

# Unique program celebrates 20 years of serving multicultural Australia

Tributes flow in from ethnic communities across the country, acknowledging the success of Centrelink's Multicultural Service Officer Program, which this week celebrates 20 years of providing support and assistance to multicultural Australians.



Centrelink's National Manager for Multicultural Services Sam Campisi, said the program has become an integral part of multicultural servicing in Centrelink.

"For one-in-five people living in Australia, English is not the primary language spoken at home," Mr Campisi said.

"This Centrelink program can be credited with breaking-down language and cultural barriers, while fostering positive relationships between government and Australia's diverse multicultural communities."

Mr Campisi said the make-up of the Australian community has changed significantly over the last 20 years.

"Centrelink, through the Multicultural Service Officer program, continues to evolve and shape the future of multicultural service delivery while meeting the needs of these new and emerging communities," Mr Campisi said.

"Multicultural Service Officers are committed to social engagement and take an active role in the community.

"This includes activities such as linking newly arrived refugees with employment and education opportunities; educating multicultural communities on Australian Government assistance through ethnic radio interviews; and providing a presence at community celebration days like Harmony Day and Refugee

Week. "These specialist staff complement Centrelink's other services for multicultural Australians, including interpreters, social workers, psychologists, the southern hemisphere's largest multilingual call centre, a suite of multilingual fact sheets, brochures and audio in up to 68 different languages."

With around 70 Centrelink Multicultural Service Officers nationwide in metropolitan, regional and rural Centrelink Customer Service Centres, the program is an integral part of Centrelink's service delivery and the Australian Government's social inclusion agenda. Centrelink offices across the country will be celebrating this significant milestone from 21 - 25 September.

## Marrickville Street Festival on this weekend

More than 50,000 people are expected to celebrate Marrickville's cultural diversity at Marrickville Council's Street Festival this Sunday 27 September.

A true 'feast for the senses', the Street Festival will feature live entertainment, cultural performances, international food, arts and crafts, displays, and over 100 stalls.

This year the Marrickville Street Festival has an 'East Meets West' theme. The West Stage, at the intersection of Marrickville Road and Framp-ton Avenue, will include Greek and Indigenous dancing, Hip-Hop violinist Saraya with spe-

cial guest DJ Logic, and popular local bands Cuthbert and the Night Walkers and The Bakery.

Experience the best of the East with a free massage or a delicacy from the Asian Food Markets in Calvert Street Carpark. See some incredible and diverse talents on the East Stage, on the corner of Illawarra Road and Calvert Street, which will host martial arts demonstrations, Bollywood dancing with Farah Shah from TV's So You Think You Can Dance, Assyrian Iraqi World Music band Azadoota, and Mauritian music from Jalsa Creole. Chinese musical group HALIAO (meaning 'go to the

Singing Festival' in the Zhuang ethnic minority language) will be flying all the way in from China to present their unique blend of popular music and Zhuang melody.

A Community Stage will be located in the Alex Travallion Plaza. Local community groups and acts will perform here in a busker style format, while a dedicated Kids' Space will feature free circus skills workshops, lantern making, drum playing and jumping castles, and there will be Aboriginal Cultural and Youth Services Tents for activities and information.

It's no wonder that Marrickville Street Festival is the largest annual festival in the Marrickville area. Entry to the event is free.

The Street Festival marks the end of the month-long Marrickville Cultural Festival. One of the final highlights is Lolo Lovina and the Gypsy Caravan Stage on Friday 25 September. The free concert at 7pm in Newtown Square, Enmore Road, Newtown will be 'an intoxicating brew of Gypsy mayhem' and will take place on the only caravan stage in the Southern hemisphere.

The Marrickville Cultural Festival program and details of the Marrickville Street Festival are on the Marrickville Council website.



### Inner peace just a stretch away

A COUPLE of Newtown's finest yoga teachers - **Katie Manitsas (photo)** of Samadhi Bliss and Simon Borg-O-

livier of Yoga Synergy - are two of nine renowned teachers to feature in a film - Yoga and Me. Produced by Sydney-based filmmaker, Robbie Baldwin, Yoga and Me is an exploration into the essence of yoga and what it has to offer, other than flexibility. Baldwin is a yoga teacher and has been practising for about 10 years. After noticing how much yoga had impacted on his life, he wanted to spread the word.

"I made it to show people the physiological benefits of yoga. I think there is still that perception out there that it's all about getting flexible and getting fit, but that is only one part of yoga," Baldwin said.

He divided the DVD into chapters, with each focusing on a different aspect of what yoga brings to your life. "I was actually working as a fitness instructor and started going to yoga classes. There were lots of different things happening in my life and when my mum died and other dramatic moments you find it a real place of peace," he said.

The chapters include interviews with yoga instructors, many of whom had impacted on Baldwin's life with their teachings. The chapter called Yoga and the Mind explores how yoga facilitates the ability to witness one's thoughts, while Yoga and Pain demonstrates how the art of yoga can assist in alleviating both physical and psychological pain. Other chapters include Yoga and Food, Yoga and Relationships, and Yoga and Emotions. "I like Yoga and Relationships, I think it's really interesting. When you're learning about yoga philosophy it can seem a bit removed from your life but when people talk about their relationships you go 'oh now I understand'."

Baldwin said the amount of knowledge and teachings that yoga offered was often overlooked but in his own life he has learnt to use many. "Sometimes I would do it three times a day and that is when I decided to become a teacher, it provided me with a greater sense of contentment with my every day life," he said. "I just did it for the physical benefits and when I was doing it I saw there was all this philosophy."

Article from The Glebe

### OPEN FORUM

The Australian Hellenic Council (NSW) invites all the Australian Hellenic community to an open forum on WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER at the "Alexander the Great" Macedonian Club, Livingstone Road, Marrickville, from 7pm.

#### AGENDA

1. Review of the AHC National Conference, Canberra, June 2009
2. 2009 NIKE Award
3. Meeting of regional AHCs, Melbourne, Sunday 1 November 2009
4. "Australia-Skopje Relations Forum", Federal Parliament, Canberra, 7 September 2009
5. Official visit of the Prime Minister of Skopje, Nikola Gruevski (October 2009)
6. Date of 2009 Annual General Meeting

Dr Panayiotis Diamadis- AHC (NSW) Secretary