

Multicultural Western Australia



Office of Multicultural Interests
Government of Western Australia

Newsletter of the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI)

December 2007

Minister Launches Trio of Multicultural Projects



On 15 October 2007 a combined launch was held for three projects that aim to support migrant and refugee families in the south-east metropolitan area.

Multicultural Interests and Citizenship Minister Ljiljana Ravlich launched the three projects, the Gowrie and Gosnells Women's Health Service's Community Relations Integrations Officers (CRIOS) and the Gowrie's Multicultural Supported Playgroups.

The Gosnells Women's Health Service's CRIO project is coordinated by Christine l'Anson and Anna Lambeck and aims to

provide support for refugee women and their children to access post and prenatal services available in the area.

The Gowrie's CRIO project, coordinated by Tina Richardson, aims to establish networks and identify issues and service gaps in addition to providing employment information and career counselling services, for young people (aged 12 to 25) from new and emerging communities.

The Gowrie's Multicultural Supported Playgroups project is funded by Lotterywest and aims to assist migrant and newly arrived refugee families with young children. The project facilitates 'family play and learning sessions' provided at the crèche facility at Gosnells Community Lotteries House and aims to develop and strengthen parents' knowledge and understandings of young children's development.

The CRIO Program has been developed by the State Government, Office of Multicultural Interests, with funding assistance from the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship, to raise awareness of and facilitate access to services and programs for members of new and emerging communities.

'It's very encouraging to see community agencies with shared visions working together address to issues and implement programs that have the potential to make such a difference,' Minister Ravlich said.

The launch was a great success with Lyal Richardson Hall in Gosnells full with community members who were entertained by traditional Karen community singing and dancing.

The St John of God Hospital Subiaco Multicultural Spring Carnival

St John of God Hospital Subiaco (SJOGHS) has a strong commitment to improving service delivery to its patients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Hospital's Multicultural Officer, Petra Elias, assists caregivers in developing culturally sensitive practice to support their work with patients. In addition, the Multicultural Working Party has been established to provide guidance and support to the Hospital in implementing best practice policies to improve qualitative outcomes for patients. In 2007, the Multicultural Working Party collaborated with the annual SJOGHS Caregivers' Spring Carnival to provide a multicultural flavour.

The Hospital has a policy which provides caregivers with a framework for caring for culturally and linguistically diverse patients. Throughout a patient's stay with SJOGHS, systems have been put in place, which raise awareness about a patient's cultural, language and spiritual needs. This allows caregivers to provide a high standard of care to patients and honours the



L-R: Ms Maria De Silva, Chair of the Multicultural Working Party, Mr Said Padshah, OMI Community Liaison and Education Officer and Ms Petra Elias, Multicultural Officer, St John of God Hospital Subiaco.

Mission and Values of the organisation, which are hospitality, respect, justice, compassion and excellence.

If you would like further information about the Multicultural Program at St John of God Hospital Subiaco, please contact Petra Elias on telephone (08) 9382 6111.

Season's Greetings

As we come to the close of 2007 best wishes for the season and thank you to our many partners in community and government agencies.

There have been many highlights this year for the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) including the establishment of the Integrated Services Centres Pilot Program, the Community Relations and Integration Officer funding, continuing work nationally to influence the 457 visa arrangements and the many community events we have been privileged to attend.

During the year OMI has continued to defend and promote Multiculturalism and the development of policies and initiatives through its public sector representation and through our work in the wider community.

A concerted effort has been required to address the many challenges facing multiculturalism during 2007 – clearly we cannot assume that Multiculturalism will survive and prosper on its own logic – it needs to be advocated and its policies need to be defended.

I would also like to thank all our staff for their enthusiasm and commitment to the objectives of the Office and acknowledge the contribution of those who have left during the year including Terry Waldron, Mia Powell, Liza Beinart and Lynda Blum. It also gives me much pleasure to welcome new staff who have joined us during the year including Amanda Perreira, Janette Hanna, Hemlata Keswani and Liz Gashaw.

On behalf of everyone at OMI, I wish you all the best for the Festive season and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Ellis Griffiths
A/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



L-R: Mr Ramdas Sankaran, Executive Director of MSC;
Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich MLC, Minister for Multicultural Interests and Citizenship;
Mr Russell Raymond OAM, President of MSC.

MAITRI

Mental Health Services for Ethnic Communities

The Office of Multicultural Interests has provided the Multicultural Services Centre (MSC) recurrent funding over three years to assist the establishment of a mental health service appropriate for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds and in particular, to people from new and emerging communities. The new initiative, named **Maitri** meaning friendship or goodwill in Hindi, was launched in October by the Minister for Multicultural Interests and Citizenship, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich MLC.

There is now a clear recognition that in a country as culturally and linguistically diverse as Australia, services for the treatment of mental disorders need to understand and specifically respond to cultural sensitivities. Some members of established ethnic groups are at risk of suffering age related mental health conditions and depression. This may result in a significant impact on their health and well-being and that of their carers and families. Their needs can be met through a specialised community-based service like Maitri. Such a service can also respond to the specific needs of Western Australia's new and emerging communities and refugee and humanitarian entrants, some of whom have experienced torture and trauma.

The racism, discrimination and resulting social isolation that some members of these new and emerging communities encounter exacerbate the many factors that impact on their mental health. Access to culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services is a vital component for their successful settlement.

For more information about the Maitri Mental Health service, contact the Multicultural Services Centre (MSC) Dianella office on telephone 9375 2224. The office is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Mission Australia CRIO Launch

In October Mission Australia launched its Connections Project. The Project is funded through OMI's Community Relations Integrations Officer (CRIO) Grants Program and aims to encourage and support humanitarian migrants, with a particular focus on women from Africa, to access services relevant to their needs. The Connections Project Coordinator has changed and we welcome Mandy Whitton to the project. Mandy can be contacted on telephone 9207 3221.

Bilyidar Celebrating Diversity project

The first Steering Committee Meeting for the Inclusion and Integration Grants Program's Bilyidar Celebrating Diversity project was held on the 23rd November 2007 at the Billy Dower Youth Centre in Mandurah.

The project will engage about 40 young people, from the Filipino, Sudanese and Nyoongar communities, in several activities to develop an understanding of different cultures and address issues of racism in the Local Government areas of Mandurah, Murray and Waroona.

Young people interested in participating in the project may contact Karen McLennan on 0447 879 975.



L-R: Nedra Weerakoon (OMI), Marie Finch (Disability Services Commission), Sian Gair (City of Mandurah), Tracey Ford (Community First Inc) and Karen McLennan (Bilyidar). Walter Gomes (OMI) was also present.

Ribbon of Africa Wins Business Migrant of the Year Award



The 2007 Belmont Small Business Awards in Perth recognised the African business "Ribbon of Africa" as the Business Migrant of the Year.

The prestigious awards were held at the Burswood Casino Complex with 300 guests including the Deputy Premier, Hon Mr Eric Ripper MLA, and Member for Swan, Mr Kim Wilke MP. The awards were announced for twenty different categories.

At the Awards, Zimbabwean-born director of Ribbon of Africa, Taku Mbudzi was accompanied by Dr Casta Tungaraza, President of the African Community of Western Australia who said: 'It was a proud moment for the whole African community and a real inspiration to the African youth'.

Ribbon of Africa was established in 2006 to strengthen African community development through various projects and initiatives in Western Australia. Ribbon of Africa's main products are shirts, bags and headgear, with the "proud 2b African" logo imprinted on them. The main purpose is to promote pride, self esteem, unity and a sense of community between Australians and people of African backgrounds.

Ribbon of Africa actively promotes other African businesses, organisations and artists and raises awareness of African issues through its networks.

Ribbon of Africa is working on a new product range and continuing more African community projects around Perth. Taku Mbudzi was a living book in the City of Melville's Living Library project which ran from 5 - 9 November 2007.

DOCEP Labour Relations Migrant Program

In early 2007, DOCEP Labour Relations established the Migrant Program to provide information to migrant workers on their employment rights and to provide opportunities to promote fairer, flexible and more productive workplaces. This program has been highly successful in building networks with community migrant and ethnic associations and in providing an outreach service to vulnerable employees.

The program is enhanced with the introduction of a new Labour Relations publication, "Migrants Working in WA" booklet. This publication presents information on employment rights in an accessible way and provides the reader with a list of contacts for further information. To access the booklet online, visit the Labour Relations publications page at www.docep.wa.gov.au/wageline.

The booklet is being distributed to migrant communities by Emma Forrest and Andrew Phillips who took over the Migrant Program from Allan Adams on 15 October 2007. Emma and Andrew are building upon Allan's excellent work in assisting employees with a migrant background on a range of employment issues.

The program is being expanded to provide assistance to employers with a migrant background. The first workshop specifically for employers was held on December 3 at Communicare in Cannington. Other service providers also attended to discuss employment related issues with clients.

Emma presented an information session on employment matters at Ishar Multicultural Centre for Women's Health on 5 December 2007.

For information on the Migrant Program, workshops, seminars or copies of the publication, contact Emma and Andrew at migrants@docep.wa.gov.au.

NEW AWARD HONOURS SIR RONALD WILSON

Western Australians who show an outstanding commitment to advancing social justice, human rights, equality and anti-racism, will be eligible for a new Award honouring the life's work of the late Sir Ronald Wilson.

Nominations are now invited for the inaugural Sir Ronald Wilson Leadership Award, which will recognise annually a Western Australian who has made an exceptional contribution to these values.

Sir Ronald Wilson was one of Western Australia's most distinguished servants, a respected lawyer, judge, social activist and a steadfast advocate for the disadvantaged.

Sir Ronald Wilson showed compassionate leadership and deep concern for the fundamental rights of ordinary people and this was reflected in his appointment as President of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. He had a remarkable career and rose above an early life of hardship.

Western Australians who have demonstrated through their field of work, a sustained impact on the lives of Indigenous

people, ethnic or other marginalised groups in Western Australia, are particularly encouraged to apply for the Sir Ronald Wilson Leadership Award.



Multicultural Interests and Citizenship Minister Ljiljana Ravlich will present the inaugural Award at the Vice Chancellors Oration to be held at Murdoch University on 18 March 2008.

Information and Sir Ronald Wilson Leadership Award Guidelines and Nomination Forms can be obtained from the Office of Multicultural Interests website at www.multicultural.wa.gov.au or by calling the Office of Multicultural Interests on telephone 9222 8800.

Nominations for the Sir Ronald Wilson Leadership Award close at 5:00pm on Thursday 31 January 2008.

Multicultural Footy Gala

Centrelink has teamed up with the South Fremantle Football club and the Western Australian Football Commission to help migrants and refugees learn more about Australian society and interact with their local communities.

The emphasis is on encouraging children to participate in Aussie Rules, making it easier for them to build friendships and fit in at school, as well as helping refugee and migrant families to mix in with the rest of community.

Despite bad weather, about 70 people came along to Morris Buzzacott Reserve in Kardinya to join in the festivities which included a kids versus adults fun footy game which was enjoyed by all!

Jill Ashcroft of Job Network Member at *Work Australia* was manning a stand at the Gala and was so impressed with the catering that she sent in this note:

'Just wanted to say what a wonderful job you did with the food on Sunday...I very much enjoyed the meal you gave to me which was delicious.'

Centrelink Area WA Communications Manager, Richard Liedtke said: 'It was a true international mix at the recent Multicultural Football Gala Day, with Asian and European food tasting, African drum sounds and "snags" on the barbie'.



Twelve years old Zar Yar at the Footy Gala.

A conversation for the future

The United Nations Youth Association of Australia (UNYA) has launched the largest and most exciting consultation of young people ever undertaken in Australia.

YouthSpeak will engage young people in the 12- 25 age bracket from across urban, regional and rural Australia through peer-led consultations and through the first serious application of the internet to consult. Young people will not only be able to participate in their real world social spaces but will also be able to participate in the consultation online and on their mobile phone.

Youth Speak will utilise young people in their networks and volunteers to engage young people through the use of social utility sites such as *Facebook* and *MySpace*. Some 40 000 – 50 000 young people are likely to participate in *Youth Speak* and many more will come into contact with it making it as broad reaching as it is exciting.

Justin Wong of the West Australian Division of UNYA said: '*YouthSpeak* is an amazing opportunity for young people from around Australia, including those from ethnic communities, to tell their local, state and federal governments where they think Australia is headed and how we should improve it'.

Young people can access *YouthSpeak* through their schools or educational institutions or through the internet at <http://www.youthspeak.org.au>. Young people are also welcome to volunteer, and can register their interest at the website.

For more information or if you're an organisation that wants to help, contact Sid Chakrabarti, *YouthSpeak* Coordinator, on mobile 0403 159 612.

Introducing OMI Staff

Janette Hanna, Executive Assistant

Janette Hanna joined OMI on 28 November 2007 as Executive Assistant to Acting Executive Director.

Prior to migrating to Australia from Sudan, situated in Northern Africa between Egypt and Eritrea, Janette worked in various Diplomatic Missions in Africa.

Janette and her family migrated to Australia in early 1985 and for 20 years worked for Coles Myer Ltd in various positions ranging from a Service Coordinator to Senior Secretary. In December 2006, Janette joined the Department for Child Protection and held a number of administrative positions there until November 2007.

We warmly welcome Janette to OMI and wish her every success as she pursues her career with the Department for Communities.



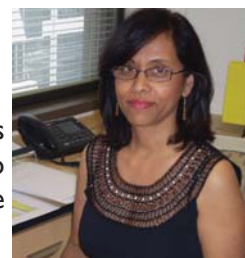
Amanda Pereira, Finance and Corporate Services Manager

The Office of Multicultural Interests is pleased to welcome Amanda Pereira to the position of Finance and Corporate Services Manager.

Amanda migrated to Australia from Oman, situated on the southeast coast of the Arabian Peninsula, in 1989 where she worked at the Central Bank of Oman for almost a decade. Amanda was born and educated in Goa, a picturesque state on the West Coast of India (formerly a Portuguese colony for over 400 years).

In Western Australia, Amanda was first employed by the Department of Training and in 1993 moved to the former Department of Family and Children's Services where she held a number of finance and resource management positions.

Amanda is active in the local community and held the position of President of the Goan Overseas Association from 1999 to 2005, taking it through its Silver Jubilee year.



Congratulations to Mark Bin Bakar

Western Australia's Australian of the Year for 2008.

Known to many across Australia as the multi-media personality Mary G, Mark Bin Bakar has dedicated much of his adult life to increasing cultural understanding and working tirelessly to present an insight into Indigenous culture. Mr Bakar is also the winner of The National NAIDOC Awards Person of the Year 2007.

To subscribe to [Multicultural Western Australia](#)
Email: omi.newsletter@communities.wa.gov.au
Phone: (08) 9222 8800 Fax: (08) 9222 8801
Website: www.multicultural.wa.gov.au