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### **COMMUNITY EDUCATION KEY TO EMBRACING RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY**

A Taskforce on Religious Diversity is recommending to the State Government that a strong emphasis be placed on the role of community education in encouraging broader understanding of different religious beliefs.

The recommendations have been made in a report commissioned by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Grace Portolesi, and undertaken by an independent taskforce, chaired by Hieu Van Le - the Chairman of the SA Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Releasing the report today, Minister Portolesi said it became evident last year from the public interest and debate about religious dress and diversity, that there needed to be more public awareness of different religions.

“The report recommends a range of measures to boost community education, with a view to encouraging a better understanding of the different religious beliefs that exist in South Australia.

“South Australia has a long and proud history as a culturally and religiously diverse society and we need to continue to recognise and celebrate that diversity into the future.”

“The taskforce has made 16 recommendations which the State Government will now consider. And acting on those recommendations will require us to work together with religious, community and sports organisations, schools and universities, and both the public and private sectors.”

Amongst the key recommendations in the report are that:

- A yearly event be staged to celebrate religious diversity in SA;
- Education providers be encouraged to include information about different religious beliefs in their school curriculum;
- Public and private sector employers incorporate information into their existing induction and management training on ethical conduct and discrimination in relation to religious appearance and dress;
- Employers be encouraged to try to accommodate staff who wish to take annual leave to celebrate religiously significant days; and
- Programs to increase the representation of youths from culturally and religiously diverse backgrounds, in local sporting organisations and youth groups.

The taskforce report and recommendations are available on [www.multicultural.sa.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.sa.gov.au) .