

Special points of interest:

- Highlights from the FECCA Conference
- Counter terrorism policing and culturally diverse communities
- Latest refugee settlement research from Victoria
- Multicultural Mental Health resources
- Free training from Multicultural Youth SA
- Cultural Immersion Workshops at ARA
- Multicultural Information Day



FECCA CONGRESS 2007 EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION: AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DIVERSITY WITHIN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

I recently attended the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council Congress held in Hobart on the 30th July – 1st of August 2007. The theme of the conference was Empowerment and Inclusion: Australian cultural and social inclusion within a global context. In the interest of promoting the themes of the conference to ASHRA members, and because many of these themes parallel current discussions, I have contributed the following highlights of the FECCA Congress.

Scope of Congress

As Australia makes its way forward in a rapidly changing and diversifying world, there are different schools of thought as to how Australia should shape its cultural and social identity. Can a society with a diverse population have a monocultural identity? Or does the concept of multiculturalism shape a unique single

Australian identity? The theme of the Congress revolved around the concepts of empowerment and inclusion, and explored how these concepts relate to Australia's cultural and social diversity, through workshops, panel discussions, presentations and plenary addresses.

The three streams of the congress:

Using today to shape tomorrow

It is commonly held that in order for a society to remain competitive, vibrant and relevant, significant emphasis and policy must be devoted to the preservation of its past and setting solid foundations in the present with a view to its future. This stream explored issues relating to youth, children, education and training, arts and sport, culture and heritage, the environment, sustainability, health and ageing.

Empowerment and Inclusion

The goal of a diverse society should be, through easily accessible and equitable distribution of resources, to empower and include as many sections of the community in order for them to participate in decision making within the greater Australian community and to full embrace society and life in general. The stream explored the concepts of empowerment and inclusion in Australia with specific regard paid to issues facing women, regional communities, people with disabilities, the concept of universal human rights, new and emerging communities, employment, racism and discrimination, business, trade, politics and wider issues of access and equity.

Australia as part of the global village

Australia's successful and unique diversity is well known. As we make our way forward in a rapidly changing

How to say g'day in Kiswahili ... Habari?

Kiswahili, or Swahili, is an African language spoken mainly by the people of central and eastern Africa including Tanzania and Kenya (where it is an official language) and Uganda declared it an official language in 2005. Swahili, or other closely related languages is also used by small number of people in Burundi, Rwanda,

Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

There are some great websites to help you practice Swahili— try www.masai-mara.com/mmsw.htm and my personal favourite:

www.gjcom/hassan/lessons/

[useful_swahili_words.html](#) This site also offers sound so you can hear how the word should be pronounced. So practice, practice, practice!

For Adelaide based Swahili speakers, tune into Radio Adelaide 101.5 on Thursdays at 11pm.



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Cultural and linguistic diversity is a given in Australia today.



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and diversifying world, opinion sways between bunkering down and engagement, between unity and diversity. This stream explored the issues of multiculturalism and diversity, cross cultural and interfaith issues, Australia's role on the international stage, immigration and citizenship, refugee and humanitarian issues, the role of the media and the concept of Australian values.

One of the most impressive speakers at the conference was film maker Khoa Do, winner of the Young Vietnamese Australian of the Year Award 2000, Young Citizen of the Year Award 2001 and Young Australian of the Year Award 2005. Khoa's life story captivated the audience as he told of his experiences as he and his family left Vietnam in a tiny fishing boat, captured twice by pirates before eventually arriving in Australia. Khoa Do is now a director, screenwriter and teacher with extensive experience working with some of the most disadvantaged in our community. Khoa's presentation contextualised the themes of the Congress: acknowledging Australia's cultural and linguistic diversity, the issues facing refugees and migrants as they adapt to life in their adopted country and particularly the concept of Australian values.

The changing demographics of the Australian population present particular challenges that must be acknowledged if we are to ensure equal and equitable access to the provision of services. Klaudia Vainshtein from the Centre for Cultural Diversity in

Ageing in Victoria presented *Reaching out to migrant elderly: communication strategies to foster informed decision making*. The Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing works with both ethnic communities and the service providers that support them. Klaudia's presentation revolved around the findings from six community consultations carried out in 2006. While it is well established that the Australian population as a whole is ageing, the population from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds is ageing at a more rapid rate. In 1996, the 65+ population was estimated to be at 18% and by 2011, the 65+ age group is estimated to be at 23%. And this is expected to increase even further, as the Minister for Ageing, Julie Bishop announced 'As Australia's population ages, people from culturally diverse communities will make up almost a quarter of the population aged over 65 over the next decade'.

As these populations age, there is a tendency for those from a CALD background to revert to mother tongue language even though they may have proficiency in English. In Victoria, 21% of the 65+ age groups speak a language other than English at home and in some areas nearly 50%. This presents specific challenges to the provision of services, including bi or multilingualism of aged care staff, cultural competency of staff, the need to recognise diversity within cultures, and the need to constantly monitor the major languages of CALD populations as these are expected to change over time. For example, the

majority of those who migrated in the 1950's and 1970's were European; Greek, Italian, Maltese, Polish, and Latvian and so on. Therefore, it could be expected that health promotional material would be available in the relevant languages. However, in Queensland, migrants from the Philippines and China are expected to rank in the top ten birth countries over the next ten years or so, which means that that same promotional material will need to be available in these languages.

Findings from the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing consultations sought to identify the barriers experienced by the ageing CALD communities and how to best address them. The identified barriers were the lack of proficiency in English, limited access to information, the migration experience, intergenerational issues, and an acknowledgement that not all aged services offer CALD oriented services. Of the ageing population surveyed in Victoria, 75% of those were unable to read or comprehend in English, 71% read ethnic newspapers, 92% listen to ethnic radio, and 40% watch pay TV from their country of origin. Another equally important area was the limited access to information. Participants stated that they often only heard about services by chance, from a neighbour, from family members, or going to the shops and many reported that they learned a lot from taxi drivers! Only 11% of those surveyed learned of services through Migrant Resource Centres. This also meant that fundamental services

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such as aged care facilities were unknown. Only 50% of those surveyed knew anything about aged care services!

Intergenerational issues were also regarded as a principal barrier to this group. Many families were looking after their parents with no assistance at all and were often unaware of the types of assistance available. Because the parents tend to rely on their children for communication, this was particularly sensitive in medical situations with many participants stating they were embarrassed having to disclose personal information in front of their children.

Participants were asked what they found to be the best way to get information and the majority responded that they preferred information forums or presentations – an opportunity to hear about services, but also attendees

would be able to ask questions. Ethnic radio was also suggested as a useful way of disseminating information to specific language communities.

It was also noted that not all aged care facilities include cultural diversity as part of their core services and cultural diversity is not acknowledged in their vision statements, policies or procedures. Klaudia used the example of an older Chinese man living in an aged care facility: the man had requested Chinese food for his meals, and staff negotiated with the client that only one meal would be Chinese. The man later left the facility, and when staff were cleaning his room in preparation for the next client, found that he had been preparing and cooking his own meals in his room.

For anyone working with the aged, the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing has a great website:

www.culturaldiversity.com.au
The site offers easy access to the broader community, to service providers and also offers language support with, among other things, a glossary of aged care terminology available in 12 different languages. There are also a couple of outstanding Australian studies on the CALD ageing population, some of which I have referred to above. The University of Queensland's Australian Centre for Ageing has produced *Ageing and Cultural Diversity in Queensland: Working together to make a difference* (available at www.uq.edu.au/chha/) and some other regional areas have completed smaller studies on these issues (notably, the Town of Gawler, Cities of Tea Tree, Playford and Salisbury. www.alga.asn.au/policy/healthAgeing/ageing/resources/innovativePractice/connectingWithSeniors.php)



For anyone working with the aged from a CALD background the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing is an excellent resource:

www.culturaldiversity.com.au

Counter terrorism policing and culturally diverse communities

Hussein Tahiri presented *Counter terrorism policing and culturally diverse communities*; a recently completed research project undertaken by Monash University in partnership with Victoria police. The project focused on the impact of counter terrorism measures on the police, community, media and legislative/policy framework. This unique research used an interdisciplinary approach to examine how counter terrorism is changing both the policing function and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The research identified three key areas: 1) lack of time to develop

relationships with CALD groups 2) lack of trust and respect by some community groups for the police (due to experiences in their country of origin) and 3) lack of cultural awareness of new and emerging communities (their behaviours/beliefs and values). Communities expressed concern over the lack of consultation between police and the community, with many community members unaware of their rights and obligations. This was of particular concern for newly arrived and emerging communities, who may also have had extremely negative experiences with police in their country of origin. The media was also highlighted as a key area

that needed to be addressed as it was felt that it tended to provide misleading information and negatively represented their communities.

Community engagement and enhancing social cohesion was regarded as integral to attending to the concerns highlighted above. There was an assumption that the government would deal with these issues, but community groups wanted to be incorporated through the creation of joint partnerships into addressing these concerns. Findings from this study are currently unavailable but is expected to be released later in the year.

For further information about the Congress or to view or download conference papers, go to the FECCA website www.fecca.org.au



Well done to the FECCA Conference organisers for an excellent and informative conference!!

Bringing Communities Together—Strategic Framework

Fahadur Reza presented *Bringing Communities together – strategic framework with a case study of symposiums on Australian Muslims*. Part the Australian Federal Government's strategy to promote social inclusion in Australian communities, the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) has established a strategic framework, "Bringing Communities Together", to support a whole-of-government approach to enhancing social participation and social inclusion in Australian communities. The language of 'social inclusion' is gaining greater currency: Universities are offering courses on social inclusion, governments are adopting policies for social inclusion and the UK even has a Minister for Social Inclusion. As Australia faces changes to its demographics, the role of social inclusion offers a variety of opportunities to challenge and rethink the ways we operate, identify need and deliver services. Perhaps most promising is the potential for communities to influence governments and service delivery and there is

a strong willingness among communities to contribute. A series of national symposiums focusing on Australian Muslims were held nationally between February and June of this year. The purpose of the symposiums was to capitalise on the 'community strength based' approach to enhance social integration by sharing the achievements and success stories of Australian Muslims with the wider Australian community, as well as increase awareness and understanding of Muslim culture and values.

The Muslim population is young, growing and educated. 64% of the Muslim population is under 35 years of age, with 40% born in Australia. Muslim families are typically larger families (with four to six children) and the Muslim community has a higher average of post graduate degrees than the Australian average. They are also facing high levels of unemployment, low levels of social cohesion; feel excluded from the broader community and expressed concern over the negative portrayals of Muslims in the media.

The project brought Muslim communities together to work out how to best address the concerns raised, and the result was a series of forums and events in each capital city focusing on 'Sharing our achievements'. These events brought local communities together and included communities of interest, virtual communities and spatial communities. The projects also sought to find ways to develop partnerships with the private and public sectors to promote their aims.

Each state organised their own events and they were so successful that some have decided to make it an annual event. Each state has also identified different areas of need that will require further attention, such as childcare, primary and secondary schools, hospital, settlement services, youth services and **affordable housing**. Connections have also been made with businesses, and IBM has donated 25 computers to Muslim community groups. The FaCSIA report was due to be released in August.

Multicultural Mental Health Resources

Suicide Prevention Australia is a non-profit, non-government organisation working as a public health advocate in suicide prevention. SPA is the only national umbrella body active in suicide prevention throughout Australia, promoting:

- Community awareness and advocacy
- Collaboration and partnerships between communities, practitioners, research and industry
- Information access and sharing
- Local, regional and national forums, conferences and events

The Life Awards is a national annual event that acknowledges the work that is being undertaken in the prevention of suicide across Australia. The Awards are held in conjunction with World Suicide Prevention Day, 10th September each year. The above information was forwarded by Rosanna from Multicultural Mental Health Australia. As the national leader in mental health and suicide prevention for Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, Multicultural Mental Health Australia is able to provide consumers, carers and mental health professionals with the information and resources they need. For the latest information on resources, services, research, conferences and events, please place the following link on your website: <http://www.mmha.org.au/> or email Rosanna at: rosanna.commisso@swahs.health.nsw.gov.au

FECCA Conference conclusion

To summarise, cultural and linguistic diversity is a given in Australia today.

Therefore, we cannot overlook the significance that these diversities can and will present as they are a key factor in the way services are delivered and how they will be received. Lead agencies can provide a voice for the specific concerns of a particular group or community and a vehicle through which they can be heard.

The current tendency to mainstream services, (for example the incorporation of the Aboriginal Housing Authority into Housing SA), means that every service must be mindful that they are not excluding the very groups in the population they are attempting to service. Lead agencies can provide guidance and direction to socially and culturally inclusive language and policies, and can act as a touch stone for others seeking direction or contact with culturally and linguistically diverse groups. Without them, the obligation rests on each of us to develop and ensure that our policies and procedures are appropriate to our targeted client groups.

For example, does your organisation have policies in place that promote cultural diversity? If you were approached by a client from a CALD background, would you be

able to assist them? If not, would you know where to refer them to? Would you know where to go for language support/ translation? If you are targeting a particular CALD group, what cultural awareness training could your staff require?

As indicated by the examples at the FECCA Conference and described here, providing effective services is dependent upon knowing your target audience. So whether you are providing aged care services, providing projects or programs to connect communities, or involved in community policing, each of these disparate areas require an understanding of the needs of these communities.

Another important point evidenced at the FECCA Conference, is that culturally and linguistically diverse communities tend to rely on their social, informal networks for settlement information. It is concerning that ageing CALD communities know so little about aged care facilities and supports available. How many families, that may be eligible for supports and assistance, are working in isolation, unaware that there is help available?

Clearly, the promotion of CALD and relevant mainstream services need

to be more actively publicised to the broader community. As the findings from Klaudia Vainshtein's project suggested, this is perhaps best provided in public forums and information sessions that allow community members opportunities to question and chat informally with service providers.

Moreover, community service organisations need to have the capacity to connect, consult and engage with CALD communities. Hussein Tahiri's presentation on counter terrorism highlighted issues of social cohesion and integration that can and will occur without appropriate consultation.

And finally, organisations providing services aimed at CALD communities need the capacity to network with each other. The current competitive tendering process and high staff turnover among community service providers has meant that expertise and continuity of services are regularly lost. Services and agencies supporting CALD communities can range from Centrelink to SAPOL, from housing to health. Maintaining networks with such incongruous groups can be difficult as staff leave positions, or funding expires.



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Free Training: Multicultural Youth SA—working with young migrants and refugees

Multicultural Youth SA (MYSA) is offering a free training session to roll out the 'Toolkit: A practical guide for working with young migrants and refugees'. A MYSA ambassador will also attend to share their culture and experience. All attendees will also receive a free copy of the Toolkit. For more information about the forum or to book your place, please contact Nicolette at MYSA on 8212 0085 or email nicolette@mysa.com.au

4:00pm – 6:30pm
 10 October
 Multicultural Youth SA
 Shop 9 Millers Arcade
 28 Hindley Street Adelaide



Cultural Immersion Workshops at ARA

Have you ever had clients or customers that have come from other countries such as Afghanistan, Burma or Sudan?

Have you ever had questions you wanted to ask about their culture but were too embarrassed to?

Have you ever wondered what you could do to serve people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds better?

Well, ARA is here to help answer those questions!

Three Cultural Immersion Workshops are being run for people whose work can make a positive impact on refugee and migrant people's lives through culturally competent practice. \$40 per session. Limit of 15 places for each session so register quickly!

Important October dates:

**13th October is Eid-al-Fitr
(Festival of the Breaking of
the Fast)**

**15th of October is Turkic/
Tatar Remembrance Day**

**24th of October is Zambian
Independence Day**

**25th of October is
Lithuanian Constitution
Day**

**28th October is OXI Day
(Greek National Day)**

**31st of October is
Slovenian Reformation Day**

Benefits:

- Feel more confident and comfortable communicating with families, communities and individuals from diverse backgrounds
- Network with other workers—share stories, problem solve
- Meet with people from these countries and communities
- Learn about the land, the people and their traditions.

All workshops to held at the Australian Refugee Association, 304 Henley Beach Road, Underdale. Telephone: 8354 2951 or email: reception@ausref.net

Dates:

Afghanistan ~Tuesday 30th October 2-4pm
Burma ~Tuesday 13th November 2-4pm
Sudan ~Tuesday 4th December 2-4pm

Cheltenham Community Centre and Muslim Women's Association Activities

❖ English classes for migrants supported by the Muslim Women's Association Thursdays 1.30pm to 2.30pm, or Mondays 10am to 12 noon

❖ Sewing classes for new arrivals/migrants. These friendly classes are held in a small group and are aimed at beginners, on Thursdays 10am to 12 noon

❖ Computer classes for new arrivals/migrants. Supportive and stress free introduction to computers, on Saturdays from 10am to 12 noon.

❖ Muslim Women's Association also run Parenting/Health Information sessions for the Somalian Community at Cheltenham Community Centre

For further information

Contact: Alison Wall (Community Development Officer)

Cheltenham Community Centre

62 Stroud Street North Cheltenham (catch the Outer Harbor trains that service Cheltenham train station) Tel: 8408 1390



New Research

'Finding a Home: A research report on supporting newly arrived migrants and refugees to secure housing'

The following is a summary of a research project that was undertaken in Victoria and published in January 2007. The overall aim of this project was to establish an on-going service model that would assist newly arrived migrants and refugees settling in the southern and eastern regions of Melbourne.

The research acknowledged the limited availability and long waiting periods for public housing in Victoria and the extremely competitive private rental market. In addition, lack of proficiency in the English language, limited social supports and low and fixed incomes (refugees may be Centrelink dependent initially) all contribute to a specific set of constraints to securing safe and affordable accommodation. For many, this resulted in overcrowded conditions for a long period of time as they were unable to access suitable long term accommodation.

The research findings highlighted a number of areas that need to be addressed to more effectively attend to the housing and accommodation needs of new arrivals. For refugee and migrant communities, it was acknowledged that many new arrivals rely on sponsors, family and friends for housing information and many were unaware of support agencies and resources that are available. New arrivals also indicated that they were often unaware of their obligations and rights as a tenant, or the rights and obligations of the Landlord or real estate agent. New arrivals also indicated a desire to have a better understanding of government benefits and assistance (such as Bond Assistance). Real estate agencies emphasised the need for all

paper work to be completed quickly and completely in order for new arrivals to be able to compete effectively in the current housing market. Real estate agents also identified maintenance and repair issues as a significant problem and included how to report repairs and how to maintain properties. Agents also reported that they were willing to attend short training sessions to increase their awareness of settlement issues and services available (such as interpreter services and other resources).

Drawing on these findings, a service model has been developed for implementation and evaluation:

The case work component of the service model proposed will include: assessment of the level of support required by newly arrived refugees and migrants; practical support based on need; networking with real estate agents; and follow-up to ensure housing is being maintained and the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants are being met. Separate information education programs will be delivered to specific cultural groups (i.e. Chin community in the eastern region and Southern Sudanese in the southern region of Melbourne).

Refugee and migrant settlement experiences, visa categories and their potential impact on tenancies and descriptions of services and resources available to refugees and migrants will be delivered to Real Estate agents through an existing training session offered by REIV, through regular Real Estate agent networking forums and through the distribution of information kits.

To view the entire report, go

to the Migrant Information Centre Website www.miceastmelb.com.au and click on publications and research.

The ASHRA network notes the parallels of settlement experience with the Victorian example, however, to my knowledge at least, there is no comparable research among South Australian refugees and migrants and their settlement experiences. Without such documentation, it is extremely difficult to argue for the housing needs of new arrivals as specific and distinct from other vulnerable groups.

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) has produced two reports on this theme: *Housing need and provision for recently arrived refugees in Australia*, and *The housing and other service needs of recently arrived immigrants*. Although neither document is South Australian specific (although it does contain South Australian content), the latter document highlights two important areas: most importantly it provides perspective—'Housing assistance was a relatively minor part of the entire quantum of services used by immigrants, comprising less than 5% of the total'. This research also highlighted the lack of a consolidated approach to the provision of services. 'No single agency across the three tiers of government performs a co-coordinating role' (2002:vi).

What is needed now is South Australian specific research building on these findings to ensure we are meeting and anticipating the needs of our newest citizens.



**To view entire
report, go to:
www.miceastmelb.com.au
and click on
publications and
research**



ASHRA Vision Statement

ASHRA is committed to developing our network of interested groups and individuals working with refugees and asylum seekers. We wish to provide greater opportunity for leadership and skill development, create strong, informal networks between organisations, provide greater transparency in information sharing, potentially reduce the duplication of services and more readily identify the gaps in services.

The strength of a nation
derives from the
integrity of the home

Confucius

ASHRA Meeting dates for 2007

Final meeting for the year ~14th November

All meetings are held in the Torrens Building, 220 Victoria Square, Adelaide from 3-5pm. Meetings are informal and everyone is welcome to attend.

All meetings are held in the Torrens Building, 220 Victoria

Multicultural Information Day ~ 20th November

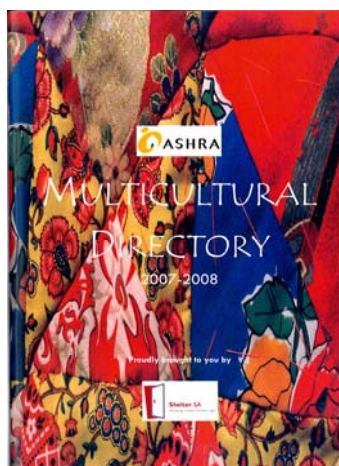
Pilgrim Hall (14 Flinders St Adelaide, just behind the Pilgrim Church) 1-4pm

In conjunction with the release of the ASHRA Multicultural Directory, the ASHRA network is organising a Multicultural Information Day on the 20th of November.

The aim of this event is to:

- ❖ provide greater opportunity for those who are working directly or indirectly with refugees and migrants to network with other service providers;

- ❖ raise awareness among the broader community of the range of services available in



actively promote their services and activities, and to put a face to the organisation. As stated throughout this edition, CALD communities tend to rely on their own informal and social networks, so it is important to regularly and publicly raise awareness about your services and activities.

- ❖ provide opportunities for individuals to meet with and ask questions about the services participating on the day.

The ASHRA network has encouraged many of the services listed in the Directory to attend to

Limited space is still available if your organisation is interested in having a stall at this event.

All Welcome



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