



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
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NSW GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY HARMONY

The NSW Parliament last night passed laws which will strengthen the role of the Community Relations Commission in cultivating community harmony.

Minister for Citizenship John Hatzistergos said the amendments follow a review of the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000 which established the Commission.

“These laws are about reaffirming the NSW Government’s commitment to promoting social cohesion,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“They strengthen our commitment to shared values within our democratic society and underline the importance of a unified commitment to Australia by all citizens in NSW.”

The new laws enshrine the following principles of multiculturalism in statute:

- The people of NSW are of different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds who are free to profess and practice their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage.
- All individuals should demonstrate a unified commitment to Australia, its interests and future and should recognise the importance of shared values governed by the rule of law within a democratic framework.
- All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life.
- All individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language.
- All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in activities and programs run by the NSW Government.
- All institutions of NSW should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of NSW as a resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State.

Other amendments include the creation of a clearer leadership role for the Commission in co-ordinating whole-of-government responses to emerging community issues and referral powers to the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW.

“New South Wales is a multicultural success story where differences in language, custom, cuisine, religious belief, and family structure are rightly seen as things which enliven our society and make life interesting,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“The NSW Government is proud of our multiculturalism and these new amendments will better facilitate the work of the Community Relations Commission.”

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