

Multicultural Affairs

The People of Australia

Australia's strength lies in our people. Our nation's character has been enriched by the combined contributions of those who have come here from all corners of the globe.

As a Government we recognise that the multicultural character of our country is central to our nation's story and to our shared future. Our new national multicultural policy, The People of Australia, builds on our strong commitment to multiculturalism in Australia. It recognises the breadth of our diversity and reaffirms the Government's support for multiculturalism.

Australia has been, and will continue to be enriched by the commitment migrants make in pledging allegiance to this place by choosing to become Australians. It is our people, including our newest citizens, who have made Australia the vibrant and open society that it is today.

As Prime Minister I am proud to lead a government that champions Australia's diversity. My government is dedicated to supporting policy and programs that unite all Australians and promote acceptance and participation.

Australia has provided a new home and a chance at a better life for millions of people. I understand this personally because it was my experience as a migrant.

When my parents migrated here they came seeking a home, a community, and a better future with brighter possibilities for their children. They wanted us to have opportunities in life, opportunities afforded by education and a society built around the fair go. They found it here in Australia.

Like many Australian migrants, they chose Australia. And having chosen this country, my family have loved it with a fierce determination and passion.

A national multicultural policy is critical to ensuring our future success as a nation. Among the countries in the world Australia is unique in our breadth and balance of cultures. We are a land of 22 million people and we speak more than 260 languages and identify with more than 270 ancestries.

The People of Australia policy embraces four key principles, including celebrating and valuing our diversity; maintaining social cohesion; communicating the benefits of Australia's diversity; and responding to intolerance and discrimination.

Our new policy takes a whole-of-government approach to maintain a socially cohesive and harmonious society for all Australians. It is about all Australians and for all Australians.

As part of our commitment to multicultural Australia, we will introduce a new independent advisory body, with broader terms of



reference, to succeed the current Australian Multicultural Advisory Council. This body will advise the government on multicultural affairs and help ensure government services are responsive to the needs of migrant and refugee communities.

The new council will also act as a champion for multiculturalism in the community and implement an ambassadors program to celebrate the benefits diversity brings. To help strengthen the independence of reporting from government, they will also be tasked with managing Australia's access and equity strategy.

Australian multiculturalism recognises that equality and fairness bridges background. I believe government is a force for equality and that there is a responsibility to ensure services reach into our communities. What we give in support and encouragement to migrants when they first arrive, we reap many times over as a nation.

As a nation, we pride ourselves on giving everyone a fair go. Our new anti-racism partnership, announced as part of the new policy, will implement a national strategy to combat racism. Racism tears at the fabric of our society and undermines our values as a nation. It disregards the contribution that countless generations of Australians have made to build this nation and ignores the commitment and sacrifices new migrants make for our shared future.

The national partnership builds on the recent decision to restore the position of a full time race discrimination commissioner and will harness the combined expertise across three government departments, the Australian Human Rights Commission and the multicultural advisory council.

I know that Australia is a diverse and accepting society. One of the great things about living in a multicultural Australia is that we are able to live together harmoniously and share our cultural traditions.

As a government we are committed to Australia's unique brand of multiculturalism and to building a shared sense of nationhood underpinned by mutual respect, common values and a commitment to fairness. Multiculturalism is in Australia's national interest, speaks to fairness and inclusion, and benefits us all.

Acceptance of diversity to be promoted

Minister for Citizenship John Hatzistergos announced a formal partnership between the Together for Humanity Foundation and the Community Relations Commission (CRC).

Mr Hatzistergos said this partnership would build upon previous collaboration between the two organisations.

"The Kenelly Government is proud that NSW is one of the world's great multicultural success stories," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"This partnership will allow the joint project Step Forward to advance the acceptance of multiculturalism.

"Project activities include twelve forums with parents and community groups, and enhanced opportunities and training for the members of the Commission's Multicultural Youth Network.

"The CRC will contribute over \$20,000 to the project from the Commission's Partnership Scheme.

The proposed joint project



will help such youth to develop a real sense of belonging and the confidence, resilience, insights and desire to participate in mainstream society.

It will assist them to respond appropriately to perceived concerns, and perceived and real conflicts."

Mr Hatzistergos said the Step Forward project would benefit both the project instructors and the project recipients.

"Over 2,000 youths and adults will increase their

understanding of the challenges related to acceptance of diversity by attending workshops," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"60 youth leaders/workers will learn how to facilitate interactive educational experiences leading to a great acceptance of diversity.

"This is a fantastic program as it will aim to reach communities who have minimal interaction with people of a diverse cultural or religious background."

SOUTH WEST RAIL LINK

One million hours of work completed

Premier Kristina Kenelly and Member for Camden, Geoff Corrigan joined more than 100 workers to celebrate the completion of one million hours of work on the South West Rail Link.

"This is a major milestone for the people of south west Sydney," Ms Kenelly said.

The \$2.1 billion South West Rail Link is under construction right now and supports 200 jobs each day.

By late 2011, more than 1,500 direct jobs will be created by the project.

"This is about building the infrastructure needed to deliver new rail services to families in Sydney's south west," Ms Kenelly said.

"While Barry O'Farrell is promising to start the South West Rail Link if elected, we have already completed one million hours of work on the project.

"The 200 construction workers, engineers, electricians, forklift drivers, excavators, carpenters, riggers and crane operators are on site working."

So far, workers have undertaken part of stage one of the South West Rail Link, including a new 700 space commuter car park at Glenfield and a 112 space car park at Seddon Park.

Work is also underway on the northern and southern flyovers which will connect the South West Rail Link to the existing CityRail network.

"The NSW Government is building the South West Rail Link right now and will deliver the \$2.6 billion Parramatta to Epping Rail Link and \$4.5 billion Western Express," Ms Kenelly said.

"Barry O'Farrell will be the first Premier in history to give \$2.1 billion back to the Commonwealth Government and axe two

heavy rail lines for western Sydney."

The South West Rail Link project includes:

- 11.4km of new rail line from Glenfield to Leppington and new stations at Leppington and Edmondson Park, including commuter car parks.

- A new train stabling facility at East Rossmore.

- A major upgrade to Glenfield Station and upgrade of the bus/rail interchange in Railway Parade.

- A 700 space commuter car park at Glenfield Station and 112 additional car parking spaces at Seddon Park already complete.

- New rail flyovers to the north and south of Glenfield station.

The South West Rail link project is expected to be completed in 2015, with rail services integrated into the CityRail network by 2016.

Member for Camden, Geoff Corrigan said the South West Rail Link would provide a major boost for south west Sydney commuters.

"The South West Rail Link is an exciting development for local commuters and today's one million hours of work milestone is another positive step forward for this project."

Member for Macquarie Fields, Dr Andrew McDonald said: "The South West Rail Link will deliver 12 trains per hour in the peak, servicing around 110,000 homes in the South West Growth Centre and the new Leppington Town Centre."

"This is an important project for south west Sydney families that construction workers and excavators are working on right now."