider community and to promote awareness of cultural diversity. The

walk sees community members and participants meeting at Flemington Community Centre for a cultural festival and celebrations before walking the four kilometers along Moonee Ponds Creek to the Dome. The event concludes with a lap of the ground in the lead up to the match.

The objectives of Walk in Harmony include working to break down barriers that may prevent the wider community engaging and embracing communities from migrant and refugee backgrounds, bringing together the wider community to celebrate Australia's success as a

diverse society and assisting people from diverse cultural backgrounds to participate in Australian society through Australian Football.

This year, the club attracted over 4,000 walk participants with an additional 2,000 festival attendees. The colour orange symbolises harmony and was a theme that continued throughout the day with orange boundary lines and goal umpires waving orange flags. Pre-game entertainment included speeches from Australians who shared their stories and experiences of moving from different countries and cultures.

*Image from Walk in Harmony 2007
courtesy Essendon Football Club.*

DiVersified is published by the Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Branch of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Victoria.

DiVersified facilitates information sharing among individuals and organisations who play a key role in the provision of settlement services in Victoria. DiVersified's main focus is to showcase good practice in settlement services and inspirational stories of social inclusiveness in a culturally diverse society.

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DIAC
GPO Box 241
Melbourne VIC 3001
www.immi.gov.au

A Message From the State Director

Welcome to the new look DiVersified.

As mentioned in our previous edition we are keen to provide you with examples of good practice in settlement services and innovative ideas which promote social inclusion and participation in multicultural Victoria.

This edition includes many stories about the wider community reaching out to new and emerging groups through community activities, music and sport.

These activities are universal and are powerful tools to engage people of all backgrounds. Whether it be beating a drum, kicking a football, learning to ride a horse or working in a community garden we cannot over estimate the value that shared activities have in helping people feel included and part of a community.

DIAC funds programs to assist the settlement of newly arrived migrants as well as to promote social inclusion. I would like to acknowledge the work of the wide network of agencies that assist this group of people through direct service provision, and to recognise the role that social inclusion activities play in assisting the settlement process and truly making people feel that Australia is their home. Recently I was fortunate enough to be involved in a Citizenship ceremony held in conjunction with the AFL and Collingwood Football Club at Telstra Stadium where 49 people made their pledge of commitment to Australia. Citizenship represents the ultimate expression of social inclusion and it is pleasing to see organisations such as the AFL supporting and promoting the value of becoming an Australian.

This year Refugee Week was held from 15 to 21 June to coincide with World Refugee Day, celebrated on 20 June. The theme was 'a place to call home' and articles in our centre spread on Refugee Week feature inspirational stories of people who have sought refuge in Australia and have successfully settled in this country.

On 8 September I hosted a dinner which brought together people from different faiths to celebrate Iftar, the breaking of the fast each day at dusk during Ramadan. Over one hundred guests including the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Mr Laurie Ferguson, and Australian Olympian, Ali Abdo, attended. This was a wonderful opportunity to express goodwill and respect towards the Muslim community in Melbourne and share in this important part of their faith. The evening was a strong symbol of the multicultural and multifaith society that Australia has become.

This will be my last DiVersified as I will be proceeding on pre retirement leave at the end of the year after 44 years service with DIAC. My involvement with multicultural communities has been an important and rewarding part of my work as State Director in Victoria and previously as State Director in South Australia and Western Australia. I was pleased to be awarded the Public Service Medal this year for outstanding public service in the successful settlement and participation of both established and emerging migrant communities in Australia.

I look forward to seeing many of you over the coming months.



John Williams PSM

State Director, Victoria
Department of Immigration
and Citizenship



DIAC Victoria State Director, John Williams PSM receiving congratulations from His Excellency, Professor David de Kretser AC, Governor of Victoria, at the Investiture ceremony held at Government House on 11 September 2008.

Breaking Down Barriers

On 5 June this year, the New Hope Foundation, in collaboration with the City of Wyndham, launched their new DVD – ‘Breaking Down Barriers’.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship supports the ongoing settlement needs of new arrivals through its Settlement Grants Program (SGP). In 2007, an SGP grant was awarded to New Hope Foundation, who throughout the 2007/08 year has progressively developed a range of support services. Of particular focus is the growing Sudanese and Karen community living in the Werribee district.

The Breaking Down Barriers youth camp began as an idea for a collaborative project between the New Hope Foundation and International Volunteers for Peace.

The idea was raised in response to concerns about the lack of engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse young people in the City of Wyndham.

The camp was designed to allow Karen and Sudanese young people within the Wyndham area to connect with each other and local service providers such as Wyndham City Council Youth Services, Victoria Police and Spirit West Services (Western Bulldogs Football Club).

The three day camp challenged everybody emotionally, physically and mentally. It bridged cultural gaps as the group bonded through activities such as water awareness at Eastern Beach in Geelong and team building and leadership activities in the Brisbane Ranges near Anakie. The camp activities challenged participants, pushing them outside their comfort zones.

Following from the success of the camp, The New Hope Foundation has initiated a multicultural youth reference group. This group currently has around 60 members and continues to assist young people in the City of Wyndham to build resilience and self esteem, overcome adversity and be active participants in the local community.

Settlement worker Alison Heseltine explains “Breaking Down Barriers was about attempting something new. It was about bringing people together, inspiring them and making a difference. Breaking Down Barriers was about showing how some small, simple things can often mean a lot”.





Students from the Noble Park English Language School's Song Room program perform as part of International Day celebrations at the school.

The Song Room

The Song Room is a national, not-for-profit organisation that provides opportunities for enhanced learning and development for disadvantaged children through music and creative arts.

The Song Room targets children who would otherwise not have such opportunities. As part of its Settlement Grants Program, DIAC has been funding The Song Room's program at Noble Park English Language School (NPELS). NPELS caters for newly arrived refugee and migrant children from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The NPELS program has involved a range of creative arts to engage the children with the school and with each other, including a whole-of-school percussion program and a creative dance program. During the school holiday periods, The Song Room conducts a week-long creative arts program for the NPELS children and their parents and siblings. The response from the program has been very positive:

"It is a fantastic program – it is of such value and gives newly arrived students the opportunity to engage in music given that it is often such an integral part of their cultures." Teacher Grades 1/2.

"The highlights of the program were students were given the opportunity to show their creativity and to gain

confidence when expressing their opinions and ideas." Teacher Prep/1

The Song Room also recently launched its national membership program, The Song Room Online. The Song Room Online will enable schools right across Australia to access innovative creative arts resources. This is a key step towards The Song Room's objective of creating sustainable music and creative arts outcomes for all schools. The Hon Maxine McKew MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Childcare, officially launched the program at Federation Square. "I am delighted to support The Song Room's exciting and strategic initiatives, which will have a significant impact on the educational and social outcomes for children right across Australia", said Ms. McKew. "We know that music and the arts help engage children at school and build vibrant, connected communities", she said.

For more information visit:
www.songroom.org.au or email
enquiries@songroom.org.au.



Make a World of Difference: Hearing each other, healing the earth is the theme of the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions, to be held in Melbourne from 3 to 9 December 2009. The theme was developed after consultations by the Parliament's Community Organisers with many local spiritual and religious communities and interfaith groups.

The Parliament's program will consist of some 500 activities and events, ranging from presentations and panel discussions to musical performances and religious observances, all relating in some way to the theme. Approximately one third of the program events are expected to originate in Australia. Program submissions are now open and will be accepted until 30 December this year. The program submission form is available on the Parliament website – www.parliamentofreligions.org.

For all enquiries about program submissions, including off-site events, please contact the Parliament's Program Associate, Petr Svoboda, on (03) 8622 8410 or via email at petr@parliamentofreligions2009.org

New settlement support for young people

Leading a horse, learning to lead: an innovative approach to leadership development

'Horses for Hope' is a therapeutic equestrian program offering reflective opportunities that highlight how thoughts and actions can impact on people's ability to develop relationships. Tiffany Peverall and Col Emonson of UnitingCare – Cutting Edge (UCCE) in Shepparton provide the program, funded by DIAC under the Settlement Grants Program, as a way of developing leadership and interpersonal skills in young refugees.

The starting point of a horse's relationship with a human is one of distrust. Many refugees have negative experiences of power, feeling that it is not to be trusted. "I believe there are enormous therapeutic opportunities in refugees participating in and reflecting on the very powerful experience of an inherently fearful horse being able to trust a human", said Col.

Initially developed by American horseman Monty Roberts, the concept provides a clear process for developing trust, respect and partnership between

horses and humans. Horses use eye contact, body position, presentation of attitude and imposition of consequences to communicate messages between one another. Roberts observed how adult horses educated young horses to behave in their community, and he translated these communication methods into human actions a horse can understand. With due care, even inexperienced participants can learn the concepts involved.

In this language there is no place for violence. It requires an understanding of how a relationship between horse and human can develop through calmness, intelligence, and reading the animal's needs and fears. It requires strength of knowledge, the will to impose appropriate positive and negative consequences, and the demonstration of love for the animal. In response, participants can expect trust and a willing partnership. The approach helps to develop personal and professional skills for working with other people.

The easy to understand activities in the program combine the role of leaders, something taken very seriously by newly settled communities, with fun. Four parents undertook initial training, focusing on trust and respect as opposed to coercion and power, with the program later including young people.

Participants are usually nervous and can be quite fearful of the horse, but are shown how to manage these emotions and develop strategies to achieve success. Some participants obtain a significant, intensive therapeutic experience, while others may gain nothing more than a feeling of success. Either way, Horses for Hope successfully illustrates and develops leadership qualities by providing reflective opportunities about self presentation and the use and effect of power in relationships.

"First time I was scared but after I understood the horse I'm not scared any more. I learnt something new", Eltouma Mansha with trainer Tiffany Peverall.



REFUGEE WEEK REFUGEE WEEK

Refugee Week Citizenship Ceremony

The first citizenship ceremony staged in the Western Bulldogs' new training facility, the Elite Learning Centre, saw 33 adults and 26 children from Asia, Africa and Europe officially recognised as Australian citizens.

The event was hosted by the Western Bulldogs in conjunction with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) on Saturday 14 June, 2008, as part of Maribyrnong Refugee Week celebrations.

Western Bulldogs Chief Executive, Campbell Rose, said "The Western Bulldogs actively promote the cultural diversity that is a feature of the western region of Melbourne".

Amongst the new citizens was 96-year old Thi Huan Hua from Vietnam who has now taken up residency with her family. She was one of five conferees over the age of 60 that attended.

Each new citizen was presented with a Citizenship Certificate, a native tree and Western Bulldogs showbag. As a final act they sung their new national anthem followed by the Bulldogs' theme song, Sons of the West.

Pictured (from left to right): 96-year old Thi Huan Hua; Maribyrnong City Councillor, Catherine Cumming; The Minister for Employment Participation and Federal Member for Gorton, the Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP; Western Bulldogs President, David Smorgon.
Photo: Western Bulldogs



Father and Son Celebrate their First Meeting

Patrick Flomo, 14, waited a lifetime to meet his father John. Civil war kept them apart until they met for the first time at Melbourne Airport in May 2008.

Patrick's mother was pregnant with him when John began working in a neighbouring town in Liberia in 1994. While he was away Patrick's mother and sisters fled to Guinea when conflict broke out in their town. Unable to return home, John also fled Liberia to the Ivory Coast but was unable to establish contact with his family whose whereabouts were unknown to him. Patrick's mother died in a Guinea refugee camp soon after giving birth, leaving him and his sisters without parents. When Patrick was 11, he and his sisters migrated to Australia as refugees and began their new life.

"Growing up in Guinea, Patrick constantly asked about our dad. I always assured him that some day he'd meet his father", states Henrita, Patrick's older sister. "Although Patrick looks more like our mother, he has his father's personality. They have a lot in common", says Henrita.

The meeting became a reality after a Red Cross Tracing request located John in a refugee camp. Patrick then proposed him under the Special Humanitarian Program.

Emotion overwhelmed both father and

son. "It was the best moment, but I can't describe it", says Patrick of their first meeting. John was also lost for words. The moment marked the end of Patrick's longing for his father and a wonderful beginning for their reunited family.



REFUGEE WEEK 15-21 JUNE 2008

Inter AMES Football during Refugee Week

A football match hosted by the Western Bulldogs between students from Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) in Footscray and Werribee was a feature of Maribyrnong Refugee Week activities.

Played on the Bulldogs' training ground at Whitten Oval, players from both teams had been in Australia for less than six months.

In a close contest AMES Werribee held on to win by a point from a fast finishing AMES Footscray.

The match was the culmination of an eight week introductory football course conducted at both AMES facilities. A Western Bulldogs Multicultural Schools Program was delivered to students during Term 2 as a feature of the Bulldogs Friendly Schools Program.

Western Bulldogs Chief Executive, Campbell Rose, said sport can play a key role in welcoming new members into the community.

"We work hard to engage and embrace new arrivals in our community through a diverse range of programs", Rose said.

"Through our Multicultural Schools Program and with the assistance of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Settlement Grants Program, we have been able to introduce the newest members of our community to the great game of Australian Rules football."

The Western Bulldogs and community partners Footscray Police and Maribyrnong City Council committed their resources to ensure Refugee Week was a success for all participants.

Photo: Matt Murphy



Profile - Fartun Farah

Chairperson of East African Women's Foundation Family and reproductive rights education program worker at North Yarra Community Health.

After graduating at a teachers training college and working as an Early Childhood Teacher, Fartun Farah was forced to flee Somalia when the civil war broke out. For seven years she lived in a refugee camp in Kenya where she worked as head of a community school for women, as part of Care International's peace education program.

Fartun arrived in Australia as a refugee in December 1998 and has worked at Women's Health West, The Royal Women's Hospital and Gilmore Girls Secondary College.

She was the inaugural President of the United Somali Women's Organisation for six years and managed a mental health project in 2007.

Fartun is a qualified Somali interpreter and is currently employed at North Yarra Community Health Centre where she works to educate the community on women's health issues. She is also now head of the East African Women's Foundation and her contribution to the community, particularly on African, women and health issues is highly commendable.



Australia balances refugee priorities

Australia's refugee and humanitarian intake for 2008-09 will help provide a new life for 13 500 people who have fled their troubled homelands in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Announcing the regional allocations for Australia's Humanitarian Program on World Refugee Day, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans said that Africa, the Middle East and Asia will each be allocated a 33 percent intake, with the remaining one percent allocated for contingencies.

In addition to this, a further 500 places have been set aside specifically for Iraqi refugees in the coming year. Another 600 places were set aside in 2007-08 for Iraqis who worked with Australian forces, and their families.

"The priorities were decided after considering views of the Australian community, non-government organisations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees," Senator Evans said.

"Over the next 12 months Australia's refugee and humanitarian intake from Africa will be 3548 people, an increase of 300 from last year."

"The new priorities continue Australia's commitment to refugees which has seen more than 700 000 humanitarian entrants come to Australia since World War II," Senator Evans said.

"We will remain among the world's top three humanitarian resettlement countries alongside the United States and Canada."

Grants to help migrants with citizenship test

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, has announced that the Australian Government will provide \$3.4 million in grants to help refugees and other people who require special assistance preparing for the Australian citizenship test.

The Citizenship Support Grants Program will provide funding for 33 community-based organisations across Australia. Of the funded organisations, 8 service providers have been funded to deliver services in Victoria.

The Citizenship Support Grants Program will deliver a range of services in 2008-09 on a pilot basis.

"The services will help refugees and other people overcome disadvantages such as low English proficiency, a lack of formal education, difficulty performing within a formal testing regime and little or no experience with computers", Senator Evans said.

A list of organisations selected to provide citizenship test assistance services in 2008-09 is available on the department's website at:

www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/citizenship-support-grants/index.htm

StepOne Community Harmony Guide for Local Government

Community cohesion in multicultural settings is a very significant and growing issue and councils are increasingly being expected to provide a leading role in creating positive and sustainable relationships between communities. StepOne is an innovative website providing councils and community groups with guidance and practical resources to implement community cohesion and community harmony strategies in their local areas.

StepOne was developed by Dr Amanda Wise from the Centre for Research on Social Inclusion at Macquarie University and was sponsored by the Australian government through the Department of

Immigration and Citizenship's Living in Harmony Partnerships Scheme.

The StepOne website includes a good practice guide, a number of key research reports, downloads and links to useful social cohesion and community harmony resources. The key feature of the site is a set of best practice case studies taken from councils and community groups throughout Australia and overseas.

Local councils in Victoria are encouraged to submit community cohesion case studies for inclusion on the website. A case study template is available for download from the website. The StepOne website can be accessed at: www.stepone.org.au

New SGP funded organisations in 2008

The Cambodian Association of Victoria has been funded in 2008-09 under the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) to provide settlement services to Cambodian migrants across the South East of Melbourne. Based in Springvale, the Cambodian Association will provide casework, information and referral services to those Cambodian migrants who are eligible for SGP services. A series of information sessions will be run to assist these migrants with various settlement issues such as

accessing mainstream services, health, education, family management and cultural transition. Activities will include the establishment of a volunteer group and various settlement support groups for women, men and elderly Cambodian migrants. These support groups will help to promote integration and reduce isolation issues. The Cambodian Association of Victoria can be contacted on: members@cambodianassociation.com.au or (03) 9546 3466

Temporary Protection Visas Abolished

On 9 August 2008 Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) were abolished. Certain Temporary Humanitarian Visas (THVs) granted to people outside Australia were also abolished on that date. These visas were Subclass 451 – Secondary Movement Relocation (Temporary) and Subclass 447 – Secondary Movement Offshore Entry (Temporary) visas.

Current and former TPV and THV holders still in Australia on 9 August 2008 now have access to a permanent visa with the same benefits and entitlements of the Permanent Protection Visa. This visa is called the Resolution of Status (RoS) (Class CD subclass 851) visa. Only health, character and security requirements need to be met for this visa, and there is no reassessment of protection claims required.

TPV or THV holders who have applied for a further Protection visa are deemed applicants for a RoS visa. Those who have not yet applied for a further Protection visa are able to make an application for a RoS visa. RoS visa holders are eligible to access the same suite of benefits and entitlements as a Permanent Protection Visa holder. These include immediate access to Newstart and Youth allowances, the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), the age pension, disability support pension, family tax benefit and childcare benefit. Holders of the RoS visa also have travel rights, are eligible for Convention travel documents and are able to sponsor their family through the Offshore Humanitarian Program.

The RoS visa application form, and further information, is available from the Department's website at: http://www.immi.gov.au/refugee/tpv_thv/abolition/resolution.htm

AMEP Review

A review of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) commenced in February 2008. The review aims to address a number of issues associated with the delivery and administration of the AMEP.

The AMEP Review Discussion Paper was released in July 2008 as a part of the AMEP Review's consultation process, and focused on key issues raised in focus groups held around

Australia. The public was invited to make written submissions in response to the Discussion Paper. Submissions closed on 15 August 2008.

The review is expected to be completed by September 2008. You may view a copy of the discussion paper on DIAC's website at: http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/amep_discussion_paper.pdf

An Australian-Lebanese Olympic Wrestler – Ali Abdo

Beijing Olympic competitor, Ali Abdo is a shining example of the talent and potential of Melbourne's rich cultural diversity. Ali represented Australia in the 75kg wrestling division in the Beijing XXIV Olympiad.

Born in Melbourne to Lebanese parents, Ali has wrestling in his blood. His father, Abdul Abdo held Lebanon's national wrestling title before migrating to Australia in the 1970s. Ali started wrestling at age nine and has since represented Australia at three Olympic Games; Sydney, Athens and Beijing.

The Melbourne based 27 year old is studying for a Bachelor of Clinical Science

(Osteopathy) at Victoria University. He also works at the university's sport and fitness centre as a gym instructor.

In 2003 Ali was named 'Young Achiever of the Year' by the Australian Arabic Council. The Arabic Council's Young Achiever of the Year awards, aim to encourage Australian Arabic youth to be active participants in the Arabic and broader Australian community. Ali is seen as a role model and is an inspiration to Arabic and non-Arabic youth in Australia.

Congratulations Ali on your Olympic efforts!



Ali (right) and his brother Bill (left).

Celebration event organised and funded by ALHUDA YOUTH ASSOCIATION on 20/07/2008.

Burmese Karen Love Corio

A thriving Burmese Karen community is the latest addition to Corio's growing multicultural mix.

Under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) Karen began settling in Corio on 1 August 2007. The community began with five families and within a year has grown to 31 families, including four Karenni from the neighbouring Karenni State. This figure is set to grow further as word spreads to friends and family overseas that Corio is the place to be.

Eh Zoo arrived in November 2007. Since then her English skills have improved so rapidly that she has begun studying for a Certificate III in Aged Care and three months ago began working as a Community Guide assisting new arrivals to access services. "I enjoy the work and helping people. I am learning a lot and improving my English at the same time", she says.

Eh Zoo's most recent achievements include scoring 100% on her driver's licence test and establishing the Karen Community Group along with other community members. She now serves as the secretary of the Karen Community Group and is brainstorming ideas for events involving other local cultural groups and the wider community.

"Corio is a great place to live. The people, particularly Nerma, are friendly and helpful

and it is easy to get around. You can walk to the shops and my English class is a short bus trip to Geelong", states Eh Zoo.

Geelong Adult Training and Education (GATE) case coordinator, Nerma Kasic attributes much of the Karen's settlement success to the local community and services in the area. "I have a good

working relationship with service providers. Their responsiveness has been helpful", she says.

Nerma's enthusiasm and dedication to her clients also played an important role. Her encouragement and commitment to addressing their needs has given the Karen a great sense of belonging in Corio.



GATE case co-ordinators Nerma Kasic and Admira Vrbovac with Eh Zoo, centre.

New settlement support for young people

Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) has expanded its Refugee Youth Support Workers program across Melbourne. The success of a 2007 pilot program focusing on African youth in Dandenong was the impetus for the program's expansion, which now includes workers who speak 12 different languages. The program is delivered as part of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS).

Developed in response to calls from community groups for settlement services to better meet the specific needs of youth from refugee backgrounds, the program was introduced to assist newly

arrived refugee families with young people aged 18 to 25. The aim is to implement a youth service that identifies and addresses the needs of young people within the context of the family.

Over 20 people have already undertaken an initial intensive training and induction program. They will also continue to participate in ongoing monthly training to better acquaint themselves with AMES Youth Services. More workers will be recruited in line with identified needs and client profile in new settlement suburbs as the need arises.

As young adults from refugee backgrounds themselves, the workers have already been through the

settlement experience in a new country. They assist clients to access relevant services, provide encouragement and share some of their own stories.

"The program benefits both workers and clients", says Melika Yassin Sheikh-Eldin, who assisted in developing the program in consultation with community groups. "Workers gain valuable skills and experience, which helps them find employment in the future, while targeting youth assists them to address their specific needs".

For more information about Refugee Youth Support Workers contact Melika Yassin Sheikh-Eldin at Melika@ames.net.au

2009-2010 Settlement Grants Program

The 2009-10 Settlement Grants Program (SGP) funding round was advertised nationally on Saturday 13 September 2008 and applications for funding close on 22 October 2008.

The focus of the 2009-10 Settlement Grants Program will be on orientation to Australia, developing communities and inclusion and participation.

Further information on the prioritised service types is included in the Applicant Information Booklet which is available on the Department's website at: www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/settlement-grants/applyingforsettlementgrants

Enquiries relating to the program can be directed to the Settlement Grants Program Helpdesk on 1800 453 004.

Windy Hill Welcomes New Citizens

On Sunday, 27 July 2008, the Essendon Football Club (EFC) hosted a citizenship ceremony for 34 people at Windy Hill.

Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Laurie Ferguson, visited the club and conferred Australian citizenship on 34 people from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds. The conferees originated from countries including Bangladesh, Burundi, Chile, China, Egypt, the former Yugoslavia, India, Malta, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Vietnam.

"Today's event is just another example of the fantastic work the Essendon Football Club is doing to build and strengthen its links with multicultural communities", Mr Ferguson said.

"The club has been involved with the Department of Immigration and

Citizenship in a variety of events, including citizenship ceremonies, in the past."

Mr Ferguson praised Essendon's leading role in multicultural engagement and urged other sporting institutions to be motivated by their efforts.

Essendon Chief Executive Officer, Peter Jackson said the club is proud to be involved in the citizenship ceremony and is firmly of the view that Australian Rules Football can play a critical role in the promotion of social inclusion.

"We use football – something iconically Australian – to engage with newly arrived migrants. Conversely, we use football to educate our supporters about the challenges confronted by migrants. It is something this club is very serious about."

What a better way to be welcomed into Australia than through Aussie Rules!



Employer Compliance Laws

It is now a criminal offence to allow a person to work, or refer a person for work, where that person does not have a valid visa or is working in breach of their visa conditions.

Business owners are being encouraged to check a person's work entitlements to ensure they have a visa that allows them to work in Australia.

Individuals convicted of these offences face fines of up to \$13,200 and/or two years' imprisonment per worker illegally hired. Companies face fines of up to \$66,000.

Checking the work entitlements of a prospective employee who is not an Australian citizen is easy.

Employers with internet access can check work entitlements through DIAC's Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) website service. VEVO is a free service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week that enables a potential employee's work entitlements to be determined within a matter of seconds. To register to use VEVO go to www.immi.gov.au/vevo.

Employers without access to the internet can use DIAC's toll-free Visa Entitlement Verification Faxback Service to check work entitlements. Phone 1800 040 070 to find out more about using the service or log on to www.immi.gov.au/vevo and download the Faxback form Authority to Obtain Details of Visa Status.

For more information about the faxback service, VEVO, or the laws, call the Employers' Immigration Hotline on 1800 040 070, during 8.30am-4.30pm, Monday to Friday. Information is also at www.immi.gov.au/employer-obligations.

Parliamentary Secretary Announces Fifth Term Appointees for Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council

Earlier this year, the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Laurie Ferguson announced appointments for a fifth term to the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council (RRAC) to run until 30 June 2010.

The RRAC was established in 1997 as an expert policy group on refugee and humanitarian settlement matters and will

continue to provide recommendations to the government on priorities for settlement services.

“The council advises on the appropriateness and adequacy of Australian Government services, priorities in settlement planning and community feedback”, Mr Ferguson said.

The RRAC appointments comprise four former Council members of the Council and six new members. The six new appointees are Bruce Baird (chair), Paul Power, Daniel Zingifuaboro, Mohammed Issa, Samia Baho and Jenny Semple. Continuing members are Paris Aristotle AM, Margaret Piper, Carmel Guerra and Kevin Liston.

‘Community Cultivation’ in the Multicultural Garden, Swan Hill

Whilst in the area to attend a community settlement forum, DIAC settlement planning officer, Kate Harvey attended the launch of the Swan Hill Multicultural Garden.

Swan Hill celebrated ‘community cultivation’ at the launch of its new multicultural garden at Sunraysia Institute of TAFE. A morning tea was hosted by the National Centre for Sustainability and Sunraysia Institute of TAFE on 25 June 2008. Members of local community groups and agencies as well as English language students from TAFE came out to enjoy the delicious food and perfect

sunshine. TAFE Garden Officer, Paul Ward, provided a guided tour, giving an overview of the different plants and their origin.

The project has been running since April 2008 and was initiated to provide an opportunity for newly arrived migrants to develop new skill sets and establish positive relationships with the wider community. It is also anticipated that by promoting positive community interaction, the project will encourage understanding and acceptance. The garden, which is located at the Sunraysia Institute of TAFE Swan Hill campus, grows fruits,

vegetables, herbs and spices, which are popular in traditional dishes prepared by newly settled multicultural groups in the region. The garden will grow North African and Middle Eastern favourites such as Okra, Molokhia, Broad Bean, Salsify, Rocket and Coriander.

The project was funded by the National Centre for Sustainability, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE and the Department of Communities. Local sponsors, including Swan Hill Hardware - Mitre 10, Swan Hill Sand Supplies, Swan Hill Irrigation, Swan Hill Chemicals, Green Elf Nursery and Cornucopia Seeds, have also provided support for the project by contributing plants, tools and fertilisers necessary to get the garden underway.

Story & Photo: Kate Harvey

