



## MCoT News

Welcome to the December 2009 edition of The Multicultural Council of Tasmania newsletter

*Promoting Multiculturalism and Harmony in Tasmania*

If you wish to subscribe or unsubscribe please send an email to [mcot@tassie.net.au](mailto:mcot@tassie.net.au)  
Please email or phone us on 6231 5067 if you would like to contribute items for the newsletter. The deadline for each month's issue is the first Monday of the relevant month.

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### **MCOT NEWS AND UPDATES**

#### **From the Chair**

I would like to extend to everyone best wishes for the holiday season and wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year. To those of the Christian faith I wish you a very Merry and blessed Christmas. I am pleased to report that MCoT received funding last month from the Department of Premier and Cabinet for the amount of \$40,000.00 plus GST of \$4,000.00. Regrettably the quantum of funding continues to remain stagnant for the last 7 years.

Delegates from MCoT, including Erik Madsen, Mary Excell, Tiiu Rääbus, Ivan Matas and Alex Dziendziel, attended the TasCOSS organised *Our Island Our Voices* Multicultural Forum on 26<sup>th</sup> November 09.

- Some of the issues facing CALD communities are:
  - Social Inclusion – including access to interpreters
  - Aged Care – particularly the needs of the elderly from CALD communities who not only face the general issues concerning aging but also issues specific to those from a certain time, language, place and situation eg war.
  - Disability
  - Health, including Mental Health
  - Education, including the rights of overseas students
  - Employment
  - Transport

Racial Vilification and the need for Tasmanian laws to be introduced to re-enforce this

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The MCoT office submitted 4 grant applications to the Community Capacity Building Grants Program 2009 – 2010 of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

I would like to warmly welcome everyone to the End of Year Celebration on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

Rohan Wirasinha  
Chairperson

### **Next Council Meeting**

No meeting will be held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December; instead we will be celebrating the end of the year and the holiday season. Refreshments will be available in the Acacia Room at the Migrant Resource Centre, 49 Molle St. at 7.00 pm. If you are able to bring along a plate please let the MCoT office know on 6231 5067 by the 14<sup>th</sup> December 09. Please bring a guest.

### **December Days**

- 1 National Day (*Romania*)  
National Day (*Central African Republic*)
- 2 National Day (*United Arab Emirates*)  
National Foundation Day (*Lao People's Democratic Republic*)
- 3 International Day for People with a Disability**
- 6 Independence Day (*Finland*)
- 10 United Nations Human Rights Day**  
Constitution Day (*Thailand*)
- 11 National Day (*Burkina Faso*)
- 12 National Day (*Kenya*)
- 13 Republic Day (*Malta*)
- 16 International Day for Tolerance**  
National Day (*Kazakhstan*)  
National Day (*Bahrain*)
- 17 National Day (*Bhutan*)
- 18 National Day (*Niger*)  
**International Migrants Day**
- 25 Christmas Day
- 31 New Year's Eve

### **2010 Meeting Dates**

**Monthly council meeting dates:** 3rd Wednesday of every month at: 7.00 pm

- 17 FEBRUARY 2010
- 17 MARCH 2010
- 21 APRIL 2010
- 19 MAY 2010
- 16 JUNE 2010
- 21 JULY 2010
- 18 AUGUST 2010
- 15 SEPTEMBER 2010
- 20 OCTOBER 2010
- 17 NOVEMBER 2010
- 15 DECEMBER 2010 (*End of Year Celebration*)

**Management Committee meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month at: 6.00 pm

- 4 FEBRUARY
- 3 MARCH
- 1 APRIL
- 6 MAY
- 3 JUNE
- 1 JULY
- 5 AUGUST

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2 SEPTEMBER  
7 OCTOBER  
4 NOVEMBER

## **NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITIES**

### **Philippines-Australia Community of Tasmania Inc**

The Philippines-Australia Community of Tasmania Inc is celebrating the end of the year with a Christmas dinner on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2009 at the Granada Tavern. The dinner starts at 6.00pm for 7.00pm. Buffett style meal.

Tickets: \$40.00 members/\$45.00 non members/\$25.00 children 9–14 yrs old/\$15.00 children 6-8 yrs old.  
RSVP: Emilie Schneider (President) on 6273 9752 or 0403 400 873.

## **GENERAL NOTICES**

### **Media Release; African Communities Council of Tasmania (ACCT)**

12 African Community Groups form the African Communities Council of Tasmania

The African Communities of Tasmania would like to announce the formation of the first ever African Communities Council of Tasmania. The Council was formed at meetings on the 15<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> of November with founding members representing a diverse range of national and ethnic groups from Botswana; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ethiopia; Liberia; Sierra Leone; with Somalia formerly admitted member on the second day; Sudan; and Zimbabwe.

African migrants have been coming to Australia since 1804, under forced migration arrangements from England. The late 1990's and 2000's have seen a significant increase in African migration to Australia, including humanitarian, economic migrants and students. There are now an estimated 3789 people of African birth proudly living in Tasmania, largely in Hobart and Launceston.

African Tasmanians are a diverse group – hailing from the length and breadth of Africa, with a multitude of different languages & cultures. Many have experienced challenges settling in Tasmania due to culture shock, language differences, climate, and loss of identity, family breakdowns, unemployment, poverty and welfare dependency.

In order to address these issues a constitution of the Council drafted by a steering committee for the ACCT came up with the following specific aims;

- i) To provide representation for member communities in Tasmania
- ii) Advocate for the wellbeing and positive settlement of members in areas of employment, health, education, housing and other key outcomes
- iii) To support member organizations develop strong associations
- iv) to promote cultural diversity, peace and harmony by providing opportunities for members and the wider community to celebrate their diverse cultures;
- v) to assist the social and cultural settlement of families and individuals of member communities in Tasmania

In order to carry out the aims of the Council an executive of the ACCT was elected and the members are Dr Jonathan Thabano as Chair (Botswana), Mr John Kamara as Vice-Chair (Sierra Leone), Mr Alain Mpoyi Tshamala as Treasurer (Congo), Mr Mark Odwogo as Secretary (Agola Kapuk, Sudan), Dr Crispin Marunda as Deputy Secretary (Zimbabwe), and Mr Mahmoud Kamara (Sierra-Leone) and Mr Alphose-Toussant Tshitenga Mulumba (Congo) as committee members. In order to provide better representation for the large African community other countries are encouraged to contact the Secretary on ([markodwogo5005@yahoo.com.au](mailto:markodwogo5005@yahoo.com.au)) for procedures on how to join the Council.

## **Amnesty International – Human Rights Day Celebration & End of Year Party**

Amnesty International invites you to join them in celebrating International Human Rights Day with an End of Year party.

Date: Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009  
Time: 5.30pm – 8.00pm  
Venue: The AIA Hobart Action Centre  
Address: Level 1/130 Macquarie Street, Hobart  
RSVP: By Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009  
On 6221 1000 or email: [tasaia@amnesty.org.au](mailto:tasaia@amnesty.org.au)

## **Refugee Council of Australia – Hobart Café Conversation**

The Refugee Council of Australia is conducting its annual national investigation into the future of Australia's refugee and humanitarian program.

In Hobart the Refugee Council will hold a Café Conversation for service providers and refugee community members. The session will explore a range of issues relating to the functioning of the program. We would also like to hear about positive community initiatives developed to address challenges confronting refugees establishing their new home in Australia.

This is an important opportunity to share your thoughts, suggestions and concerns about Australia's refugee and humanitarian program. Your feedback will contribute to our submission to the Minister and the Department of Immigration which will set out recommendations for the future direction of the program. As refugees and people who work with refugees and humanitarian entrants, your participation will be invaluable. We need to hear your voices to help, us bring about positive change for the future.

Hobart Café Conversation  
Date: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009-12-02  
Time: 1.00pm – 3.30pm  
Venue: The Acacia Room at the Migrant Resource Centre  
Address: 49 Molle Street, Hobart  
RSVP: [melbourne@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:melbourne@refugeecouncil.org.au)

If you cannot make it to the meeting, but would like to contribute your views, please contact us and we will arrange a phone interview with you. You can also email your thoughts to [info@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:info@refugeecouncil.org.au). Visit [www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/consultations.html](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/consultations.html) for more information on how you can contribute. For details on meetings in other states or any other information, please contact Lucy Morgan on (02) 9211 9333 or [info@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:info@refugeecouncil.org.au).

## **New Citizenship Test**

*Our Common Bond* contains all the information people need to prepare for the new test. The way people can apply for Australian citizenship will also change in late 2009. More information about the changes including copies of the revised resource book is available at [www.citizenship.gov.au](http://www.citizenship.gov.au). A new citizenship test began on 19 October 2009. The test will focus on the Pledge of Commitment made by new Australian citizens, including the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. A revised citizenship test resource book, *Australian Citizenship*:



## The Human Rights Week Organising Committee

Invite you to the  
**Human Rights Week March 2009**

Date: **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 12.30pm - 1.10pm**

Start and Finish: Starts at the fountain roundabout off **Liverpool St** near the **ABC Centre** and goes to **Parliament House** lawns for speeches and sausage sizzle.

**Bring a banner or placard with a RIGHT for which you want to stand up but remember it must be in the Universal Declaration of Rights.**

For further information contact: [talvin@bigpond.net.au](mailto:talvin@bigpond.net.au) or [pinferim@hobartcity.com.au](mailto:pinferim@hobartcity.com.au)

### **Get involved in Our Island Our Voices: a new campaign for a fairer Tasmania** [www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au](http://www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au)

The **Our Island Our Voices** campaign for a fairer Tasmania has begun and we need your help in getting Tasmanians to sign on!

**Our Island Our Voices** is about ensuring that all major political parties make clear commitments to health, education, and services in the lead up to the March 2010 State election. It is about advocating for a clear commitment from political parties to community service organisations.

You can help make the campaign a success by:

- logging on to the campaign website, joining-up and emailing the call to parties to Tasmania's major political parties and their candidates for the March 2010 State election.
- circulating this email to your colleagues, friends and family and encouraging them to support the push for a fairer Tasmania.
- organising your own pre-election events to promote the issues in the call to parties.
- putting a link to the campaign website on your own web homepage
- adding 'I support the Our Island Our Voices campaign for a fairer Tasmania ([www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au](http://www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au))' to your email signature.
- 

The campaign will only be successful if people sign on and get involved. It only takes 5 minutes to get started, so please join up and email all major political candidates asking them to tell you what they will do for a fairer Tasmania.

Please also circulate this email among your networks and urge as many people as possible to join the campaign for a fairer Tasmania.

If you have any questions about the **Our Island Our Voices** campaign, please contact Luke Martin at TasCOSS on 62310755.

General MCoT Information

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Postal address: PO Box 798 Hobart 7001  
Street Address: 49 Molle Street Hobart  
Phone: 03 6231 5067  
Fax: 03 6231 5069  
Email: [mcot@tassie.net.au](mailto:mcot@tassie.net.au)  
Web: [www.mcot.org.au](http://www.mcot.org.au)