



MCoT News

Welcome to the November 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
Please email or phone us on 6231 5067 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.

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MCOT NEWS AND UPDATES

From the Chair

October has been an eventful month for MCoT. As I said in the previous newsletter, my first task was to meet with Multicultural Tasmania and the Department of Premier and Cabinet to finalise the funding for this year. I am happy to state that this has now been achieved. Unfortunately the quantum of funding has not changed for the last 7 years. We will continue to lobby aggressively for more funding in the future.

The Premier has announced a 1 million dollar grant for organisations to develop programs, projects and other events for the social inclusiveness agenda. We intend to put in grant applications for some of this money.

The Multicultural Evening was a resounding success. The VIP guests included the Hon. Lisa Singh MHA - Minister for Corrections and Consumer Protection, attending on behalf of the Premier David Bartlett who was unfortunately unable to attend. Vanessa Goodwin - MLC, Jillian Law - Liberal Member for Franklin, Adriana Taylor –Mayor of Glenorchy and Mr Taylor.

Apologies were received by Will Hodgeman – Leader of the Opposition, Lara Giddings – MP, Terry Martin – MLC, Kim McKim MLC – Green’s Leader. Many compliments on the evening were received from dignitaries, guests and performers. The organisers of this event need to be congratulated for putting on such a fine performance. Many thanks to all those who contributed to ensuring that it was an enjoyable multicultural event. This is now becoming a much looked forward to annual event in Tasmania’s calendar and we hope to see it grow and become bigger every year.

On Saturday 3rd October MCoT hosted its annual senior’s barbeque at Tolosa Park, Glenorchy. The Mayor of Glenorchy, Adriana Taylor and her husband, joined in the barbeque along with MCoT members and guests. Many participants were very appreciative of this and even contributed towards the expenses as a gesture of their appreciation. Lovely salads were prepared and donated by Mary Excell, Tiiu Rääbus and Marcella Perovic.

The MCoT delegates attended the annual FECCA Conference in Shepparton in Country Victoria. A new FECCA Committee was elected with Pino Migliorino from NSW as the new Chairperson. MCoT contributed to the conference deliberations.

Briefly the following were raised as the prime concerns for FECCA at this conference:

- Multiculturalism and Human Rights go hand in hand and Australia urgently needs a human rights charter as it is one of the few developed countries without one.
- Australia is a culturally diverse and faith diverse society and the Government needs to honestly acknowledge this.
- Social inclusion should be embedded within multiculturalism
- Racism exists, and we should acknowledge this without being in denial. It is not something to be frightened of but to be engaged with.
- International students experience high levels of discrimination and racial vilification, which are not reported due to cultural reasons and a fear of being sent back.
- FECCA should stop ‘preaching to the converted’, get off their backs and engage with people that really matter and are able to make decisions to ensure that we make ‘a difference on the ground’.

A more detailed account will be provided by the other delegates.

Rohan Wirasinha

Correction:

1. *It was stated in last month’s From the Chair that “discussions have already been initiated with Multicultural Tasmania and the Department of Community Development”. This should have read “Department of Premier and Cabinet”.*
2. *The correct spelling for a member of the New Executive/ Management Committee is: Remash Narayana of the Hobart Tamil Association. Our apologies.*

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Next Council Meeting

The next Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 18th November at 7.00 p.m. in the Acacia Room at the Migrant Resource Centre, 49 Molle St.

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November Days

- 1 Anniversary of the Revolution (*Algeria*)
National Day (*Barbuda*)
National Day (*Antigua*)
- 3 National Day (*Panama*)
National Foundation Day (*Republic of Korea*)
National Day (*Federated States of Micronesia*)
Independence Day (*Dominica*)
- 9 Independence Day (*Cambodia*)
- 11 Remembrance Day (*Australia*)
Independence Day (*Poland*)
National Day (*Angola*)
- 16 International Day for Tolerance**
- 18 National Day (*Oman*)
Proclamation of Independence (*Latvia*)
Independence Day (*Morocco*)
- 19 National Days (*Monaco*)
- 22 Independence Day (*Lebanon*)
- 25 National Day (*Suriname*)
Statehood Day (*Bosnia and Herzegovina*)
- 28 National Day (*Mauritania*)
National Day (*Albania*)
Independence Day (*Panama*)
Proclamation of Independence Day (*East Timor*)
- 30 Independence Day (*Barbados*)
National Day (*Benin*)

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NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

Simply the Best

A concert of mixed cultures organized by and featuring The Australian Rosny Children's Choir, The Tassie Pinoy Ensemble, The Pact Dance Group, The Hobart German Choir and The German Folk Dance Group at the Theatre Royal, 29 Campbell St. on November 21st at 7.30p.m. Ticket prices \$30, \$25 (Senior Tickets), \$20 (Student Tickets). Book at the Theatre Royal on 62332299. Ticket sales are also available at the door.

Community Radio

A message from Danijela Hlis (volunteer radio presenter, Hobart Community Access Program):

Dear friends of MCoT and MRC, as you probably know, I have been replacing Vikki Miteff on this program. It was started by Vikki over 13 years ago and it has a great multicultural flavour. My colleague on this program is Judy Gray, a lovely person to work with. Unfortunately I will not be able to continue with my participation in the New Year. If anyone is interested in becoming a volunteer radio presenter, why not contact the new President Mr Brian Lewis on 62441900, or email: presenter@hobartfm.org.au You need to be free on Mondays from about 12.45 pm to about 14.10 pm, and have about 4-5 hours per week free to research, prepare questionnaires, invite representatives from various community organisations, liaise with them by phone and email and select music etc. If you do not have internet at home, you can work from the radio station in Bellerive. I do not know what plans the radio station has for the New Year, but if you are interested, call the President and find out. (training is provided). It is a challenging and rewarding activity.

Congratulations

James (Migloo) Graham (an Individual member) was recently elected as a councilor on the Derwent Valley Council. Congratulations and all the best James.

GENERAL NOTICES

Myer Christmas Pageant

The organiser of this year's Christmas Pageant would like some multicultural choirs or groups to sing along the route of the Pageant. No walking required. The Pageant will be held on November 21st between 9.30 a.m. and 11.30a.m. If you are interested, please contact the Hobart City Council.

AND/OR

The Migrant Resource Centre has invited MCoT's members to parade with them as part of the Pageant! For more information or for pre-parade involvement, contact Georgi at MRC 62210999 or gmarshall@mrchobart.org.au. It should be heaps of fun.

New Citizenship Test

A new citizenship test began on 19 October 2009. The test will focus on the Pledge of Commitment made by new Australian citizens, including the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. A revised citizenship test resource book, *Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond* contains all the information people need to prepare for the new test. The way people can apply for Australian citizenship will also change in late 2009. More information about the changes including copies of the revised resource book are available at www.citizenship.gov.au

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New Peak Body to Help Multicultural Youth

A new peak advisory body will provide a nationally coordinated approach to advocacy for multicultural youth issues. The DIAC has provided \$285 000 to the National Multicultural Youth Advisory Network (NMYAN) through its Diverse Australia Program for the two-year project. In announcing the advisory body the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Mr Laurie Ferguson, said the Network 'will build the capacity of youth agencies and networks around the country to meet the needs of young refugees and migrants'. The majority of refugees who come to Australia under the humanitarian program are young people under the age of 30. Along with other newly arrived young people with culturally diverse backgrounds; they face significant challenges when settling into their new country including learning English, negotiating the education system, coming to terms with a new culture and finding jobs and housing.

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Social Inclusion Strategy and Grants

A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania report has been released by Tasmania's Social Inclusion Commissioner. It is available online from the Department of Premier and Cabinet's website at: www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/siu/strategy The Tasmanian Government has established a \$1 million Community Capacity Building Grants Program to support projects that progress one or more of the strategies in A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania.

Guidelines, application forms, details about grant writing workshops and supporting information are available from the Community Development Division website at Department of Premier and Cabinet -TASMANIA : Community Capacity Building Grants Program 2009-10 or by emailing cdgrants@dpac.tas.gov.au or by phoning 1800 204 224. Additional support and advice is available on request by phoning 1800 204 224. [Top](#)

**Multicultural Voices
State Election Forum**

**Thursday, November 26 2009
Glenorchy Civic Centre, Hobart
6pm – 7.30pm.**

Refreshments will be provided.

The Migrant Resource Centre, Multicultural Council of Tasmania (MCoT) and TasCOSS invite you to a special forum to discuss issues for Tasmanian multicultural communities in next year's State Election.

Local candidates in the State Election from all major political parties will be in attendance.

Health services? Education? Employment?

Public Transport? Translation Services? Social Inclusion?

This is your chance to have your say on the important issues for you and your community.

To register your attendance visit

www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au

or call 6221 0999

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Impact of violence on young Australians

Are you aged between 12 to 24 years and have experienced physical violence, directly or indirectly, or know someone who has? Do you have a view on youth violence in your neighbourhood, town or city?

If so, please take 5 minutes to complete the Impact of Violence on Young Australians Survey. Take the survey now!

The Australian Parliament is holding an inquiry into the impact of violence on young Australians, and would really like to hear your views. What they mean by violence is the sort of violence that's physical and is more likely to happen out on the street or in a public place.

For more information about the inquiry please visit

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fchy/youthviolence/index.htm> or call 02 6277 4566.

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Get involved in Our Island Our Voices: a new campaign for a fairer Tasmania

www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au

The **Our Island Our Voices** campaign for a fairer Tasmania has begun and we need your help in getting Tasmanians to sign on!

Our Island Our Voices is about ensuring that all major political parties make clear commitments to health, education, and services in the lead up to the March 2010 State election. It is about advocating for a clear commitment from political parties to community service organisations.

You can help make the campaign a success by:

- logging on to the campaign website, joining-up and emailing the call to parties to Tasmania's major political parties and their candidates for the March 2010 State election.
- circulating this email to your colleagues, friends and family and encouraging them to support the push for a fairer Tasmania.
- organising your own pre-election events to promote the issues in the call to parties.
- putting a link to the campaign website on your own web homepage
- adding 'I support the Our Island Our Voices campaign for a fairer Tasmania (www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au)' to your email signature.
-

The campaign will only be successful if people sign on and get involved. It only takes 5 minutes to get started, so please join up and email all major political candidates asking them to tell you what they will do for a fairer Tasmania.

Please also circulate this email among your networks and urge as many people as possible to join the campaign for a fairer Tasmania.

If you have any questions about the **Our Island Our Voices** campaign, please contact Luke Martin at TasCOSS on 62310755.

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Tasmania's political leaders agree to a free public debate

Premier David Bartlett, Liberal Leader Will Hodgeman and Tasmanian Greens Leader Nick McKim will meet in a free, open and public debate in **Hobart on Tuesday, the 1st of December at the Federation Concert Hall. Bookings essential** - The debate will be independently moderated and cover a broad range of issues for Tasmania's economy, community, democracy and environment.

There are no more places left as the event is booked out. The debate will be recorded and available to download from www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au.

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Social Security Agreement between Australia and Poland

The agreement between Australia and Poland was signed on 7 October 2009. After the relevant legislation is passed and other treaty processes have been completed in both countries, the Agreement is anticipated to begin operating in July 2010.

The agreement will allow Australia and Poland to share the retirement support of people who have spent part of their working life in both countries. People will be able to move between Australia and Poland knowing that their pension rights will be recognized by both countries.

The text of the agreement is available on

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/international/ssa/Pages/default.aspx>

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Scaremongering about asylum seekers will achieve nothing: Refugee Council

Political scaremongering and grasping for hardline deterrents will do nothing to resolve the complexities associated with asylum seekers seeking protection in Australia, the Refugee Council of Australia says.

Refugee Council president John Gibson said the recent debate about asylum seekers arriving by boat had revived memories of past destructive debates which had demonised vulnerable people and diminished Australia's reputation as a just nation.

“A decade ago, the then Australian Government introduced temporary protection visas, expecting that this measure would stop the flow of people escaping persecution in their countries of origin,” Mr Gibson said.

“In fact, the policy achieved the opposite, with the three years following the introduction of temporary protection being the three highest years in Australian history for asylum seekers arriving by boat. It beggars belief that Opposition MPs seriously believe that the reintroduction of this policy will result in a different outcome this time around.”

Mr Gibson said a far more constructive historic precedent was the experience of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Australia’s political parties worked in a bipartisan manner, under Coalition leadership, to contribute to effective regional solutions for Indochinese refugees fleeing persecution.

“As we learned 30 years ago, international cooperation is critical to responding to large-scale human tragedy,” he said.

“We are contending with difficult regional issues, including gross human rights abuses in refugee source countries and complex social and political issues in countries receiving asylum seekers. Rather than backing away from our international responsibilities, Australia could play a significant role in promoting open and transparent cooperation with our neighbours and UNHCR to find durable solutions for the region’s refugees.

“Prime Minister Kevin Rudd pointed out in his recent address to UNHCR’s Executive Committee that Australia was the sixth country to sign the Refugee Convention and a founding member of UNHCR’s Executive Committee. This, too, was the result of bipartisan political action, from Coalition Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, and Labor Opposition Leader, Dr H.V. Evatt.

“As a nation which has championed human rights, it is important that we do not back away from the Refugee Convention, recognising that it is never ‘illegal’ for a person to enter our country to seek protection from persecution.

“Much of the recent debate about asylum seekers has lacked perspective. It is extraordinary that some commentators are engaged in such a shrill public debate about the arrival by boat of 1704 asylum seekers this year, given that nations such as Pakistan and Syria are currently hosting more than one million refugees each.”

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