



# MCoT News

Welcome to the February 2009 edition of The Multicultural Council of Tasmania newsletter

*Promoting Multiculturalism and Harmony in Tasmania*

If you wish to subscribe or unsubscribe please send an email to [mcot@tassie.net.au](mailto:mcot@tassie.net.au)  
Please email or phone us on 6231 0764 if you would like to contribute items for the newsletter. The deadline for each month's issue is the first Monday of the relevant month.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

### MCOT NEWS AND UPDATES

- [From the Chair](#)
- [Next Council Meeting and Guest Speaker](#)
- [February Days](#)
- [Free Membership](#)

### NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

- [Philippines – Australia Community of Tasmania Fundraiser](#)
- [Estonian Association – A play “Soldier”](#)
- [Filipino Communities Council of Tasmania Inc.](#)
- [Sierra Leone/Liberian Union](#)

### GENERAL NOTICES

- [Diverse Australia Program: Everyone Belongs](#)
- [Harmony Day](#)
- [60 Years of Australian Citizenship](#)
- [Seniors Card](#)
- [West Moonah Exhibition](#)

## MCOT NEWS AND UPDATES

### From the Chair

I am pleased to inform members that MCoT has started this year on what promises to be yet another busy year. I started my duties by attending the citizenship ceremony on Australia Day at Sandy Bay hosted by the Hobart City Council.

MCoT and the MRC worked very hard to ensure that the community consultation with the Social Inclusion Unit was a success. I was pleased to see so many of our members attending and contributing lots of positive input for the Premier's Department and look forward to the government's response to the community consultations.

We who live in Tasmania have truly been the lucky ones, so far we have been spared floods, fires and extreme heat. Sadly thousands have lost everything and they need our help to get back on their feet, so I ask you to spare a thought and to lend a hand to your fellow citizens in their darkest hour, in whichever way you can.

On the 22nd February I will be attending the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of recognition of the Croatian language at Sydney's Macquarie University. The following month I will be attending the FECCA Executive meeting in W.A. where I will, at the same time, be attending the FECCA/ECCWA Refugee and Immigrant Women's Conference along with FECCA colleagues from other states and an impressive line up of dignitaries and key speakers.

[Top](#)

### **Next Council Meeting**

The next Council meeting will be held in the Acacia Room at the Migrant Resource Centre, 49 Molle Street at 7.00 pm on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

Guest Speaker will be Imogen Birley, Community Liaison Officer for the Dept. Immigration and Citizenship. Imogen will be talking about activities being planned in Hobart and Launceston to support Harmony Day on March 21st 2009, and seek Council support and participation in some of the key events. She will also be able to provide updates on the outcome of the 'Living in Harmony' Program review and information on small and large grants.

[Top](#)

### **February Days**

- 4 Independence Day (*Sri Lanka*)
- 5 Constitution Day (*Mexico*)
- 6 Waitangi Day (*New Zealand*)
- 7 Independence Day (*Grenada*)
- 11 National Day (*Japan*)
- 11 National Day (*Iran*)
- 15 Constitution Day (*Serbia*)
- 16 Independence Day (*Lithuania*)
- 18 Independence Day (*Gambia*)
- 21 International Mother Language Day**
- 22 Independence Day (*St. Lucia*)
- 23 Independence Day (*Brunei Darussalam*)
- 23 Republic Day (*Guyana*)
- 24 Independence Day (*Estonia*)
- 25 National Day (*Kuwait*)
- 27 Independence Day (*Dominican Republic*)

[Top](#)

### **Free MCoT Membership**

To assist new and emerging communities and groups the Multicultural Council of Tasmania is offering the first year's membership to MCoT for free. Value \$30.00

[Top](#)

## **NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITIES**

### **Philippines-Australia Community of Tasmania**

The Philippines-Australia Community of Tasmania is holding a fundraiser at 12.00pm on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February 09 at the Moonah Community Hall, Gormanston Road, Moonah. Come along and enjoy a Filipino lunch featuring Filipino cuisine with cultural presentation.

Entry fee: **\$10.00** Adults **\$5.00** Children.

For more information contact: Emilie Schneider 62739752

Ludvinia Cooley 62310627  
Cecile Standen 62623536

[Top](#)

### **Estonian Association of Tasmania**

The Estonian Association of Tasmania is proud to announce that a troupe from Estonia, including actors and the playwright will be bringing the production of "Soldier", a play of WWII by Mart Kivastik to Hobart. A play described both in Estonia and New York as "the most distinguished performance of 2007".

The performance is scheduled for 7p.m., 19<sup>th</sup> February 09. It will be at St. Georges Church hall, Cromwell St, Battery Point. For further details contact Tiiu Rääbus on 62783574 (evenings are best).

[Top](#)

### **Filipino Communities Council of Tasmania Inc.**

The 7<sup>th</sup> annual Filipino Fiesta will be held on Sunday, 8 March 2009 at the Main Grandstand Hall, Royal Showground from 11:00 am. This is the main event of the Filipino community of Tasmania each year. This event is celebrated in a different major area each year. Each three years, the fiesta is celebrated in the South, with this year's fiesta to be held in Glenorchy. It was previously celebrated in Hobart (2003) and Moonah (2006).

### **Sierra Leone/Liberian Union**

The Sierra Leone/Liberian Union are planning a celebration to commemorate Sierra Leone's Liberation Day in April. Look for further details in MCoT's next newsletter.

[Top](#)

## **GENERAL NOTICES**

### **Diverse Australia Program: Everyone Belongs**

Despite the current economic climate and competing agendas, social inclusion continues to remain as a key focus on the government agenda. A new national program, Diverse Australia, aims to empower communities in their response to address cultural, racial and religious intolerance. The program includes a small grants scheme of up to \$5,000 to help build the capacity of small organisations in addressing community needs. In addition, ongoing year round funding will be available to increase responsiveness to emerging issues of intolerance when communities identify a need.

Source: [www.harmony.gov.au](http://www.harmony.gov.au)

[Top](#)

### **21 March 2009 is Harmony Day**

Harmony Day, which is managed by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, celebrates the cohesive and inclusive nature of our nation and promotes the benefits of cultural diversity. Get involved and visit [www.harmony.gov.au](http://www.harmony.gov.au) for more information, to register your event and order free materials.

New program brings diversity into focus

The Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Laurie Ferguson, has launched a new program to support communities in their efforts to address cultural, racial and religious intolerance.

Mr Ferguson said the new Diverse Australia Program has an increased focus on addressing issues of intolerance with more funding directed to areas of need. The program will provide funding support to local groups and organisations to tackle issues specific to each community while promoting respect and fairness.

“Last year I asked the Department to take a fresh look at the previous Living in Harmony program which had been operating for ten years. I wanted to ensure we were taking the best possible approach to promoting the benefits of cultural diversity” Mr Ferguson said  
Key elements of the new program include:

- a small grants scheme of up to \$5000 which will extend the reach of activities and help build the capacity of small organisations to address community needs; and
- ongoing year round funding to increase responsiveness to emerging issues of intolerance when communities identify a need.

“The activities funded are aimed at bringing Australians from all backgrounds together in a positive and productive way, a key element of the Diverse Australia Program is that it works with different levels of Government and community organisations to empower a local response to issues of racism and intolerance” Mr Ferguson said.

Harmony Day which is celebrated on March 21 remains a key event in the new program.

“In 2009, I would like to see schools, community groups, local governments and business all get behind Harmony Day and make it the best day of celebration ever,” the Parliamentary Secretary added.

[Top](#)

## **60 Years of Australian Citizenship**

Australian citizenship was first introduced in 1949 with the enactment of the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948*. Before this, most Australian residents were British subjects.

The first citizenship ceremony was staged at Albert Hall, Canberra, on 3 February 1949. Seven men became citizens – one to represent each state and the ACT. They were from Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Greece, Norway, Spain and Yugoslavia.

During 1949, almost 2500 people from more than 35 countries became Australian citizens. Most were from Italy, Poland, Greece, Germany and Yugoslavia.

More than four million people have become Australian citizens in the past 60 years.

More than 95 per cent of the nation’s population are Australian citizens.

Australian citizenship is celebrated annually on Australian Citizenship Day, September 17.

Commemorations throughout the year will include:

- the opening of Citizenship Place, on the shore of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra, on Australia Day.
- a commemorative mintmark coin released by the Royal Australian Mint
- Citizenship Place will feature a timeline wall and engraving of the Australian citizenship affirmation. Citizenship Place will be a focus for future citizenship celebrations.
- a 60th anniversary of citizenship message from the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, for all conferees throughout the year
- a 60th anniversary edition of citizenship school education resources, and
- 60th anniversary-themed conferral ceremonies at landmark events including Citizenship Day.

## **Citizenship today**

More than 120 000 people from more than 200 countries became Australian citizens in 2007-08:

New South Wales	45 000
Victoria	30 700
Queensland	17 400
Western Australia	17 000
South Australia	6 300
Australian Capital Territory	2 500
Tasmania	900
Northern Territory	600

Most were from the United Kingdom, India, China, New Zealand and South Africa.

Citizenship for all Australians Australian citizenship carries responsibilities and privileges. It is a commitment of loyalty to Australia and its people and our shared democratic beliefs, laws and rights. It is a bond uniting our culturally diverse society.

It is fundamentally important that we all understand our civic responsibilities and the meaning of Australian citizenship, whether we are Australian by birth or by choice.

**Did you know...**Notable Australian citizenship conferees of the past include ground-breaking medical specialists Dr Victor Chang and Prof Fred Hollows, authors Bryce Courtenay and John M. Coetzee, former world boxing champion Kostya Tszyu and performers Jon Stevens and John Farnham.

[Top](#)

## Seniors Card

Do you have a Seniors Card?

The Seniors Card is provided free by the Tasmanian Government to all people who are Permanent residents of Tasmania (you do not have to be an Australian Citizen);

- Aged 60 years or more; and
- Not employed for more than 20 hours a week.

The Seniors Card entitles the holder to a range of discounts from participating businesses cheaper government services. So far nearly 600 businesses and services support the Seniors Card.

To find out about the simple application process, and more useful information, go to:

[http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cdd/seniors/seniors\\_card](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cdd/seniors/seniors_card) or phone **1300 135 513**

[Top](#)

## Mountains, Mud and Migrants: a History of West Moonah Exhibition

Moonah Arts Centre, Hopkins Street, Moonah 5-19 August 2009

An exhibition of photography and artwork, local history, "then and now" photography and interviews with West Moonah's "living treasures".

[Top](#)

### General MCoT Information

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