Unity in Diversity
A South Asian Conference

Venue:

Holroyd Centre
Merrylands

Time:
8.30am – 2:30pm

Date:
17 July 2006

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This conference aims to explore response strategies on settlement issues most relevant to the South Asian Community such as education, health, business and employment.

The conference aims at promoting liaison and cooperation between the South Asian community and the wider Australian community. The target communities are Indian, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Burmese and Nepalese communities in Sydney. The topics and speakers for the conference will be decided in consultation with representatives of the target communities through a series of consultations held at the BHHP Migrant Resource Centre.

The Conference partners are:
♦ Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre
♦ Baulkham Hills Shire Council
♦ Holroyd City Council
♦ Parramatta City Council
♦ SEVA Inc

Conference Steering Committee:

We are seeking Expressions of Interest for community representation on the Conference Steering Committee from the following communities:
Indian, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Nepalese and Burmese.
The Steering Committee will liaise with the working party in order to develop a working structure for the conference. It will include local community representatives, community leaders of the target communities to provide input on the program with support, involvement and community participation.
Closing date: 28th April 2006
Pre Conference Steering Committee meetings will be held on:
16 May 2006 and
14 June 2006
at the BHHP MRC, 15 Hunter St, Parramatta, 6pm.

Contact details:
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Manager   Comm. Services Coordinator
BHHP MRC   BHHP MRC
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Expressions of Interest

Background:
The Australian Government currently provides funding for community settlement services through the Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS) and Migrant Resource Centres through the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

Each year the Australian Government funds over 150 community organizations to implement projects which include the

- Delivery of settlement information, referral and case work, building community capacity by helping communities to be self reliant in planning
- Organising and working together to advocate for their needs to be met
- Promoting and representing client needs to service providers and building strong relationships with local settlement and mainstream agencies.

Migrant Resource Centres also provide a resource base for the settlement activities of migrant communities and have through this scheme identified a range of settlement issues faced by these communities. Changes of countries of origin in the last few years have meant that a number of small and emerging communities have increased. Many of these need considerable settlement assistance in the form of education, health, and employment.

Employment is perhaps the greatest facilitator of settlement for migrants and yet current labour market program arrangements present the most vexing issues for migrants at all stages of settlement. Some of the other barriers preventing new arrivals in successfully obtaining employment are language skills, lack of pre settlement information on employment, being over qualified, under employed, lack of jobs in their respective professions/ training, lack of correct information on the Australian labour market.

One of the major hurdles for skilled migrants and trades people is accessing information on their profession and trade in order to overcome employment barriers in their chosen field at an early stage of settlement. Newly arrived migrants require assistance in accessing information to conduct further research in their own occupation field and in order to maximize existing services. This could involve professional networks, websites, the labour market and higher education. This leads to addressing other issues of their ability to access further training, studies or experience in order to have their skills recognized at a level to satisfy the Australian standards.

There have been gradual improvements in the accessibility of health services through the creation of services within the main area health services. A number of community health organizations have been instrumental in advocating for migrant health services at an area level within the NSW Department of Health for a number of years. These issues have been addressed however further on going development needs to take place pl place. There are still specialist areas such as mental health, diabetes, heart related and preventative measures that are need to be addressed.

Conference Workshop Presentations:

We are seeking expressions of interest from a range of Individuals or organisations to show case models /best practice, case studies, community initiatives on the above mentioned areas of Education, Health, Employment and Business.

Selection Criteria:

Responses will be assessed on the basis of the applicant's responses to the selection criteria below and how well they address the overall conference objectives.

1. The extent to which the model/best practice, case study etc meets the objectives of the conference.
2. The extent to which the best practice /model is outcome focused and can generate community interest.
3. The extent to which the model is integrated to the conference themes of education, health, business and employment.

Application process:

Applicants will be short listed based on the assessment of the expression of interest by a panel including conference partners.
Short listed applicants will be further contacted to develop and supply detailed information.

Closing date: 28 April 2006

Expressions of interest should be marked to the attention of the:
Manager, Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre

By post	Hand Delivery	e mail
PO Box 1081	15 Hunter Street	mmonteiro@bhhpmrc.org.au
Parramatta 2124	Parramatta 2150	