

# appendices

## APPENDIX A – Premier's Memorandum

MEMORANDUM -NO. 2002 -18

(Memorandum to all Chief Executive Officers)

### COMMUNITY HARMONY REFERENCE GROUP

The NSW Government is putting in place a plan to maintain community harmony should there be community unrest or incidents of harassment resulting from any possible Australian involvement in a conflict with Iraq and the terrorist attack in Bali.

I have directed the Community Relations Commission to establish a Community Harmony Reference group to develop a coordinated and rapid response should there be a breakdown in community harmony. This Reference Group will be chaired by the Community Relations Commission and include representatives from government agencies, the media, and community.

The Community Relations Commission has experience in coordinating government agencies and community representatives in these circumstances- This was the case during the 1991 Gulf war and in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States.


As a first step I have instructed the Community Relations Commission to set up a multilingual telephone hotline to monitor and respond to incidents of harassment and violence in the community.

I ask NSW Government agencies to cooperate and assist the Commission in this initiative.

Bob Carr MP  
Premier

Contact: Richard Acheson  
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Date: 15 October 2002

## APPENDIX B – Press releases

<b>NEWS RELEASE</b>		Premier of New South Wales Australia
October 22, 2002		
<b><u>PREMIER WELCOMES COMMUNITY HARMONY REFERENCE GROUP</u></b>		
<p>The Premier of NSW, Mr Bob Carr welcomed the first meeting yesterday (Monday 21 October) of the <b><u>Community Harmony Reference Group</u></b> – set up in the wake of the Bali bombings and possible Australian involvement in a conflict with Iraq.</p>		
<p>The Community Relations Commission (CRC) following a direction from Mr Carr, set up the group.</p>		
<p>NSW Police Commissioner, Mr Ken Moroney and representatives from the Department of Education, Department of Community Services and the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board attended the meeting, chaired by the CRC Chair, Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian.</p>		
<p>Sydney's Islamic, Jewish and Sikh communities were also represented on the group.</p>		
<p>Mr Carr said the <b><u>Community Harmony Reference Group</u></b> would help the NSW government promote and maintain community harmony.</p>		
<p>"We must ensure that there are no reprisals or acts of vengeance directed against members of our community," Mr Carr said.</p>		
<p>"Intolerance, racism and hatred have no place in Australia. This is the most harmonious place in the world."</p>		
<p>Mr Carr said the group would also ensure a coordinated, rapid response to any local community relations issues that may arise.</p>		
<p>Similar reference groups were set up during the 1991 Gulf war and in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.</p>		
<p>The CRC has set up a bi-lingual hotline to handle incidents of harassment or violence in the community. The hotline number is <b>1800 80 41 41</b>.</p>		
<b>(Attached is a fact sheet on NSW initiatives for community harmony)</b>		

### NSW INITIATIVES FOR COMMUNITY HARMONY -- FACT SHEET

- On the day of the September 11 attacks, the Premier directed the Community Relations Commission to set up a hotline to assist Arabic speaking communities experiencing racial hatred as a result of events in the United States.
- Immediately after September 11, the Premier made comments appealing for tolerance and restraint.
- In addition, the Premier chaired a formal meeting with NSW Islamic communities' leaders on October 8, 2001 to discuss their concerns. That meeting resulted in:
  - A conference on *Islam in a multi-faith Australia* at the University of Sydney last November;
  - The Director-General of the Premier's Department wrote to NSW Vice-Chancellors asking them to address the issue of safety of young Muslim female students;
  - The Community Relations Commission continued to investigate options in relation to the insurance coverage of places of worship;
  - NSW Police directed Local Area Commands to record all racially motivated crimes;
  - The Community Relations Commission convened an inter-departmental meeting with government agencies and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to discuss incidents of racial hatred reported to the hotline; and
  - The Community Relations Commission produced a brochure on Islam.
- The NSW Government also co-ordinated the historic '*Unity in Adversity*' assembly last year, involving leaders of all major religions coming together to condemn terrorism and support Australia's cultural diversity;
- The NSW Government, through the Community Relations Commission, in partnership with B'nai B'rith Anti Defamation Unit are undertaking an anti-racism project called '*Fair Go Australia*'. The project also includes 15 other communities.
- The Premier announced the formation of a Community Harmony Reference Group following the attacks in Bali, October 2002.

## Community Relations Commission

*For a multicultural NSW*

### Plans to deal with community unease

The Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW has put in place plans to deal with community unease following the terrorist acts in Bali.

The details were announced today by the Chair of the Commission, Stepan Kerkyasharian, following decisions announced by the Premier and Minister for Citizenship, Bob Carr.

"The first step will be to open today a hot line with bilingual staff to take reports of discrimination or assault from any member of the community.

The telephone number for people in New South Wales to report incidents in English, Arabic or another language is **1800 80 41 41**.

"Meanwhile the Commission will call together on Monday the members of the proposed Community Harmony Reference Group who will monitor the situation throughout New South Wales and take whatever measures are necessary to guarantee community harmony.

"This will be the most senior group to be assembled representing government agencies and the community.

"The school system, the Police, the Department of Community Services and the Anti Discrimination Board will be amongst the agencies represented at high level on the group.

18.10.02

#### **For media enquires:**

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Media Release

## Community Relations Commission

*For a multicultural NSW*

### Hotline still open

The Chair of The Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW, Stepan Kerkyasharian, has urged members of the community who suffer abuse, insult or discrimination to call the hotline which was established after the Bali bombings.

“Reports of incidents can be made in English, Arabic or another language on **1800 80 41 41**.

“It is very important that we receive reports of these incidents so that we have a clear picture of community reaction to events like the Bali tragedy.

“Each report helps build up a pattern of behaviour and helps the government plan strategies and responses to any behaviour that threatens our community harmony.

“The information can be fed into the Community Harmony Reference Group which was set up after the Bali incident to safeguard harmony. The group is comprised of representatives of key government agencies including Police, Education, Community Services and Anti Discrimination Board and various affected community groups.

“The Reference Group and a number of sub-groups are working well in monitoring the current situation and preparing for any further terrorist activity or the likelihood of an invasion of Iraq, which we believe would have some serious repercussions for our community,” Mr Kerkyasharian said.

16.12.02

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Media Release

## Community Relations Commission

For a multicultural NSW

### Community Harmony Group continues its work

The Steering Committee of the NSW Government's Community Harmony Reference Group has met for the first time in 2003 to continue its work in the wake of the Bali bombing.

The Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW is heading the high- level reference group which was set up by the State Government last year.

It comprises senior representatives of Muslim, Arabic, Jewish, Indonesian and Sikh communities, Police Commissioner Ken Maroney and senior directors of Education, Community Services, and the Anti Discrimination Board of NSW.

At the meeting last night community leaders again expressed their concern about the levels of vilification and racism coming from talkback radio. The Committee was addressed by the Executive Director of the Sydney Institute, Gerard Henderson, about the role of the news media and how to deal with journalists and radio and television presenters.

Community leaders also discussed security issues with senior police attending the meeting.

The Community Relations Commission Chair, Stepan Kerkyasharian, who heads the reference committee, said today "we are continuing our efforts to maintain community harmony which time and again has withstood challenges of this nature.

"The basic Australian tenet of a *fair go* has seen us through as a successful culturally diverse society.

"We have a number of working parties under the steering committee to work on detailed plans. Muslim, Jewish, Arabic, Indonesian and Sikh Community leaders are working cooperatively with each other and with senior bureaucrats and police. This is a very solid basis for meeting any challenge that we may arise from this possible war," Mr Kerkyasharian said.

15.01.03

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## Community Relations Commission

*For a multicultural NSW*

### Community harmony helplines

The Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW has established telephone and e-mail helplines to record reports of abuse, insult or discrimination suffered by anyone in the community as a result of the Iraq situation.

The Chair of the Commission, Stepan Kerkyasharian, said today the hotline and email helpline would be functioning fully and ready to give assistance from tomorrow.

"There are many communities who could be affected by the events in the Gulf including Australians of American background. The Commission is there to assist all Australians.

"Through both of these emergency services the Commission will be ready to provide referral and information in a variety of community languages," he said.

The e-mail helpline is at [help@crc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:help@crc.nsw.gov.au).

The telephone hotline is on **1800 80 41 41**

The hotline will be complemented by dedicated lines to record calls in Arabic, Turkish and Indonesian.

"I believe that the New South Wales community has greatly matured since the last Gulf War and we will see very little community unrest as this war proceeds. No doubt people will support their fellow Australians especially those who may have family or friends involved in the conflict.

"However some people may still feel the need to report occurrences that they have witnessed or experienced. This is important to us so that we have a clear picture of how the community is coping with the pressure of a war which will impact on so many peoples around the world as well as here in New South Wales

"This is a state where Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and all other believers and non-believers live together, in harmony with a unified commitment to Australia.

"The war in Iraq is not and should not be an excuse to allow those who want to undermine our society to point fingers at people because of their religion. This is un-Australian," Mr Kerkyasharian said.

**20.03.03**

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## Community Relations Commission

For a multicultural NSW

### Helpline strikes a chord

The newly established community helpline to log reports of racism, discrimination or attacks has already struck a chord, according to the Chair of the community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW, Stepan Kerkyasharian.

"The very first email received by the Commission said:  
*Thank you for making this service available. I felt powerless to do anything about what I had witnessed until I saw this contact.*

"The e-mail continued:  
*I am appalled at the increase in racist behaviour – due I believe to the focus on terrorism and the consequent suspicion of one another in the community.*

"The message was accompanied by reports of some instances of quite nasty racist graffiti.

"At this time of agony for people in many different parts of the world affected in many different ways by the conflict in Iraq the people of this culturally diverse state should be supporting and helping each other not insulting each other.

"I agree with the suggestion in the e-mail that instead of acting with suspicion *to smile and say hello to the people living in my street.*

"The Commission is there to assist all Australians. I encourage anyone in the community with something to report to use our multilingual email helpline or the telephone hotlines on **1800 80 41 41 in any language.**

"The hotline is complemented by dedicated lines to record calls in Arabic **(02 8255 6830)**, Turkish **(02 8255 6828)** and Indonesian **(02 8255 6829)**," Mr Kerkyasharian said.

The e-mail address is : [help@crc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:help@crc.nsw.gov.au)

#### 25.03.03

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Media Release

## Community Relations Commission

*For a multicultural NSW*

### Iraqi community to set up council

The Chair of the Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW reported today that a broadly representative meeting of Iraqi community leaders had met last night to form a unified council to assist each other at this difficult time.

In response to community requests, the CRC organised a meeting which was attended by representatives of various ethnic and religious groupings including Muslim, Arabic, Christian, Kurdish, Assyrian and Chaldean communities of Iraqi origin.

"This is an extremely difficult time for people from Iraq as a war in their former homeland threatens. They recognise they must be united as Australians and have asked for the Commission's help", Mr Kerkyasharian said.

18.02.03

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The following statement was translated into multiple languages and appeared in various ethnic newspapers at the outbreak of war in Iraq:

**A statement from Stepan Kerkyasharian AM  
Chair  
Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW**

There are reports of people being harrassed as they go about their lives, in shopping centres or in the streets.

There are also reports that property is damaged or offensive graffiti written on walls. It is not always possible to identify the people doing it. However it is important we all know about these activities.

The Community Relations Commission has set up a hotline to take calls in any language from anybody, whether they're Turkish, Iraqi, American, English, Muslim, Christian or Jewish background. Three extra lines have been set up for people to leave recorded messages in Arabic, Turkish and Indonesian. And, we have an e-mail helpline.

This is not just about trying to get people arrested and sent to jail. It is about drawing a map of the behaviour of our people and finding solutions to the community problems that produce bad behaviour.

I realise that if someone shouts an insult from a car, for example, it is not necessarily a crime but it can be very harmful, depressing and discouraging. We need to know how often it happens and where it happens. Please call our hotline and report it or send an e-mail with as many details as possible. Include the date and time, the place and what actually happened or was said.

As we all know a great deal of racism stems from ignorance. If we have a clear picture of what is happening we can take steps to deal with that ignorance through education or information campaigns.

Obviously if someone commits a criminal offence by way of violence, racial vilification or blatant discrimination you must report it even if you don't think you have enough details for charges to be laid. The police will follow through to get the necessary evidence, and in any case we need to know what is going on.

Language should be no barrier to reporting these incidents. You can leave a message on the hotline in any language and someone who speaks your language or dialect will call you back as soon as possible.

If you don't want to identify yourself or actually engage in conversation you can send an e-mail in English or in your own language if you have the necessary software in your computer. Please let us know.

**The Hotline number is 1800 80 41 41**

The dedicated lines to record calls in **Arabic is (02 8255 6830), in Turkish (02 8255 6828) and Indonesian (02 8255 6829).**

The e-mail address is : **[help@crc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:help@crc.nsw.gov.au)**

**Pernyataan dari Stepan Kerkyasharian AM**  
**Ketua**  
**Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW**  
**(Komisi Hubungan Masyarakat untuk NSW yang multikultural)**

Ada laporan bahwa orang sedang diganggu sewaktu mereka melakukan tugas sehari-hari, di pusat perbelanjaan atau di jalan.

Ada juga laporan bahwa harta sedang dirusakkan atau ditulis kata-kata yang menghina pada tembok. Tidak selalu mungkin untuk mengetahui siapa saja yang melakukan hal-hal ini. Namun, penting agar kita semua mengetahui tentang perbuatan-perbuatan ini.

Community Relations Commission telah mengadakan telepon langsung untuk menerima panggilan dalam segala bahasa dari siapa pun, apakah mereka mempunyai latar belakang Turki, Irak, Amerika, Inggris, Islam, Kristen atau Yahudi. Tiga sambungan tambahan telah diadakan bagi orang yang ingin meninggalkan pesan yang direkam dalam bahasa Arab, Turki dan Indonesia. Kami juga mempunyai pelayanan bantuan melalui e-mail.

Ini bukan hanya tentang menahan para pelaku dan mengirim mereka ke penjara, tetapi tentang menghasilkan peta kelakuan warga kita dan mencari penyelesaian untuk masalah masyarakat yang mengakibatkan kelakuan buruk.

Saya sadar bahwa jika seseorang meneriakkan hinaan dari mobil misalnya, ini belum tentu suatu kejahatan tetapi mungkin membahayakan, menyedihkan dan mengecewakan. Kami perlu mengetahui berapa sering hal ini terjadi dan di mana. Silakan menghubungi telepon langsung kami untuk melaporkannya atau kirimlah pesan e-mail dengan sebanyak perincian yang mungkin. Sertakan tanggal dan waktu, tempat kejadian dan apa yang sebenarnya terjadi atau dikatakan.

Sebagaimana kita semua ketahui, sebagian besar rasisme timbul karena tidak tahu. Jika kita mempunyai gambaran yang jelas mengenai apa yang sedang terjadi, kita dapat mengambil langkah untuk menangani ketidaktahuan tersebut melalui kampanye pendidikan atau informasi.

Jelasnya jika seseorang melakukan tindak pidana melalui kekerasan, penghinaan ras atau diskriminasi blakblakan, Anda harus melaporkannya meskipun Anda rasa tidak ada perincian yang cukup untuk menggugat. Polisi akan melakukan tindakan susulan untuk memperoleh bukti yang perlu, dan dalam hal apapun kami perlu mengetahui apa yang sedang terjadi.

Bahasa seharusnya tidak menjadi halangan dalam melaporkan kejadian-kejadian ini. Anda dapat meninggalkan pesan di telepon langsung dalam mana-mana bahasa dan orang yang berbicara bahasa atau logat Anda akan menelepon Anda kembali secepat mungkin.

Jika Anda tidak ingin menyingkapkan jati diri Anda atau berbicara dengan orang lain, Anda dapat mengirim pesan e-mail dalam bahasa Inggris atau bahasa Anda sendiri jika Anda mempunyai peranti lunak yang sesuai pada komputer Anda. Silakan memberi kabar.

Nomor telepon langsung adalah 1800 80 41 41  
Telepon khusus untuk merekam panggilan adalah: bahasa Arab (02 8255 6830), bahasa Turki (02 8255 6828) dan bahasa Indonesia (02 8255 6829).  
Alamat e-mail adalah: [help@crc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:help@crc.nsw.gov.au)

## COPING WITH CONFLICT

# NSW draws plan for aftermath of battle

Linda Morris

A statewide plan for dealing with violence, harassment and racist attacks is being drafted in case of Australian involvement in war overseas and terrorist attacks at home.

The plan is expected to provide for increased security at mosques and synagogues, the identification of potential targets, including Muslim women, and a visible police presence.

In schools, students and staff are to be placed on alert for schoolyard clashes between children arising out of Australian military activity overseas or terrorist acts in Australia.

The chairman of the Community Relations Commission, Stepan Kerkyasharian, says final details are still to be worked out, but once drafted the plan will be the first comprehensive strategy of its type enacted in NSW.

To date strategies to deal with a "breakdown in community harmony" have been developed on a needs-only basis, the first one framed during the Gulf War.

The plan aims to mobilise local police commanders, bilingual staff of the Department of Community Services, the Anti-Discrimination Board, the Department of Education and Training, the Attorney-General's Department's victims of crime unit and community leaders.

There will be a hotline to give victims of violence or harassment avenues of advice and redress.

When finalised, later this year, the plan is to complement the State Disaster Control Plan, which deals with fire, flood,

## IN EVENT OF WAR . . .

The plan includes:

- Increased security for mosques and synagogues
- Identification of potential targets, including Muslim women
- Visible police presence
- Setting up a complaints hotline.

earthquake, epidemics and other natural disasters and accidents and which was invoked with the January bushfires.

"We are learning from our experiences of the Gulf War and September 11 and we're translating that into a permanent plan which could be activated at any time," Mr Kerkyasharian said.

The plan is the work of the Community Harmony Reference Group, convened under the direction of the NSW Premier following the bombings in Bali in October. The group includes the assistant police commissioner, Garry Dobson, and senior representatives of the Department of Education, Department of Community Services and Anti-Discrimination Board. It also includes representatives of Sydney's Islamic, Jewish and Sikh communities.

There have been at least two attacks on Islamic buildings since October 12. Yesterday, Keysar Trad, a spokesman for the Lebanese Muslim Association, said local Muslims were expecting a backlash. "It happened in the Gulf War, it will happen again," he said. But as yet no decision had been taken to step up security at Sydney mosques.

# Communities brace for racial hatred

Linda Morris

Sydney's Muslim and Arabic communities are bracing for a backlash to Australian troop deaths or setbacks to the campaign to oust Saddam Hussein.

As America stepped up its bombing yesterday, the acting Race Discrimination Commissioner, William Jonas, said war would feed a climate of fear and suspicion and it was important that Australia's political leaders denounced racism and encouraged calm.

"War poses a real threat to Australian Muslims and to Australians of Arab or Middle Eastern background. This threat is neither imagined or exaggerated," Dr Jones said.

Yesterday, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission said it would begin consulting Muslim and Arab Australians to devise strategies to deal with discrimination and vilification.

The project's community liaison officer, Omeima Sukkariah, related how she had been asked by a stranger two days ago if she was the daughter of Saddam Hussein. In the same week her mother had been wrongly accused of stealing potatoes and her brother refused registration to a local soccer team because he was of Middle Eastern appearance.

In a separate move, representatives from more than 30 Arab and Muslim organisations in NSW have set up a "peace council" and agreed at their first meeting to send a letter to the Prime Minister, John Howard, condemning the decision to go to war. As well, the council resolved to send letters to governments and community organisations reminding them of

their obligation to give humanitarian support to the people of Iraq.

Security at the Lakemba mosque is being reviewed on a day-by-day basis and will be stepped up if Arab and Muslim communities experience violence or attacks, said Keysar Trad, a spokesman for the Lebanese Muslim Association.

"We hope there won't be trouble but it would be silly of us to discount it given the rhetoric on talkback radio," Mr Trad said.

Meanwhile, the senior imam of the Lakemba mosque yesterday branded Mr Howard, the US President, George Bush, and British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, as "an axis of evil" for their single-minded pursuit of war against Iraq.

In a speech full of anti-American sentiment to Friday worshippers, Sheik Taj Aldin Alhilali also likened "Bush junior" to the war-like son of Genghis Khan and described him as "the most ignorant president to lead the White House".

Urging Australian Muslims to take to the streets to protest war, Sheik Alhilali said the real goal of the Bush Administration was not to secure peace but to gain control of Iraqi oil and spread its influence across the Gulf.

"Since when did democracy, freedom and justice come through bombs and missiles? Why is it helping Israel [to] increase its stockpile of weapons of mass destruction while turning a blind eye to Israeli aggression?"

The chairman of the Community Relations Commission, Stepan Kerkyasharian, said the Iraq conflict should not be used as an excuse to undermine community harmony.

## SPEAKING UP

The Community Relations Commission has set up an emergency multilingual hotline and email service to field any reports of abuse, insult or discrimination. The email service is at [help@crc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:help@crc.nsw.gov.au).

The telephone hotline number is 1800 80 41 41.

Hotline advertisement in the Daily Telegraph and the Sydney Morning Herald.



## **Community Harmony Helpline**

The Community Relations Commission for a multicultural NSW has established telephone and e-mail helplines to record reports of abuse, insult or discrimination suffered by anyone in the community as a result of the Iraq situation.

MULTILINGUAL HOTLINE **1800 804 141**

**Additional dedicated lines to receive calls in  
Arabic (02 8255 6830) Turkish (02 8255 6828)  
and Indonesian (02 8255 6829)**

**Multilingual e-mail: [help@crc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:help@crc.nsw.gov.au)**