



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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DELIVERING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES: PREMIER UNVEILS MAJOR STRATEGY FOR MULTICULTURALISM

NSW Premier and Minister for Western Sydney Barry O'Farrell has unveiled the NSW Government's strategy to advance multiculturalism.

Speaking to 600 community guests at the inaugural Premier's Harmony Dinner in western Sydney, Mr O'Farrell launched the *Multicultural Advantage Action Plan* with the Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello.

"NSW is one of the greatest success stories of multiculturalism anywhere in the world and it requires government action to unlock the economic, social and cultural potential of our extraordinary diversity.

"The *Multicultural Advantage Action Plan* is a package of reforms designed by the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government for one purpose: to improve the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of our diverse communities.

"Our strategy goes hand in hand with the NSW Government's broader goals for the economy and it goes into operation from today," Mr O'Farrell said.

Mr Dominello said the *Multicultural Advantage Action Plan*, to be implemented by the Community Relations Commission, would be an important element in making New South Wales the number one state.

"The *Multicultural Advantage Action Plan* utilises diversity for the benefit of all of the people of NSW," Mr Dominello said.

"It aims to foster respect and unity, celebrate and grow the value of multiculturalism as an asset and expand opportunity for participation in our society.

"One of the key elements of the plan is a proposal for a whole month of multicultural activities in March 2013

"During 'Multicultural March', one exciting feature will be a massive open-air choral concert - *Voices in Harmony* - drawing on the artistic talent and the cultural traditions of the state's ethnic communities.

"In addition to their social and cultural benefits, similar initiatives in the ACT and Victoria generate significant tourist expenditure for those jurisdictions," Mr Dominello said.

“A multicultural film festival will also be scoped as a possibility for Multicultural March.

“The Plan also unveils new honours for outstanding members of ethnic communities who give extraordinary service to the New South Wales community.

“This includes the establishment of an Honour Roll of leading migrant figures who have distinguished themselves in the past in NSW communities.

“And the new and more inclusive Premier’s Awards and Medal program will recognise outstanding current-day achievers under six categories: Youth, Lifetime Community Service, Arts and Culture, Regional Communities, Economic Participation and Community Harmony and Interfaith.

“Initiatives will also be established to give ethnic communities every opportunity to be fully involved in Australia Day activities, as what binds us together as Australians is ever important.

“An exciting new collaborative program will also be rolled out for ‘established’ communities to reach out and mentor ‘emerging’ communities and help them to fully participate in our society.

“And there will be greater engagement with local government on policies and practices for cultural diversity.

“Other *Multicultural Advantage Action Plan* initiatives, previously announced, include:

- improvements to the Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP) to ensure Government agencies deliver appropriate services for the diverse community of NSW;
- a new \$1.4 million *Multicultural Advantage* Grants program;
- development of a NSW Multicultural Tourism Strategy;
- investigation of multicultural and community ‘hubs’ in Sydney;
- initiation of the Ministerial Roundtable on Workplace Diversity;
- initiation of the CRC / Ethnic Communities Councils Policy Roundtable, and;
- establishment of the Multicultural Business Advisory Panel (MBAP) with Nihal Gupta as Chairman and Benjamin Chow as Deputy Chairman.

“Our people - with their language and cultural skills and with their intimate knowledge of their home markets – can be our ‘human highways’ for more business for New South Wales,” Mr Dominello said.

“There is so much unlocked potential within our culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities, I am excited about this journey that tonight, we embark on together,” he concluded.

Mr O’Farrell and Mr Dominello thanked the Chair of the Community Relations Commission, Stepan Kerkysharian, for the Commission’s dedication in producing the Action Plan, including significant community input.