

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

Dialogue of Civilisations

Issue 6
April 2006



On the 30th of March, 2006, over 120 people attended a Breakfast Seminar on the topic of Dialogue of Civilisations with Guest Speaker, Professor Joe Camilleri.

Professor Camilleri began his speech with an overview of history and world politics and the expectations that were made for achieving world peace and prosperity following the end of the Cold War era. The theory of the Clash of Civilisations was put forward by Samuel Huntington as the new arena for debates and contest which replaced the previous

animosities between the two economic systems of capitalism and communism. The late President of Iran, Khatami was the one who placed the idea of Dialogue of Civilisations on the agenda of the United Nations which declared the year 2001 as the International Year of Dialogue. Dialogue of Civilisation goes deeper and further than the concept of cultural diversity, tolerance and harmony. It is about immersing oneself in the world of "the other". It is about listening more than talking, it is about being humble and willing to admit one's own dark side and failings. It is about accepting that cultures while have commonalities also have differences and that those differences are just as important and valuable as the commonalities. In fact the Dialogue is necessary around understanding and learning from the differences.

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<i>Top: Professor Joe Camilleri, Guest Speaker at the Breakfast Seminar</i>	

It is not enough to say we value cultural diversity and multiculturalism, the challenge is to recognise how to harness, nurture and benefit from this diversity. Australia is uniquely placed in the world. It is a country whose people's history and heritage come from elsewhere and whose geography they all share. Professor Camilleri concluded his speech with a huge round of applause from an audience that left inspired and encouraged by the endless possibilities Dialogue has to offer us at the local, regional, national and international levels.

This event was a joint initiative with Darebin Ethnic Communities Council and featured the launch of Darebin eForum; an online discussion group. The first topic for discussion is on Community Harmony. The discussion will be on line till end of May and participants can win prizes. For further information on the Darebin eForum and to register and join the discussion, you can visit the eForum site at: <http://eforum.darebin.vic.gov.au> and join the Community Harmony discussion group.

The Signoras, performed at the Seminar



Suriyan asking a question on the clash of civilisations.

COUNCIL STAFF LEARN HOW TO IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNICATION WITH NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING CITIZENS



The Multicultural Affairs Unit has completed its annual training sessions on how to work with interpreters and how to prepare a document for translation on the 15th and the 29th of March respectively. These sessions prepared 24 staff to communicate through the use of interpreters and printed material in other languages. They acquired information and skills in general communication and cross-cultural issues in relation to both working effectively with interpreters and techniques to prepare a document for translation. The sessions were based on experiential learning with theoretical as well as practical content of discussions, role plays and other exercises as appropriate.

INFORMATION SESSION ON WEST AFRICA

The Darebin City Council hosted an Information Session on the West African Community on the 22nd of February in the Shire Hall. The session was conducted by the Northern Migrant Resource Centre and presented by Abdinur Weli. This session attracted 80 participants representing service providers in Darebin. Abdinur offered an overview of the culture, population, health, history, religions, languages, customs and settlement and communication issues of migrants from West African background living in this municipality. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and to enjoy West African food. An



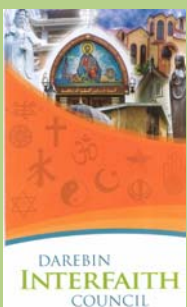
evaluation of the session indicated that 99.68% of participants found the session to be new, helpful, informative and relevant to their work. 100% considered the presenter to be well informed on the material presented, organised, interesting and well related to the audience. The catering rated at 9 out of 10 and 99.6% found the venue comfortable while 99.9% found it appropriate. Some of the comments provided indicated that people are interested in receiving more information on how to assist migrant groups in settling and feeling welcome and they regarded the presentation as an excellent introduction on the West African communities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BOOKLET

This booklet is due to be launched on the 27th of April, at 12 noon at the Shire Hall, Preston, by the Chairman of the Victorian Multicultural commission, Mr George Lekakis. It is a new Council resource available in English, Italian, Greek, Chinese, Arabic, Macedonian, and Vietnamese. It contains a list of questions residents ask the Darebin Council on a regular basis. It offers residents and in particular those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities an easy to access reference to information and services provided by the Darebin City Council. It is available to residents as hardcopies from Customer Service Centres, and online at the Darebin City Council's website at www.darebin.vic.gov.au.



FOSTERING INTERFAITH DIALOGUE



The Darebin Interfaith Council (DIC) was first launched on the 29th of June 2005 when it held its inaugural meeting. The DIC is a collaborative partnership between faith leaders aimed at providing leadership, information, guidance and inspiration to the local community on matters related to faith and benefits of interfaith collaboration, comprehension and dialogue. The DIC has held so far three Interfaith Summits with another three planned for 2006. At the summits, participants listen to guest speakers and discuss issues of interest and importance to the community and to their interaction and development as an Interfaith Council.

For further information on the Darebin Interfaith Council, you can contact Dalal Smiley, Coordinator, Multicultural Affairs on 8470 8411.