

## **Multicultural Victoria**

A Showcase for Developing Community Cohesion  
through Multicultural Policies and Practices

2 July 2008

# **Reflections on Performance to date**

## What more can be done ?

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## **Introduction**

- | Background on the **Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV)**

## **Five Pillars of Social Cohesion**

### **Social Cohesion and Established Migrant Communities**

- | Priorities and Challenges

### **Social Cohesion and Refugee & Emerging Communities**

- | Priorities, and Challenges

### **Social Cohesion in a Multicultural society**

## Introduction

### I What is the **Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria** ?

The **Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV)** is the peak not-for-profit advocacy body for migrant and multicultural communities throughout Victoria.

### I What does the **Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria** do ?

- » We act as a representative voice on matters of common and specific interest to migrant and refugee Australians and multicultural communities.
- » We advocate on key social and cultural issues such as youth, justice, employment, education, and healthcare.
- » We collaborate with local communities, service providers, and governments to further the development of sustainable, self-reliant, and successfully integrated multicultural and migrant communities

## **Five Pillars of Social Cohesion**

### **I 1. Recognition**

- » Acknowledgement and acceptance of existence

### **I 2. Representation**

- » A visible and vocal presence

### **I 3. Participation**

- » Meaningful involvement

### **I 4. Remuneration (*not simply financial*)**

- » Efforts and achievements duly rewarded

### **I 5. Progression**

- » Opportunity to develop, evolve and become more established

## 1. Recognition

### I Policies

- » Non-discriminatory immigration and refugee resettlement policies
- » Equal and fair citizenship policies
- » Freedom of expression and association
- » Anti-discrimination legislation
- » Access to translators and interpreters for languages other than English
- » Support for National Days and cultural & religious celebrations

### I Practices

- » Treat others with dignity, empathy and affinity
- » Support and encourage every individual for who they are and wish to be
- » Difference need not create division

## 2. Representation

### I Policies

- » Equal and fair democratic opportunities, eg. right to vote and stand for elections
- » Facilitate involvement of diverse communities on Boards and Councils
- » Equal opportunity employment legislation
- » Ethnic and multicultural media, eg. SBS

### I Practices

- » Equal opportunity employment Codes of Practice
- » Expand the Australian image beyond the “Bronzed Aussie” stereotype

## **3. Participation**

### **I Policies**

- » Community engagement and consultation on policy development
- » Grants programs for grass-roots community activities
- » Cross-cultural projects, programs and initiatives
- » Targeted sport and leisure activities for youth, the aged etc

### **I Practices**

- » Equal opportunity employment Codes of Practice
- » Mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities

## 4. Remuneration

### I Policies

- » Greater equity in the distribution of the nation's prosperity
- » Equal salary and workplace conditions for all
- » Anti-exploitation and intimidation legislation
- » Official awards

### I Practices

- » Appreciation for effort and achievement not just financial
- » Opportunity for advancement and professional development

## 5. Progression

### I Policies

- » Abolition of Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) – had created uncertainty
- » Housing availability and affordability – desire to become more established (permanent) in the community
- » Education opportunities – desire to give children better opportunities than their parents
- » Employment opportunities – desire to give back to the community

### I Practices

- » Not forever trapped by “migrant” and “new arrival” labels – part of the Australian family
- » Takes effort on both sides !

## **Social Cohesion and Established Migrant Communities**

### **I Priorities**

- » Culturally sensitive aged care services
- » Escalating cost of living for retirees
- » Strengthening of social ties with newly-arrived migrant communities
- » Problem gambling

### **I Challenges**

- » Limited (shrinking) resources available in ever-widening multicultural pool
- » Lower government priority than newly-arrived communities
- » Generational shift in ethnic and cultural affiliations and associations

## **Social Cohesion and Refugee & Emerging Communities**

### **I Priorities**

- » Language services – English training and access to translators
- » Vocational pathways – matching new settlers according to ability
- » Understanding of legal rights and responsibilities
- » Strengthening of social ties with established migrant communities

### **I Challenges**

- » Culture shock and lingering personal traumas
- » Limited (shrinking) resources available in ever-widening multicultural pool
- » Generational shift in ethnic and cultural affiliations and associations
- » Current “whipping boys” in the evolution of Australia’s diverse population



**Within the spirit of democracy, civility, and social justice, we must**

- | Find ways to work together for the common good**
- | Learn to accept one another for who we are**
- | Treat each other with dignity and equality**
- | Respect their choice of cultural and spiritual affiliations**
- | Think globally while acting locally**

## **Social Cohesion in a Multicultural society**

- | Social Cohesion is a community effort and an ever-evolving process

**Barriers to social cohesion began**

**with the very first fence**

**to claim ownership of a block of land**

## **Social Cohesion in a Multicultural society**

- | Social Cohesion is a community effort and an ever-evolving process

**The peaks of two mountains will never meet**

**But the meeting of two humans is a must**

**And will occur over time**

- | Encouraging diversity is NOT antithetical to strengthening cohesion

**In all the world  
there never were two opinions exactly alike,  
Just as there were never more than two hairs ...  
or two grains exactly alike.**

**The most universal quality is diversity.**

*-- Michel de Montaigne (French philosopher during the Renaissance)*

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# **Thank you**

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