

harmony

harmony

harmony week

towards mutual respect • 14-21 march 2003

Harmony Day has been expanded to Harmony Week in 2003, when events that engage the community and encourage dialogues about multiculturalism and anti-racism will be held. The theme for 2003 is "Towards Mutual Respect"

Harmony Week 2003 will be held from Friday 14 March – 21 March commencing with a community walk from Russell Square. Throughout the week, activities and events that recognise and celebrate cultural diversity will be planned and coordinated.

OMI is promoting Harmony Week 2003 as part of a series of community events and is offering small grants of up to \$500 to assist not for profit Community based groups and Local Government Authorities around the State to plan and coordinate activities and events for Harmony Week 2003. Grants for events of a celebratory nature will not be provided for March 21.

Guidelines and application forms are now available on the OMI website- <http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/pages/grants.htm> or by calling OMI on 9426 8690. Applications for grants close Friday 10 January 2003.

Friday 21 March signifies the United Nations Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and marks the 42nd anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre.

On 21 March 1960, in the township of Sharpeville, South Africa, police opened fire, killing 69 peaceful protestors against apartheid's "pass laws".

The United Nations General Assembly subsequently declared March 21 the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to commemorate the massacre.

Whilst apartheid has been defeated, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance are, sadly, still common all over the world. March 21 is an opportunity for the international community to not only reflect on

progress made towards eliminating racial discrimination, but also to continue to oppose discrimination in all its forms.

In 2003, Western Australia will mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with events that focus on eliminating racial discrimination and intolerance.

The Migrant Services Directory

The Migrant Services Directory, published by the Office of Multicultural Interests, is being updated to make sure the contact information is current. The Office intends to release it in the first half of 2003. For the first time the Directory will be available on the internet, at the multicultural.online website.

Some changes and additions are planned for the Directory. Five new sections will be added, covering refugees and Temporary Protection Visa holders, transport, participating in public life, utilities and media and multicultural arts. In addition the children's services sections will be expanded to include more information, especially regarding educational and recreational activities for children, and will now address the needs of young people as well.

If your contact details have changed since the publication of the last Migrant Services Directory in 2000, or you would like to your organisation included in the Directory, please email Emily Crawford at ecrawford@omi.wa.gov.au.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor: Anne Rida
Research: Amanda Grbavac
Coordination: Grant Hicks
Photography: Bohdan Warchomij
Grant Hicks

Official newsletter of

the Office of Multicultural Interests



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Language Services – Need and equity

A Message from the Premier and Minister for Multicultural Interests



I am pleased to announce that the Strategic Plan for the Office of Multicultural Interests has been developed and endorsed.

The Plan was developed on the basis of the Government's broad policy commitment, consideration of major issues in the area, and a series of workshops held with Government and non-government service providers, community groups and OMI staff.

It is based on an assertion that Western Australia is a multi-ethnic society whose members are drawn from a variety of rich cultural traditions and histories. This diversity is part and parcel of Australia's traditions of egalitarianism and democracy. Multiculturalism in this State is about social equality, which empowers all citizens to participate equitably in the democratic process. It is about how we, collectively, value our diversity and protect those most vulnerable to exclusion.

Multiculturalism is about mutual respect and a commitment to social equality based on principles of democratic rights, entitlements and responsibilities. It means recognising and valuing the social and economic benefits that multiculturalism brings while acknowledging and engaging with the challenges and responsibilities that go with it.

The Plan sets out the Office of Multicultural Interest's vision for an *inclusive Western Australia where all individuals and groups participate equitably and in a spirit of mutual respect, enriching and developing our society and its purpose to lead the Public Sector and the community in achieving the ideals of multiculturalism.*

The ongoing development of the State's Anti-Racism Strategy and Multicultural Policy continues to re-affirm my Governments commitment to strengthening multiculturalism in the Western Australian community.

Through these initiatives we are prepared to state clearly what it means to live in a modern multicultural society.

I would like to extend season greetings to all Harmony Newsletter readers and look forward to working with you in 2003 toward achieving a truly inclusive multicultural Western Australia with benefits that enrich us all.

Dr Geoff Gallop MLA
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS

The Western Australian Language Services Policy was introduced by the Government in 1992 and seeks to ensure that language is not a barrier to services for people who require assistance in English.

The Language Services Policy also recognises the cultural diversity of the indigenous communities and the complexity and diversity of indigenous languages. For many Aboriginal people English is also a second language.

A telephone advisory service has been established by the Aboriginal Affairs Department to provide information to clients on how to access interpreting services for indigenous languages

The Language Services Policy is a commitment to the development of efficient communication strategies to enhance agencies ability to deliver services that are:

- responsive to community needs; and
- equitable for all people.

Provision of most interpreting services is covered by an agreement brokered between the Commonwealth Government and the State of Western Australia. These services are currently managed from the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs' (DIMIA's) national TIS centre in Melbourne.

This move to national management has highlighted problems in the provision of services in Western Australia and has prompted an analysis of interpreter services in Western Australia.

Prior to considering options for addressing this issue, it is important for Government to have a good understanding of all the issues through the collection, collation and analysis of available data. For this purpose, the Premier has requested that a needs analysis of translator and interpreter services in Western Australia be carried out to ascertain the extent and impact of the issues.

The objective of the needs analysis is to collate available information on translator and interpreter services in Western Australia, including:

- the demand in Western Australia for translator and interpreter services;
- the current roles and responsibilities of major stakeholders in the provision of translator and interpreter services;
- the supply of interpreters in the State; and
- models of service provision across Australia.

The primary outcome of this initiative is to develop options intended to achieve a more equitable, effective and efficient provision of translator and interpreter services in Western Australia.

The Office of Multicultural Interests has been directed to liaise extensively with the many stakeholders to enable a comprehensive analysis to be undertaken. The needs analysis of translator and interpreter services in Western Australia will be undertaken in early 2003. The findings will be used to suggest options for addressing the issues currently facing translator and interpreter services in our State.

Individuals or agencies seeking further information on the State Government's Language Services Policy, are encouraged to contact the Office of Multicultural Interests on 9426 8690.



Multicultural Reflections

The People, Places, Lifestyles And Spirit of Langford



The colour of multiculturalism is bright in Langford; reflected in a spectacular mural created on the walls of the Langford Community Centre.

The 'Multicultural Reflections Art for All Project is a snapshot of the diverse peoples, cultures, places and lifestyles of the Langford community, painted over a 386 square metre area of the front wall and courtyard of the Centre.

Officially launched by the Premier Dr Geoff Gallop in July this year, the 10-week project saw more than 100 Langford artists, residents, school children and businesses come together to put their own unique stamp on the mural. Two local artists Fleur Pisano and Fred Shilton also made a vital contribution to the painting process.

'Langford's newest community art installation stands as a tribute to the great enthusiasm, artistic talent and multicultural spirit of the people of Langford,' said Federico Medina, the projects artistic coordinator.

'The mural is now firmly embedded in the community and is already a recognisable and fondly regarded part of the town's landscape, as well as a lasting reminder of the Langford of today, for future generations to see.'

Many of the people who contributed to the project, benefited from a series of art workshops, led by Federico, which allowed them to develop their skills in a social environment.



'The project has encouraged cross-cultural cooperation between groups who may have otherwise existed in isolation from one another,' said Federico. 'As such it has helped build a community identity, unite cultures and create a sense of harmony, a benchmark for other suburbs.'

'The end result is very satisfying and many Langford residents, including

children and even pets, are now able to say that have made a contribution to the wellbeing of their community."

"I encourage everyone to come to Langford to see what our community has achieved.'

The Office of Multicultural Interests is proud to have funded this worthwhile artistic project through its Community Grants Program.

The Multicultural Reflections murals can be seen seven days a week at the Langford Community Centre.



Racism and the Fourth Estate.

Free Speech at what Cost?



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner & Acting Race Discrimination Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), Dr William Jonas AM, explored racism and the media in Australia at the Seminar Series on Monday 12 August 2002.

Dr Jonas noted that, 'The media play a major role in establishing, reaffirming and undermining 'popular' attitudes about race and racism in Australia.' He observed that while, 'Freedom of expression is of critical importance to those of us who work in the field of

human rights because it enables us to reveal and critique corruption, injustice, inequality and oppression.', nonetheless, 'Freedom of expression is not always an instrument of liberty. Racial abuse, vilification and the dissemination of racist propaganda are forms of expression that violate the rights and freedoms of others.'

He pointed out that: '...certain segments of the media argue consistently that democracy is undermined by limitations on expression imposed by legislation or regulation. Whenever the issue of regulating racial vilification has been raised in Australia over the last three decades, the media has invariably asserted its right to report on issues of concern to the community

without fear of censorship or excessive restriction. The commonly expressed fear is that legislation blurs the line between criticism and abuse and stifles public debate on issues of legitimate public interest.'

Dr Jonas also advised that, 'There are two main kinds of protection against racial vilification in the media in Australia, media industry codes, and legislation. Currently, the civil remedies offered by the Racial Hatred Act (1995) are the only national provisions specifically directed against racist speech.'

Racial Discrimination Act extends to the Internet

The Federal Court has handed down a landmark ruling, saying an Adelaide man must stop publishing racially offensive material on the Internet.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry brought the case against the man before the court in Sydney.

It relates to material published on a website headed by the man. The court deemed as insulting, claims that the Holocaust in World War II never occurred and that only Jewish people of limited intelligence were offended by such arguments.

The president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Jeremy Jones, says today's ruling is proof the Racial Discrimination Act does apply to the Internet.

"The fact that the Internet was treated as an area of publication covered by the law shows very clearly that we now have [a] law that [if] you are defamed on the Internet as a member of a group, then you have the same rights as a person defamed as an individual," Mr Jones said.

Harmony Newsletter Have Your Say

Is Harmony Newsletter meeting your needs and interests?

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) is seeking your feedback on the Harmony Newsletter.

We would like to give you the opportunity to help us design and develop a newsletter that meets the needs of your community. By answering these questions, you will be helping OMI to produce a newsletter that reflects your community's needs and interests.



The Racial Hatred Act 1985

(EXCERPT FROM SEMINAR BY DR WILLIAM JONAS AM, ON MONDAY 12 AUGUST 2002)

Under the *Racial Hatred Act* it is unlawful to insult, humiliate, offend or intimidate another person or group in public on the basis of their race. A public act can include racist abuse yelled from one person's house to their neighbour's house. On the other hand, a private conversation between two individuals is not unlawful in Australia, even if the discussion is racist (subject to the possibility that it may amount to racial harassment at work or school, for example).

In order to protect freedom of expression, the legislation sets out certain circumstances in which the racial prohibition will not apply, providing the person has acted reasonably and in good faith. First, if the action is part of an artistic work it is not unlawful. Also exempt are academic and scientific works and debates or comments on matters of public interest. This permits a range of public policy issues to be debated such as multiculturalism, affirmative action for migrants and so on. The media are given considerable scope within a third exception, which permits fair and accurate reporting on any matter of public interest. This last exception enables the media to report on public issues, such as racial incitement or racially offensive conduct. It also allows editorial opinions and the like, providing they are published without malice.

This national legislation has some distinct limitations as these examples demonstrate.

The scrawled statement on Carol Martin's media release – "Just goes to show you can't trust a blackfella" – would probably escape because the offender is anonymous and unlikely to be identified.

1 The conciliation process needs two identifiable parties, a complainant and a respondent.

The identification of gang rapists in Sydney as Lebanese, while it may effectively stereotype the entire Lebanese community, would also probably escape on the basis that it is factually accurate: a "fair and accurate report on a matter of public interest".

2 Public 'debate' about the cultural mores which could have lead these young men to consider Anglo women as 'fair game', may also be lawful on the basis that it reflects writers' genuinely held beliefs on a matter of public interest.

1. *'Racist taunt over Derby health'*,

The West Australian, 30 July 2002.

2. *'Reign of terror by mobile phone and the promise of a smoke'*, *The West Australian*, 13 July 2002.

Note: For further information on the Racial Hatred Act please visit

http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/racial_hatred_act/

Racial Discrimination Act used to combat letterbox campaign

The Jewish community has welcomed a Federal Court decision outlawing a Launceston woman's campaign denying the Holocaust.

In May, the woman was taken to the Federal Court in Launceston, which was asked to judge whether her letterbox campaign denying the Holocaust was in breach of the Racial Discrimination Act.

Justice Peter Hely found the distribution of such material was indeed illegal, and must cease immediately.

Justice Hely said the woman's actions were found to be insulting, humiliating and intimidating by all of the complainant's witnesses.

Complainant Jeremy Jones, from the Council of Australian Jewry, says the importance of the decision stretches beyond the local Jewish community.

"Everybody with an interest in the quality of Australian life will be looking at this judgement, saying this is a judgement that reaffirms Australian principles of tolerance."

QUESTIONS:

1. Does Harmony Newsletter provide enough coverage about WA's diverse communities?
2. Do you like the current format and layout? What would you like to change?
3. Is the information useful? What kind of information would you like to see in the newsletter?
4. Are the stories and articles interesting? What kind of stories or articles would you be interested in for the newsletter?
5. What do you think should be added or deleted from the newsletter?

To have your say, send your answers to:

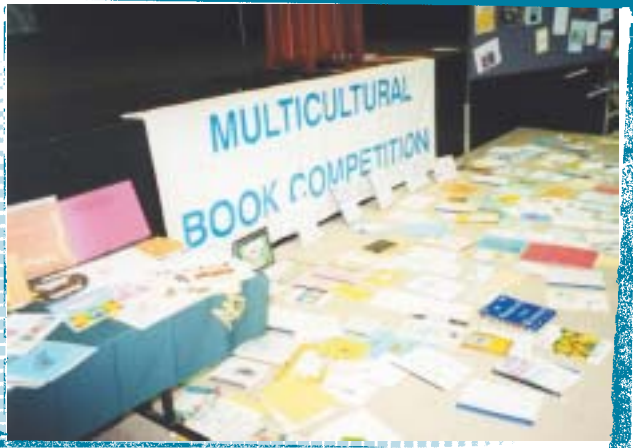
The Editor, Harmony Newsletter
Office of Multicultural Interests
Level 2, 81 St Georges Terrace
PERTH 6000

Or email: harmony@omi.wa.gov.au

You can also have your say on these issues and more by visiting <http://www.omi.wa.gov.au>



Multicultural Book Competition



Valuing Languages and Promoting Intercultural Understanding

"I am Super Boy", "The Music of the Sea", "My Favourite Pet", "The Magic Rose", "The Wolf and the Turtle", "Our Story about Greek Salad", "Hello Rome Speaking" and "There's a Monster Under My Bed".

English to Speakers of other Languages; Modern Language teachers Association of WA; Ethnic Schools Association of WA; Teachers Association of German; Japanese Language Teachers Association; Italo Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre.

The Office of Multicultural Interests Community Grants Program and the Public Endowment Trust proudly supported the event.

Cultural and linguistic diversity was embraced at the Multicultural Book Competition Presentation Ceremony held on 18th October 2002 at Methodist Ladies' College.

Officially opened by the Honourable Graham Giffard, MLC Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, this year's competition had 500 entries from students of all age groups (Kindergarten to Year 12) learning English as second language (ESL) or learning a language other than English (LOTE).

To be eligible to enter the competition the students had to write a book in a language other than English or in bilingual format. There were book writers from 34 languages including Malaysian, Russian, Kurdish, Japanese, Serbian, Arabic, Italian, Turkish, Korean and Greek. Story themes were varied and some winning story titles included

The project has the backing of education providers and professional associations from which members of the organisational competition committee are drawn. These are the Department of Education; the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia; Catholic Education Office; English Teachers' Association; Australian Literacy Educators Association; Westralian Teachers of



ONLINE WA MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Ethnic communities and not-for-profit community organisations have the chance to get online with their own websites as part of the **Online WA Multicultural Communities** (OWAMC) gateway. The OWAMC project is an initiative of the Office of Multicultural Interests and the Ethnic Communities Council of WA. The project gives

groups the opportunity to learn about building and administering their own websites. The site includes bulletin board, chat facilities, a calendar of events and an Online Stories facility.

For further information contact OMI on 9426 8690 or visit www.multicultural.online.wa.gov.au.

Australian Asian Association of WA Inc.

For nearly half a century, the Australian Asian Association of WA Inc (AAA), has played a pivotal role in providing a number of vital services and facilities in meeting the settlement, language, accommodation, health and welfare needs of the Western Australian community.

The Association has a composite membership of approximately 15,000 and represents more than 100 ethnic, cultural, welfare, educational and corporate groups from Latin America, Africa, South East Asia, the Far East, the Middle East, the Indian Sub-Continent Europe, Eastern Europe, the Pacific Islands and Australia.

The Association has developed a broad based policy to help migrants with cultural and language related social, welfare and health needs. There is increasing demands for quality, culturally appropriate services at the grass roots level. Providing this service assists not only the migrants and their families but also the whole community. Much of this work is done by volunteers, trained by the Association.

The AAA, which was incorporated in 1956, was originally housed in Ord St West Perth and at that time mostly catered for the needs of Columbo Plan students. In 1981 the AAA purchased premises in Stirling St, Perth. And re-developed it with a generous grant of approximately \$1,000,000 from Lotteries W.A. The present accommodation of the AAA, Australia Asia House, was officially opened in March 1997 and provides a number of services and facilities, for example:

- Information and advice on housing;
- Free Legal Advocacy Service;
- Secretarial support;
- Community Settlement Service Worker
- Language Learning Centre; /Computer Laboratory
- Aged Care and Seniors Day Centre and
- Meeting rooms, which are heavily subsidised for members and available for hire to the wider community as well
- Rent free office space for 17 ethnic organisations
- free immigration advice
- free computer training, dressmaking, english classes

For further information contact the Australian Asian Association of WA (inc) on telephone 93286202.



Extending Cultural Traditions

THE POLISH COMMUNITY IN WA

The Polish Community in Western Australia helps extend the nationalistic spirit and cultural traditions that Polish people have enjoyed over the last one thousand years.

The majority of Polish migrants have arrived in Western Australia in the late 1940s from Germany and early 1950s from Africa. The next wave of Polish migrants arrived in the early 1980s.

Today they all are a well established part of the Australian community with two clubs (one in Beechboro and the other in Bellevue), a complex in Maylands which has a Polish Centre, a presbytery and a Polish church, and a camping property at Chidlow.

Over the past fifty years various Polish organisations have offered cultural, educational, welfare, recreational and social programs for its members. From its base in Maylands programs such as the Polish language and culture classes for children are held on Saturdays, a Polish library which has approx. 4,000 volumes is used widely, cultural and social evenings are held regularly both as fundraisers and social events.

However, the clubs have a more social and recreational emphasis. Through the State and Commonwealth funding, special programs for seniors are run incorporating day care centers and home support not only for Polish seniors but also for seniors from other nationalities. Previously one social welfare officer was employed.

Polish Community Council is keen to promote the Polish national days to commemorate important events and to bring these events to the attention of not only the older generation but also to the young people. Recently a concert to commemorate the Third of May Constitution (1791), one of the oldest in Europe, was held in Maylands. Children and young people performed with vigour and enthusiasm traditional songs and dances dressed in authentic national costumes. The event culminated with the spectators joining in the singing followed by a special Polish Luncheon.

Such events promote unity and harmony not only within the Polish community but also highlight the contribution made by Polish migrants to Australian society.

Contact: 9271 2036



PUBLICATIONS

"Little Black Book of Scams" produced by the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection

will be of use to those most vulnerable to be being swindled. For further information visit:

www.scamwatch.wa.gov.au and www.consumeronline.gov.au or for copies of the book contact the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection, telephone: 1300 304 054.

"Guide to State Government Concessions" produced by the Department of Community Development

aims to help Western Australians cut the cost of their bills with social concessions across a wide range of services. People are encouraged to check their entitlements, as they may be eligible for concessions on many services including local government rates, motor driver's licences, dental treatment and even admission to the Perth Zoo.

The guide outlines concessions for holders of Health Care Cards, Pensioner Concession Cards, Senior Cards, State Concession Cards, as well as Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Pensioners and War Widows.

For copies of the guide contact 9222 2833 or go online to: <http://www.communitydevelopment.wa.gov.au>

Migration: Benefiting Australia Conference Proceedings

The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs hosted a major conference on immigration and the population in Sydney earlier this year at the Australian Technology Park. The conference delivered new research and informed discussion on a range of topics including:

- Economics and Immigration
- Population
- Social Participation of Migrants
- International Asylum
- Humanitarian Migration

Conference papers and speeches are available available from the *Migration: Benefiting Australia Conference Proceedings* entry on the Research Publications page of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs website:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/research/publications/index.htm>

Communities Histories – A History of the Australian Asian Association

is an OMI funded project that records the histories of five migrant communities to Western Australia. The Project documents the history of migrant groups from the South East Asian region and the history of the Australian Asian Association. The migrants groups participating are from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Malaysia/Singapore & Burma.

Copies of the publication can be obtained calling Dr Donald Chandraratna on 9383 1433.

OMI Funded Events

WOMEN TOGETHER

1 October 2002 – 1 October 2003 is an initiative of the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka that aims to bring together 30 recently arrived refugee women from diverse backgrounds to participate in a series of activities over a one year period. These include cooking sessions, talks by health-care professionals, child minding activities, and the dissemination of information on agencies, services and the rights of women in Australia.

For further information please contact Ms Lorraine McGinness, Coordinator on 9440 0625.

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY OF WA ISSUES AND SOLUTION CONFERENCE

is being held at the Perth Mosque on the 22 and 23 February 2003. It will provide a useful forum for West Australian Muslims to identify and define their community, develop practical strategies to address the issues facing them, encourage active citizenship and raise awareness of the resources that are available to them within the Muslim and broader communities. The conference is organised by the Dar Al Shifah (Islamic) Inc.

For further information contact Gadija Gaba, Manager, on Tel: 9276 4511.

USEFUL LINKS

WESTERN PERSPECTIVES (LISWA) As part of a completed Centenary of Federation project, LISWA 's Western Perspectives contains a multicultural section with a brief history of WA settlement and a small archive of photographs. For further information visit: http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au/wepon/settlement/html/multicultural_wa.htm

KULCHA is the State's peak presenter of multicultural arts. For nearly twenty years it has been generating a dynamic program of music and arts projects to advance the development of Australian artists from diverse cultural backgrounds.

For further information on Kulcha and its upcoming events visit:

<http://www.kulcha.com.au>

READ WRITE NOW is a community based volunteer organisation that provides and adult literacy tutoring service. The service is free of charge and open to all adults regardless of gender, age, race or disability. For further information visit: <http://www.training.wa.gov.au/initiatives-events/content-read-home.asp>



office of multicultural interests

2nd Floor, 81 St Georges Terrace,
Perth Western Australia 6000
Telephone (08) 9426 8690

Facsimile (08) 9426 8691
Email: harmony@omi.wa.gov.au
www.omi.wa.gov.au