

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



There has been much debate in the media recently about Australian values and multiculturalism. Australia has a strong civic culture founded on the notion of freedom of speech and religion, English as the official language and respect of the rule of law. These are values cherished by all Australians. They are also integral to multiculturalism.

The Commonwealth Government has proposed a citizenship test for migrants to test their English language skills and understanding of Australian values. The test is being sold to Australians on the basis that it will strengthen national unity. In practise, however, those who fail the new test will go on living in Australia as permanent residents alongside the rest of us, only now with an officially sanctioned 'outsider' status. A test of this kind is likely to create further division when community harmony is already being tried by international tensions. Why not devote resources to ensuring that all migrants have adequate opportunities to learn English instead?

It is important to remember that multicultural policy reflects the multicultural reality of the Australian community, with 43% of Australians either born overseas or with one or both parents born overseas, and about 200 languages spoken between us. These numbers speak for themselves; multiculturalism in fact underpins the Australian way of life.

Hieu Van Le, Chairman

SAMEAC DRIVES THE SA STRATEGIC PLAN AGENDA

The Chairman of the Commission, Mr Hieu Van Le, as a member of the South Australian Strategic Plan Update Team, has been working to have several actions included in the Strategic Plan to further strengthen the State's capacity to support and benefit from the cultural and linguistic diversity of our population.

SAMEAC GETS SUPPORT FROM MONSIGNOR CAPPO

The Chairman has welcomed support from Monsignor Cappo, Director of the Social Inclusion Board and member of the executive committee of Cabinet, in its battle against racism. Monsignor Cappo has expressed concern about the extent of prejudice and racism and has joined the Chairman in calling on South Australians to stand up against racism.

STATE GOVERNMENT PROUD TO BE MAJOR SPONSOR OF VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL

The long-awaited Vietnam War Memorial on the Torrens Parade Ground was unveiled on 15 October 2006. The Premier, the Hon. Mike Rann M.P., said the Memorial is South Australia's tribute to all those who served in the Vietnam War and, in particular, it acknowledges the 58 South Australians who made the supreme sacrifice. The Memorial also recognizes the Vietnamese-Australian Veteran community in South Australia. Multicultural SA has worked closely with the Vietnamese community and the RSL throughout the project.



The Hon. Michel Atkinson M.P., Minister for Multicultural Affairs, with Nhut Van Tran, former General, Commander of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam at the unveiling of the Vietnam War Memorial

MORE WOMEN TO BENEFIT FROM MULTICULTURAL SA LEADERSHIP COURSE

A leadership course for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds commenced on 8 November. The course will provide opportunities for 15 women to develop their skills so they are more able to provide leadership both within their communities and beyond. More than 30 women applied for a place in the course that is being delivered by TAFE SA and jointly funded by Multicultural SA and the Office for Women. The participants are drawn from both established and emerging communities, and represent a broad age range.

CHAIRMAN ADDRESSES NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTICULTURAL AGED CARE

A recurring theme at SAMEAC consultations is multicultural aged care. SAMEAC is giving this issue priority and this month the Chairman is addressing the Australian Association of Gerontology 39th National Conference, *Diversity in Ageing*, in Sydney. He will highlight the need for culturally appropriate care.



MULTICULTURAL SA ORGANISES KEY FORUM ON MULTICULTURALISM

A Multicultural Forum will be held on 29 November to explore the future of multiculturalism in the context of current debates about citizenship, racism and community harmony. The Forum will feature keynote speaker Dr James Jupp, Director of the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies at the Australian National University. The Multicultural Forum brings together key decision makers and strategic thinkers with community leaders to explore developments in multicultural and ethnic affairs, identify emerging issues and to assist with policy development. For further details see the enclosed flyer.

SAMEAC LISTENING AND RESPONDING

The Commission recently held a consultative reception with leaders of communities from the Indian subcontinent. The leaders raised several issues that have been discussed during previous consultative receptions but also drew attention to the urgent need for low cost student accommodation in the CBD and other needs of many international students and skilled migrants from the Indian subcontinent. Some community leaders also reported concerns with racist incidents. The Commission will follow up on these matters and report back to the community leaders who attended the consultation.

MULTICULTURAL SA REMINDS ORGANISATIONS TO APPLY FOR LAND TAX GRANT

The South Australian Government invites not-for-profit ethnic community organisations that are incorporated and provide services or support for the community to apply to Multicultural SA for the full amount of their land tax bill. More information and application forms can be obtained from Multicultural SA on 82261944 or the Multicultural SA website: www.multicultural.sa.gov.au.

MINISTER ZOLLO LAUNCHES MUSLIM MEDIA GUIDE

On Tuesday 31 October, the Hon Carmel Zollo, Minister Assisting the Minister on Multicultural Affairs hosted the South Australian launch of the *Media Guide: Islam & Muslims in Australia* at Parliament House. The launch was attended by journalists and Muslim community leaders. The launch of the Guide was proposed by the South Australian Government Muslim Reference Group in its advice to Government. During the launch there was a panel discussion to explore the representation of Islam and Muslims in the media. Panel Members included Adjunct Professor Peter Manning - University of Technology, Sydney, Tasneem Chopra - Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria, and Dr Omar Lum & Yasmine Ahmed from the South Australian Government Muslim Reference Group.

PREMIER HOSTS EID-AL-FITR RECEPTION

On Friday 27 October, the Premier held a reception in Parliament House to celebrate Eid-Al-Fitr. In Islam, Ramadan is the holy month of fasting, the ninth month of the Muslim year. Ramadan, is a period of obedient response to a command from God. The end of the fast is celebrated as Eid-Al-Fitr, which is one of the two major religious holidays of the Islamic calendar. For a Muslim, Eid is a day of thanksgiving. On the day of Eid, fasting is forbidden since this day marks the end of the month-long fast.



The Hon. Mike Rann M.P., Premier, with Commission Member, Dr Gala Mustafa

MINISTER ATKINSON ADDRESSES REFUGEE WEEK DINNER

The Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Michael Atkinson M.P., gave an address at the dinner held as part of the *When Do I Stop Being a Refugee?* conference during Refugee Week. In his speech the Minister spoke about refugees in South Australia and the debate on citizenship and values in Australia. The full text of the Minister's speech is available on the Multicultural SA website: <http://www.multicultural.sa.gov.au>

MULTICULTURAL GRANTS SCHEME APPLICATIONS BEING CONSIDERED

The Government has increased funding for the Multicultural Grants Scheme from \$75,000 in 2002 to \$300,000 per annum. There are two rounds of grants per year. Multicultural SA received 116 applications requesting a total of almost \$700,000 in the first round of the Multicultural Grants Scheme for 2006-2007. Applications are being considered and applicants should be advised about the outcome in the near future.

MULTICULTURAL SA PROMOTES COMMUNITY HARMONY

Once again Multicultural SA has taken the opportunity to support ethnic community participation in a major public event, the Christmas Pageant. The Multicultural SA float this year will include representatives from the Argentinean, Croatian, Dutch, Indian, Japanese, Kenyan, Samoan and Polish communities.

www.multicultural.sa.gov.au

