

A bi-monthly newsletter providing up-to-date news on Darebin City Council's progress in relation to the Memorandum of Understanding with Darebin Ethnic Communities Council

Seminar on Community Engagement Stirs Debate

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On the 14th of April 2005, The Darebin City Council, in conjunction with Darebin Ethnic Communities Council, hosted a one day seminar on: Community Engagement in a Multicultural Society; Smokescreens and Mirrors? The seminar attracted over 180 participants. Presenters included Hayden Raysmith, Peter Kelly, Chris Scanlon, Mary Kalantzis, Carmel Guerra, Maria Dimopoulos, Barbara Mountjouris and Serenella Prelaz, George Lekakis and many more. The seminar examined the policies and programs of community building, community strengthening programs

currently happening across Victoria with a focus on how well such programs are catering to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The seminar generated healthy debate and provided an opportunity for reflection and evaluation of the principles and frameworks which guide the Community Building thinking and agenda. The challenges faced by the current policies of Community Building include the Middle Class values and the place management approaches which guide such policies, factors that in themselves preclude CALD communities from either participating or

benefiting from such programs. 62% participants provided written feedback which suggested that overall the seminar was very good; Proceedings from the seminar will be compiled into a booklet which will be distributed to all seminar participants and others wishing to have a copy.



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Top; Gaetano Greco, Barbara Mountjouris, Serenella Prelaz and George Lekakis—Opening Panel Philip Shanahan, Opening Address Edwina Entwisle and Carmellina Di Guglielmo as the Signoras. Performing at the seminar

Meet Hyder Ramahi



Hyder came to Australia 3 years ago and has over 8 years of experience as an engineer overseas, in both Libya and Iraq, and has undertaken challenging projects in the petrochemical field and in water collection.

Mr Hyder Ramahi has just joined us as a Project Engineer in the Asset Management Team. He is the first member of staff who has been employed as part of Darebin City Council's Workplacement Program.

The Workplacement Program is part of the commitment the City of Darebin has with the Darebin Ethnic Communities Council (DECC) through a Memorandum of Understanding signed between DECC and EMT in 2003.

Meet one of Darebin's Language Aides

My name is Kathy Asvestas. I started working for Council in the Social Policy Department in April 2001. Not long after I started I was on the phone to my mum, talking to her in Greek, and Dalal Smiley, Council's Multicultural Affairs Co-ordinator walked in and heard me. She ran in her office and came back with a Language Aide Application Form and asked me if I would like to become a Language Aide in Greek. As you guessed, I did agree to become a Language Aide and completed the Language Aide Training Course and received my certificate.



My experience as a Language Aide has been great. I have had to deal with a lot of different people, some ringing up about their bins, others ringing about their neighbour's dog and some even ring to find out why their rubbish was not collected but in the end it makes me feel good to be able to help the people who do not speak English. I have even had the satisfaction of helping a Darebin resident who moved overseas to Greece, which won me the Multicultural Global award.

There are thirty one Language Aides operating in Darebin Council and covering all the main languages spoken by our residents. We assist over the phone or face to face. We assist with basic communication. So, Don't ever hesitate to call the Council regardless of what language you speak, we will always be able to assist you. The number to call is: 9230 4353.

What You can find on the Darebin City Council Internet Site

At Darebin City Council we have developed information for our Internet Website in 12 languages other than English spoken in the Municipality.

The languages include Italian, Greek, Macedonian, Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Spanish, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Somali.

What you find when you visit one of our multilingual pages, is information on Council Services, How to Contact the Council, Traffic Offences, Community Grants Scheme, Australia Day Celebrations, and Darebin Safety Card.

Your feedback on our Multilingual Website is greatly appreciated. Please check it out in your language at: www.darebin.vic.gov.au

George Kanjere; Why I Love Working for DECC

I began working with DECC in February 2005. I handle the administrative requirements, which include taking minutes, updating membership list, promoting DECC to ethnic communities, monitoring correspondence and answering queries. I also get involved in various DECC projects such as the Seminar which was held in April. That required a lot of work and I am still recovering from the exhaustion of it all... I found it really exciting though.

I love working for DECC because I

get to meet so many different people from diverse backgrounds, age groups and interests. I myself was born in Zimbabwe but have lived here for a total of ten years. Whenever DECC members get together, the conversation is bound to get quite animated. There is always a hot topic to be discussed. DECC is a fantastic organisation to be involved with and they certainly are a valuable resource to Darebin City Council. I am usually in the office every Friday all day.



George Kanjere; 9230 4337

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Visit decc at www.decc.org.au