



*The Hon. N. Rees MP,  
Premier,  
Minister for the Arts and  
Minister for the Central Coast*



*The Hon. V. 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 2009

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report of the Community Relations Commission for the year ended 30 June 2009 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

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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 co-operative 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 2008/09



*Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian AM*

Welcome to the 2008/09 Annual Report of the Community Relations Commission.

This report marks a major milestone in the 30 year history of the Commission, for it is to be the last annual report published by the Community Relations Commission as a separate NSW State Government Department. As of 1 July 2009, the Commission, while maintaining its statute, will form part of the Communities Department.

A further significant milestone for the Commission occurred during the year when two long-serving commissioners were sadly farewelled. Mr Michael Marx AM retired as deputy chairperson after 13 years service, and Mr Ned Maruncic OAM retired after serving almost 12 years. Both were exemplary commissioners who contributed greatly to the deliberations of the Commission and who were instrumental in building the foundations and structures of community harmony and in ensuring the success of multiculturalism in New South Wales. I place on record my appreciation for their dedicated service.

A summary of the Commission's achievements is illustrated in the pages following with more detailed information and activities provided in a further section of this report.

I wish to acknowledge with thanks my fellow commissioners for their invaluable assistance throughout the year, as well as the members of the Commission's ten regional advisory councils.

To the staff, I extend my gratitude once again for implementing the important programs of the Commission.



Stepan Kerkyasharian, AM  
Chairperson



## Summary of achievements

### Effective leadership in community relations

- a community project was developed in the Albury/Wodonga area to help recently-arrived communities with support structures.
- a working group was formed to address the various housing issues affecting emerging communities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Western Sydney, particularly those from African countries.
- concluded the Cabramatta CityWatch program that successfully addressed serious drug-related crime issues.
- co-chaired a National Working Party on Trafficking and Sexual Servitude and chaired the committee on the Recognition of Overseas Nursing and Midwifery Qualifications.
- coordinated the development of NSW government policy on visa sub-class 457 and related issues.
- hosted a number of activities during World Youth Day 2008.
- in Albury/Wodonga, a community consultation was organised for the recently-arrived Bhutanese community in conjunction with the Victorian Multicultural Commission.
- information sessions on various topics including the legal and justice system in NSW for the African and Burmese communities were conducted in the Coffs Harbour, Wagga Wagga and Illawarra regions.
- initiated a sports sponsorship program for young people from African backgrounds to participate in sport at regional centres.
- in Orange, a community consultation was held that focused on the secondary migration of people from African backgrounds and their settlement issues.
- in ten regions across NSW, 41 Regional Advisory Council meetings were held, bringing together representatives from the community and government agencies to discuss and address issues of concern to people whose first language is not English.
- in the New England region, social support networks are being developed for temporary skilled workers under the 457 visa program.
- negotiated the translation and publication of a Commission publication into Japanese.
- organised a lecture by Imam Habib Umar Bin Hadif on the ethics of governance in Islam.
- the need for additional assistance was highlighted for residents of Griffith who have limited English and literacy skills wishing to undertake the Australian citizenship test.
- throughout regional NSW, consultations were organised that would address the concerns of the African community.

## Provision of quality language services

- 107 external and internal complaints were received and addressed. This equates to 0.2% of 48,746 assignments.
- accommodated 101 video conferencing interpreting sessions.
- a service charter was developed to improve the quality of language services to customers.
- an additional 50 organisations have direct access to the LanguageLink system.
- interpreting services increased by 9.2%.
- conducted training sessions for casual translators that addressed quality issues in translation services.
- language services are now available in 86 different languages.
- major contracts with the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Department of Housing have been extended for a further year.
- most NSW courts are now booking an interpreter directly via LanguageLink.
- a recruitment drive took place for casual translators and interpreters resulting in 43 new panellists in 26 languages/dialects.
- the new shopfront for language services that is located at the Parramatta Justice Precinct is progressing according to plans.
- translation services increased by 4.4%.

## Effective resource utilisation

- developed an online portal, *Multicultural E-Advice NSW*, to assist public authorities to update, report and correspond with the Commission electronically, increasing efficiencies and environmental savings in storage and printing costs.
- most key programs and activities have now been made available on the website.
- online transactions increased, allowing business to be conducted expeditiously and more efficiently.

## Effective communication and consultation

- 83 candidates from among 18 nominating agencies passed the CLAS examination.
- EmailLink service was utilised by 109 customers.
- MediaLink service reported 174, 014 articles in the year, an increase of 21%.
- received 461 expressions of interest for the Community Development Grants Program.
- the 2008 Community Relations Report highlighted 150 outstanding multicultural initiatives undertaken by public sector agencies and local councils across New South Wales, supporting the full participation of people of cultural, religious, and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the life of the State.

## Promotion and implementation of the principles of multiculturalism

- assisted the AFL to increase participation of young people in sport in western Sydney.
- attendance at the Gala Presentation dinner for the National Multicultural Marketing Awards increased by 20%.
- launched the publication *Implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism Locally: A Planning Framework for Councils*, that provides guidance and benchmarks for Councils when implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism.
- promoted inclusion of social cohesion through the multicultural street festivals program.
- provided opportunities for young people and community leaders to inform decision-making through the annual symposium and youth leaders' day.
- recognised and promoted the benefits of multiculturalism through a range of awards.
- reviewed the operation of the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) program after 25 years of existence.
- since its introduction in 1988, the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) Standards Framework has undergone a review, and will be relaunched as the Multicultural Planning Framework in late 2009.

## Effective knowledge management

- a customer satisfaction questionnaire was circulated to translation customers inviting feedback to determine areas for improvement.
- initiated *Multicultural E-advice NSW* to streamline client relationship management for the administration of the Multicultural Policies and Services Program and other reporting requirements under the Act.
- responded to 906 requests for briefings, speech notes or messages to assist the Premier and Minister for Citizenship or their representatives when attending community events.
- upgraded the electronic records management system.

## Leadership system throughout the Commission

- arranged training for new OH&S committee members, to ensure their understanding of the OH&S legislative framework and risk management principles, and to provide leadership on workplace safety issues.
- coaching sessions were conducted by volunteer staff on the use of specific business applications, allowing the opportunity to develop presentation skills and knowledge sharing among users.
- conducted an annual workplace inspection and made necessary recommendations, particularly in relation to fire safety, use of appropriate equipment and availability of storage.



## Financial overview 2008/09

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 2008/09 was \$18.6 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		2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Government appropriation	\$	11 696 000	11 893 000	13 039 000
User charges	\$	4 138 000	4 719 000	5 034 000
Other	\$	383 000	409 000	493 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>16 217 000</b>	<b>17 021 000</b>	<b>18 566 000</b>

### Operating result

The Commission's net result for 2008/09 was a surplus of \$0.1 million.

### Expenses

The value of the Commission's total expenses for the year ended 30 June 2009 was \$18.5 million. The table below provides a comparison of the expenditure of the Commission over the past three financial years.

Category		2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Employee-related	\$	11 351 000	11 762 000	14 138 000
Other operating	\$	2 248 000	2 284 000	2 309 000
Maintenance	\$	26 000	41 000	187 000
Depreciation	\$	517 000	437 000	299 000
Grants & community outreach	\$	1 518 000	1 457 000	1 526 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>15 660 000</b>	<b>15 981 000</b>	<b>18 459 000</b>

### 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 2008/09 for late payments 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 08	100.00	99.87	3 873 986.87	3 869 131.44
December 08	100.00	99.52	4 794 645.25	4 771 918.09
March 09	100.00	100.00	3 469 745.64	3 469 826.35
June 09	100.00	99.97	3 551 398.39	3 550 177.36

### 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 2008/09.

Quarter	Current \$	30 days \$	60 days \$	90 days \$
September 08	1 091 972	151 427	116 223	15 826
December 08	970 243	102 133	55 906	12 103
March 09	886 445	80 102	30 442	22 127
June 09	1 285 998	44 736	17 197	23 044

### Engagement of consultants

During the 2008/09 financial year the Commission engaged three consulting assignments costing less than \$30,000 and one consulting assignment costing more than \$30,000.

Consultant engagements costing less than \$30 000 each		
Number of engagements	Category	Amount \$
2	Management services	13 087
1	Information technology	5 000
<b>Total</b>		<b>18 087</b>
Consultant engagements exceeding more than \$30 000		
Number of consultant	Title of project	Amount \$
1	University of NSW Research Services Multicultural Policies and Services Program (formerly Ethnic Affairs Priority Statements) Standards Framework review.	30 553