

ETHNOS

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Newsletter for Ethnic Liaison Officers, N.S.W.

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NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER

THE ETHNIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION HAS A
NEW TELEPHONE NO. - 231 7100.

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INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES

A Task Force has been established to report through the Ethnic Affairs Commission to the state government on the key concerns of Indo-Chinese Refugees in New South Wales.

The Task Force includes members of the Khmer, Lao and Vietnamese communities.

Announcing the establishment of the Task Force, the Premier, Mr. Wran said:

"Quite a lot has been said about the problems of refugees, and the government is particularly anxious to have advice from the refugees themselves".

The Task Force will operate for eight weeks to document the views of the refugee communities.

The settlement problems which emerge will be referred to the Premier.

The areas of research will include: employment, language, children at school, accommodation and health.

The Ethnic Affairs Commission together with other key Departments, such as Youth and Community Services are also collating a list of services and assistance presently being provided by both government departments and voluntary agencies.

The latest figures from the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs state the number of refugees as:

<u>AUSTRALIA</u>	<u>NEW SOUTH WALES</u>
879 - Khmer	400
3,042 - Lao	1,200
19,201 - Vietnamese	7,700

The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs expect 14,500 additional refugees to settle in Australia in the next financial year.

OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS UNIT

An overseas qualification and counselling unit has been established within the Ethnic Affairs Commission.

The functions of the Unit are:-

- * to counsel people on how to obtain recognition of qualifications gained overseas;
- * to negotiate methods of simplifying the present complex system of recognising overseas qualifications;
- * to promote the development of re-training programmes and bridging courses aimed at making qualifications relevant to Australian conditions;
- * to collect case material and statistics on which realistic proposals for change can be based.

The Premier, Mr. Wran said in many cases the process involved in gaining recognition of overseas qualifications was time-consuming and complex.

"We see it as a waste of valuable human resources if people do not utilise the knowledge and expertise gained in their country of origin", Mr. Wran said.

The Unit has dealt within a few weeks, so far with one hundred and twenty enquiries the majority have been in the medical and para-medical field plus a significant number of queries regarding trade and secondary school qualifications.

The applicants using the Unit have been Vietnamese, South American and people from the Middle East.

The Officer-in-Charge of the Unit is Nabil Kazemi, a graduate of Cairo and Paris Universities, and spent years studying the international comparability of overseas courses and standards.

"It is important to realise Australia in the 80's cannot afford to waste any human resources", Mr. Kazemi said.

The Unit is located on the 1st Floor, 140 Phillip Street, Sydney, 2000, telephone 231 7387 or 231 7100.

PROFILE: In each issue of Ethnos, we feature a profile on an Ethnic Affairs Liaison Officer.

In this issue we have pleasure in introducing you to Phil Arblaster from the Adult Migrant Education Service.

Phil Arblaster has been teaching English as a second language for the past twenty years. He spent the first ten years of his career in the New Guinea Highlands. After his return to Australia - as an ex-patriot he felt sympathetic to those new settlers who were also arriving in Australia - as immigrants and refugees.

Phil joined AMES in January 1969, and began teaching in the adult English Education Unit.

Apart from the English courses which are conducted on a daily basis - AMES also designs a wide variety of courses for industry and the specific needs of government departments.

"We are very flexible" Phil Arblaster said. "For example we have recently conducted a special course for Talley-men at Australian Iron and Steel".

"The course was designed to fit in with the shift-work operations of the men".

The English classes can be designed as oral courses, and reading and writing.

"Reading and writing courses could improve the capacity of employees to write reports" Phil Arblaster said.

He prefers the classes to be a homogeneous group of 15-20 people. Each class runs for 1½ hours.

"A ten-week course - of 2 - 2 hour sessions per week would accomplish a rudimentary level of English" Phil Arblaster said.

"The first step in the process is we send a teacher into the specific environment - and they assess the needs - and design a tailor-made course, suitable for that environment, which will achieve the goals of the work situation". "It is important that we are not unrealistic in our levels of expectation from students" Phil Arblaster said.

"At the end of a ten-week series we would prefer to assess the level of achievement and perhaps provide some additional - more advanced levels of learning".

AMES also provides a counselling service for persons to find the most appropriate English classes for their individual needs.

"Sometimes these courses are outside our service - but we can make arrangements to slot people into them".

AMES welcomes enquiries from all state government departments and will assist in providing courses to improve the level of staff competence in English. Ethnic Affairs Liaison Officers can contact either Phil Arblaster or Neil Wright on 27 6684.

