



## NSW GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY HARMONY

The NSW Parliament last night passed laws which will strengthen the role of the Community Relations Commission in cultivating community harmony.

Minister for Citizenship John Hatzistergos said the amendments follow a review of the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000 which established the Commission.

"These laws are about reaffirming the NSW Government's commitment to promoting social cohesion," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"They strengthen our commitment to shared values within our democratic society and underline the importance of a unified commitment to Australia by all citizens in NSW."

The new laws enshrine the following principles of multiculturalism in statute:

- The people of NSW are of different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds who are free to profess and practice their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage.

- All individuals should demonstrate a unified commitment to Australia, its interests and future and should recognise the importance of shared values governed by the rule of law within a democratic framework.

- All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life.

- All individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language.

- All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in activities and programs run by the NSW Government.

- All institutions of NSW should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of NSW as a resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State.

Other amendments include the creation of a clearer leadership role for the Commission in co-ordinating whole-of-government responses to emerging community issues and referral powers to the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW.

"New South Wales is a multicultural success story where differences in language, custom, cuisine, religious belief, and family structure are rightly seen as things which enliven our society and make life interesting," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"The NSW Government is proud of our multiculturalism and these new amendments will better facilitate the work of the Community Relations Commission."

# 2,500-year anniversary of Battle of Marathon

The 2,500th anniversary of the Battle of Marathon will be commemorated with a number of events to take place at the archaeological site of Delphi, in south-central Greece, on July 2-4 within the framework of the annual European Cultural Centre of Delphi.

The events include a symposium entitled "Marathon: The Day After", the screening of a movie-documentary entitled "2,500 years since the Battle of Marathon", directed by Maria Hatzimichali-Papaliou as well as an exhibition of paintings and sculptures entitled "Marathon: Eight Greek artists on Marathon".

Additionally, the National Theatre of Northern Greece will stage Aristophanes' comedy "Acharnians".

"Generations of people worldwide live and will continue to live with the 'myth of Marathon' and it is very important for everybody to learn the true story of Marathon," Administration Council of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi President and University of Europe President Helene Ahrweiler said.

The events will be held under the aegis of the president of the Hellenic Republic and the ministry of culture and tourism.



## Long-term exemption from participation requirements for customers with a serious illness

Centrelink understands that customers with a serious illness may not be able to look for work for an extended period of time.

Customers can now apply for an exemption from participation requirements for up to 12 months if they are unable to work because they are undergoing or recovering from treatment for a serious illness. This may include cancer, severe stroke, acquired brain injury, serious burns, heart disease or serious physical injuries requiring long recovery periods.

While medical evidence will still need to be provided, customers will generally only need to provide this evidence once within a 12 month period rather than every 13 weeks.

This change applies to customers who receive payments with participation requirements such as Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, Special Benefit and Parenting Payment. These customers may not be eligible for the Disability Support Pension (DSP) if they are being treated and have good prospect for recovery, or do not meet other criteria for DSP such as residency requirements.

More information on participation exemptions for customers with serious illness can be found by going to a Centrelink Customer Service Centre or the Centrelink website [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) or calling 13 1202 to speak to someone in Greek.



## Greek Australian business community united for new opportunities

Two of the Greek-Australian businesses have merged to form a united business-networking front.

The Hellenic Business Forum and Hellenic Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HACCI) will from now on be united under the HACCI banner.

The new-look HACCI was launched at Parliament House last week.

During the period of the merger both organizations virtually ceased recruitment operations, which has seen numbers drop to below 500. One of HACCI's major new initiatives is the establishment of an internship program, aimed at giving young Greek-Australians a helping hand at the beginning of their careers.

Also high on the new HACCI's agenda is looking beyond

Greece to establish international business partnerships, in particular targeting other Greek diasporic communities.

They intend to capitalize or build some bridges to other English-speaking countries, which happen to have very vibrant and very strong populations of Greeks.

They focus on the USA and the UK, but is also aware that countries like Sweden and South Africa also have very active Greek populations. There is also the possibility that engaging with Greeks in these countries will lead to greater opportunities in Greece.

The opportunity's enormous and HACCI is calling for anyone interested in getting involved, either on the board of management or any sub-committees, to come forward and make their interest known.