

NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE ETHNIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION

In December 1979, the Premier announced the appointment of four new members of the Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Dr. George Peponis, the Australian Rugby League Captain has been appointed Deputy Chairman. The three other members are: Ald. John Aquilina, the Mayor of Blacktown; Mrs. Maria Szajewski, an active worker in ethnic affairs in the Illawarra region; and Sister Mary Fabian Walsh, an authority on migrant education.

The continuing members of the Commission, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Paolo Totaro are:- Mrs. Dorothy Buckland; Dr. Nicholas Chuchkovich; Mr. Joseph Doueihi; Mr. Alan Duncan; Mr. Constantine Karanges; and Ald. Frank Pangallo.

The Ethnic Affairs Commission was reconstituted as a statutory body by an Act of State Parliament last year.

"Looking back over the decade we can see how ethnic affairs has become a central concern of Government", the Chairman of the Commission, Dr. Paolo Totaro said.

He said the Commission's Report "Participation", had served to inform and assist many areas of Government in formulating policies to assist the ethnic communities to participate fully in the life of the State.

*** STOP PRESS *** - HANDBOOK FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The Premier, Mr. Neville Wran will launch an AFFIRMATIVE ACTION HANDBOOK on 4th February, 1980.

The Handbook, prepared by the Review of N.S.W. Government Administration, is a comprehensive, step-by-step guide on ways to promote equal employment opportunity.

It has been written for managers, senior officers and co-ordinators responsible for undertaking affirmative action programmes.

The contents are comprehensive and practical.

The first chapter defines "what is affirmative action"? Other chapters include the principle of redress, guidelines for the development and budgeting of an affirmative action plan, exercises for group discussion, and an equal employment opportunity guide for staff selectors.

The Review will provide free copies of the Handbook to all major N.S.W. Government Departments and authorities.

Ethnic Affairs Liaison Officers' can purchase additional copies from the Government Information Centre, 55 Hunter Street, Sydney, for \$6 per copy and 80¢ postage.

OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS UNIT
CELEBRATES ITS 1ST YEAR

The Overseas Qualifications Unit of the Ethnic Affairs Commission dealt with 463 cases, covering over 30 professions from over 30 different countries, during its first year of operation.

The Officer-in-Charge of the Unit, Nabil Kazemi, said the qualifications dealt with ranged from those of doctors and railway technicians, to actors, artists, government officials and judges, and many of the cases have been resolved.

"In some matters, unfortunately no satisfactory solution can be found", Mr. Kazemi said. "We try and open options for the client - such as re-training, English classes, or alternative fields of employment".

"We have received full co-operation and assistance from State and Federal authorities, especially the Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications in Canberra, and the Commonwealth Employment Service offices throughout N.S.W.", Mr. Kazemi said.

Mr. Kazemi said the Unit has also begun action to influence the structure of assessment in some professions. "We now realise the difficulties of effecting change in these areas and the length of time it will take, but a start has been made", he said.

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PROFILE:

In each issue of ETHNOS we feature a profile of an Ethnic Affairs Liaison Officer. This month, we have pleasure in introducing you to MR. ROBERT KELLY from the DEPARTMENT OF DECENTRALISATION and DEVELOPMENT.

With 40 years of service in the public sector, Robert Kelly's approach to equal opportunity issues is as up-to-date and committed to change as the leading activists in the field.

Mr. Kelly was able to quote "off the top of his head", the number of persons in the Department whose birthplace was outside Australia. "They number approximately 9%", he said.

He attributes his sensitivity and tolerance for people, to his experiences in the Army as an 18 year old, on active service during the second world war.

"Community education is as important as legislation when it comes to equal opportunity issues", Mr. Kelly said.

"All 10 regional offices of the Department are circulated with all the information I receive on ethnic affairs and women's issues".

"Community education is a slow process and it is a two-way track", he said.

"Often individuals have a poor image of 'self' and need encouragement to recognise their worth, and their rights to equal opportunities". He said, in order to discharge his duties as an Ethnic Affairs Liaison Officer, he required constant contact with the Ethnic Affairs Commission.

"Despite good intentions, you need a pipeline of grass-roots information to motivate you to take action".

The Ethnic Affairs Commission is looking forward to a close relationship with the Department of Decentralisation and Development through Mr. Kelly.

