

ETHNOS

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In the Ethnic Affairs Commission 85 full-time and over 250 part-time people work together. They come from many different parts of the world. Natural calamities and wars are felt by our team in a special way - often our relatives are suffering.

The war in Lebanon has been felt with particular anguish by our Commission and staff.

Those of us who pray, pray to God for world peace. And we would like to see the Ethnic communities of Australia support peace. Abroad, at home, and among ourselves.

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ETHNIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION CELEBRATES FIFTH ANNIVERSARY



left to right: Dorothy Buckland-Fuller, Paolo Totaro, Maria Szajewski, (Nick) Chuchkovich, Premier, Mr Neville Wran, Bill Jegorow, (Trudy) Mills-Evers, Carlos Gonzalez, Vivi Koutsounadis, (Joe) Doueihy Alan Duncan, (Mick) Alagich, Sister Mary Fabian Walsh.

The Ethnic Affairs Commission has been in the forefront of moves to improve the quality of life for people of non-English-speaking background, according to the Premier, Mr Neville Wran.

Mr Wran was guest of honour at a function held last month to mark the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Commission.

Mr Wran said: "It is a remarkable achievement for our community in this State - indeed in this country - that it has found a way for people of well over 100 different national backgrounds to work and enjoy life in what, in world terms, must be seen as comparatively peaceful co-existence."

Outlining the Government's basic goals on ethnic affairs, Mr Wran said that it wanted to remove barriers that prevented people from total participation in the community life of the State.

"We wish to actively encourage people who have traditionally been excluded to share in the entire range of opportunities offered in the State."

He said the Commission had played an important role in the development of the Government's policies on ethnic issues.

The work of the Commission's interpreter service was singled out by Mr Wran. "It provides a powerful bridge between Government institutions and people of non-English-speaking background."

He said the N.S.W. Government is one of the largest employers of interpreters in the world, through both the Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Health Commission. Last year, EAC interpreters were used 35,000 times and translated 13,000 pages of legal documents, and other material in close to 50 languages.

Mr Wran also announced the appointment of an additional Polish interpreter to the Commission's staff to assist in the settlement of Polish immigrants.

The fifth anniversary function was held at the offices of the Ethnic Affairs Commission. Over 200 people attended. They included Ministers, community leaders, representatives from the mainstream and ethnic media, past and present EAC commissioners, and others involved in ethnic affairs.

OVERSEAS TRAINED DOCTORS REINSTATED

Over 20 overseas-trained doctors were recently permitted to resume work by the N.S.W. Medical Board, following the cancellation of their licenses last year.

Under the Amended Medical Practitioners Act, 1981, (Section 16), they have been allowed registration to work in a hospital approved by the Board until June, 1983. Last year, around 50 doctors working in trainee and research capacities in hospitals in the State had their licenses revoked by the Board.

This followed investigations by the Board into "irregularities" in their employment. Under the old Medical Practitioners Act, Section 21(1), these doctors - many of whom had considerable experience in their countries of origin - were only allowed traineeships, or involvement in research projects. Direct practice was not permitted.

The Ethnic Affairs Commission originally questioned the substance and the form of the dismissal and made representations to the then Minister for Health, Mr Kevin Stewart, to have the decision rescinded. The Commission welcomes the latest Medical Board decision.

EAC ON THREE MAJOR INQUIRIES

The Ethnic Affairs Commission is currently represented in three major inquiries: the State Inquiry into the 1981 HSC Examination, the Commonwealth/State Inquiry into the Recognition of Overseas Qualifications, and the Tri-partite Committee to advise on the new State legislation on industrial health and safety.

The Commission is operating as follows:

- a) The Chairman of the Commission has been appointed by the Government as a member of the Inquiry (or nominated by the State Government to represent its point of view, as is the case in the Commonwealth Inquiry into the Recognition of Overseas Qualifications).
- b) The issues raised at the committees are conveyed to officers of the Commission or, when approved by the relevant inquiry, to independent community members appointed as honorary advisors.
- c) The issues in question are researched and discussed. The Chairman of the Commission brings to the Inquiries' meetings the result of such work for further development.

For the Inquiry into the HSC, the Commission's main researcher is Lesley Lynch, Acting Co-ordinator of Projects, who has been given access by the Board of Senior School Studies to confidential material.

On the Commonwealth Inquiry into the Recognition of Overseas Qualifications the researcher is the head of the Overseas Qualifications Unit, Nabil Kazemi, who has also been appointed to the trades sub-committee of the Inquiry.

Executive Officer Nadia Lozzi-Cuthbertson and Tony Dolk, Project Officer, are analysing issues relating to industrial health and safety with the assistance of an informal advisory group headed by Commissioner Carlos Gonzales and comprising a number of lawyers and other experts on industrial matters.

So far this way of operating is proving to be most effective. In all cases where the opinions of community members are sought, participation in decision-making by people of non-English-speaking background is increased.

The Commission is also taking a very active interest in the current Inquiry by the Law Reform Commission of N.S.W. into Accident Compensation. Professor Sackville, the Chairman of the Commission, has requested advice and assistance on how to raise the ethnic community's awareness as to the momentous task in front of him.

INQUIRY INTO 1981 HSC EXAMINATION

The Ethnic Affairs Commission has endorsed the decision by the Minister of Education, Mr Mulock, to set up an independent Inquiry into the 1981 HSC Examination.

It has already put forward a number of proposals aimed at ensuring that in HSC Examinations all students, including modern language candidates, gain fair results.

In a submission to the Inquiry, the Commission said:

- . If "scaling" of marks to achieve parity of esteem between subjects is done by the Board of Senior School Studies existing uncorrected statistical procedures many modern language candidates would be disadvantaged.
- . That there be wider representation on the BSSS, with the inclusion of people with a wide linguistic knowledge.
- . That the Education Act be changed so that a representative of ethnic interests may become a full member of BSSS. The Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Commission now attends BSSS meetings as an observer.

The Commission is doing further research on material recently released by the BSSS, and this has confirmed the appropriateness of earlier recommendations.

The Inquiry was set up last month following the disclosure by the BSSS that there had been errors in the marking of the two-unit Modern Greek and three-unit English papers.

Over 500 students who sat for the 1981 HSC later had their marks adjusted. But this came too late for some who had not been admitted to university because of errors in their original marking.

The inquiry will bring down its findings next month. It is headed by Dr Ken McKinnon, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong, and a former Chairman of the Commonwealth Schools Commission. The three other members are the Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Headmaster of the Sydney Church of England Grammar School, Mr B.H. Travers, and the Principal of Marsden High School, Mr Hugh Boyle. The Inquiry is also being assisted by a number of experts, including Professor Hasofer, Professor of Statistics, University of N.S.W.

FEDERAL INQUIRY INTO RECOGNITION OF OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS

A Federal Inquiry into problems associated with the non-recognition of qualifications obtained overseas is expected to be finalized within the next three months.

The Inquiry was set up in December last year by the then Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Mr Ian MacPhee. It followed increasing concern by Federal and State governments over the problems faced by immigrants with university and other qualifications which are not recognized by professional bodies in Australia.

The Inquiry has been sitting for six months. It is chaired by Mr Ron Fry, a former National Director and Chief Executive of the Metal Trades Industry Association.

In a position paper presented on behalf of the N.S.W. Government to the Inquiry, the Ethnic Affairs Commission has made some preliminary proposals.

- . The duties of technical advisors attached to immigration recruitment offices overseas should be widened. This would mean that detailed advice could be provided to prospective immigrants on their professional standing in Australia. The processes involved in getting accreditation for their qualifications could also be more fully explained.
- . The Commission argued that no fees should be levied for the accreditation of overseas qualifications, including those for people with medical degrees.
- . That people should not be required to obtain sponsors in order to join professional organizations, since newly arrived immigrants often have no contacts in Australia.

- . The obtaining of accreditation should be regarded as part of the settlement process, and therefore part of the Commonwealth responsibility. Thus Commonwealth-funded advisory and counselling services should be set up, along the lines of the one offered by NSW through the Overseas Qualification Unit of the Ethnic Affairs Commission. These should be established in all capitals.
- . In the case of N.S.W., the Commonwealth government should enter into cost sharing arrangements with the state, similar to the arrangements operating with interpreting and translating services.

ADVISORY GROUP ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

An ad-hoc advisory group has been established by the Ethnic Affairs Commission to provide for a greater input to the Tripartite Committee drafting the new legislation on industrial safety and health.

The Tripartite Committee was formed by the Minister for Industrial Relations and Technology, Mr Pat Hills. It followed his decision to introduce one single piece of legislation in the next parliamentary session covering the broad area of workers' health and safety. This was envisaged in the EAC Participation Report (Chapter 15, pp174-75).

The Ethnic Affairs Commission is represented on the Committee by its Chairman. The Commission hopes to provide a wider perspective on the needs and problems of workers of non-English-speaking background.

The Commission's advisory group will advise on issues related to the immigrant work-force, in order to appropriately 'program' the EAC representative for meetings of the Tripartite Committee.

The advisory group held two meetings this month. It is headed by Commissioner Carlos Gonzalez, and comprises a number of lawyers and other experts on industrial matters.

In subsequent meetings, the advisory group will consider and advise on matters brought back by Dr Totaro from the Tripartite Committee. These will include various legislative proposals and policy matters.

The development of the new legislation on occupational safety and health follows the tabling of the Williams Report last year. At the time, the Ethnic Affairs Commission had expressed concern that the Report had paid little attention to the problems faced by workers of non-English-speaking background.

In a detailed response to the Report, the Commission recommended that:

- . Whatever legislation is finally brought in, it should include mandatory health and safety standards, to be policed by an adequate inspectorate. These standards should be supported by effective enforcement provisions.
- . The problems of workers from non-English-speaking background should be specifically considered, through clauses incorporated in the legislation, so that they benefit equally from all provisions relating to health and safety.
- . Health and safety committees be established where there are more than 10 employees.
- . Immigrant workers to have the opportunity to select and vote for their own representatives.
- . Clear guidelines to be brought in to cover the translation and distribution of information on hazards in the workplace.

ACCIDENT COMPENSATION

The Ethnic Affairs Commission is currently assisting the Law Reform Commission in disseminating to the ethnic communities a major report on possible reforms of Accident Compensation legislation.

The Chairman of the Law Reform Commission, Professor Ronald Sackville, had earlier asked the Commission to suggest ways in which details of this important document could be channelled to people of non-English-speaking background.

The 141-page document looks at the existing system and argues that reforms are essential.

The paper seems certain to have far-reaching effects within the community. It raises the question of whether N.S.W. should introduce a no-fault scheme for accident victims. This would allow for compensation without the need to prove in court that the accident was caused through the "fault" or negligence of another person.

Each year, according to the Law Reform Commission, 1,600 people are killed and 170,000 are injured in road and work accidents in N.S.W.

Total amounts paid through third party insurance and workers' compensation exceed \$700 million per annum.

The paper argues that an inquiry is necessary because of public concern at the apparent deficiencies of existing arrangements, and outspoken criticism by judges of the way in which damages are assessed in common law negligence actions.

The paper suggests four possible approaches to reform on both systems:

- . The establishment of a comprehensive no-fault accident scheme which would compensate all accident victims regardless of the cause of their injury.
- . A slight modification of the existing systems, such as the common law negligence action and workers' compensation, but preserving them basically intact.
- . The introduction of a limited no-fault scheme for road accident victims (as in Victoria and Tasmania) to supplement the existing law.
- . The replacement of the common law negligence action with a new no-fault scheme (as has been done in the Northern Territory for road accident cases).

Submissions are invited by September 30th on 40 policy questions in the Issues Paper. It can be obtained from the Law Reform Commission. It would also like to hear of personal cases on an informal basis. For details contact: Ms Marcia Neave or
Mr Bruce Buchanan on 238-7213

SUPPORT FOR ETHNIC MEDIA

In a letter to all ministers, the Premier, Mr Neville Wran, has asked Government departments to explore ways to make more effective use of the ethnic media, both in terms of advertising and dissemination of news.

Mr Wran said it was the Government's objective to make services provided by its administration more accessible to people of non-English-speaking background.

This is in line with guidelines on the ethnic media contained in the Ethnic Affairs Commission's Participation Report and accepted by the Government.

"The ethnic newspapers are an important means of reaching people who do not speak or read English or who have only a limited command of English. The ethnic press is, in many instances, the only means available by which members of the community are made aware of events of public concern."

In his 1981 Policy Speech on Ethnic Affairs, Mr Wran said that strategies would be developed so that the ethnic press could continue to carry out its recognized and important role in complete freedom and independence.

On the ethnic media, the Ethnic Affairs Commission had pointed out in its Participation Report that the purchase of advertising space by Government agencies would be an important means of financial support for the ethnic media.

It suggested that guidelines be set for Government departments over the distribution of advertisements. This should be based not so much on the newspaper's circulation, but on its success in reaching its target audience.

The Commission also argued that since staff shortages were often a problem on ethnic newspapers, the provision of special Government information services, in the form of news releases or community information, would be of considerable help.

For information contact:

Mr Ian Hay,
Advertising Branch, Premier's Department.
Phone: 270 4917 or,
Shahida Hussain,
Phone: 231 7386 or 231 7374

ETHNIC AFFAIRS UNIT AT WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION

An Ethnic Affairs Unit has been established at the N.S.W. Workers' Compensation Commission to assist immigrants with workers' compensation, in line with recommendations contained in the Participation Report of the EAC.

It is headed by Miss Athena Touriki, 28, a lawyer, who has had extensive experience advising workers of non-English-speaking background on compensation claims.

Miss Touriki is co-founder of the Marrickville Legal Centre, and has first-hand knowledge of the difficulties experienced by many immigrant workers in making claims. "People of non-English-speaking background experience great frustration in the area of workers' compensation, partly because of their lack of familiarity with English, and the procedures of Australian law."

She said there was confusion about how the system worked. Long delays were the norm because workers did not have access to information and advice.

The new Unit will inform immigrants about benefits available under the Workers' Compensation Act, conduct research, make policy recommendations, document cases and assist with claims.

Contact: Ethnic Affairs Unit,
Workers' Compensation Commission,
Telephone: 237-4888

SURVEY OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

The N.S.W. Department of Education is conducting a survey on the educational needs of severely handicapped children who are not participating in full-time educational programmes.

The age group is 5 to 18 years.

Information is requested from people with the responsibility of caring for these children. The children may either be at home, or in care institutions, and need access to programmes to allow maximum development of their potential.

Precise information is required so that:

- . They may be directed to existing and appropriate programmes and,
- . To ensure that the development of further services is consistent with identified needs.

For enquiries, contact: Needs Survey Co-ordinator,
P.O. Box 415,
North Sydney, N.S.W. 2060 or,
telephone: (02) 923-4234

MEETING WITH LEBANESE COMMUNITY

As part of a continuing programme of consultation with the ethnic communities, the Chairman, Commissioner Eddie Obeid and Liaison officer Abdullah Mograby of the Ethnic Affairs Commission met about 30 representatives from the Lebanese community recently.

The meeting canvassed a number of issues of particular concern to the large Lebanese community in N.S.W.

These included the problems over the recognition of overseas qualifications, proposed changes to workers' compensation regulations, and difficulties over the operation of Saturday community language classes.

Among other points raised at the meeting was the attitude of police towards ethnic communities, in particular Lebanese youth. The Chairman of the Commission pointed out that an EAC Inquiry in 1977 had criticized police attitudes. Since that report, the Chairman said, the police had improved recruitment and training procedures.

On the issue of overseas qualifications, the Chairman said the Commission would raise with the Federal Inquiry on this subject the fact that little was generally known about trade courses and tertiary qualifications in Lebanon.

The meeting also decided to form a working group to enable the views of the community to be expressed, in conjunction with the Ethnic Affairs Commission, to various inquiries that are currently underway.

The Commission representatives expressed a concern that the Australian Lebanese did not make themselves sufficiently heard by the Government.

It was suggested that articulate commentaries on issues of concern should be organized through the work of ad-hoc advisory groups.

ETHNIC WELFARE AND CULTURAL GRANTS

Ethnic welfare and cultural organizations throughout New South Wales will receive grants totalling \$770,000, according to an announcement by the Premier, Mr Neville Wran.

This year's allocation has been increased by \$72,000.

Ethnic schools teaching community languages in after-school hours will receive \$211,000. The community grants programme is administered by the Ethnic Affairs Commission. Some of the allocations include:

- . Ethnic Communities Council of N.S.W., \$69,250 to help in the administration of the Council.
- . Labor Council Ethnic Affairs Unit, \$30,500 for development of migrant union participation.
- . Mt Druitt Multicultural Centre \$16,500 towards salary of a Co-ordinator.
- . Polish Welfare and Information Bureau \$10,000 to assist in the settlement of Polish refugees.
- . Canterbury Community Aid Bureau, \$14,000 towards the salaries of bilingual welfare officers.
- . Italian Pensioners and Friends Group, \$2,500 towards general welfare expenses.

For further information please contact Joyce Di Mascio, telephone: 270-4499

CAREER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP KIT

In order to help with the career development opportunities of people from non-English-speaking background in the Public Service, a useful kit has been issued by the N.S.W. Public Service Board.

The kit - Career Development Workshop for Immigrants - provides a detailed guide for conducting a two-day workshop for public servants.

It was designed in consultation with the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment, and selected departments.

The kit includes information on how the Public Service works, conditions of employment, and benefits and entitlements.

Its main emphasis is on the development of job-seeking skills.

For information on the kit, contact:

Julie Berry,
EEC Training and Resources Section,
Public Service Board of N.S.W.,
Telephone: 23-3351

DOCUMENTARY ON IMMIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA

A television series which will cover 200 years of immigrant life in Australia is being produced by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs and Film Australia. The series is entitled The Migrant Experience.

Film Australia would like to hear from people who have home movies, or collection of photographs relating to their migrant experience, settlement in Australia, or return trips to their homeland. It plans to look at any material (lent out for around four months) for possible use in the series.

Those interested in lending material should contact:

Patricia L'Huede or Tom Zubrycki,
Telephone: (02) 467-111 or write to:
Series Producer,
"The Migrant Experience",
Film Australia, P.O. Box 46,
Lindfield. N.S.W. 2070

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