



Fostering Multicultural Values

Minutes of **Darebin Ethnic Communities Council** Held 17th March 2005.

Attendance: As per attendance sheet

1. Welcome from chairperson
2. Apologies
3. Correspondence and minutes tabled
4. The guest speakers Paula Weekley and Michelle Marinelli were introduced to DECC. They work in City of Darebin's Aged Care Services. They were invited to answer questions and concerns brought up by several DECC members at the February DECC meeting concerning the changes to funding of senior citizens clubs. Briefly:

John Nicolau and several other members expressed their unhappiness at the reduction of funding for their clubs due to these funding reforms. They also expressed dissatisfaction that application forms for funding needed to be filled out perfectly to be successful.

Jackie Mansourian added that under these reforms the clubs feel as though they are being punished for providing a much needed service.

In response to this Paula Weekley and Michelle Marinelli said that these reforms have been implemented because the way the system was previously set up resulted in inequitable distribution of funds, and also because one person could generate money for two different clubs. Forums were held to get opinions from representatives of some of the affected clubs so that the most reasonable model could be implemented. They knew that some clubs would lose money, but said that transition funds were available to help clubs deal with new levels of funding. Clubs could apply for funding through other grant schemes. They said these reforms are supposed to share limited money around more fairly. The forms must be correctly completed because the size of the database involved means that the forms have to be processed electronically, and so if forms are incorrectly filled out the computer will not be able to process them. If there is a mistake on the form then the form is unable to be read and is rejected. Also in the reforms are new eligibility requirements which are designed to try and make sure that funding from the City of Darebin going to primarily Darebin residents and clubs.

Gaetano Greco said that possibly council could investigate how much more it would cost to fund all clubs for their members regardless of whether the people were members of other clubs as well. He said that the benefits of having people going to clubs would outweigh the additional financial cost.

Vincenzo Balestra said that the reality of running a club means that these reductions in funding will make running clubs much less viable. More volunteers would be needed but they are a limited resource.

Suriyan said that funding should be based on community groups, not on the individual, so as to prevent the individualization of this funding system. The social clubs and are collective organisations that represent older peoples' interests, and individualising the process of funding will greatly reduce this strength of unity.

It was agreed that DECC would ask George Lekakis to speak and advise on this issue because he has previously been involved in club funding reform in Prahran.

5. Guest Ann Pentelow was introduced. She talked about the project of redesigning of the front of the council building to make it more friendly and inviting. Other areas to be upgraded are Preston Station and Preston Market. Community consultations will be held to receive feedback about how people think the façade should be changed. On the 7th 8th and 9th of April at the Market there will be listening posts with interpreters so that as many people as possible will be able to speak their minds concerning these developments.

6. Jackie Mansourian urged everybody to attend the Kookaburra festival, a welcome festival held in March for new arrivals by Aboriginal Community Groups. It was suggested The Connies attend.

Meeting Closed at 8:45 pm