



Community Relations Commission
For a multicultural NSW

Report on the Community Relations Symposium 7 July 2004



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1. Introduction

The Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW is legislated to consult systematically and widely with our culturally, religiously, linguistically and racially diverse community in the pursuit of its objectives. As part of this responsibility the Commission held a Symposium on 7 July 2004 in Parramatta. Over two hundred delegates from community, religious, academic and private sector organisations participated in the event.

The Symposium provided a key opportunity for community workers to network and for organisations to showcase community initiatives in the area of multicultural affairs. The community views expressed and reported on at the Symposium provided the Commission with further insight into priority issues for community organisations working in the area of multicultural affairs and/or with specific linguistic, cultural and religious communities. The program, media releases relating to the Symposium and speeches are available on the Commission website www.crc.nsw.gov.au

2. Symposium aims

Through the Symposium the Commission aims to:

- Foster inter-communal activities.
- Encourage networking and capacity building.
- Showcase community initiatives on a range of issues.
- Support discussions regarding working on multicultural issues, project successes and failures, and of opportunity and concern with other groups and government organisations.
- Further discussions on the issues of diversity, harmony and equality in NSW society.
- Listen to and analyse community views on a range of issues and impart information gleaned from discussions to project managers and other government bodies as is appropriate.

Delegates were given the opportunity to complete a survey prior to the event to assist with the development of the Symposium program. Delegates widely supported the showcasing of successful community initiatives as an integral feature of the day.

Proactive responses to key challenges raised at Symposium 2003 such as “who will replace the pioneers of ethnic community organisations?” were included in the program. Community initiatives that focused on mentoring younger generations to take on leadership positions and the dynamic contribution of young people were showcased in the workshops and discussed in the speeches.

The issue of promoting a deeper understanding between religious groups and the wider community was developed further with the focus shifting to communicating religious difference.

Mechanisms to build more effective and sustainable partnerships between government and communities working in the area of multicultural affairs formed the agenda for the workshop Community and Government Partnerships.

The agenda for the Commission and NSW government on multicultural issues is outlined in the white paper *Cultural Harmony and the Next Decade 2002-2012*. The white paper examines current government policies and initiatives, future actions in providing appropriate and equitable services to our multicultural society and in maintaining respect, tolerance and harmony within it. It focuses on four key objectives: leadership, community harmony, access and equity and economic and cultural opportunities.

3. Outline of the Day

Stepan Kerkyasharian, Chairperson, Commission welcomed delegates and spoke about the challenges facing each of us striving to develop a multicultural society where all individuals seek to understand those from other cultures and religions.

A key focus of his speech was the need to hand over the baton of leadership on multicultural affairs to younger generations. Stepan Kerkyasharian said “The old guard must appreciate that young people, like those we are going to hear from very soon, have had a very different experience of cultural diversity. They have not seen their landscape change dramatically before their eyes or had to enter a country where everybody seemed different and where life was very different from what they had known previously. For today’s teenage Australians, the world is quite naturally diverse. It’s not even an issue. It’s not worth debating.

What is worth debating, for young people, are the policies of multiculturalism. How do we manage and mould that diversity for the common good? Did we get it right in the past? How should we do it in the future?” he asked the delegates.

The Symposium was officially opened by the Hon. Frank Sartor MP, Minister for Energy and Utilities, Minister for Science and Medical Research, Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer), and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts.

The Hon. Frank Sartor MP spoke about government initiatives in the area of community harmony and stated “...the diversity of humanity is in fact our greatest asset and in that regard Australia is lucky as being quite a diverse community, quite a pluralistic society. And in that respect we are very, very lucky. And it also seems to me that the major threats to mankind in terms of harmony peace and understanding tend to often be around a couple of key manmade fogs, human made fogs. And these fogs, not so much religious principles which are very valuable and many of us treasure them; not so much ideological principles which guide the way we organise our society; but it seems to me the two great fogs of mankind are religious dogma, hard core religious dogma and hard core ideological dogma. And for that reason, for that reason, being a diverse society and understanding other religions and other peoples and different ideologies and different ways of doing things is a vital way of trying to lift the fog so we can see clearly the common purpose the human rights, the common humanity we all share...”

The topic *That Multiculturalism is Unifying the Nation* was debated by Colo High School (the affirmative) and Sydney Girls' High School (for the negative). The affirmative side won the debate though speakers on both teams provided dynamic,

witty and sophisticated insights into the practice and outcomes of multicultural policy. Many delegates in written feedback thought the debate was outstanding and a highlight of the day. Transcripts of these speeches will be available from the website.

George Megalogenis, Journalist for *The Australian* and author of *Faultlines, race, work and the politics of changing Australia*, published 2003, gave the keynote address *Multiculturalism and the next generation*. His focus was primarily a recent history of immigration to Australia.

He said “The problem today is despite six decades of immigration, the first instinct of the public remains to say no to the next wave... While there are many examples of xenophobia in our history, each episode carries a twin meaning. Every new arrival confers, without meaning to, a form of vindication for the previous intake. This is the side of Australia that is most redeeming.”

He uncovered statistics and polls that demonstrated changing public perceptions towards migrant communities and discussed the politics of multiculturalism. He proposed that a fundamental challenge for our society is to ensure that the each successive wave of migrants is more rapidly welcomed than the previous group.

George Megalogenis also spoke about Generation W noting the baby boomers and first generation ethnic groups need to “hand over to the second generation on the question of how to translate multiculturalism for younger Australians. You should not be afraid where the second generation takes these issues, because their outlook is being shaped and is shaping the new middle class in Australia” he told the audience.

In the afternoon delegates were given the opportunity to attend two of the following workshop areas focusing on outstanding community initiatives: Mentoring and Leadership, Managing Organisations, Community and Government Partnerships, Out of Africa: Opportunities for Refugees, Young People Taking Action and Communicating Religious Difference. Further detail on the program and these workshops is available on the Commission website.

4. Workshop Statements

Full unedited workshop statements and notes are attached. The information below is a summary of key themes for each workshop area and highlights key areas the Commission will consider in developing projects and programs, future symposiums and in advising other government agencies.

Mentoring and Leadership

Facilitator: Nada Nasser, Assistant Director, Communities Division, Department of Community Services

Presenter: Geoff Aigner, Benevolent Society

Presenter: John Paul, Big Brothers Big Sisters Association, YWCA Sydney

Mentoring and leadership programs for young people need to do the following to engage young people:

- Provide space for self-discovery and confronting difficult issues.
- Use an outreach approach to reach socially and geographically isolated groups including use of “Gatekeepers”, media and web technology.
- Have a diverse group of participants to help break down potential and current conflicts.
- Use whole of community and cross-cultural approaches.
- Engage the community to develop solutions.
- Involve parents and the extended family.
- Look beyond the groups and leaders that are “known”.
- Recognise that currently there are limited opportunities for youth to take on leadership roles within organisations.

Current Commission initiatives in this area include:

- *The Canterbury Bankstown Community Harmony Round Table leadership and mentoring programs*

Proposed actions

- *Commission to consider showcasing community initiatives in this area at Symposium 2005.*
- *Commission to further the development of a leadership network*
- *Commission to recognise that additional strategies are required to involve participants from more isolated groups. Strategies include working with gatekeepers, other program areas and using a broad range of media including electronic media to disseminate information to young people and organisations.*
- *Commission to advise other government agencies of outcomes of this consultation.*

Managing organisations

Facilitator: Rosa Droescher, Government Relations Coordinator, CRC

Presenter: Pino Migliorino, Managing Director, Cultural Perspectives

Presenter: Susi Schio, Executive Director Co.As.It

The key issues raised in this workshop included:

- Organisational development including workforce development and positioning.
- Strategies for engaging the community.
- How to develop sustainable organisations in the areas of leadership (providing opportunities for new leaders to emerge and be supported in the organisational structure including the management committee), the structure of an organisation and financial management.
- How an organisation can develop and grow.
- The evolution of ethnic community organisations in relation to multiculturalism at large.

Proposed Actions

The Commission to consider showcasing community initiatives in this area at Symposium 2005. Initiatives that focus on the needs of small and emerging communities to be a priority. The following areas are to be considered for inclusion in future workshops on the topic:

- *Different models of financial management and organisational structure*
- *Organisational development over time*
- *How to engage and maintain a volunteer base from different generations with a range of expertise.*
- *How to analyse the needs of the community in relationship to the development of the organisation e.g. is cultural maintenance a core driver?*

Community and Government Partnerships

Facilitator: Paul Conlon, Manager Central Sector, NSW Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation.

Presenter: Dr Margot Rawsthorne, Western Sydney Community Forum

Presenter: David Harris, Coordinator, Pacific Education Resource X-change

The following points were raised as mechanisms for developing better community and government partnerships:

- A proactive, whole of government approach to identify and address gaps in services.
- Clarification of funding programs and processes with ongoing support provided by agencies to organisations and communities applying for funding. Acknowledgment that partnerships can take a variety of different forms. The receipt of funding from some government departments (Federal and State) is regarded as a Partnership. Partnerships can be damaged by competitive funding processes.
- Genuine approach by government to sustain community partners through seeking to achieve equal partnerships, where there is mutual agreement on all stages of a partnership, a clear definition of what the “partnership” means and trust. Recognition of the value of community partners and common goals.

- Community to have ownership and be more involved from the inception of a project idea. Consultation processes to consider timeframes for full involvement of community members and organisations. The framework for consultations to enable the germination of novel approaches and not to be preset.
- Setting realistic goals for the partnership. The community needs to ensure that it is clear about what the partnership will involve before entering into any agreements. This involves negotiating reasonable reporting and procedural requirements for community partners.
- The community needs to have its own policy/plan for objectives and actions.
- Government should prioritise the outcomes of the partnership ahead of other elements of the partnership. The focus too often is on process (staffing, actioning, evaluation, reports) rather than the outcomes and flexible planning to achieve the outcomes.
- Partnerships should be an equal agreement between equal partners to work towards a common goal.

Proposed actions

- *Commission to consider showcasing good practice models of community and government partnerships at Symposium 2005.*
- *Commission to consider consultation processes and partnership arrangements with the above mechanisms for improving government and community partnerships in mind.*
- *Commission to write to relevant government agencies on these issues.*

Out of Africa: Opportunities for Refugees

Facilitator: Marilyn Barron, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA)

Presenter: Juliana Nkrumah, Transcultural Mental Health Centre

Participants outlined the following issues as key issues to consider to support livelihood opportunities and quality of life for refugees from African nations settling in Australia:

- Policy makers need to understand differences and diversity amongst peoples of Africa. There is no unifying language. There are many autonomous political states.
- Train and educate the receiving community particularly regional communities. Direct communication between service providers and community members. Consider utilizing a reference group model. There needs to be community involvement before people come
- Partnerships involving business, government, the community and non-government organisations. Who will be the broker in these relationships?
- Pre-arrival education provided for refugees.
- Housing – larger families require larger accommodation

- Loss of culture experienced in settling in Australia. Those who have lived for long periods in refugee camps have suffered loss of culture and family connections. Debilitating physical and mental impacts are experienced by many people who have endured long periods in refugee camps.
- Livelihood opportunities – creating local work areas. Need to consult with individuals and communities about what they used to do and aim to assist them to create their own industries.

Proposed actions:

- *Commission to reflect community views to Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs*
- *Commission to discuss with Settlement Services Coalition.*
- *Commission to communicate these issues to relevant NSW government departments.*

Young People Taking Action

Facilitators: Margaret Kama, Commissioner CRC and
Benny Peng, Commissioner CRC

Presenter: Glen Stelzer, Principal, Punchbowl Primary School

Presenter: Tania Ward, Pacific Youth Council

The following steps are important when nurturing an understanding and acceptance of pluralism in children and young people:

- Consistent engagement of young people in cultural diversity from an early age through exchange and interaction programs across all levels of education with a transition process through to adulthood.
- Teaching young kids the understanding of cultural diversity
- Empowering youth in community activities by having programs that enable youth to actively participate and choose their own medium.
- Encouraging and ensuring that young people participate in policy development
- Positive encounters through appreciation and practical experience of pluralism.

Current Commission initiatives in this area include:

- *Arabic Youth Partnership*
- *Pacific Islander Partnership*
- *The Canterbury Bankstown Community Harmony Round Table – cross cultural and cross-generational programs*

Proposed actions

- *Commission to consider showcasing community initiatives in this area at Symposium 2005.*
- *Commission to write to relevant government agencies on these issues.*

Communicating Religious Difference

Facilitator: Ezel Jupiter, Commissioner CRC

Presenter: Lou Bacchiella, Project Consultant, and Joanna Stobinski, Team Leader, Community Development Worker, Canterbury City Council

Presenter: Maha Abdo, Manager, and Feda Abdo, United Muslim Women's Association

Presenter: Maddy Slabacu and Shab Tavakol, Horizon Theatre Company

The workshop strongly affirmed the importance of interfaith initiatives and key issues to be considered in developing these initiatives included:

- Developing initiatives at the grass roots level, gaining local and state government support.
- Encouraging young people to participate in and carry forward projects.
- Encouraging interaction between young people and older generations
- Utilising creative media such as theatrical and visual arts to engage participants.
- Focusing on “humanity” as the principle is a key to successful interfaith dialogue.
- Concentrating on activities that overcome fear and encourage interaction between individuals.
- Moving beyond tolerance to true understanding and respect.

Current Commission initiatives in this area include:

- *Development of Metropolitan Advisory Council and Anti-Racism Council*
- *Community Harmony Round Table*
- *CRC media releases*
- *Multicultural Marketing Awards*
- *Imam Feisal visit to Australia*
- *CRC Commission Prize in Dorothea MacKeller Poetry Awards*
- *Sydney Film Festival CRC Award*

Proposed actions

- *Commission to consider showcasing community initiatives in this area at Symposium 2005.*

5. Participant Feedback

Forty-three percent of delegates (86 people) provided written feedback on Symposium 2004. Delegate feedback guides the Commission's organisation of future Symposiums. A full analysis of participant feedback is attached. What follows are the key results:

- 59.3% (51 people) rated the overall format of the day as good.
- 45.3% (39 people) rated the debate as excellent.

- 87.2% (75 people) said they would like to see another debate at future Symposiums.
- 59.3% (51 people) rated the keynote as good or excellent.
- 62.8% rated the workshops as good or excellent.

Delegate responses to the question *What issues would you like to see explored at future symposiums?* indicated that the following topic areas are of particular interest:

- Community and Government Partnerships and Funding
- Youth, Leadership and Inter-Generational Issues
- Multiculturalism
- Small and Emerging Communities
- Managing organisations and skills development

6. Outcomes

In summary the Commission achieved the following outcomes through the Community Relations Symposium 2004:

1. Good participation from a wide range of community, religious, academic and government institutions. Close to 250 people registered for the event with just over 200 people participating at the Symposium.
2. Community workers and leaders were brought together to talk about issues that were considered by the Commission and delegates to be priority issues.
3. Workshop groups canvassed a range of strategies for community organisations and government to consider when dealing with issues of concern.
4. The final plenary session and workshops aimed to develop a common understanding of issues by community and government participants.
5. Managed a professional event well within budget.

7. Recommendations

That future Symposium's be structured to:

- Include more time for participant input – especially by lengthening workshop sessions with a greater portion of time devoted to participant interaction and during the Q& A session with the keynote speaker or a panel. There were twenty-seven comments in the written feedback advocating that more time for participant input be scheduled in the day. Workshops should run for a minimum period of an hour and a half, with half an hour dedicated to Q&A. More time also needs to be allowed for developing consensus statements.
- Heighten participant networking opportunities by running workshop sessions in the morning. This would enable participants to network with contacts made during workshops throughout the day.

That the Symposium content for 2005:

- Be developed with participant input via an electronic and hardcopy survey prior to the event and taking into account the issues raised by delegates at Symposium 2004.
- Include further material of relevance to small and emerging communities.
- Progress the issues raised during workshops at Symposium 2004.

That the online/ hardcopy survey form for future Symposiums:

- Include a separate fields/ boxes for Title (Mr/ Mrs/ Ms etc), First Name, Surname, Role, and Organisation.
- That online surveys are electronically tagged with a date - this is important for cut off dates for assessing applications to present.

That the venue for future Symposiums:

- Be located near a main transport node.
- Have workshop rooms on the same floor and close to the plenary hall where possible.
- Provide in-house catering.
- Have professional events staff to ensure staging and equipment are available and set up appropriately.

Symposium workshop statements and written notes

Mentoring and Leadership

Statement:

Mentoring and leadership programs for young people particularly are vital for promoting diversity, equality and harmony. They should provide space for self-discovery and confronting difficult issues.

These programs need to use an outreach approach to reach socially and geographically isolated groups and make use of “Gatekeepers”, media and web technology.

The programs should encourage diversity in participation and aim to help break down conflict and the potential for conflict. Information about programs needs to be shared widely through networking.

Leadership and mentoring programs need to incorporate the following:

- Community engagement and effective two-way communication – beyond the “known” leaders.
- The provision of infrastructure and opportunities to empower young people and encourage personal development and exploration.
- Whole of community and cross-cultural approaches
- Promotion of individual day-to-day responsibilities.

Leadership notes – butcher’s paper:

- Co-leadership/ partnership (inter-cultural and inter-religious representation)
- Engaging community to develop solutions
- Broadening issues to involve more than the directly affected groups
- Facilitate self-recognition and self-esteem in a safe environment in a world that is rapidly changing.
- Beyond program/ project based models. Focus on individual responsibility: need for networking.
- Importance of networking and sharing info about program
- Involve parents and extended family
- Dissemination of information
- Importance of 2 way communication
- Look beyond the groups and leaders that are “known”
- There is limited opportunity and infrastructure for youth to take on leadership role.
- Need to empower young people to lead and manage change
- Encourage increased participation

- Challenge youth to look outside the square

Qualities of a good leader:

- Listener
- Communicator
- Credible
- Generous
- Drive and energy
- Sacrifice time
- Delegate
- Able to relinquish power
- Fair

Qualities of a good mentor:

- Experienced
- Role model
- Can take a back seat
- One-to one
- Determination
- Supportive
- Tenacious/ consistent
- Respectful
- Understand culture
- Non-judgmental
- Appreciative and able to draw out results

Statement:

- Networking (leadership round-table)
- Importance of participation
- Self discovery
- Programs with diverse participants
- Need for outreach to target more isolated groups e.g. working with schools including Schools for Special Purposes (SSP schools)
- Role of “gatekeepers”
- Space to confront difficult issues
- Creative use of media and other forums (web technology)

- Mentoring and leadership programs are vital for promoting diversity, equality and harmony. They should provide space for self-discovery and fronting difficult issues. These programs need to use an outreach approach to reach socially and geographically isolated groups and make use of “gate-keepers” media and web technology. The programs should encourage diversity in participation to help break down conflict and address potential for conflict.

Managing organisations

Statement:

- Need to explore models of financial management and organisational structure
- Need to look at organisational development over time
- How to involve a range of voluntary expertise and generation
- In particular organisations that are small or emerging.
- How to envisage/ analyse the needs of the community in relationship to the development of the organisation (e.g. the cultural maintenance as a core driver)
- How small and emerging organisations can develop and grow.

Key themes:

- Organisational development
 - Workforce development
 - Positioning and re-positioning
- Engaging the community
- Sustainability of organisations:
 - Leadership – management committee
 - Structure
 - Finance
- Development of organisations from small to large
- Evolution of ethnic community organisations in relation to multiculturalism at large.

Community and Government Partnerships

The Government needs to identify and be proactive in each of the following areas:

- Whole of government
- Identity of communities
- Proactive
- Australia multinational as opposed to multicultural (m/national and harmony)
- School curriculum should include study of all cultures – provide information and resources

- Consultation support for communities – information on how to obtain funding and support
- Clear and concise communication between government and NGOs
- Genuine approach by government to sustain community partners – equality and trust.
- Equal partnerships and clear definition of what the “partnership” is.

Session 2

- About addressing gaps in services
- Involve mutual agreement between equal partners
- Recognition of the value of partners and common goal but awareness of damage caused by competitive processes and funder/ funding relationships.
- Recognize value of the community in partnerships
- Community to have ownership and be more involved from the beginning (consulted during development).
- Better communication between government and the community

Record of Question and Answer proceedings (1:30 -2:45pm session):

- Whole of Government approach leads to unrealistic expectations by government.
- It is the responsibility of the Government to act on these issues – they are social servants.
- Community Organisations are in the middle – between government and their community.
- Government Department’s operating in a silo fashion makes partnerships difficult. Agencies should return to a multi-facet approach. (EG. United Kingdom has strategy of housing workers from different areas in the same office – health, social service, education etc means they work together and know what is going on.)
- Huge problem for communities that they often here about consultations following the event or hear too late to enable them to attend.
- Government consultations with community often happen too late. A policy has already been developed. Often seems that government consults with those that it funds – Government getting the “right” answer.
- Issues surrounding the identification of communities. Example given of the Croatian community being referred to as the Former-Yugoslav community.
- Problem with lack of sincere consultation from Government. Community agencies/NGOs caught in the middle. There needs to be proper communication from State and Federal Governments.

- Community and Government Partnerships sound great in theory but the issue of clarity is important. Partnerships can take a variety of different forms. The receipt of funding from some departments (Federal included) is seen as a Partnership. Whole arm of “partnerships” that are based on contract/funding arrangements. The community needs to ensure that it seeks clarity on what a Partnership with government involves before entering into one.
- Contracting has caused damage and “Partnerships” are the response.
- The reporting and procedural requirements placed on community partners who have limited resources almost seem like an avenue to ensure partnerships fail. Particular concern when a community agency partners with more than one Government Department.
- Equality in Partnerships is an issue – incredibly important.
- Need to ensure that consultations are timely for the community.
- Government should assist the community to do things rather than directing them to do things.
- Squeaky wheel gets the grease ... being needy is not enough. A multi-structured approach is recommended to communities. Write to agencies and write to Ministers...
- Community agencies should be proactive. Look at a long term plan. Be strategic.
- The impetus for the Pacific Island project (PERX) came from two community agencies. They were strategic in seeking Partnership with another large NGO which had structures for developing policy, procedures etc
- An aid or hindrance to Partnerships is the attitudes of and access to information of long term staff in agencies. Government Departmental staff attitudes can be rigid/narrow in their approach (the silo).
- Government moves to having one or two ways of doing things. Narrow & dangerous approach.
- Gradually, with agencies involved in community solution projects, senior managers are seeing the benefits of involvement in partnerships.
- Consultation is a buzz word. The Government responds to issues – is responsive not proactive.
- Creating a service at *Y* means, in all likelihood, cutting a service at *X*.
- Community needs to have its own policy/plan for objectives & actions.

- Change in organisational culture is a good outcome.
- Danger in Government thinking of consultations, projects and partnerships as something to be staffed, actioned, evaluated, report written – trick in the box. Need to look at the outcomes etc.

Record of Question and Answer proceedings 3:00 – 4:15pm session:

- How does the Government measure out grants amounts?
 - No set formula
 - dependant on resources (sometimes under/over resourced)
 - issues of the day, media influence etc
 - Whole of Government approach leads to unrealistic expectations by government.
- Does the Department of Tourism, Sport & recreation give grants to multicultural communities for things like, for example, mini-Olympics?

The Agency itself does not issue grants but can act like a brokerage with other agencies – most of whom use sport & rec initiatives and utilise the agencies services.
- Needs to be better state-federal government communication and better government -community communication.
- Nature of short term funding backed by government is a concern – reduces commitment and energy over the long haul – hard to sustain long term. In such a competitive support environment how do community workers go on?
- There are different approaches within government. Taking on community solutions projects has encouraged a more open and innovative approach. Response versus bottom line approach. The approach can vary within and agency too.
- Different government agencies each having their own policies, procedures and criteria that community agencies must follow/meet makes it extremely difficult for the community.
- The government want the community to go from *A* to *B*. Has to learn to assist/allow communities to find their own way there. May not be the fastest ...
- The idea of partnerships is almost idealistic. Community may be concerned about “biting the hand that feeds”. Are the findings of the Western Sydney Community Forum reflective of people reluctant to speak out for fear of being de-funded? Not a factor looked at in current research – but previous research has suggested that this is not a driving concern for communities. However, this may be reflective of the views of larger community organisations.
- Issue raised regarding the timing of government consultations. Seems like the government is often just looking to rubber stamp.

- Regarding consultation processes – Does the research of the Western Sydney Community Forum include information on cultural issues associated with consultations with communities? Do people know what’s involved in consulting with community X or community Y? Is this type of consultation different to that with main stream communities?
Not an aspect specifically looked at – but indigenous communities are definitely “over it” (being consulted). Bill Purcell gave an example of protocols that people should know about when consulting with the Pacific Island community – community elders should be consulted first.
- Paul Conlon added that often funding models cause fragmentation in communities as for one organisation there is *X dollars available* but for two organisations there is *Y dollars available*.
- “Whole of Government” / “Community” – are there such things? Many a community has a large amount of internal politics. How do communities deal with that and how do government or outside individuals’ manage/approach that?
- Does the panel have examples of instances where the business sector has been successfully engaged?
Panel suggested the following resources:
- community builders website (www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au)
- partnerships website (www.partnerships.gov.au)
-social entrepreneurs website

Partnerships should be an equal agreement between equal partners to work towards a common goal.

Out of Africa: Opportunities for Refugees

- Recognize differences – peoples of African continent
- Community involvement before people come
- Train and educate the receiving community
- Partnerships involving business, government, the community and non-government organisations.
- Direct communication between service providers and community members. Reference group models.
- Pre-arrival education
- Housing – larger families require larger accommodation
- Loss of culture experienced in settling in Australia. Those who have lived for long periods in refugee camps have suffered loss of culture and family connections.
- Take into account debilitating effect of long periods in refugee camps.
- Partnerships (Government/ non-Government organisations/ community/ business) – who will be the broker.

- Recruitment policies – target communities.
- Livelihood opportunities – creating local work areas. Need to consult with individuals and communities about what they used to do. Many women worked as traders before arriving. There is a need for partnership between NGO, agencies, and community organisations to create strategies where people can create their own industry.

Young People Taking Action

- Consistent engagement of young people in cultural diversity from an early age through exchange and interaction programs across all levels of education with a transition process through to adulthood.
- Engagement at an early age
- Teaching young kids the understanding of cultural diversity
- Empowering youth in community activities by having programs that enable youth to actively participate and choose their own medium.
- Encouraging and ensuring that young people participate in policy development
- Positive encounters through appreciation and practical experience of pluralism.

Communicating Religious Difference

- The workshop strongly affirmed the importance of interfaith initiatives.
- Some key issues to be considered were the following:
 - Initiated at the grass roots level
 - Gaining local and state government support
 - Focus on youth –encouraging them to participate in and carry forward projects
 - Encourage interaction between young people and older generations
 - Creative solutions – theatre arts.
 - Humanity – focusing on this principle is a key to successful interfaith dialogue
 - Successful projects were all locally based and implemented, however they drew on broader principles
 - Focus on activities that overcome fear and encourage interaction between individuals
 - Move beyond tolerance to true understanding and respect

Participant feedback

Forty-three percent of delegates (86 people) provided written feedback on Symposium 2004. Delegate feedback guides the Commission's organisation of future Symposiums.

How would you rate the overall format of the day?

19.8% (17 people) rated the day as excellent.

59.3% (51 people) rated the day as good.

13.9% (12 people) rated the day as satisfactory.

2.3% (2 people) rated the day as poor.

1.2% (1 person) rated the day as unsatisfactory.

3.5% (3 people) gave no response to this question.

How would you rate the debate?

45.3% (39 people) rated the debate as excellent.

33.7% (29 people) rated the debate as good.

12.8% (11 people) rated the debate as satisfactory.

1.2% (1 person) rated the debate as poor.

1.2% (1 person) rated the debate as unsatisfactory.

4.7% (4 people) gave no response to this question.

Would you like to see another debate at future Symposiums?

87.2% (75 people) said yes.

5.8% (5 people) said no.

6.98% (6 people) gave no response to this question.

What issues covered in the debate were relevant to you?

Participants made the following comments:

- Treatment of refugees and their assimilation in Australian society.
- That there is a generic desire to have all community groups feeling comfortable about being Australians.
- Interesting to see different points of view, are we just co-existing or actually mixing and being open to other communities?
- Multiculturalism - good to see different sides of argument about the current policy and future directions.
- The knowledge and interests of young people with valid points on both sides.

- The articulation of the students was excellent.
- Good to see that the young people who participated were aware and concerned about a range of social issues.
- Youth understanding on current issues i.e. multiculturalism.
- The young and the problems they are passing.
- That as a society we do not openly debate these topics in the current political environment.
- The future of multiculturalism.
- The entire argument around what is multiculturalism and is it working effectively.
- The benefits of multiculturalism to Australian society.
- Questioning multiculturalism - theory versus reality, opportunity versus threats, strength versus weakness.
- Perspective on multiculturalism and how it has failed so many in not translating policy to practice.
- Everything. All relevant and good.
- None - it was fun but didn't really cover any "issues".
- Multicultural does not mean unity.
- Let me think about the word "unify".
- I learned a lot about what the Government is willing to cooperate with communities on.
- I would like to see a debate/ discussion between different political parties.
- Could have been shorter with time focussed on other issues.

What topics would you like to see debated at future Symposiums?

Participants suggested the following topics for future debates:

Community Harmony

- Understanding and acceptance (Not tolerance of difference).
- Tolerance or understanding (2 people made this comment)
- Diversity, harmony and equality.

Religious Issues

- Inclusiveness interfaith
- Religious issues
- Religious diversity. Refugees/ detention.
- Is fear of Islam justified?

Racism

- Discrimination and harassment within the community

- How can we erase stereotypes in Australian society?
- How multiculturalism will never occur in Australia. Racism – as acts of the political body (government).
- How can we tackle racial disharmony, discrimination based on race and religion?
- Racism

Migration

- Overseas migration is good or bad
- Migration
- African migrants in our society and society's knowledge about them.

Youth and families

- Should the youth have a direct say in the running of the country?
- Growing up in a bicultural family environment is it good or bad?
- Either have older debaters or make the topic youth specific.
- Older students - "growing up Australian means".
- The perspectives of young people and their parents.
- Australian schools are well placed to nurture pluralism among their pupils.
- Progress on youth activities and community integration (multiculturalism).

Government

- Community (NGO) and government "relate to funding".
- Resources to work with different communities.
- Government assistance to multicultural organisations.
- Sustainability of an organisation.

Multiculturalism

- Same general topic with more experienced debaters.
- Accepting multiculturalism is not the same as understanding multiculturalism.
- More to do with multiculturalism in particular areas youth, ageing etc.
- The outcomes of multiculturalism in 2025 if any and whether it would be still practiced or at least promoted.
- If multiculturalism works why are there stereotypes?
- Multiculturalism versus multinationalism.
- Ethnic organisations should go mainstream.
- What kind of multiculturalism do you want?
- How to re-engage and re-think multiculturalism.

Miscellaneous

- National identity - is it relevant? If so how in a global context (globalisation issues)?
- Terrorism: Individual, community and nation, poverty and prosperity change
- Clash of civilizations
- An answer to get information to the rural multicultural communities.
- Identity

Comments about structure of debate

- Time could be used much more effectively to explore issues at a much deeper level, otherwise it is just tokenism.
- One where both sides can put their views without anyone being concerned (eg one side not being seen as PC).
- What about public speaking?
- A policy - something practical.
- "Evidence based" verses anecdotal.
- Not as is perhaps by other groups in a hypothetical but given whole day out of usual work not time effective.

How would you rate the keynote speech?

18.6% (16 people) rated the keynote as excellent.

40.7% (35 people) rated the keynote as good.

27.9% (24 people) rated the keynote as satisfactory.

3.5% (3 people) rated the keynote as poor.

2.3% (2 people) rated the keynote as unsatisfactory.

8.1% (7 people) gave no response to this question.

What issues covered in the keynote were relevant to you?

Participants made the following comments:

Multiculturalism – politics, history and media representation

- Place of multiculturalism in the political spectrum.
- The politics of multiculturalism, the past and the future.
- Historical relevance to the current situation on multiculturalism.
- Placing multiculturalism in perspective and focussing on challenges for the future.
- Historical perspective of development of multiculturalism.
- Media presenting the different aspects of multiculturalism.
- Media related views and influences upon multiculturalism.

- Media and political activities.
- The current political environment. George's interpretation of the future constructs of Australian society in 10-15 years - and who will be the power brokers.
- Lobby your politician.
- Federal government using refugee issue and Islamo-phobia to undermine multiculturalism.

Generation W

- Next generation, statistics. Next wave, comparison to past, facts.
- That the younger generation will takeover and how the future can be shaped.
- Intergenerational and women's perspective.
- Second generation.

Immigration

- Statistics on attitudes towards immigration. Analysis of the immigrant acceptance process. Analysis of the political situation and media.
- Changing political nature of Australian migration makeup.
- Interpretation of migrant experience, generational experience, researched and informed.
- Statistics of migration.
- Tendency of dynamics of "look at the foreigners Chinese, Italian, Vietnamese, Asians, Arabs and Muslims".
- The pecking order in migration waves (historical).
- How acceptance of differences comes with time.
- It is always interesting to refer to the experiences of former migrant waves to Australia.

Miscellaneous

- All of it, but I think it missed a number of significant issues eg long-term ingrained discrimination and discrimination against religions as opposed to ethnic communities.
- Awareness of ethnicity of NSW government officials and that they don't represent their ethnic group.
- Fear of Islam and Muslims, stereotyping, lack of influential media.
- Frank's own "disadvantaged" history and how he shot to "stardom".
- Interesting that people of non-English speaking backgrounds were more successful than English speaking. How media has been responsible for producing an atmosphere of fear, racial disharmony.

Average rating of workshop session?

25% rated the workshop as excellent.

37.8% rated the workshop as good.

20.3% rated the workshop as satisfactory.

1.7% rated the workshop as poor.

1.7% rated the workshop as unsatisfactory.

13.4% gave no response to this question.

Comments regarding the workshops (for both sessions):**Mentoring and Leadership:**

- The projects discussed were very interesting. Would have liked more time to have more detailed information.
- Time for discussion was probably too limited. Reporting back arrangements need greater preparation. A well-briefed scribe with good skills at writing on overheads is essential. Perhaps workshops would be better in the morning with the keynote speakers and "cultural" component in the afternoon. It is always a pity when the feedback and summation is presented to a rapidly dwindling audience.
- Interesting presenters and topic but difficult to work on a statement especially at the end of day - everyone is too tired. Get rid of the debate and finish the day at afternoon tea.
- Satisfactory speeches, same old typical programs nothing that was entirely moving about the discussions.
- The 1st speaker was quite interesting, key learnings were relevant. That purpose and values are more important than skills. 2nd speaker - good principles.

Managing Organisations:

- Workshop conducted in both a professional and sparkling manner. Relevant to especially emerging communities and their young associations and welfare organisations.
- Relevant to any organisation, which is looking for ideas in "starting and expanding". Easy going and informative.
- Excellent presentations. No time for participants to discuss/ pursue issues of concern.
- Communicating time-structure to presenters (they need to learn their time-limits). Facilitator prepared to work to the time structure designed.
- Was too limited to the Italian community needs more about management less on communal specifics.
- Excellent!!!

Community and Government Partnerships:

- Excellent presentations. This topic could be the theme of a symposium. It is so complex and important for the development of Australian society.
- Presentations were relevant and informative the question/ answer session were interesting, however it is extremely difficult for a group of 30 people to develop a statement which reflects their opinion - too big a group to combine.
- Fairly negative view presented and therefore a bit of a nagging session rather than aspiring to better things.
- Hard to address and pinpoint strategic ways in dealing with the topic.
- Good structure and style. Interesting and vital discussion around the pros and cons of community and government partnerships - with focus on limited resources of community and government mode of consultation. Attendees very involved. Would have been good to have a focussed discussion on the practical aspects of running/managing these partnerships.
- Too rushed. Not enough time to construct statements.
- Needed much more information relating to actual partnerships and positive results between government and community.
- Very useful information by the panel.
- Professionally delivered with appropriate examples and interactions.
- More practical information about how to develop partnerships with government organisation, how to lobby them and go on.
- Good discussion on community partnership and development. Handouts of presenters' power-point notes would have been great.
- Good structure and style. Less involvement from attendees in discussion.
- Do these people know who their audience is? Are they dealing with large NGO's or small NGO's? Ridiculous.
- Interesting but not too structured. Three presentations good in themselves but would have been good to have been connected. No new information.

Out of Africa: Opportunities for Refugees:

- Both speakers were fantastic.
- Juliana gave a lot of practical ideas in the reality issues that African refugees are facing and different approaches to providing a service to them.
- More time needed for discussion. Relevance - current - style just speakers - one engaging, DIMIA bland.
- Good info that was new to me. Easy discussion of issues.
- Juliana had great insights and spoke passionately about the issues faced by peoples of Africa.
- Enjoyed the passion and practical advice given by Juliana.

Young People Taking Action:

- The workshop was interesting on how people such as teachers in public schools are being extremely passionate about the young people involved in exchange programs. Well-delivered speeches and experiences. Very inspiring! Excellent.
- Needs more time for input.
- Very effective and informative. Was comfortably informal and yet covered important issues.
- Speakers were excellent - simple ideas yet very effective. Facilitators found it hard to keep it on track a few dominant people in the group.
- Great! Well presented - it prompted good question and discussion and a view of what is possible.
- Opens forum for ideas, lack of time to be able to discuss in a wide platform what young people outside of education system is doing.
- Young people - very inspiring and relevant.

Communicating Religious Difference:

- Presenters were excellent and innovative.
- Informative but presenters were repetitive and didn't stick to time constraints.
- Needed more time for discussion in both workshops. Suggest that each workshop have a maximum of two speakers.
- Not very relevant but informative on what others are doing - provides good ideas.
- Showcased projects rather than exploring issues and processes. Also important to move beyond just creating a dialogue and establishing commonalities.
- Exciting presenters, diverse and inspiring.
- Inspiring.
- There are other, better, areas of religious cooperation in NSW to showcase. But a good session and highly relevant.
- Showed some important points on various religions and how similar we all are. Impressive and informative. Very relevant in today's society.
- Interactive nature of Horizon Theatre Company presentation with a very positive perspective/ experience.

Future symposium topics**What issues would you like to see explored at future symposiums?****Media**

- Fear and terrorism encouraged by Politicians and media. The Media's responsibility in hyping up issues. Optimism during difficult times.
- Media reputation is it their fault? Funding!!

- Media bias and media influence on society. Racial and religious implications. Projects that reduce religious vilification especially towards Muslims. Role of education (community or schooling) in Community Relations.

Multiculturalism

- Development of ethnic organisations in the context of a multicultural society.
- Living through the spirit of multiculturalism.
- The future of multiculturalism in a more and more globalised world. How to encourage communications and partnerships between the different communities of NSW.
- How multiculturalism can benefit all age groups. How can these groups be encouraged to participate in the programs?
- More emphasis on explaining role of government in multiculturalism, outlining government bodies/ organisations that work on multiculturalism

Community and Government Partnerships and Funding

- Forum with government re policy development.
- How communities can work together more effectively
- Presentation of more diverse, grassroots examples of inspiring partnership projects reflecting between government, community and business.
- Workshop discussing communication channels in government. Discuss the government funding merry-go-round. How do you get on/off it?
- Funding
- How an organisation would affect funding?
- The positive role of government.
- Government funding

Rural and Regional

- Rural issues. Communication and access to information.
- Regional and rural issues. (3 people made this comment).

Youth, Leadership and Inter-Generational Issues

- More youth related topics.
- Cultural conflict between the older and younger generations.
- How to address the generational gap and the impact this is having on multiculturalism - generation x-y.
- Helping younger generations to accept each other.
- More about the role of youth.
- 2nd generation youth.
- Youth leadership.
- Issues on adult leadership - role models to young potentials.

Small and Emerging Communities

- Small and emerging communities in NSW.
- Engaging small and emerging communities in becoming contributing partners in Australian society. How can we do this effectively and meaningfully for them?
- Emerging communities. Refugees that are not humanitarian sponsored. Community activities and initiatives.

Managing organisations

- Lot more scope for managing organisations eg finance, continuity, practical guidance how to address structural issues.
- Explanation by community organisation how they are run and funded and structure. How to attract volunteers to their community.
- Further work on developing and growing organisation. Please bring in recent success examples of small organisations, or organisations that are still establishing themselves.

Skills development

- Practical issues for Small groups!!!
- Tools and skill development for specific groups/ delegates/ organisations represented at the Symposium.
- More varied workshops to share good practices.
- Discussion often quite broad - would be beneficial for attendees to have an opportunity to discuss more practical and level ideas and opportunities.

Conflict Management

- Dealing with conflicts within community on social value, with other organisations in same community, competition between organisations in same community.
- Conflict management between cultures.

Miscellaneous

- Oneness of humanity as the theme.
- More creative solutions to cultural expression and integration. I.e. creating cultural spaces to solve problems. E.g. Sierra Leone Women's Group
- Domestic violence within communities, closing the gaps between communities i.e. Aboriginal. Bullying and intimidation.
- Overcoming discrimination. Program funding/grants.
- Racism
- Mental health. Ageing issues- will become huge in next decade. I think about 71,000 people in NSW aged over 65 don't speak English. Multicultural and Arts Projects.

- Multicultural arts. Aging communities. Established communities and divide with refugees.
- The venue was excellent and the attention to logistical element (provision of equipment etc) the best I have seen.
- Same items different organisations.
- Perhaps split into areas of specialisation eg issues for youth, children and elderly.
- This would depend on the issues, which are prevalent at the time.
- More presentations with specific aims and recommendations for others to follow.
- More guest speakers.

Participant comments on any other aspect of the day

- Start time a bit later - distance and childcare needs prevented arriving on time. Not in school holidays. Debate a great opening. On any of the above topics. More time for discussions. Venue with windows to see outside. Arts presentations inspiring.
- Liked: range of activities. Disliked - needs to be on time, summing up as single statements work of workshops
- Food great, entertainment great - keep it creative, attractive and interesting, not just talking.
- "A" grade in the workshop organisation and the venue setting. Good program a bit of everything and yet allows enough time for each/section. It's good that it is free.
- Great venue. Great hospitality. There were so many important issues to be discussed that it is difficult to squeeze them all into one day. Following on from the theme of today - let's have more young people involved in the presentations, as speakers and as organisers. At the conclusion of today I have come to realise that it is time for the baby boomers to let go!! And that includes me!
- Everything was excellent.
- Symposium was very good I enjoyed it.
- I enjoyed all of it.
- I think people in power are supposed to stay and listen not leaving immediately.
- Too much up front talking in introductions. Not necessary to have keynote speaker/ have a panel discussing various issues with questions.
- Agenda needs to run to time. Workshops were really more of a presentation format than a workshop format.
- Longer workshops.
- Needs more time for input more deep issues.

- Start workshops earlier so could allow more time for participants to interact with the presenters and more time for discussions.
- In structure - workshops in morning, easier to concentrate and to make contacts in your specific interest group to network with later in the day. Have debate later in the day. - Perhaps ask people to nominate an interest area on RSVP and then try to set them (name place seating at lunch) to make networking easier - took me half the day to find relevant people to network with.
- The presentations at the workshop need more time to discuss projects.
- Like - good venue, seating at tables is a great idea, breakout rooms good and easily accessible. Dislike - presenters not observing time limit, trying to present too much. Lack of time for discussion. Not a uniform approach to time management between facilitator and moderator.
- Workshops to be more practical based i.e. more involvement of participants.
- Some good stories eg Punchbowl Newport school exchange program.
- I thought the workshop on Communicating Religious Difference was extremely relevant personally, spiritually and professionally.
- Workshop, participation, networking is in particular important to rural representatives. Projects like "diversity works" are important to build on "good news" stories.
- It would have been good to have the workshop speakers invite interaction throughout their 10min talk as opposed to at the end. Feedback as a direct result of today's workshops to be fed back to participants. Not all workshop speakers had copies of overheads to hand out. Lunch refreshments were very good. Debate was a good way to invoke your thoughts on the subject.
- Would have preferred one workshop in morning instead of both in afternoon.
- Inclusion of more representations from small and emerging communities, and or African communities. Please make a special effort to contact them directly. 2) CRC is new name of what used to be EAC. Therefore we ALSO need to see representatives from dominant culture in audience/ participants, not just as organisers.
- Good to have workshop on how to run the similar project as the Canterbury Interfaith Harmony Project.
- Debate was the most exciting part of the whole program. Generally the whole program was informative.
- The debate as well as the workshops were very informative as well as revealing (especially the Debate) where and how multiculturalism is perceived, practiced, promoted... by different individuals and communities in NSW.
- The student's debate took too long of the time. More effective workshop sessions, getting/ monitoring inputs.
- All the culture groups should work or Australia. All groups should also introduce some programs in their constitutions to incorporate activity which

make their members proud "Australian", not only look to govt to provide them help.

- Good opportunity for networking.
- This was a great organisation, congratulations. Hope to attend the next Symposium. I am happy to see CRC report back to community delegates on their activities and involve the communities shape at showcase intercommunity relations.
- In future be a little more sympathetic for hearing impaired participants. Acoustics at back of room made it difficult!
- Must make much more time for participants to participate with questions and reflections. Very good idea to have keynote speaker during lunch but needs to be audible.
- Symposium was run well but perhaps desert should not be served when the keynote speaker is presenting! (Too much noise!)
- The first half of the day (agenda) was extremely off putting.
- Minister at the end - I have on a few occasions noticed that Carmel Tebutt will come to the plenary sessions of Forums (eg on Domestic Violence) to pick up on the issues and give a closing address/or short address just before afternoon tea.
- This is my first time to join this symposium. It enriches my knowledge and perspectives towards the issues discussed in the Symposium. I have been involved in the EAPS process for a few years in my workplace and it's great for me to see the CRC report.
- Not all ethnic groups were represented. Good to hear about problems encountered by other community groups.
- Liked the opportunity for networking. This should remain.
- The workshop on specific issue is good.
- Idea: expo.
- Juliana - refugee workshop speaker is great! We need more dynamic speakers like that to recharge what may appear to be old issues. - Work harder to reach more organisations to come along. We need more workers to come along and have a larger symposium. There are heaps of issues to cover.
- Great venue, good pace, great organisation, could the symposium be used to promote services provided especially by community groups?
- Excellent!!! More on organisation management and how to attract volunteers and get people to volunteer in an organisation
- I like workshop
- Very large. Smaller possibly would have made mingling easier. Time not kept well, overall. Workshops could have been longer. Didn't really lead to "consultative" statement at conclusion. Structurally obviously great deal of time and energy into the organisation of the day!

- Lack of time to ask more questions.
- Get more time to discuss issues and open a free discussion about community related issues. Two days Symposium is a good idea. Get a rest afternoon and stay overnight will get a good relationship between community leaders. Social night. Thank you.
- One of the best parts of the symposium was the address by the keynote speaker. It is/ was unfortunate that the most stimulating/ participative part of follow-up question/ answer was too short. Managing organisations - stimulating, inspiring and challenging.
- Thank you for a productive DAY!
- There is nothing to complain about. Very satisfied after all.