



*The Hon Nathan Rees MP
Premier
Minister for the Arts*



*The Hon Virginia Judge MP
Minister for Fair Trading
Minister for Citizenship and
Minister Assisting the Premier on
the Arts*



The Hon V Judge MP
Minister for Fair Trading
Minister for Citizenship and
Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts
Level 36
Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

31 October 2008

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report of the Community Relations Commission for the year ended 30 June 2008 for presentation to Parliament.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985*, and the *Annual Reports (Departments) Regulation 2005*.

Yours sincerely

Stepan Kerkyasharian AM
Chairperson
Community Relations Commission
For a multicultural NSW



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About the Commission

Vision

To be the leader and facilitator of community relations in achieving a harmonious and cohesive multicultural New South Wales.

Mission

Engage the community, public and private sectors and provide direct services and advice to enable equal participation and promote community harmony and the benefits of multiculturalism in New South Wales.

Values

The Commission values:

- Commitment
- Diversity
- Equity
- Collaboration
- Integrity
- Quality
- Accountability

The Community Relations Commission of New South Wales was established as a statutory body on 13 March 2001 under the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*.

Objectives

- participation of the people of New South Wales in community life and the public decision-making process so that they can exercise their rights and fulfil their obligations
- access to government and community services that is equitable and that has regard to the linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic diversity of the people of New South Wales
- the promotion of a cohesive and harmonious multicultural society with mutual respect for and understanding of cultural diversity
- the enrichment of all sections of society through the benefits of cultural diversity
- the promotion of the principles of multiculturalism and the advantages of a multicultural society
- the promotion of social justice, community development and community initiatives for ethnic communities in New South Wales.

Functions

- to undertake systematic and wide ranging consultation with people and groups with respect to its objectives
- to advise and make recommendations to the Minister to promote any of its objectives
- to investigate and report to the Minister on any matter relating to its objectives that the Commission considers appropriate or that the Minister refers to the Commission for investigation and report
- to arrange and participate in forums to promote its objectives
- to facilitate cooperative arrangements involving governmental, business, educational and community groups or bodies to promote its objectives
- to enter into agreements with public authorities in connection with their functions to promote the objectives of the Commission (including, but not limited to, the objective relating to access to government services)
- to assist, and assess the effectiveness of, public authorities in observing the principles of multiculturalism in the conduct of their affairs, particularly in connection with the delivery of government services
- to assist in resolving issues associated with cultural diversity
- to provide (whether within or outside New South Wales) interpreter or other services approved by the Minister
- to advise the Minister on the most effective use of funds appropriated by Parliament for programs related to its objectives (including funds for the provision of resources to community groups that promote the objectives of the Commission)
- to support community initiatives that promote the objectives of the Commission
- to encourage eligible people to become Australian citizens
- to advise and make recommendations to the Anti-Discrimination Board on matters relating to discrimination and racial vilification
- such other functions as are conferred or imposed on it by or under this or any other Act.

Chairperson's overview 2007/08



Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian AM.

Building on the many achievements made over the past 30 years of operation, the Commission in 2007/08 continued to make important contributions to the promotion of multiculturalism, cultural diversity, and community unity and harmony throughout New South Wales.

It has indeed been pleasing to witness an increasing awareness of the need to embrace the principles of multiculturalism and to recognise the benefits which diversity brings to our society .

The year 2007/08 has seen the onset of new and exciting initiatives and projects undertaken by the Commission or in partnership with other agencies or organisations, in which common objectives have focused on the benefits and contributions to cultural diversity as a whole.

I am pleased to report that much of this work has brought about gratifying results in the pursuit of a cohesive and harmonious multicultural society.

I am therefore proud to announce that some long-term projects have been finalised and successfully implemented and it is my hope that the efforts made in these areas will have lasting effects for years to come.

Harmonious communities

The Cabramatta CityWatch project concluded this year. This project was initiated in 2001 and established by the then Premier of NSW for the Commission to oversee and coordinate collaboration between the police and the local community in working together on issues of crime and safety. The esteem built over the years between the police and community members enables the program to continue at the local level.

The Canterbury-Bankstown Community Harmony Round Table is another community project that has recently ended since its launch four years ago. This project brought together a round table forum where members who represented various segments of the community developed strategies to promote and sustain community harmony through developing and implementing activities that aimed to strengthen community relations in the Canterbury-Bankstown area.

My profound thanks go to all who were actively involved in both projects, especially those who invested their time on a voluntary basis.

Principles of multiculturalism at a local level

I am especially pleased to announce that the Commission, in a joint project with the Department of Local Government, succeeded in developing and completing an information kit and planning framework to assist NSW councils to implement the principles of multiculturalism within their areas of responsibility.

NSW local councils play a crucial role in promoting the principles of multiculturalism, and the framework is aimed at assisting with planning strategies and initiatives for the culturally diverse communities across a broad range of activity areas.

The steering committee and pilot councils are to be commended for their role in the development of the kit and framework.

Rural and regional NSW

The Commission has been actively involved in providing essential statewide support structures to promote the principles of cultural diversity. These support structures are well placed to address issues that affect the culturally and linguistically diverse communities, particularly those outside the Sydney metropolitan area.

Through the broad reach of the ten Regional Advisory Councils established by the Commission, there has been systematic and wide-ranging consultation carried out with people and groups representing the multicultural communities in rural and regional NSW on matters relating to community relations. These councils have worked at the grassroots level to bring together and create a greater sense of community and to provide local solutions to local issues.

A multi-faith society

In the lead up to the World Youth Day 2008, the Commission was active in planning to facilitate a number of intercultural and multi-faith events that would take place during this momentous occasion. One of these events, the *Multi-faith Prayers for Global Peace and Social Justice*, was aimed at engaging young people from all faiths to pray together with religious leaders for peace and justice for all people around the world. It was also an opportunity to demonstrate the religious diversity of the Australian people and to promote mutual understanding between different religions.

Connecting the communities

Since its inception, the Commission has built strong and long-standing relationships with ethnic community leaders and groups, and has developed and fostered extensive networks throughout the various NSW communities. As such, the Commission has compiled and maintains a unique contacts database for community organisations and individuals.

In April this year, the Commission launched an innovative email distribution service that provides for the delivery of information and messages direct to community groups, religious organisations and ethnic media. This service, *EmailLink*, is a communication channel that is fast becoming widely used by NSW Government agencies that wish to reach out to the culturally diverse communities and target groups in NSW. The service is also available to private organisations and individuals.

I wish to acknowledge the support of the Premier and Minister for Citizenship, the Hon Morris Iemma MP, and the Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship, the Hon Barbara Perry MP.

To the Deputy Chairperson, Mr Michael Marx AM, and my fellow Commissioners, I convey my thanks for their leadership, support and guidance throughout the year. I wish also to acknowledge Ms Winky Chow, Citizenship Adviser with the office of the Premier, for her invaluable assistance.

The achievement of the Commission's objectives has been made possible thanks to the dedication and hard work of the Commission staff, for which I am extremely grateful.



Stepan Kerkyasharian AM
Chairperson



Summary of achievements

An overview of the achievements made in 2007/08 towards the Commission's Corporate Plan 2007-12. A more detailed account of these activities is reported in following sections of the report.

1 FOCUS

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY

RESULT:

Facilitate and support cooperative arrangements and community initiatives

Across New South Wales, 44 Regional Advisory Committee meetings were held in 10 regions. The meetings brought together government and community representatives where concerns of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were discussed and addressed.

In regional and rural New South Wales, the development of community proposals was coordinated and facilitated. The proposals formed part of the Commission's submission to the Premier's Rural and Regional Taskforce. Interaction between the Griffith City Council, the local community-based organisations and ethno-specific organisations was facilitated and secured involvement in implementing the Griffith Community Action Plan.

Several forums were organised in conjunction with government agencies and community organisations. The forums promoted awareness among members of the African community and service providers of issues and challenges and strengthened relationships with government agencies and the community at large.

Advice, guidance and information on EAPS planning and implementation was provided to NSW Government agencies.

RESULT:

Increase participation in government initiatives in the promotion of cultural diversity

The Commission provided policy advice and briefings on a range of government and community issues. It responded to 740 requests for briefings, speech notes and messages for community events attended by the Premier or his representative. The Commission participated in regular meetings of some ten agency and interagency committees, as well as special consultations, including the coordination of consultations with ethno-religious communities on burial space issues.

The National Multicultural Marketing Awards attracted audiences on a national scale. The increase in sponsorships and participation in the Awards presentation represented increased awareness and recognition of the benefits of inclusive marketing in the business community, public sector and general community.

2

FOCUS

PROVISION OF QUALITY LANGUAGE SERVICES

RESULT:
Improved access to government and community services that has regard to the linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic diversity of the people of NSW

Recruitment and training initiatives improved the quality of language services. Interpreters and translators were encouraged to upgrade their qualifications. A recruitment drive was undertaken for languages that are rare, new and/or emerging.

Customer service improvement initiatives were undertaken through implementation of several enhancements in LanguageLink, for example, requesting or booking an interpreter online and receiving email confirmation of that request. The quarterly feedback meetings with casual panellists as well as with major customers provided feedback on the services. A service charter was developed and implemented later in the year. All complaints were processed according to procedures and required turnaround time.

The demand for language services, interpreting and translation requests increased during the year. The Roads and Traffic Authority extended the contract for interpreting services to March 2009. Language Services won a new contract with Housing New South Wales for the provision of onsite interpreting for the coming three years.

3

FOCUS

EFFECTIVE RESOURCE UTILISATION

RESULT:
Maximise customer benefits through continuing development of electronic service delivery

Technology assisted processes were introduced. An online booking facility for interpreting and translation services, *LanguageLink*, was automated and simplified the processing of requests and allocation of interpreting and translation assignments. Video conferencing for court assignments was encouraged and used when possible. Seventy-five interpreting assignments were performed via video conferencing in rural NSW making access to interpreter resources efficient and cost effective. Media reports have been made available electronically through the *MediaLink* online ethnic media reporting service, where subscription increased by 10 percent and revenue by 5 percent.

Using the Commission's rich database with its email facility, the *EmailLink* service enabled direct contact between members of the culturally diverse community, government agencies, private businesses and others with an interest in multiculturalism.

EFFECTIVE RESOURCE UTILISATION (cont)

Usage of this service increased 115 percent from last year and registration of individuals and groups in the database increased by 20 percent.

Online transactions increased with expressions of interest to the Community Development Grants Program exceeding the target by almost 100%. Nominations for the awards for Volunteering tripled from last year and nominations for the NSW Premier's Chinese Community Service Awards doubled.

More community organisations were able to establish an internet presence through *Communilink*, a free webhosting facility of the Commission.

RESULT:
Meet performance standards and strategic targets set out in the Results and Services Plan

The Commission continued its strong performance in meeting its financial targets, agency results indicators and service measures for the year ended 30 June 2008.

4

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

RESULT:
Develop targets and performance measures for reporting commencing early 2009

The Community Relations Report 2007 was published, tabled in Parliament and launched on 26 June 2008. The report highlights over 120 NSW Government agency initiatives under EAPS.

The Commission's Corporate Plan for 2007-2012 was finalised. The plan sets organisational targets and performance measures. Development of operational plans commenced. This process will develop strategies and performance measures towards maintaining consistent and responsive internal and external communication.

Internally, standing processes to ensure ongoing consultation and communication were implemented. In the promotion of continuous improvement, workplace committees with cross-functional representation continued to function and met regularly.

Externally, the Commission held a regional meeting at Broken Hill in December 2007. This allowed direct liaison and consultation with community leaders and local officials on multicultural issues.

5
FOCUS

PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF MULTICULTURALISM

RESULT:
Promote social justice, community development and community initiatives for ethnic communities

A total of \$1,268,922 in grant funding was provided to 119 mostly not-for-profit organisations that implemented community-based projects. The projects enabled culturally diverse communities to increase access to government programs and support services, particularly to newly arrived migrants, to participate in community life and to celebrate cultural diversity in NSW.

Language examinations for public service employees under the Community Language Allowance Scheme saw an increase in the number of candidates who qualified. There were 90 candidates who passed the examination compared to 75 the previous year. This result directly contributed to the increased capability of the NSW Government to provide services to the linguistically diverse people of NSW.

RESULT:
Increase the participation of the people of NSW in community life and the public decision-making process

Regional Advisory Councils were instrumental in referring issues related to the settlement of migrants and refugees to the Standing Committee on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (SCIMA).

Through the Regional Advisory Councils, 10 presentations were conducted by the Australian Red Cross which provided information about that organisation’s regional activities in NSW, generating significant community interest in volunteerism.

RESULT:
Measure and report the observation of the principles of multiculturalism by public authorities

The Commission evaluated biennial self-assessments of 11 key agencies against the EAPS Standards Framework and provided detailed feedback. The outcome of this process culminated in a report to Parliament on the state of multiculturalism in NSW. During the year, the Commission provided advice and assistance in EAPS planning and implementation to a wide range of agencies, including consultative meetings with some 20 agencies. It also completed a project that assisted local councils to implement the principles of multiculturalism locally.

6

FOCUS

EFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

RESULT:

Improve access to information

The Commission's website was redesigned to improve public access to Commission information. It now features restructured access to information on critical functions of the Commission including programs, services and publications and other improvements that comply with the NSW Government website style directive.

A major campaign was conducted to promote the registration of community organisations in the Commission's contacts database resulting in a more comprehensive repository of information. The campaign strengthened the Commission's position as the primary provider of information on ethnic communities. At the same time data cleansing was undertaken which enabled the achievement of information integrity.

Document scanning with optical character recognition technology was introduced and enabled the electronic capture of information received at the Commission. This resulted in a fast and easy internal distribution of information which contributed to the quick turnaround in processing requests for advice, service and information.

7

FOCUS

LEADERSHIP SYSTEM THROUGHOUT THE COMMISSION

RESULT:

Measure performance against the Corporate Plan

The Commission has formally implemented its Corporate Plan 2007-2012. The plan incorporates the NSW Government's commitments as stipulated in the State Plan and the Commission's Results and Services Plan.

An enterprise risk management plan was updated during the year to ensure alignment with the Commission's new Corporate Plan. This enables the Commission to address risk exposures brought about the development of new services.

Business continuity and disaster recovery plans were updated and tested which included the establishment of alternative sites for web-based and core services. This has increased the Commission's preparedness for potential business disruption and provided customer confidence in Commission information and business processes and services.

Financial overview

An unqualified audit report was issued by the Auditor-General. In the Auditor's opinion, the financial report is in accordance with section 45E of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 (the PF&A Act) and the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2005.

There were no major events after the balance date that would have a significant affect in the succeeding year on the Commission's operations, clients or stakeholders.

Revenue

The Commission's revenue in 2007/08 was \$17.0 million which was drawn from three sources:

- government appropriation
- user-pays revenue from the sale of language services
- miscellaneous revenue including grants for special projects, earnings from provision of corporate services and investment income.

The following table outlines the Commission's revenue over the past three years.

Source		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
User charges	\$	3 494 000	4 138 000	4 719 000
Other	\$	846 000	383 000	409 000
Government appropriation	\$	12 052 000	11 696 000	11 893 000
Total	\$	16 392 000	16 217 000	17 021 000

Operating result

The Commission's net result for 2007/08 was a surplus of \$1.0 million.

Expenses

The value of the Commission's total expenses for the year ended 30 June 2008 was \$16.0 million.

The table below provides a comparison of the expenditure of the Commission over the past three financial years.

Category		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Employee-related	\$	10 487 000	11 351 000	11 762 000
Other operating	\$	2 301 000	2 248 000	2 284 000
Maintenance	\$	60 000	26 000	41 000
Depreciation	\$	681 000	517 000	437 000
Grants & community outreach	\$	1 561 000	1 518 000	1 457 000
Total	\$	15 090 000	15 660 000	15 981 000

Time for payment of accounts – accounts payable

The Commission has an excellent account paying record and settles at least 99 percent of the claims by the due date. While all claims on hand are settled promptly, some late payments are unavoidable through factors beyond the control of the organisation. Payments effected after due date may be due to the late receipt of creditors' invoices and/or discrepancies with the goods or services received. Despite settling a minute proportion of claims after the due date, no penalty interest was paid or became payable in 2007/08 for late payment of accounts. The table below illustrates the performance indicators of the Commission's payments (accounts paid on time within each quarter).

Quarter	Total Accounts Paid on Time			Total amount paid \$
	Target %	Actual %	\$	
September 07	100.00	100.00	3 083 752	3 083 752
December 07	100.00	100.00	3 571 731	3 571 731
March 08	100.00	99.45	4 422 234	4 398 222
June 08	100.00	99.66	4 965 228	4 948 200

Time for payment of accounts – accounts receivable

The Commission continued with its aim of keeping debtors' balances low. The following table shows the debtors' aged analysis at the end of each quarter for the 2007/08.

Quarter	Current	30 days	60 days	90 days
	\$	\$	\$	\$
September 07	456 275	17 263	10 904	14 473
December 07	381 181	23 074	21 172	13 573
March 08	242 880	9 757	14 177	18 250
June 08	474 118	13 854	2 374	7 752

Engagement of consultants

During the 2007/08 financial year the Commission engaged seven consulting assignments costing less than \$30,000 each. The number and cost categorisation is by nature is:

Consultants - engagements costing less than \$30 000 each		
Number of engagements	Category	Amount
4	Management services	62 804
3	Information technology	43 130
TOTAL		105 934

There were no consulting engagements over \$30,000.