



Harmony Day 2010 - Express Yourself

Every year Harmony Day is held on March 21 to celebrate the cohesive and inclusive nature of our nation and promote the benefits of cultural diversity. It is managed by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship which supports a range of community events and provides free promotional products.

The essence behind Harmony Day is that 'Everyone Belongs' and the theme for 2010 was 'Express Yourself'. The day gave people the opportunity to share with others the importance of diversity in the workplace, in schools and the general community through action, performance, fashion and food.

This year Harmony Day's 'Express Yourself' theme inspired singer and songwriters' Ross Garrett and Rowan Thomson, who also perform as DJs D'Opus and Roshambo, to pen a song to celebrate Harmony Day.

The song 'Express Yourself' encourages people to believe and say that 'diversity is a part of me, everyone belongs in harmony, so express yourself and let your heart be free', a sentiment that captured the essence of the day. To listen to the Harmony Day theme song, visit:

<http://www.harmony.gov.au/harmony-day/express-yourself.htm#a>.

Since it began in 1999, thousands of schools, community groups and organisations have hosted Harmony Day events across Australia. These events have ranged from morning or afternoon teas, local BBQs and multicultural lunches in schools and the workplace to large events involving the whole community and showcasing multicultural performances.

There were 1647 registered events that took place across NSW this year to actively support a day of celebration and unity. For photos of more Harmony Day events held in NSW please see page 6.



Omar Halaby and Mohammad Haidas, youth participants and volunteers with Bankstown Multicultural Youth Services at the Harmony Day Festival held on 20 March 2010 in Carysfield Park in Bass Hill. The event was organised by Bankstown City Council, Australian Football League and Australian Federal Police.

Free TIS services for real estate agents

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) is piloting an extension of free immediate telephone interpreting services to selected real estate agents around Australia. This project is designed to assist migrants and humanitarian entrants in the current environment of declining housing affordability and an increasingly competitive rental market.

The pilot began in October 2009 and will run until 31 July 2010.

Free interpreting services are being provided to real estate agents who work with approved SGP providers to support clients in accessing housing in project locations. Eligible clients are migrants and humanitarian entrants accessing settlement support through specific SGP projects.

It is being conducted nationally in targeted locations with high concentrations of migrant and humanitarian settlement. There are 13 SGP projects nationally in the pilot selected by the Department for their focus on housing and accommodation issues.

In NSW, the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre (FMRC), a division of the Cabramatta Community Centre Inc, in Fairfield and SydWest Multicultural Services Inc in Blacktown are part of this pilot.

While the program is only operating in selected areas, evaluation of the pilot will be used to consider an expansion.

As part of the continuous evaluation, the Department is undertaking analysis of monthly usage patterns and a series of surveys of participating real estate agents at three monthly intervals. The Department has received responses to the first set of surveys and is encouraging participating agencies to continue to provide feedback.

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Newest Australian citizens rejoice at the AFL

The splendid idea of holding an Australian citizenship ceremony during an Australian Football League (AFL) game became reality on Saturday, 20 February 2010 at Blacktown Olympic Park. The AFL, in conjunction with DIAC NSW Citizenship Section at Parramatta, organised two very special citizenship ceremonies - one before the match commenced and one during half time of the NAB Cup pre-season game between the Sydney Swans and Carlton Blues. Blacktown Olympic Park was filled to capacity, with close to 10 000 spectators.

During the half time break the field looked spectacularly colourful with the participation of people from 20 different countries carrying a range of flags from those countries. During the pre-match ceremony, 31 conferees acquired Australian Citizenship. During the half time break four adults and three children from four different countries officially became citizens of Australia, one of the most culturally diverse nations in the world.

Blacktown Mayor, Charlie Lowles, presided over the first ceremony and Mr Roger Price, Federal Member for Chifley, was the presiding officer for the half time ceremony. It concluded with the Australian National Anthem being sung by 2009 Australian Idol winner, Stan Walker. This was a thrilling finale for the conferees, their friends and families, as well as the organising staff from both the AFL and DIAC, who were abuzz with the excitement and warm feelings for such a special moment in a great setting.

Presiding Officer, Mr Roger Price, said in his speech, '... all new citizens must contribute to and participate in their communities to help us continue to build this great, peaceful, democratic nation. Everyone holds hopes and dreams for their future here as an Australian citizen'. All were encouraged to achieve those dreams and to make the most of the opportunities that Australia offers.



One of our newest citizens, Mr Bol Chol, with Australian Idol winner Stan Walker at a special citizenship ceremony during an AFL match in Blacktown on 20 February 2010.

Senator Evans visits community members in Parramatta

Community leaders from various backgrounds including nations as diverse as Afghanistan, Burma, Bhutan, Egypt, India, Liberia, Romania, Rwanda, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, attended a morning tea with Senator Chris Evans and Parramatta Labour MP, Julie Owens on Thursday 28 January 2010.

The event, hosted by The Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre (THHP MRC), provided the newly arrived community members, staff and board members of the MRC and other local service providers with a unique opportunity to speak individually with Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

Senator Evans acknowledged the Chairperson of THHP MRC, Ms Nola Randall-Mohk, and her work as a member of the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council and also congratulated the MRC on receiving the award for outstanding partnership from the University of Western Sydney.

Noting that migrants from a particular community may initially be given 'a hard time' by the community at large and find settlement challenging in the early days, Senator Evans said this then led to acceptance.

Newly arrived migrants were characterised as hard working and their children equally hard working in the school system.

Senator Evans encouraged those present to focus on the positives of the immigration program, and noted the great contribution that large waves of migrants have made to Australia throughout the decades, citing as one of many examples the Greek and Italian communities who settled very well. He also noted that the United Nations High Commission for Refugees had recognised Australia's settlement of migrants and refugees as very successful.



Senator Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, poses with community representatives at the morning tea at The Hills Holroyd Parramatta MRC. From left: Ms Liliane Lukoki N'Gengu, Senator Chris Evans, Mr Patrice Nyembo and Ms Mukanya Astrid Mukendi.

Community groups to benefit from Diversity funding

In the lead up to Harmony Day on March 21, the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement, Mr Laurie Ferguson, announced on 15 February 2010, the recipients of grants funding under the Diverse Australia Program. Community groups around NSW received a total of \$345 500 under the program.

'The Diverse Australia Program aims to promote respect, fairness and a sense of belonging for everyone in a practical way – delivering funding to groups and organisations that make a real difference to Australian communities,' Mr Ferguson said.

Among the community organisations benefiting from diversity funding in NSW, there are a range of projects designed to encourage social cohesion among different communities in particular regions through innovative and creative outlets.

Of these projects, Blacktown City Council will film a play written by a Sudanese youth group on racism, trauma, inter-generational conflict, cultural transition and isolation. The film will be developed into an education resource kit and distributed to high schools in Sydney's west.

The Auburn Community Development Network will receive \$49 000 to utilise models of community education and cultural development to raise awareness of rights, social responsibilities and civic participation among different communities in and around Auburn Central.

Several projects have proposed to target youth issues addressing the growing alienation of migrant youth and breaking down tensions between youth groups from different cultural backgrounds.

Youth focused projects funded this year include the 'Synergy Boys' project through Penrith Skills for Jobs Ltd that aims to encourage young people to build social links and work skills through a Getting to Work program; the Rugby Youth Foundation's 'Mt Druitt and Doonside Youth Leaders Program' to empower youth and build leadership skills through sporting activities in local schools and Rugby in the Park activities; a project through St George Youth Services Inc to empower young people to combat negative attitudes and stereotyping through leadership programs and Anti-Racism Youth Conferences in local schools with local police; and the NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance will work with the local community and agencies in the Fairfield region to encourage cross cultural activities, such as a theatre project, music and dance workshops, and multicultural youth camps and festivals.

International Women's Day 2010

Each year around the world, International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on March 8. Hundreds of events occur not just on this day but throughout the month of March to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women.

International Women's Day originated in 1908 when 15 000 women garment makers took to the streets of New York to demand better working conditions, fairer pay and the right to vote.

In 1910 at the International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, it was resolved with unanimous approval to celebrate IWD each year.

Since then it has stood to promote women's rights and equality.

The United Nations theme for 2010 is 'Equal rights, equal opportunities: Progress for all', however different organisations, governments and women's groups around the world prefer to localise their theme to make it more specific and relevant. The NSW Office for Women's Policy has set this year's IWD theme as 'Empowering women to end poverty by 2015'.

Here are photos from various events held around NSW in March to celebrate women's rights and achievements.



A women's group partnered with Asian Women at Work Inc put on a tai chi demonstration at Martin Place in Sydney during the 99th Year Celebration of International Women's Day on 6 March 2010.



Every year across Australia, local governments present local Woman of the Year awards around International Women's Day to highlight and acknowledge the contribution women make to society and their local community.



Left: Ms Jang ("Jan") Frikken, an SGP funded worker with Illawarra Multicultural Services (IMS), received the local International Women's Day award from Shoalhaven City Council at a ceremony held on 7 March 2010 at Meroogal, an historic house in the Shoalhaven region.

Right: Blacktown City Council announced Ms Julie Nunez as the 2010 Blacktown City Woman of the Year at the International Women's Day Breakfast on 8 March 2010 held at the Council. Ms Nunez is an active member of the community and is currently the President for the Philippine Australian Community Service Inc (PACSI). From left: Councillor Kathie Collins, City of Blacktown Mayor Mr Charlie Lowles, Ms Julie Nunez and Councillor Julie Griffiths.



Eye on DIAC

NSW Community Liaison Team

Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) work as part of the NSW Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Branch of the Department. There are nine CLOs in NSW who work from both the Parramatta and Sydney CBD offices and form part of a broader network that spans across Australia.

The CLOs serve as an important link between community groups and the Department. They assist in promoting the benefits of a united and diverse society through the ability to reach people and organisations in different locations to share information and advice on issues that may affect social cohesion and community harmony.

One of the roles of the CLO is to foster strong relationships with communities through effective two-way communication with key community representatives and organisations. The CLOs engage with stakeholders in various ways including by attending community events, meeting with and maintaining correspondence with key representatives of the community. CLOs provide stakeholders with information about multicultural and other government policies, programs and initiatives and stimulate activities which encourage people to build better cross-cultural and intercommunity relations.



Australian Government
**Department of Immigration
and Citizenship**

Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority

The requirements for Australian visas are strict and the rules can be complex so it is understandable that people may sometimes feel the need to seek assistance. Clients who are not confident in lodging a visa application, or have complex circumstances, may wish to use a registered migration agent to assist them in the visa process.

A registered migration agent is someone who can advise on visa requirements, help an applicant lodge a visa application and deal with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship on the applicant's behalf, usually for a fee.

Migration agents must be registered with the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (Office of the MARA) and abide by the Migration Agents Code of Conduct as set out in regulations. Unless exempted, only registered migration agents can provide immigration assistance.

NSW Outreach Team

The NSW Outreach team engages directly with a wide range of stakeholders and clients through a dedicated Outreach Program, including Industry Outreach Officers (IOOs) and a Regional Outreach Officer (ROO). This year the Outreach program has expanded to include Union Outreach Officers (UOOs).

IOOs are experienced immigration officers working in partnership with industry to help employers to better understand how to use DIAC's services to address skilled labour shortages. They have also increasingly provided information on employer obligations as a result of the current economic climate, as well as the 457 reform process. IOOs are part of a national network covering 20 industry groups.

UOOs are also experienced immigration officers working in partnership with unions to raise awareness of employer obligations and worker rights and responsibilities. UOOs are part of a national network covering six unions. The NSW UOOs are placed with the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) and the Australian Workers Union (AWU).

ROOs provide information and advice on state-specific and regional migration schemes to a range of stakeholders. ROOs make regular visits to regional areas to meet and provide assistance to employers wanting information and advice on employing skilled migrants, where skilled vacancies cannot be filled.

Unregistered people who give immigration assistance (even without charging a fee) are breaking the law and penalties of up to 10 years' jail can apply.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship discourages the use of unregistered migration agents. The regulation of migration agents exists to protect consumers from being given incorrect advice or losing money to unscrupulous operators posing as migration advice professionals.

Anyone can apply for their own Australian visa and a migration agent cannot influence the outcome of an application. In choosing a migration agent, clients need to check they are registered and able to practice lawfully in Australia by contacting the Office of the MARA on 1300 226 272 or visiting the website at www.mara.com.au.

The Office of the MARA recently released a video on the dangers of using an unregistered agent in "Don't get caught out!" at IMMItv on www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RacpuZ3NQ0.

21 MARCH HARMONY DAY



Chinese lion dance at the Harmony Day Festival at Carysfield Park in Bass Hill on 20 March 2010, organised by Bankstown City Council, Australian Football League and Australian Federal Police



Carnevale 2010 was held in Holroyd Gardens in Merrylands on 21 March 2010. The event was organised by Holroyd City Council and local service providers including The Hills Holroyd Parramatta MRC. Carnevale is a cultural festival held annually to celebrate diversity, unity and cultural awareness. The event featured many cultural performances on stage including the Acholi Cultural Dance Group (above) who performed a traditional Sudanese dance on the day.



The IMS Nowra Harmony Day Dancers performed at the 4th Annual Multicultural Celebration Day. The event was held on 27 March 2010 at Bomaderry RSL Club and organised by Illawarra Multicultural Services and the Shoalhaven Multicultural Group.



Organisers of a Harmony Day Picnic in Wollongong held on 13 March 2010. Workers from Illawarra Multicultural Services (IMS), ACL, Illawarra Multicultural Health and volunteers celebrate the success of the picnic in promoting a spirit of inclusiveness and shared identity.



NSW AMES and the NSW Fire Brigade staff ran a Harmony Day BBQ in Belmore Park in Sydney on 16 March 2010. The BBQ featured a traditional (but halal) sausage sizzle, information stall on NSW AMES and the NSW Fire Brigade services and included free Harmony Day materials, and an exciting fire safety presentation, attentively watched by recently-arrived AMEP students.



A Korean women's choir performed in traditional dress at the Harmony and Migrant Information Day celebration held on 26 March 2010 at the Crows Nest Centre. The event was organised and supported by a number of local service providers and agencies from the Lower North Shore Multicultural Network including Willoughby City Council and North Sydney Council.



Project Highlights – Youth Projects

Humanitarian Youth Project

The Humanitarian Youth Project run by SydWest Multicultural Services Inc and funded by the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) has achieved excellent outcomes over the last three years for refugee youth in Blacktown and Penrith. Until recently, the Humanitarian Youth Worker, Catherine Johnson, was the primary worker but now she heads a team comprising of a Youth Employment and Education project worker and a Youth Outreach worker based in Penrith. With Diverse Australia Program (DAP) funding a Youth Empowerment in Sport (YES) project is also running and provides a special focus on young Muslim women to actively and confidently participate in mainstream sporting activities. At the moment Ms Johnson is also working with Youth Off the Streets to initiate a joint African Youth Community Development Project.

The project facilitates weekly recreational and sporting activities and also provides educational and skills development sessions through holiday programs and youth camps. The project successfully links information dissemination and youth leadership training with fun activities to increase knowledge and access to services for refugee youth and to develop mentoring relationships between participants.



The project has established several successful sporting initiatives such as the STAR Basketball Recreation program with Blacktown PCYC and Blacktown Youth Services Association. It is a Sudanese youth-led program which provides free basketball training sessions for young people and has successfully entered teams in local mainstream competitions around the region. The youth project has also developed an ongoing soccer and recreation program for refugee youth in partnership with Football United. This project supports weekly Saturday in the Park soccer training programs as well as other initiatives like a Spark Futsal program held at the Blacktown PCYC and a girls futsal program. A tournament is held during the Christmas period with teams from mixed refugee backgrounds.

The project also facilitates a Homework Support Program which runs during school terms with a network of volunteer tutors and has recently been extended to include primary school students. It also facilitates computer training courses in partnership with TAFE, as well as a debating program.

The success of this program has been in its ability to work in partnership with a range of local service providers and with young refugees themselves to produce sustainable and effective programs. It has consulted with the target group, has been able to engage the support of a large volunteer network and been proactive in seeking funding from various sources.



The Newly Arrived Pathways Program

The Auburn Youth Centre (AYC) received funding under the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) for the last two years to implement a program in the Auburn, Holroyd and Parramatta areas focusing on education and employment pathways for newly arrived young people.

The issues facing newly arrived young people are well known. Most revolve around learning English and negotiating the education and employment systems, amongst others. The project had its source in the Youth Literacy and Transition to Work program. This project identified gaps in services for newly arrived youth, especially in making the transition from Intensive English Centres (IECs) to mainstream education and employment pathways.

The Newly Arrived Pathways Program, partnered with local high schools and IECs, to deliver outreach career casework in schools, career workshops, facilitate parent information sessions and advocate on behalf of the client group to the

education system at both the school and government level.

The program aims to develop client's capacity to access education and employment opportunities, and to assist parents to understand and engage with school communities regarding their children's learning outcomes.

The program operates as a connector, assisting newly arrived young people to take advantage of the opportunities and services that they are entitled to. This may be as simple as helping a client fill in a course application form, to extended case planning and casework, as well as assisting clients to map out plans and career goals and take steps towards them.

The project relies heavily on the partnerships with schools. The commitment to the future of newly arrived students shown by partner schools has been outstanding. Those schools that have partnered with AYC, to deliver the Newly Arrived Pathways Program, have taken the risk to trial a new program and their students have been greatly assisted as a result.

Changes to the General Skilled Migration Program

On 8 February 2010 the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans announced a number of reforms to the General Skilled Migration (GSM) program as a result of a review of the Migration Occupation in Demand List (MODL). The reforms are designed to ensure that it is more responsive to the needs of industry and employers. These changes will guarantee that the program meets the needs of industry sectors and regional Australia where there are shortages of highly skilled workers, such as in health care, engineering and mining.

As a result of the review, the MODL was revoked on announcement and effectively, no occupational targeting points will be available under the points test, following its revocation. However, transitional arrangements are in place for some former overseas students. For more information, please visit the department's website at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/skilled-occupations/occupations-in-demand.htm>.

The Minister will be recommending that the Governor-General in Council, make amendments to the *Migration Regulations 1994* to give effect to the framework in which a new Skilled Occupation List (SOL) will be applied. From mid 2010 the new SOL, will provide a more targeted list of skilled occupations acceptable for GSM purposes. The list was developed based on research undertaken by the independent body Skills Australia. When the new SOL commences the Critical Skills List will cease, as it will no longer be required.

As part of the reforms, up to 20 000 would-be migrants who applied for an offshore GSM visa prior to 1 September 2007 will have their applications ceased and receive a refund of the Visa Application Charge. The Minister announced that he would set a maximum number of these GSM visas that could be granted and once this number is reached, any applications awaiting decision will be taken to have not been made.

Review on the GSM Points Test

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship is currently reviewing the GSM Points Test. Under the current points test, potential skilled migration applicants who are not sponsored by an employer need to accumulate up to 120 points based on their qualifications, skills and English proficiency in order to be eligible for a visa.

The review is being undertaken to ensure that the Points Test is selecting high calibre applications with skills the nation needs and who are most likely to quickly secure skilled work. It is considering matters such as whether some occupations should

New Skilled Occupations List announced

On 17 May 2010, the Minister announced the new list of occupations to comprise the new Skilled Occupations List (SOL). The new SOL is proposed to commence on 1 July 2010.

Affect of GSM changes to Onshore International Students

It is anticipated the new SOL list would apply to all new GSM applications lodged on or after its implementation, but will impact onshore international students differently depending on their particular circumstances.

If an international student held a subclass 572, 573 or 574 student visa on 8 February 2010, they will continue to be able to access the existing SOL should they apply for a subclass 485 Skilled Graduate (Temporary) visa prior to the end of 2012. They will be required to have an occupation on the new SOL should they wish to apply for a permanent GSM visa.

Alternatively, if on the 8 February 2010, a former international student held a subclass 485 Skilled Graduate (Temporary) visa or applied for a subclass 485 Skilled Graduate (Temporary) visa that had not been decided, they will continue to be able apply for a permanent GSM visa utilising the current SOL, as long as they apply for their permanent or provisional GSM visa before the end of 2012.

Those who at the date of announcement on 8 February 2010 already had a pending GSM will not be affected by the changes to the SOL. For applicants who do not fall into this group, they will be subject to the new SOL if they apply after the new SOL commences.

For more information, on how the changes to the SOL may affect you or your clients, please visit the department's website at:

www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/whats-new.htm.

warrant more points than others, whether sufficient points are awarded for work experience and excellence in English, and whether there should be points for qualifications obtained overseas.

A discussion paper was released on the Department's website on 15 February 2010 and remained open for public comment until 12 March 2010. Over 220 submissions were received from educational institutions, unions, business and industry groups and individuals.

For more information on the review of the GSM Points Test, please visit the department's website at: <http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/pdf/faq-points-test.pdf>.

Announcements

Health Care Complaints Commission

The Health Care Complaints Commission is an independent body dealing with complaints about health services or health care providers in NSW under the *Health Care Complaints Act 1993*.

Health care providers can be registered (eg. doctors, nurses) or unregistered (eg. psychotherapists, acupuncturists, naturopaths). The Commission also deals with complaints about hospital, surgery centres and other health facilities.

If you know of community members who are concerned about the health services that were provided to them, encourage them to contact the Health Care Complaints Commission.

Commission staff can talk people through their options in resolving their concerns or assist in making a formal complaint. The Commission also has officers located throughout NSW who can arrange a presentation to community members about the role and services of the Commission.

Please call the inquiry service on 1800 043 159 to confidentially talk about any issues. For more information, visit www.hccc.nsw.gov.au.



The People of Australia – AMAC statement

The Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC) provided a statement on cultural diversity and recommendations to the government on 30 April 2010. The statement entitled *The People of Australia* was presented to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, and Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement, Mr Laurie Ferguson, at a function held at the Immigration Museum in Melbourne.

The statement was developed following extensive community consultation. Senator Evans thanked council members for their effort and dedication and endorsed the government's commitment to ensuring that future multicultural policy be based on participation and inclusion.

'Australia's approach to immigration and cultural diversity is a national strength but it is a strength which should not be taken for granted,' Senator Evans said.

The AMAC was launched in December 2008 by Senator Evans in Melbourne. The council consists of 16 members with a wide range of backgrounds, experience and professional expertise, also reflecting a balance of ages and gender.

The council provides advice to government on practical approaches to promoting social cohesion, the engagement of migrants in Australian society, overcoming racism and intolerance and communicating to the public on this complex social policy area.

Following the release of the statement, Senator Evans announced that the AMAC would be extended for a second term of two years. It will be tasked with developing a long-term strategy for increased settlement in rural and regional locations in its next term.

The *The People of Australia* statement is available on the DIAC website at: http://www.immi.gov.au/about/stakeholder-engagement/_pdf/people-of-australia.pdf.

ATO releases multicultural DVDs

Many taxpayers come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. For these Australians, understanding tax obligations can be a particular challenge. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has developed audio-visual products to assist with taxation issues.

Tax in Australia: What you need to know was launched late last year and is available as a DVD and as an audio-visual program.

The material is available in 10 community languages including English, Burmese (Karen), Mandarin, Korean, Dari, Dinka, Vietnamese, Arabic, Thai and Farsi. All DVDs are also subtitled in English.

The online audio-visual file and DVD provide practical support and guidance to the community about their rights and obligations. It provides an introduction to Australia's tax and superannuation systems and gives basic information about the need for and use of Tax File Numbers as well as what people need to know when they start employment.

Tax Commissioner Michael D'Ascenzo said, 'This product will assist new migrants understand the tax and [superannuation] systems – and how as valued members of the community they can share in the benefits they provide'.

Taxpayers can access the online program and order a DVD through www.ato.gov.au/otherlanguages, by telephoning 1300 720 092 or by emailing diversity@ato.gov.au.

DIAC Updates

AUSCO 'Testimonial' DVD

On 25 February 2010, the Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) Contract Manager, Gus Overall from Humanitarian Branch in DIAC National Office and National Communications Branch Producer, Brendon McKenzie visited ACL, the metropolitan IHSS and Western Sydney and South Western Sydney AMEP Service Provider, at their premises in Auburn. DIAC staff filmed an AMEP class and interviewed Iraqi and Afghan clients about their settlement experiences.

To capture a perspective on rural settlement, Denise Earnshaw from DIAC's Humanitarian Branch traveled to Coffs Harbour on 15 February 2010 to speak to some Togolese clients and film a Vocational English course. She also interviewed

some Iraqi entrants who had arrived in Australia some years prior.

The material collected from these visits will form part of an entrant 'testimonial' DVD, a resource which will complement other components of the AUSCO program delivered offshore to humanitarian entrants before they embark on their travel to Australia.

It is hoped that hearing about the challenges and successes of humanitarian entrants who preceded them will provide future AUSCO participants with a 'peer-to-peer' perspective on the settlement experience.

The clients interviewed by DIAC enjoyed the experience of 'giving back' to Australia's settlement services in this way.

New AMEP Contract

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is the Australian Government's largest settlement program which has been administered by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship since 1947. The new AMEP business model incorporates some improvements to achieve better outcomes for clients in response to a formal review of the AMEP in 2008.

The review found that the settlement related aspects of the AMEP are fundamental to helping new arrivals settle in Australia and their local communities. AMEP Clients valued the orientation information reinforced through the AMEP and felt reassured and less isolated by being around other students facing the same settlement challenges.

AMEP has a long tradition of providing English skills in a settlement context. To reflect this settlement dimension, the program's objective has been revised as follows: '[To] Provide access to settlement focused English Language Training for eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants.'

In recognition of the crucial role AMEP plays in helping new arrivals to settle in Australia, service providers will deliver settlement courses with related learning outcomes to all AMEP clients. The entry course will provide new arrivals with information about Australian society, culture, laws, services and practices. The course for exiting AMEP clients will reinforce this information, as well as provide information on post AMEP pathways to further education, employment, ESL, and community services. The courses will highlight key aspects of settlement information delivered through the Australian Cultural Orientation Program (AUSCO), the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) and the resources provided on the DIAC website.

The role of the AMEP Counsellor has been formally introduced in the next AMEP contract period to provide clients with increased support at entry and exit to AMEP, throughout their tuition and referrals to other services.

Other changes under the new AMEP contract include an increase in the number of contract regions in NSW from five (current) to nine. Distance or e-Learning services will also be delivered by a single national service provider. Distance learning tuition includes: self-paced e-modules for independent learning; on-line tuition; traditional paper based learning; and home tutoring.

The new AMEP contract period will be for three years, from 1 January 2011 to 30 June 2014.

Release of the HSS Tender

The Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Mr Laurie Ferguson MP, recently announced in a Media Release on 17 March 2010, that the new Request for Tender for the provision of settlement services to refugee and humanitarian arrivals had been released.

The Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program replaces the existing Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS). Services include case management, accommodation, local area coordination and a volunteer program.

Full documentation is available to view by registering on the AusTender website at: www.tenders.gov.au. The request for tender will close on 26 May 2010.

Any enquiries about the tender should be directed to the nominated departmental contact officer.

Australian Citizenship Test Resource Book

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship has released a new resource book, *The Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond*, which contains vital information applicants need to know to pass the Citizenship test. All test questions are based on information in the testable section of the book, which covers topics such as Australia's democratic beliefs, laws and government, as well as the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

This resource also contains 20 practice questions. There is also a non-testable section that contains interesting and useful information about Australian history, culture, sport and notable Australians.

The resource book is currently being translated in 37 community languages and these will be

progressively available on the website from March 2010.

In addition to the resource book, a DVD presenting key points from the testable section is also being developed to assist clients who have low literacy levels. This study resource will be available in 2010. Also there is a tutorial test and four short practice tests available on the website that will familiarise applicants with the look and feel of the Citizenship test. The practice test contains sample questions similar to those asked in the Citizenship test. The practice test will help applicants prepare for the types of questions likely to be asked during the actual Citizenship test.

For more information on the Citizenship test book and other resources, visit:
http://www.citizenship.gov.au/learn/cit_test/test_resource_book/.

Settlement Reporting Facility

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship has released an enhanced version of the Settlement Reporting Facility (SRF) to make it more user-friendly. The SRF accesses the Department's statistical database on permanent arrivals to Australia since January 1991.

The Settlement Database brings together data from various internal and external sources to assist government and community agencies involved in the planning and provision of services to migrants.

The site contains helpful links outlining how to use the new SRF tool to produce a settlement report and additional 'Learn More' links that provide further relevant information.

To access the Settlement Reporting Facility and more information about the tool, visit:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/settlement-reporting-facility/>.

Taking the Initiative Program

The Taking the Initiative program has been designed for police around Australia to help them get to know what other jurisdictions are doing to improve their relationships with new arrivals.

It is a useful resource for settlement service providers and others interested in learning about the work being undertaken by police, how it is planned and implemented.

The online resource contains useful links to important information for police including Department of Immigration and Citizenship profiles for communities such as the Sudanese, Congolese, Karen and Chin Burmese, as well as links to the Department's programs and service providers. It also contains brief profiles of individual liaison officers who are involved in these initiatives.

For more information on Taking the Initiative, visit:
<http://www.immi.gov.au/gateways/police/home/>.

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For more information

Please contact the MAS Branch on (02) 8666-5466 or write to:
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