

# Multicultural Western Australia



Office of Multicultural Interests  
Government of Western Australia

Newsletter of the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI)

February 2008



## Professor Angela Davis comes to Perth

Activist, feminist and once on the FBI's "10 Most Wanted" list, Professor Angela Davis will visit Perth for the first time on March 18 to speak about the ways racism infiltrates our institutions without us realising. Professor Davis will be an important part of this year's Harmony Week and will deliver the 2008 Vice Chancellors' Oration at Murdoch University.

Professor Davis grew up in a world where schools, toilets and even drinking fountains were divided by labels of "white" and "coloured". The black American from Alabama was a victim of racist attacks in her youth, and later became involved in black activist organisations that rallied for social justice. By 1968 she was a member of the Black Panthers and in 1970 found herself on the FBI's "10 Most Wanted" list. Her link to the kidnap and murder of a court Judge resulted in a wide scale manhunt and she was placed in jail for 18 months. After massive "Free Angela" protests around the world, Angela Davis' case was heard and she was cleared of all charges.

Her work as an educator – both at the university level and in the larger public sphere – has always emphasized the importance of building communities of struggle for economic, racial, and gender equality. She argues that racism is so entrenched within our institutions, that we no longer notice it happening.

Professor Davis is recognised by her trademark Afro hairstyle that fashionistas called "an Angela Davis" during the 60s and 70s. In 1972, John Lennon and Yoko Ono released the song "Angela", and the Rolling Stones released "Sweet Black Angel". Both songs advocated for her release from prison.

## Linking Communities project provides a boost for new and emerging communities

The recently launched *Linking Communities* project is an initiative of the Learning Centre Link, the State Association of Community, Neighbourhood and Learning Centres in WA. Learning Centre Link has been funded to employ a part-time Cultural Access Worker who will work with six learning centres over a ten month period.

The six centres involved in the project are: Armadale Community Family Centre, Broome Circle, Collie Family Centre, Glyde-In Community Learning Centre (East Fremantle), Playfield Learning Centre (East Vic Park) and Westerly Family Centre (Coo loongup).

The project has the potential to involve about 380 people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) backgrounds in the centres' activities. There will be a particular focus on participation by new and emerging community groups.

This project has been funded through the *Inclusion and Integration Grants Program* (IIGP) offered by the Office of Multicultural Interests with support from the Australian Government Department for Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).



Mr John Hyde MLA, Member for Perth, with representatives of Learning Centre Link, Armadale Community Family Centre, Glyde-In Community Learning Centre, Westerly Family Centre and the project Steering Committee

The *Linking Communities* project was launched on 14 February 2008 by Mr John Hyde MLA, Member for Perth, representing the Minister for Multicultural Interests and Citizenship, the Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC.

For more information about the *Linking Communities* project, contact Karina Wan Kader, Cultural Access Worker, on telephone 9228 9000.



### Harmony Week 2008 15 – 21 March

The 'Connect' logo, to be used for the first time during Harmony Week 2008, has been created by weaving seven colourful strings together, symbolising the intertwining, or 'connecting' of cultures in Western Australia and how cultural diversity enriches and strengthens the social fabric of our society.

The 'Connect' concept is drawn from the principles of the WA Charter of Multiculturalism. The graphic illustrates how Western Australians are bound together in a single unified strand by our shared citizenship, a sense of community membership and democratic principles including mutual respect.

The 'Connect' logo positions multiculturalism as a positive, beneficial, vibrant and integral part of Western Australia, the

most culturally diverse State in Australia. The branding creates one unifying and consistent identity for multicultural and anti-racism initiatives; community celebratory events and Harmony Week projects.

The logo is intended to draw attention to multicultural initiatives that provide opportunities for all West Australians to understand, appreciate and interact with a diverse range of cultures, traditions, values, ideas and influences, which they may not usually connect with in their day-to-day life.

It is through community engagement, education and participation that the Office of Multicultural Interests aims to reduce racism and discrimination.

## WA gets ready for HARMONY WEEK – March 15-21

With Harmony Week just around the corner, schools and community groups around the State are enthusiastically preparing, with numerous events being held in March to promote cultural diversity, inclusiveness and substantive equality.

Now in its fifth year, Harmony Week provides an opportunity for all Western Australians to share our rich cultural experiences, histories, languages and traditions, while taking a stand against racism and discrimination.

Many WA schools are taking the opportunity to spread this message during Harmony Week. Given that many learned behaviours are formed at a young age, the involvement of schools is invaluable, and the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) applauds teaching staff who have woven Harmony Week into their class activities during the week. For a taste of what's happening, read on!

From March 15-20, Huntingdale Primary School students will investigate one of the many countries represented in their own classroom. They will present a legend in the form of dance, drama, craft, written research, a power point presentation or a retelling of the legend.

Meanwhile, the Barking Gecko Theatre Company will be exploring Harmony Week themes at Mirrabooka and Girraween Senior High Schools and Balga Primary School. A week of workshops will introduce students to unique theatre exercises and techniques with a multicultural theme.

Mirrabooka Senior High School will also run four days of multicultural activities during Harmony Week. Students will take part in multimedia presentations, multi-faith panel discussions and story-telling, and watch a presentation from 'Empowering Peacemakers in Your Community'. The value of cultural diversity will also be taught through soccer, music and dance.

Campbell Primary School in Canning Vale is hosting the creation of two major art projects. Children and the wider community will produce a large mosaic multicultural wall and a painted Aboriginal mural.

The OMI Community Grants Program has supported a number of innovative Harmony Week projects.

Bunbury pre-school children and the wider Bunbury community will have access to a special storytelling session with an Algerian bilingual storyteller at the Withers Public Library on March 18. South West Migrant and Multicultural Services will also hold a Cultural Exchange Forum, where speakers from different cultural backgrounds will share their life stories, explaining the traditions they grew up with and answering audience questions.

Residents in the Cities of Stirling and Melville will have the chance to hear refugee, migrant and indigenous stories first hand. The joint Living Libraries project is aimed at connecting community members with people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, by having them tell their stories being 'Living Books'. It is hoped that this personal contact will help reduce and prevent racism and challenge stereotypes.

# MAJOR EVENTS

To find out what else is happening during Harmony Week, including events in your area, go to [www.multicultural.wa.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.wa.gov.au)

## Harmony International Folk Fest

On Saturday 15 March 2008, the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre will come alive with the Harmony International Folk Festival featuring some of Western Australia's most talented and diverse performers.

An extravaganza of folk music, songs and cultural performances from across the world will showcase the talents of many people of diverse backgrounds who have made Western Australia their home. More than 350 performers will wow the crowds.

This is a major community event organised by member associations of the Australian Asian Association of WA Inc (AAA). The event serves as an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of diverse cultural groups to the development of Western Australia in a true spirit of harmony.

Come and join in the fun and excitement, and learn about the diverse cultural groups that make up our unique Western Australian community.

Tickets are limited and must be obtained prior to the event. An entry fee of \$2 will be charged. To obtain your tickets contact the AAA on telephone 9328 6202.

## Vice Chancellors' Oration

A major highlight of Harmony Week 2008 is the Vice Chancellors' Oration at Murdoch University.

This year's oration is titled "Recognising Racism in the Era of Neo-liberalism" and will be delivered by Professor Angela Davis who will explore how historical definitions of racism prevents us from recognising how new forms of racism have infiltrated our institutions via the processes, attitudes and policies we have adopted.

The Vice Chancellors' Oration will be held on Tuesday 18 March from 6:30pm to 9:30pm in the Kim E Beazley Lecture Theatre, on South Street, at Murdoch University.

This is a free event and open to the public, however places are limited and an RSVP is essential. For further information or to RSVP, please contact Siobhan Quinlan, Events Coordinator by telephoning 9360 6253 or email [rsvp@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:rsvp@murdoch.edu.au).

## Sir Ronald Wilson Leadership Award Presentation

The Sir Ronald Wilson Leadership Award recognises leaders in the field of social justice, human rights, equality and anti-racism. At the conclusion of the 2008 Vice Chancellors' Oration, the Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC, Minister for Multicultural Interests and Citizenship, will present the inaugural Award to an outstanding Western Australian who has shown exceptional leadership in these areas. The Award will be presented at the Vice Chancellors' Oration on Tuesday March 18, 2008.

## City Concerts

A Harmony Week event that will appeal to city workers, is a week of musical performances in Central Park, on the corner of Hay St and William St. Hundreds of people are expected to be entertained by some of Western Australia's most talented and diverse musicians.

The performances of contemporary world music will provide a visual and aural feast during Harmony Week. The Central Park concerts aim to highlight a different dimension of WA culture, reminding passers-by of our vibrant, harmonious multicultural society.

The daily lunchtime concerts are organised by Urban Conversation, a volunteer organisation working to revitalise Perth city.

Concerts are free and all members of the public are welcome.

Harmony Week provides an opportunity for all Western Australians to share our rich cultural experiences, histories, languages and traditions, while taking a stand against racism and discrimination.

# Harmony Week

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# Moses Mabeny

## Leading the South Sudanese Community



Mr Moses Mabeny with OMI Grants Officer, Mr Rod Nicholl.

Hello! My name is Moses Maker Mading Mabeny, a migrant from Rumbek in Southern Sudan. I am the new President of the Southern Sudan Community in Western Australia.

My father was a successful businessman and my grandfather was a Sergeant in the Southern Sudan army during the time that Sudan was a British colony. My grandfather fought for eight years during two world wars.

When war broke out in Sudan, my family was forced to flee to the capital, Khartoum.

I finished High School in 1997, the same year the government announced that all Year 12 graduates had to report for military training. But my principles would not allow me to accept such a fate and I escaped to Egypt in 1998, where I spent two years before joining my two elder brothers in Australia. The war meant we had been separated for fifteen years and I was very happy to be reunited with them.

In Australia, I focused on developing English language skills and undertook my BA in Sociology at Murdoch University. It was not easy doing full time night shift and studying full time, but I managed. Most of my friends usually wonder how I achieved my degree. I proudly answer through my determination and focus!

During the past seven years working with Sudanese communities in more than four states, I understand that Sudanese refugees carry around an invisible backpack full of childhood insecurities and that they often struggle against the heavy burden of past experiences. Many Sudanese have low self esteem as a result of being scorned in their homeland and squashed into refugee camps before coming to Australia.

I believe my leadership could make the load lighter, so I work to show people that I trust and believe in them through my role as the President of the Southern Sudan Community in Western Australia.

I am determined to strengthen the South Sudanese community and help community members feel better about themselves. When that happens, their work improves, and my own morale leaps. As Noel M Tichy said once 'Leadership is about change, it's about taking people from where they are now to where they need to be.'

## Financial Counselling information for ethnic communities

Mr Gary Newcombe, Director Policy and Strategic Development, Department for Consumer and Employment Protection (DOCEP) will launch a new series of financial counsellors posters and flyers aimed at WA's Multicultural Community. The posters and flyers are produced by the Financial Counsellors Resource Project (FCRP).

The poster series was developed for clients for whom English is not their first language. Funded by DOCEP, the education material will benefit clients who have financial difficulties or issues and don't know where to go for help. Many are unaware that they can access free and confidential financial counselling in their local area.

The poster and brochure series "A financial counsellor can help" is available in six languages: Arabic, Amharic, French, Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese.

Both FCRP and DOCEP are encouraging a co-operative approach in reaching out to both new migrants and refugees in their first 12 months of settlement.

The launch is an opportunity for WA's financial counsellors, the CALD community and DOCEP to meet and network in order to better service these vulnerable consumers.

The launch will be held at 10:00am, Tuesday 18 March 2008 at the Blue Room, 53 James Street, Northbridge. If you would like to attend, please RSVP before 7 March 2008 by telephoning Diane Hayes at FCRP on (08) 9221 9411 or email: fcrp@fcrp.org.au



## What is happening at Mission Australia!

The Literacy, Language and Numeracy Program of Mission Australia invites you to its office at Unit 19, 24 Chesterfield Road, Mirrabooka, to participate in the following events:

### Harmony Week

Harmony Week will be celebrated on Wednesday 19 March 2008. The program will include lunch and music from 11.30 – 2.30 and everyone is asked to bring a dish of their favourite ethnic food and come in traditional dress. The event will begin with a short video on "Words of Peace". Everyone is welcome.

### Police talk

Come and join a "Police Talk" on Wednesday 9 April 2008. A Police Officer will be present to provide information about driver's licenses, securing your home, discrimination and other topics of interest. All are welcome. The talk will be held at 11:00am and repeated again at 12:30pm. For further information contact Mandy Whitton, Connections Project Coordinator, on telephone 9207 3221.

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