

ASHRA Newsletter

Agencies Supporting Housing for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

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Future Directions for ASHRA group

At our final meeting for 2006, members discussed our general direction for 2007, our goals and how we could best achieve them.

The issues for 2006 revolved around mental health issues and the accommodation needs of single unaccompanied men. Many of the volunteers supporting new arrivals wanted some sort of training or support to both better understand the needs of those arriving and how to avoid acquiring a mental health issue themselves. 'Compassion fatigue' and 'burn out' were the buzz words of early 2006. Mental health in particular received considerable media attention. Subsequently, various training sessions and forums highlighting the issues were held. More recently, mental health issues have faded from the media spotlight and ASHRA meetings (can we

assume that mental health is no longer a priority for 2007?). Similarly, the demands for affordable, short term single bedroom accommodation has subsided. The type of accommodation required will always be dependent upon the family makeup of refugees and asylum seekers. So although the focus may have changed, the need to continue to identify and promote the issues remains the same. Diversity of housing stock offered within an array of tenures must ALWAYS be a key feature of housing need in this country. So what are the anticipated issues for 2007?

ASHRA members highlighted a variety of areas that can be loosely drawn into four areas of interest:

- 1) The difficulty in supporting those without a regular income.
- 2) The housing crisis in this country that is impacting most severely upon those most at risk. Low income earners, those without secure and affordable accommodation, and those with a health issue naturally are hardest hit. The shortage of affordable accommodation has resulted in transience and overcrowding for many in our community, including refugees and asylum seekers.
- 3) The need to work together more effectively. There are many services and specialist knowledges in our community. How can we better link up, connect and optimise the use of these services and skills? In short, how can we ensure that those who are needing to access services are aware of what's available? (continued p5)

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How to say g'day in . . . German ~ Guten Tag

DIMA estimates there are around 107,000 German born Australians living in Australia today. Many originally came before Federation, and others came as refugees fleeing Nazi Germany or via the planned migration program after WWII. For more information on their settlement experiences, visit the South Australian German Association's website: www.saadv.com.au As one of the oldest ethnic groups in the state, what parallels could be drawn from their experiences and those of the more recent refugee intake?



Invitation from the Findon Community Centre

The Centre is located at 222 Findon Road Findon. Bus Stop 214. It is open Monday to Friday 9-5pm. It is one of a network of 5 Community Centres and 6 Libraries within the City of Charles Sturt. Other Centres are located at Semaphore Park (Bower Cottages), Cheltenham, Henley and Grange and West Lakes. A wide variety of programs are on offer and a Program Guide for

Libraries and Community Centres comes out on a quarterly basis. Programs offered are low cost and in some cases free!! For example, free English Language and Computing Classes. Between July and October each year, a free Tax Help Program is available for low income earners. Programs cater for all age groups.

Currently, in conjunction with the SA Herb Society,

they are establishing a Community Herb Garden and this is becoming very popular. They also have a Gardening Tool Bank where tools can be hired at a low cost: tools include lawnmowers, post hole diggers and rakes to name just a few. The Centre is welcoming and you are invited to call in, have a chat, a coffee and pick up a Program Guide. They look forward to seeing you there!

African Resettlement in Australia Conference 2007

When:
11-13 April 2007

Where:
University of Melbourne

Contact:
(03) 8344 3682

This grass-root initiative Conference is to be hosted by Victoria's African communities and aims to increase awareness and assist African communities and individuals to integrate in the mainstream Australian society. The forum will provide an opportunity for service providers, local, state and federal government agencies and policy makers, professionals and community members/leaders to share past and present success/failures, common concerns, and hopes for the future.

The Conference theme, "Walking together at same speed" A forum to dialogue...a cultural journey reflects the belief that both African refugees and Australian society need to come together in the spirit of learning and

mutual understanding. A series of keynote addresses, case studies and presentations will reflect the theme and topic areas of refugee settlement needs, community capacity building, health, refugee employment, youth, and refugee education.

This conference is for everyone who wants to learn about the new and emerging African communities and the challenges facing them settling in Australia as well as the service and support systems available and their capacity building for better integration. The target audience of the conference is members of the African community, service providers, social workers, state and federal government representatives, police,

youth drug and alcohol counsellors, community health representatives, educators, academics, business leaders and policy makers.

A range of local, national and international speakers will give participants information and advice about African family values, cultural diversity, and settlement needs. It is also a great chance to meet people and develop strong networks with the African communities.

Further information including registration details can be found at the : [conference website](#) or by contacting Conference Management on telephone: 03 8344 3682 / email heather.wringe@union.unimelb.edu.au

IPAA Forum on working with Muslim communities

The Institute of Public Administration presents "What's an Aussie Mossie?" An Introduction to Islam and Working with Muslim Communities

This event has been developed to assist government and non-government.

Speakers include: Irfan Yusuf, Canberra-based workplace relations lawyer and media commentator on

Muslim issues. Yasmine Ahmed, Associate to the Honourable Justice Sulan in the Supreme Court of South Australia. Facilitated by Mia Zahra, Equal Opportunity Commission and IPAA Young Professionals Co-Chair.

Date: Friday 9 February 2007

Time: 7.30am to 9.30am, register at 7.15am

Venue: Banquet Hall, Adelaide Festival Centre

Cost: \$65 for IPAA Members, \$73.50 for IPAA Corporate Members, \$80 for Non-Members

For more information or to register for the event, contact IPAA on 08 8212 7555, email enquiries@sa.ipaa.org.au or visit the IPAA website www.sa.ipaa.org.au/Events/program.asp



Special thanks to:

Rob Topsfield

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Bill Peterson

Kerry Grey

Christine Loveday

Michael Dummin

Judy Bishop

Margo Johnson

Andrew Church

Multicultural directory update

As many of our readers would know, the ASHRA group has been working on a multicultural directory targeted to mainstream organisations in an effort to more effectively bridge the gap of matching available services to community need.

The directory is in its final stages of preparation now and we are seeking funding opportunities to publish the document. Unfortunately, our most recent application for funding was unsuccessful. The difficulty appears to be that the project doesn't neatly fit into either the

'refugee' or 'multicultural' criteria. However, we will continue to seek and apply for funding for this important project. If anyone in our network learns of potential funding sources, please contact us at Shelter SA. Stay tuned and we will keep our readers posted!!

Centrelink and disabilities update

Do you care for a child or family member with a severe disability? Have you ever asked yourself 'How will my child or family member be looked after and where they will live when I am no longer able to care for them?' Many parents and families ask themselves these questions, particularly as they get older.

The Australian

Government understands these concerns and has recently introduced an initiative to assist people to make private financial provisions for the current or future accommodation and care of their son, daughter or immediate family member with a severe disability. Since 20th September 2006, parents and immediate family

members are now able to place up to \$500,000 into a trust called a 'Special Disability Trust' for their future care and accommodation. It will not affect the parent or immediate family members' Centrelink or Dept of Veteran Affairs Pension or income support supplement if they are of Age Pension age

To find out more about the 'Special Disability Trust' call Centrelink's Financial Information Service on **131 202**

(Calls can be made anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local call)



**Free movie
afternoon for
the 8-18 year
olds in the
Campbelltown
Council Area**

**Contact Dan for
further
information:
8366 9213**

Campbelltown Council and CALD Youth

Do you know any CALD young people aged 8-18 years old who live in the City of Campbelltown Council area?

Campbelltown Council is hosting a special Movie and Computer gaming Saturday session specifically for young people of CALD backgrounds.

It is a FREE informal event, where there will be showing a movie on the BIG SCREEN and also have some computer games set up on the computers for use. FREE PIZZA and DRINKS will be provided. The event is a lock-out session where the

general public will be excluded from the Library, allowing unrestricted access to library facilities for this group, a large screen to watch a movie (of their choice) and LAN computer gaming. This session will be held on:

**Saturday 3rd Feb 2007
Campbelltown Library
12-3pm 71 Montacute
Road, Newton**

During the 3 hour session, library staff and Council's Youth Development Officer will be talking to the young people about their ideas for setting up an on-

going program, activities, sports group or gaming session specifically for this target group.

Community elders are encouraged to attend and/or promote this event to local CALD people.

For more information please contact Dan Popping on (08) 83669213 or 0434 306 799 or email

dpopping@campbelltown.sa.gov.au for more information about the program. Hard copies of the flier are also available on request.

Position Vacant: Community Visitor's Scheme Project Officer



The Multicultural Communities Council of SA Inc (MCCSA) is the peak body representing interests of the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in South Australia. It has a membership of over 200 organisations and

individuals from both English and non-English backgrounds. An elected Management Committee oversees the operations of the organisation. The MCCSA is currently seeking applicants for the above position offered

at 19 hours per week. For further information and the job specification please call Vivien Hope on 8410 0300

Future Directions for ASHRA (continued from page 1)

4) The development of accurate and appropriate resources. While there are quite a few resources available pertaining to housing, they are not always culturally or linguistically appropriate. These resources should equally be available to Landlords and real estate agents, schools and teachers, local community groups, libraries. Local councils should also be aware of the diversity of services available.

Many of the areas highlighted are inter-related. Matching services to need seems self evident, yet this would be the most common complaint expressed at ASHRA meetings. Too often, those requiring support or advice are turned away from services as the applicant did not fit the criteria of the organisation. Of greater concern is that when these people were turned away, they were not told of where else to go for help.

ASHRA members also highlighted the inconsistency of service delivery. This has led to the 'squeaky wheel' mentality: providing services only to those

who jump up and down the loudest. Each of these concerns suggest a need to set some benchmarking of acceptable standards in the access and provision of housing and supports. Accessing housing and support SHOULD be by design rather than accident.

The difficulty in supporting those without an income presents its own challenges. The education and recruitment of empathic landlords/real estate agents that can acknowledge the limitations of the current systems and be open to working with social housing providers is one step to addressing this stage of the refugee application. Recruiting volunteers and supporters of the Circles of Friends and promoting the ongoing need of refugees and asylum seekers is another.

If we can acknowledge the crisis in housing in this country and its affect upon all marginalised groups, then we can begin to explore other alternatives. The focus must necessarily move away from the Housing Trust (now known as Housing SA) as the one, the only, form of

affordable social housing. Many countries around the world are experiencing similar changes; what have their responses been? What other affordable housing models have been employed? What has been successful?

In essence, points one and two require long term commitment from everyone concerned; they require us to change the way we think and challenge us as to what we believe is acceptable and fair in Australia. Points three and four are infinitely more simple by comparison!

ASHRA will strive to maintain these foci throughout 2007 and I look forward to some spirited discussions at our meetings.



**We welcome
your
involvement...**

**Would you like to
contribute to the
ASHRA
Newsletter?**

**Raise an issue at
one of our
meetings?**

**Suggest ways to
promote the
housing needs of
refugees and
asylum seekers?**

**Call Shelter SA on
8221 6488 or email:
margo.johnson@sh
eltersa.asn.au for
more information**



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.

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www.sheltersa.asn.au

ASHRA Meeting dates for 2007

14th February	16th May
14th March	13th June
11th April	11th July

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

Building on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security:

highlights from the Action Plan by the Muslim Community Reference Group

Recently produced (September 2006) the above document is available on the web (I googled the title).

Pertinent to ASHRA's recent discussion of future goals, the plan highlights the timeliness for ALL Australians to work together to make our society more inclusive and minimize the risk of any community facing isolation and marginalisation.

Through extensive community consultation, members of the Muslim Community Reference Group (MCRG) and its seven sub groups, identified a number of key areas to make Australia a more

inclusive society. They are:

- Addressing marginalisation and radicalization
- Employment
- Education and training
- Community Engagement and;
- Leadership.

'The social isolation facing many Australian Muslims, particularly the young, both at school and in the community, will be challenged by promoting interfaith and intercultural cooperation through school education, redesigned school curricula, sport, mentoring and volunteering. Research

into education and employment will examine how Australia's education and employment systems encourage integration and where they fall short. Muslim youth will be assisted into the labour market with improved access to employment service providers and government services' (p7).

For further information on the MCRG and their projects/activities, check out this and others like it at Australia Policy Online www.apo.org.au or for further reading, see Ghassan Hage's 'Arab-Australians Today: Citizenship and Belonging (2002).