



** EMBARGOED until Wednesday 20 May 2009

MINISTER WELCOMES NEW COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSIONERS

Minister for Citizenship, Virginia Judge, today welcomed the appointment of two new Commissioners to the Community Relations Commission.

Ms Judge said that Jihad Dib and Seini Afeaki would join the Commission after the retirement of two long-standing members earlier this year.

"I am pleased to welcome these outstanding community leaders to their new appointments," Ms Judge said.

"Our new Commissioners come from some of the new and emerging cultural communities in New South Wales.

"As leaders who are well-respected in their communities, they bring to their roles a depth of experience and understanding of issues affecting our culturally and linguistically diverse communities."

Community Relations Commission Chairperson, Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian said the new appointments would make a valuable addition to the Commission's work.

"Mr Dib is the principal of Punchbowl Boys' High School and is an active role model for youth in the Muslim community," Dr Kerkyasharian said.

"Ms Afeaki has been involved in many local projects in the Tongan community, including being the Chairperson of the Pacific Island Women's Advisory and Support Services.

"I welcome both of these new appointees to their positions and look forward to working with them on furthering the aims of the Commission in promoting cultural diversity in New South Wales," he said.

Ms Judge also recognised the tireless work of retiring commissioners Michael Marx and Ned Maruncic and presented them with medals for their service.

"Mr Marx and Mr Maruncic deserve our gratitude for all the hard work they have put in over the years to ensure that the principles of multiculturalism, respect and tolerance are promoted in our State," Ms Judge said.

"Through their dedicated service to the Commission our outgoing Commissioners have contributed a wealth of commitment and experience to the people of New South Wales.

"On behalf of the Rees Government I thank them both for their contribution to multiculturalism in New South Wales."