

**MAKING
OUR
VOICES
HEARD**

AFRICAN COMMUNITIES SPEAK OUT REPORT

**27 NOVEMBER 2008
ADELAIDE**

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Government of South Australia
Multicultural SA

AFRICAN COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS

AFRICAN COMMUNITIES SPEAK OUT

A COMMUNITY FORUM FOCUSING ON ADDRESSING CURRENT
ISSUES AFFECTING AFRICAN-AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES

THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2008
9.00AM – 5.00PM ITALIAN CLUB
262 CARRINGTON STREET, ADELAIDE

PRESENTED BY THE
MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE OF SA
AND THE
AFRICAN COMMUNITIES COUNCIL OF SA

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

African Women's Federation of SA, Burundian Community Association of SA,
Congoese Association of SA, Ethiopian Community Association of SA,
Ghanaian Community Association, Liberian Community Association of SA,
Liberian United Women's Association, Nuba Mountains Association of SA,
Ogaden Community Association of SA, Oromo Community Association of SA,
Rwandan Community Association, Sierra Leonean Community Association,
Somali Community Development Association, Sudanese Community Association
of SA, Sudanese Women's Network, Tanzanian Community of SA, Togolese
Community Association, and the Ugandan Community Association of SA.

AND WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE

African Chamber of Commerce (AFRICOM)
The Department of Immigration and Citizenship

TO REGISTER, PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN ATTACHED REGISTRATION FORM.

For additional information, contact **MATTI SPELLACY** on TEL 8217 9510 / EMAIL admin@mrcsa.com.au or **MARTIN MAYA** on TEL 8217 9520 / EMAIL martin@accsa.com.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As the hosting organisations of the African Communities Speak Out, the Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia (MRCSA) and African Communities Council of South Australia (ACCSA) wish to acknowledge and thank the following individuals, groups and organisations for contributing to the success of this event:

- ♦ Partners – Multicultural SA and the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)
- ♦ Speakers – Mr Hieu Van Le, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia and Chairman of the SA Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission; Mr Abeselom Nega, Chair of the Federation of African Communities Council and Steering Committee Member of the AHRC African Australian Project; Mr David Edwards, Acting State Director of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship; and Dr Lynn Arnold AO, CEO of Anglicare SA.

Their presentations are contained in the Appendices of this report.

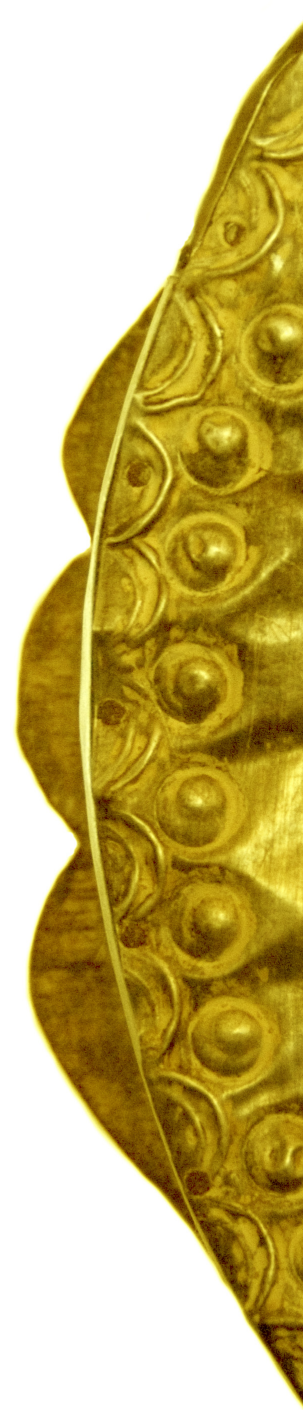
- ♦ Community Facilitators – Sidique Bah, Reagan Bledde, Catherine Cole, George Fomba, Zeleka Habtegiorgis, Ibrahim Jabateh, Fina Kamati, Mary Kasangu, Amel Manyon, Rukukuye Mastaki, Martin Maya, Dr Lillian Mwanri, Abeselom Nega, Patricia Njuki, Bosco Opi and Odette Polepole.
- ♦ The many African community groups that formally supported and sanctioned the Speak Out. These are listed on the Speak Out promotional flyer/invitation also contained in the Appendices.
- ♦ The African leaders, workers and community members who generously gave their time to participate in the Speak Out, with many taking time off work to add their voice to the proceedings.

Community participants are listed in section 6 of the report.

- ♦ The service providers who attended the Speak Out in order to support and learn from the African communities, and who are committed in their efforts to improved service delivery for these communities.

The views and opinions expressed in this section of the report belong to the African community members who participated in the Speak Out.

Direct quotes by community members are presented in italics.



INTRODUCTION

As the African communities in South Australia have become more organised and knowledgeable about how to best serve the interests of their members, they have been eager to take up the mantle of speaking out on issues that concern and affect them. Above all, they have expressed a strong desire to speak for themselves rather than having others speak on their behalf and to address their concerns as a means of furthering their effective settlement and full participation.

The MRCSA and ACCSA are strongly committed to supporting the empowerment of the African communities in South Australia and it was this shared commitment that prompted the African Communities Speak Out.

With the support and sanction of key African community groups and organisations, the Speak Out aimed to provide a forum through which African leaders, workers and community members could come together and be the dominant voice on a broad range of strategies for addressing issues that impact on their settlement, health and wellbeing. For this reason, it was agreed that the round table discussions would be facilitated and reported on by African community members and that the communities themselves would drive the proceedings. This they achieved with serious discussion on very complex and challenging issues intermixed with light banter, much laughter and song.

African community representation at the Speak Out was characterised by diversity across ethnic and religious groups, as well as inclusive participation in terms of the many women and young people who attended and actively contributed to the discussions.

Although SGP and other settlement services, as well as key Commonwealth, State and Local services were invited to the Speak Out, the number from each was curtailed in order to ensure African community dominance of the proceedings. We thank them for their support and for assisting with scribing.

The issues and accompanying actions identified by the African communities have been compiled and are presented in this report. They form the basis of an action plan that the African communities 'own' and are keen to progress, hopefully with the support and assistance of all committed stakeholders. This report will be forwarded to the Australian Human Rights Commission, Department of Immigration and Citizenship and Commonwealth and State Social Inclusion Boards to assist their deliberations in ensuring full participation for Australians of African background.

EUGENIA TSOLIS OAM
Executive Director
Migrant Resource Centre of SA

DR JOSEPH MASIKA
Chairperson
African Communities Council of SA

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

All speakers acknowledged the traditional owners and custodians of the land, the Kaurna people, and paid tribute to their elders both past and present.

DR JOSEPH MASIKA
CHAIRPERSON, AFRICAN COMMUNITIES COUNCIL OF SA

Dr Masika welcomed all participants and discussed the objectives of the Speak Out which were to consolidate the hopes, dreams and aspirations of the African Community in South Australia and to develop strategies for advancing these. He particularly emphasised the responsibility of the African Community to future generations of African young people and the importance of the legacy that the Africans of today would be imparting to them.

Dr Masika urged all Africans to take control of their community's development and capacity building, stating:

This is a crucial time. We should not wait for others to act on our behalf. There should be ownership by migrants of migrant issues.

In closing, Dr Masika spoke about the 'White Ribbon Campaign' which seeks to raise community awareness at the national level about domestic violence. He alluded to domestic violence within the African community, as in other communities, and urged all participants to be vigilant and address this problem within their respective communities.

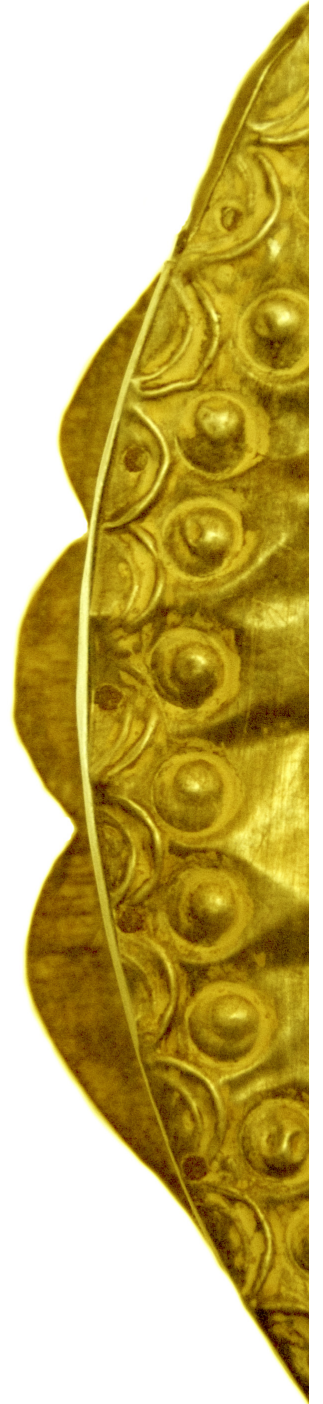
MR HIEU VAN LE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE SA MULTICULTURAL AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Mr Le expressed the hope that the themes of Understanding and Communication would dominate the Speak Out proceedings. He also highlighted the cultural diversity that characterises South Australia and described it as both an asset and a challenge.

A one size fits all approach in settlement service delivery is not appropriate, he argued.

Mr Le emphasised that government agencies cannot do everything and that the African communities themselves must be unified and active. He described how every new wave of settlers has experienced some negative reaction from the public, but that each successive group has managed to settle and settle very well. Importantly, he added, these groups have contributed to our multiculturalism which is applauded around the world. He also alluded to survey findings which reinforce that nine out of ten people in the community believe that multiculturalism is a positive force.

Mr Le expressed confidence that the Speak Out would generate ideas and solutions that would improve the lives of Africans in South Australia and on that note, officially opened the proceedings.



MR ABEJELOM NEGA

CHAIR OF THE FEDERATION OF AFRICAN COMMUNITIES COUNCIL

As a committed Ambassador for the 'White Ribbon' Campaign, Mr Nega reinforced the message of gender equality across communities and made reference to the fact that this campaign 'carries the hopes and aspirations of many women'.

He emphasised that despite recent reports from the media and other quarters, African Australians are making significant contributions across a range of fields including medicine, nursing, engineering, education, policing, sport and the public service.

He added that the African community has challenges like any other community. These relate to their pre-arrival experiences which include long stays in refugee camps (which in African can average up to 17 years), disruption to education, lack of employment history, experiences of torture and trauma, and lack of infrastructure. While refugees by nature are resilient people, Mr Nega emphasised the importance of ensuring that those who are at risk of being left behind are supported and assisted.

Mr Nega identified what he felt was needed for the African Community to move forward and take ownership of its issues. These included political representation, collaboration with other communities, early intervention, partnerships with the government and non-government sectors, and self reliance. He also encouraged policy makers to talk to the African communities as.....we need to be part of the equation.

Mr Nega's closing words to the African communities were:

We need to be courageous enough to say the things that we mean. We have to raise issues again and again, again and again, again and again, until we get the response that is needed.

He also made the commitment to take back to the national level key issues raised at the Speak Out.

DR LYNN ARNOLD AO

CEO, ANGLICARE SA

Dr Arnold provided a comprehensive and poignant historical overview of the colonisation of the African continent, focusing particularly on the Democratic Republic of Congo, and its impact on the identity and autonomy of its people. African nations and their people were reduced to mere possessions of an imperialist power and this history of oppression and occupation has left its imprint on African self-identity and the manner in which the African people are perceived by western societies.

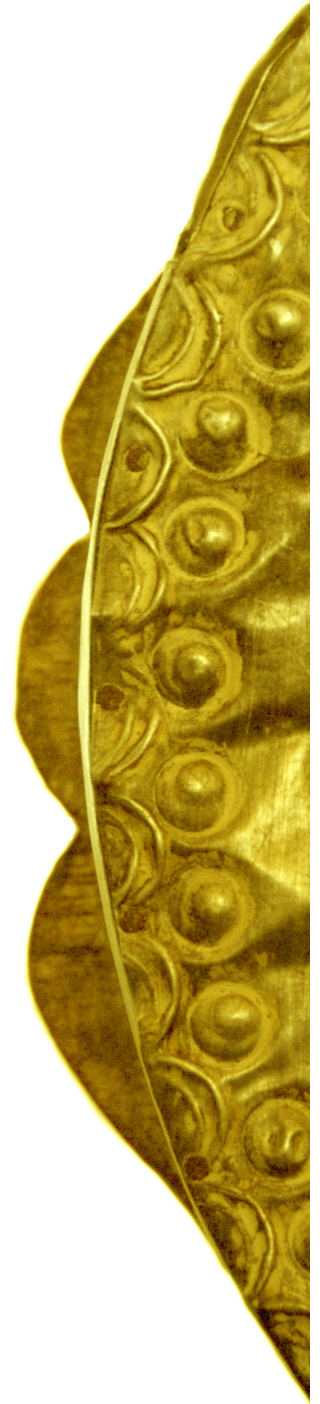
Within this context, Dr Arnold provided an explanation as to why issues arise for African settlers in Australia as a means of better understanding how to address these.

MR DAVID EDWARDS
ACTING STATE DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr Edwards praised the Speak Out for identifying the issues and aspirations of the African communities in South Australia and reinforced the admiration that new migrants inspire through their courage and resilience. He discussed Australia's migration history which has changed 'the face of our nation', and identified some of the key settlement challenges experienced by each wave of new arrivals. With respect to African settlement, Mr Edwards alluded to the 16,000 humanitarian entrants from different parts of Africa who have made Australia their home.

He also provided an overview of the Australian Government's settlement services and programs designed to further the inclusion and participation of new arrivals. He encouraged the African communities to continue to 'speak out' about their issues and needs and urged them to:

Look to a way forward and plan a future of self-determination, unity and independence.



OUTCOMES OF THE SPEAK OUT: EDUCATION

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Government Review of the NAP (for the teenage years)

Arriving with no prior education but being placed in classes according to age.

Being placed into the New Arrivals Program for a set period and then displaced again into metropolitan schools (14-19 year olds).

The lack of 'one on one' support for vulnerable children and teenagers who are making complex pathway decisions. This support should include psychological support.

2. Mentoring Programs to support learning and integration into the education system

3. Cultural Support via committee membership and other representation in schools, TAFEs etc

ACTIONS

Individual plans based on individual circumstances - ie level of prior schooling, ability etc

Review of the New Arrivals Program (NAP) for teenagers – ie as a transitional program.

NAP funds to be used for 'one on one' support.

Mentoring and leadership programs that also encourage communities to participate in the school sector.

Overseas trained teachers to be employed as Teacher Assistants.

More African community members to become involved in mainstream education committees and advisory bodies.

OTHER ISSUES

♦ Young people being placed in the same AMEP classes as older people.

♦ The need for interpreters in AMEP classes.

♦ Changes to AMEP teaching to accommodate the learning backgrounds of new arrivals. The emphasis should initially be on visual and oral learning with respect to the teaching of English. Written proficiency should follow at a later stage.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Skills audit and evaluation

The need to evaluate existing skills sets for members of the African communities, including areas of personal interest, and to develop a central database that employers can access. This database should include training information.

2. Self determination

While this is ultimately an individual responsibility, it should include access to supports such as mentoring and training, as well as assistance in developing social networks.

3. Training for employers

This training should focus on the social responsibility of employers and should include multicultural awareness.

ACTIONS

Establish an African Communities Community Capacity Building Committee to identify and promote the skills, experience and qualifications of community members (ie skills audit).

Provide pre-employment training options.

Make Job networks accountable for assisting workers to find and keep a job through case management and mediation.

Engage with employers to promote African employment and provide them with cultural awareness training.

OTHER ISSUES

Resources
Expanding basic skills and English training
Developing a database/evaluation of skills
Consultation
Qualifications assessment
Enhancement of individual choice
Partnership between government and private sector



FAMILY, GENDER ROLES & WOMEN'S ISSUES

"WHAT HOLDS THE FAMILY TOGETHER?"

COMMON GOALS FOR THE FUTURE AND RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER.

EDUCATION IS NEEDED TO LINK THESE"

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Women need to understand the meaning of 'abuse' and be aware that there is help available.

2. Education for men and women about what is acceptable behaviour and for men to understand that men and women have an equal say in the family - and that this can strengthen and enhance the family rather than divide it.

3. Information sessions to promote an understanding of Australian culture with regards to gender roles – ie the rights and responsibilities of the father, mother and children.

ACTIONS

Confidence building for African women that includes awareness training about what constitutes acceptable behaviour and what they can do to make changes in their lives if they are victims of abuse or domestic violence.

Community workers and leaders should be trained and become qualified in all aspects relating to domestic violence.

Communities to be educated to not shun women who complain of abuse but rather to be their ambassadors.

Community elders, leaders and youth leaders – should work together and take ownership of the problems.

Programs delivered by service providers for men as peer educators and positive role models.

Programs that promote effective communication in families.

Community leaders/members need to be empowered through training on Australian culture and systems.

Government funded training for new and emerging communities on conflict resolution and anger management (to prevent physical violence).

Training and information sessions should continually reinforce:

- ♦ What constitutes acceptable behaviour
- ♦ Respect for each others' view
- ♦ Open communication
- ♦ Transparency in the spending of family money
- ♦ Family mediation
- ♦ Sharing

These values should be promoted by community leaders/workers.

Community workers and leaders must show professionalism and uphold confidentiality so that women are confident to speak out about domestic violence and other issues.

It is understood that change will not occur overnight but it needs to be continually aimed for.

Written information needs to be language specific.

It is great for the Government to bring people to this country but there needs to be adequate supports in place. It took time for immigrants in the past to integrate, and it is important to understand that it will take time for the African community as well. Our problems are the same as previous new arrivals. It is important for not only the wider community to understand that but also the African community.

Education on birth control which reinforces the responsibility of both men and women.

Activities that engage men.

Men should be encouraged to share child care responsibilities.

OTHER ISSUES

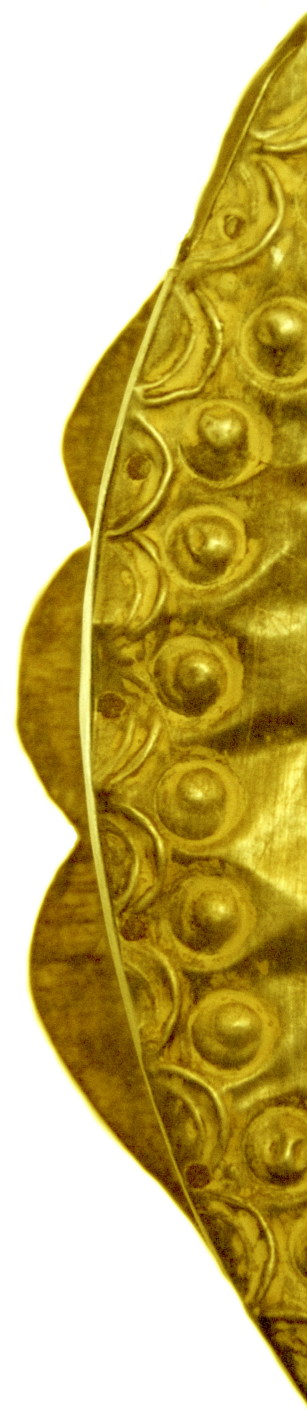
Access to accommodation and community support, especially for single parents, are also important in furthering the wellbeing of African families.

Culture shifts within the African community regarding gender roles.

Parenting challenges – African parenting culture versus Australian children's rights.

Women's health and language barriers – confidentiality concerns, fear, shame and isolation.

How to change from followers to leaders as 'African women' – ie showing leadership ability without offending men, how to get African men's support.



FAMILY VALUES

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Traditional hierarchy

Need to find a balance and a 'middle way' between the parents' culture and the children's culture.

2. Respect for elders

3. Culture, religion and language

Respect for culture and religion while also integrating into the Australian culture.

ACTIONS

Workshops for young people on their history and culture and the need to feel comfortable about their heritage.

Committee of elders to empower leaders and communities to provide positive role models for young people.

Cultural competencies training for service providers to support young people to respect who they are.

Traditional language classes for young people to maintain their language and culture.

Cultural festivals to affirm cultural identity and support engagement between different cultures.

OTHER ISSUES

The need for young people to understand and respect Australian law.

Additional hours – English language learning.

Life skills education – eg the law, finances, marriage, communication.

HEALTH

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Access to practical health education, information and training.

2. The employment of African workers in the health sector, especially community health and mental health services and hospitals.

3. Cross cultural awareness training for mainstream health services including community health centres addressing racism, prejudice, misperceptions about Africans and health etc.

ACTIONS

Health information for African communities that is culturally and linguistically appropriate, including information on sexual health.

Health programs that specifically target young Africans.

Awareness raising for African communities about where to go for information and how to access services.

Health promotion focusing on diet, nutrition, physical activity etc.

Local government to be more proactive in engaging with African communities settling in their areas, linking them with local health services and networks, and supporting them to develop projects in collaboration with these.

Gender specific interpreters in the delivery of health services to African communities.

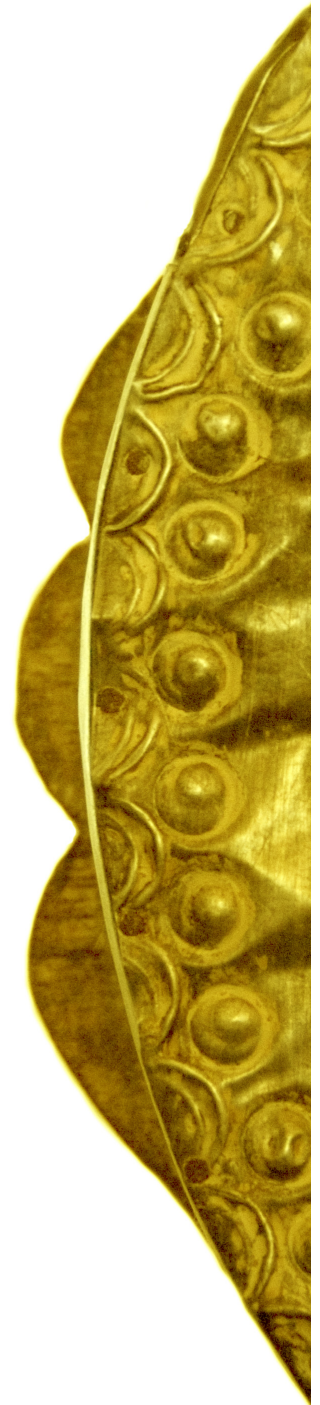
Longer sessions with GP/nurse/health provider.

SA Government to invest in the training of African health workers. African workers need to be employed in health services. Training, apprenticeships and student placements should be provided to the African communities.

Bridging courses for overseas trained and qualified health professionals.

Develop the confidence, communication and job search skills of African community members so that they can more readily access employment opportunities within the health sector.

Cross cultural training should involve African community leaders, including training on the use of interpreters and the need for culturally sensitive reception services.



OTHER ISSUES

- ♦ Confidentiality issues when interpreters from small communities are involved.
- ♦ Mental health issues related not only to pre-migration experiences but also to 'culture shock' in Australia.
- ♦ Lack of awareness about women's health centres – more promotion needed.

ACTIONS

African counsellors – male and female.

Health screening for African women – eg pap smears, breast screens.

HOUSING

PRIORITY ISSUES

- 1. Remove barriers to long term accommodation for Africans through education of landlords and reporting of discrimination as well as through pathways to housing ownership**
- 2. Education for the African community about their rights and obligations as tenants, as well as how to deal with and report any form of discrimination**
- 3. Cultural awareness training for housing providers**

OTHER ISSUES

- ♦ General shortage of rental properties in South Australia.
- ♦ Tenants have to vacate the rental property if the landlord decides to sell.
- ♦ Choice of locality is hampered by cost.

ACTIONS

Establish an African Communities Housing Committee as an advocacy body that can advise, link and work with the Minister for Housing, Housing SA and housing agencies in improving services for community members. Together with housing providers, this committee will need to address the following issues:

- ♦ a strategy to assist the African community access affordable housing.
- ♦ advice in relation to signing contracts.
- ♦ assistance in overcoming language barriers with respect to housing matters.
- ♦ information on what is available, how much it costs, where it is located, whether it is close to public transport etc.
- ♦ awareness raising about the housing market and how it works.
- ♦ appropriate housing for larger families.
- ♦ housing in South Australia that is geared to extended families.

Housing SA to reinstate refugees as a priority group for public housing, particularly sole parents.

Public housing should be 'needs appropriate' – ie culturally appropriate and responsive to African family needs.



IDENTITY & INTEGRATION

YOU CANNOT IDENTIFY AND INTEGRATE WITH YOUR NEW CULTURE
WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Communication

- ♦ within and between communities
- ♦ between service providers
- ♦ in terms of asking the right question in the right way

2. Cultural Values and Identity

♦ Culture clash - African and Australian

Clash of values. People come to Australia with a set of values unique to their culture and life circumstances. Upon arrival that are faced with Australian values which can be quite different, especially values around family roles – eg children back in Africa have to obey parents while in Australia they are more independent and encouraged to speak out and question their parents. The roles of males and females are considerably different in Australia and this is especially difficult for males who are used to being dominant and the family head. In Australia they are expected to contribute as equals and be involved in traditionally female roles – ie getting involved in issues with children at school, cooking etc.

ACTIONS

Break down all the small networks that are currently in operation and form one network of service providers and community leaders such as the Migrant Settlement Services Network. This network should be facilitated to encourage collaboration between all parties to achieve positive outcomes for African communities.

We need to work cooperatively, break down competitive behaviour between recipients of funding, and openly discuss issues and strategies. We also need to advertise this network within the broader community so that any member of the public who works with Africans has a point of contact to raise issues and seek answers.

Management training for African community groups and leaders on how to run a community organisation – ie role of leader, role of members, documented procedures, effective communication of issues and events etc.

Educating the broader community on the cultural specifics of various African communities. Cultural awareness that extends beyond service providers to the whole of the community (ie through schools and public forums) will break down many barriers.

African communities to educate their members on their own culture as well as Australian culture – ie their language, religion, history etc. This should be supported by government funding.

Capacity building within the various communities and an emphasis on raising awareness and acceptance of the diversity within a cultural group.

It is challenging for new arrivals when identity is not well defined. Individuals need to connect with themselves before they can begin to integrate and connect with the broader community.

♦ **Youth do not understand their parents' language and culture**

It is very difficult for young people who came to Australia as small children and have lived most of their lives here. These young people see how their Australian friends are treated by parents and feel that it is OK to challenge their own parents. The older Africans are trying to raise their children with African values and respect for elders but it is perceived by young people that this behaviour is not common in Australian families.

Young people don't understand the language and/or culture of their parents. This leads to conflict within the family because elders think that young people are behaving in a disrespectful manner. This loss of cultural identity through the generations is of great concern to older Africans.

♦ **Parental permission is required for children and young people to participate in integration activities**

♦ **Family roles**

African families feel that they can sort out issues within the family as this is the way it has always been done. They don't believe that getting help from outside will actually help.

♦ **Gender equality and inequality**

African adult men are used to being providers back in Africa. In Australia many of them are unemployed so they feel lost as they no longer have the 'provider' role. This can lead to anti-social behaviour (eg drinking) to fill the void.

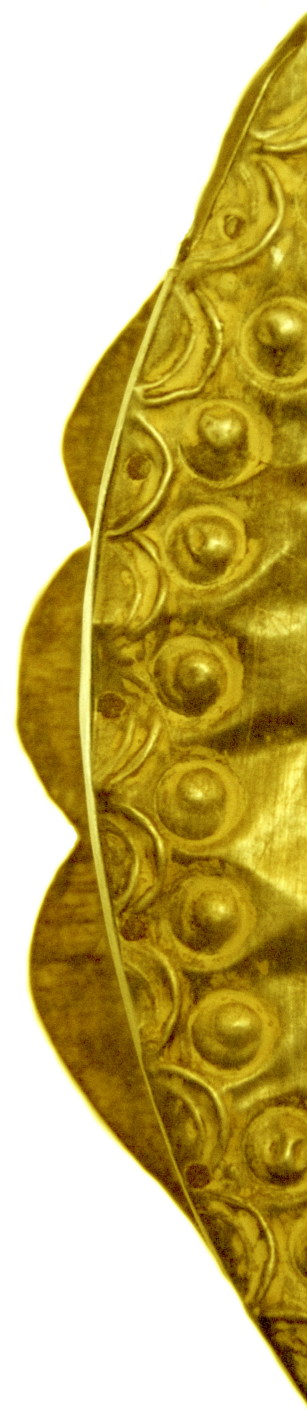
Women's roles change in Australia and this becomes threatening to men who have traditionally been the head of the family.

When people first arrive in Australia they need to be appropriately linked with representatives from their community and support structures. These cultural networks have assisted individuals and families to settle and orientate in the first few months and support them to integrate.

Young people need to be educated to understand Australian family values as these are different from those portrayed on television and other media.

Young people need to access cultural activities that affirm their identity.

Service providers need to be trained in how to support mediation and reconciliation for African families.



♦ **The role of education and its impact on integration**

New arrivals with low levels of education feel pressured to leave their culture behind in order to integrate. Those with higher levels of education can see that there are ways to embrace both the Australian and their cultural way of life.

Long term Community Development initiatives are required to support new arrival families to balance their cultural needs while educating them on Australian culture and systems.

♦ **People from the same culture have different cultural identities and have taken different paths to get to Australia**

People from the 'same community' have difficulties identifying with their 'primary culture' because they have all had different experiences on their path to Australia. Some arrived as young children and some were older. People lived in different places before Australia – ie Egypt, refugee camps etc. They have different religious beliefs and speak different languages. How do they identify with other arrivals in Australia that come from the same country?

Cross cultural community development initiatives that provide forums for different ethnic groups to come together to support each other's development.

3. Access Issues

♦ **English language skills – if never formally educated it is difficult to learn in a formal education system**

Very hard for older Africans who have never received a formal education. They find it very difficult to learn English in the structured education environment and require more informal/practical ways to learn English.

Adult AMEP to reorganise its teaching in order to achieve better outcomes – eg separate classes for older and younger people, focus on oral and visual learning before reading and writing, and more opportunities to link migrants with member of the broader community so that they can practice their English.

♦ **Transport – expensive to get licence, difficult to learn to drive when instruction is in English**

♦ **Affordability of buying, running and maintaining a car**

♦ **Public transport inconvenient for mothers with lots of children**

With small budgets and large families, getting around Adelaide to get involved in 'integration' events is difficult. The cost of getting a driver's licence is high, getting a licence when they speak minimal English is difficult, affording and maintaining a car once they have a licence is expensive. Public transport is a huge hassle for single mums with many children.

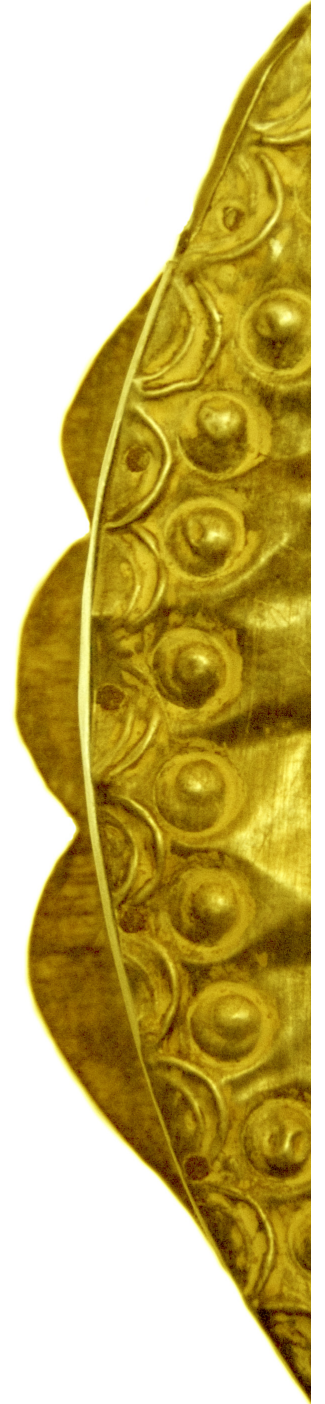
Discussions with Local Councils to explore the possibility of providing a community bus service to collect families/individuals and transport them to and from shopping centres and other key local services.

Africans trained and employed as qualified driving instructors – to assist those in the communities particularly women sole parents with young children and the elderly.

Service providers should be funded to assist communities with transportation to participate in integration events.

OTHER ISSUES

- ♦ The justice system is encountering Africans who do not always have family networks and supports in Australia. This makes it difficult to explain to a court who will be responsible for and supportive of a person once they are released from custody.
- ♦ Sport is a big part of Aussie culture and a good way for Africans to become integrated into the community. Sounds good in theory but sporting activities cost money and families may have more important spending priorities; African kids often have responsibilities within their families that take priority over sports (eg need to finish homework first, may need to work to help provide for the family etc); and need permission from parents to play.



THE LAW & THE POLICE

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Raise the cultural awareness of the legal and justice systems

'Fair' recruitment of African police officers – ie targeted and flexible recruitment, reinforce police training through TAFE.

Discrimination and prejudice towards different races. For example, the negative focus towards the African community following the recent incident reported in the media involving African young people. How do we change the perception of Australian society and the assumption that if you are African, you are a law breaker?

2. Education for African community on legal issues

Focusing particularly on family law, the Australian legal system, driving with/ without a licence, driving an unregistered vehicle etc.

ACTIONS

Ongoing training for police officers – from officers 'on the beat' through to public relations and media liaison personnel within SAPOL.

Educate Families SA and their social workers through cultural competencies training to involve community elders in decision making regarding African families.

Mediation to be the first step in the DFC child protection response.

Formal liaison between the police and African communities.

Training for the African communities on the legal and justice systems in South Australia – supported by the availability of translated information. At the community level, there needs to be a firm commitment to participating and promoting this training on the part of community members.

Engagement and ongoing consultation between African community leaders and the Australian legal system – so that leaders can take information back to their communities.

African communities to be supported to identify and respond to diversity issues.

Develop and support ongoing awareness about the Australian legal system in schools.

Reinstate a Multicultural Advisory Unit within SAPOL and other key government departments to ensure effective communication and consultation with CALD communities. These specialist units have been dismantled over the years and this has compromised the capacity of these agencies to engage with and identify issues relevant to migrant communities.

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Community expectations of leaders places a heavy burden on key people who themselves are trying to settle.

2. Current funding arrangements have made African communities subservient to service providers rather than equal partners.

3. The role and responsibility of leaders and community members in developing their communities.

ACTIONS

Leadership training for African community leaders targeting women, men and youth.

Allocation of government funding based on need rather than numbers/critical mass. This should include the allocation of seed funding to lay the foundations for community development and for engagement with the broader community.

Funding bodies need to rethink funding made to service providers to 'care' for new communities or their members, women or young people.

African communities to commit themselves to building and developing their infrastructures.

Commitment to inclusive governance by African communities that focuses on:

- ♦ developing governance systems and procedures;
- ♦ inclusive representation (women and youth) – eg constitutions of African community organisations need to articulate a commitment to adequate female representation on management committees; and
- ♦ succession planning through a variety of initiatives

OTHER ISSUES

Leadership and governance were discussed within the context of leadership issues facing African leaders and what makes a good leader. It was agreed that a good leader possesses the following attributes:

Listening skills
Respect for others - including those with dissenting views
Integrity and transparency
Patience
Humility
Good communication skills
Having a vision
Upholding democratic governance



Leadership issues and challenges include:

Community expectations
Responsibility
Relevance
Persistence
Lack of resources
Diverse needs
Divisions
Democratic governance
Empowerment
Lack of role models
The lack of structures and systems that support sustainable leadership
Lack of diversity of representation – eg women and youth
The need for leadership training

Governance

Governance was defined as being a system, process and/or structure that enable individuals to provide leadership to achieve pre-determined outcomes.

Governance should be used to provide leadership for community development.

African communities to:

- ♦ think about what they can do for their organisations, people and society;
- ♦ initiate activities/projects that build stronger communities;
- ♦ be adaptable and accountable; and
- ♦ exercise democratic leadership

African organisations to develop a framework and documents that guide their operational and strategic activities.

MIGRATION & FAMILY REUNION

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Reducing the processing time for sponsoring a family member and making it simpler.

2. Access to free migration advice.

3. Increasing the number of extended family members that can be sponsored.

OTHER ISSUES

- ♦ Information regarding migration law is too complex and it is difficult to negotiate this information all at once.
- ♦ Difficulties in paying back travel loans.
- ♦ Family member sponsorship denied with insufficient explanation.
- ♦ Orientation in camps does not equip people to sponsor their family members following resettlement in Australia.

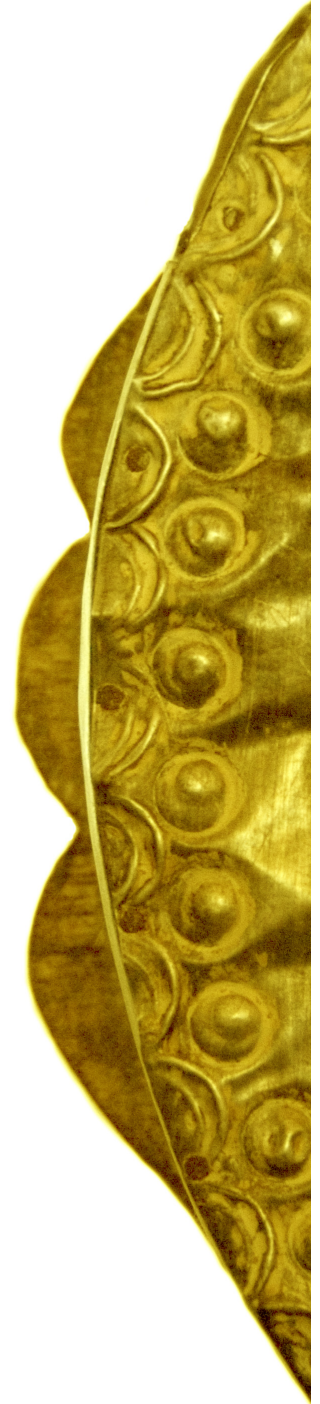
ACTIONS

The ACCSA to advocate to Government on family reunion needs and lengthy processing times for family sponsorship.

Access to free migration advice for newly arrived, unemployed refugees.

Representation made to government regarding intake for extended family members to be increased.

More information sessions on migration law and family reunion.



PARTICIPATION & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Representation within Local Government and its Councils

2. Education for African community members about the role and functions of Local Government

3. Forming Relationships/Partnerships with Key Stakeholders

Open, honest communication
Knowledge
Cultural awareness
Promote multicultural events
Attend functions
Actively involved within the community
Social inclusion

ACTIONS

African community leaders to:

- ♦ Directly approach Local Councils in order to promote community issues and activities.
- ♦ Identify specific Local Councils (ie those that have high concentrations of new arrivals), build relationships and develop an understanding of local government protocols.
- ♦ Identify leaders and community members who can represent their interests to Local Government.
- ♦ Learn from and interact with leaders and community members from established communities that have engaged successfully with Local Government.
- ♦ Use African leaders as presenters to Local Councils.

Identify barriers to participation within the African community and educate African community members about the role of Local Government and how to engage with Local Councils.

Local government representatives to be invited to African community functions and events.

OTHER ISSUES

African communities should engage with their Local Councils

Accessing information on what is available in the local community

African Communities Council of SA can be the first point of contact for information

Advertising, key people, representatives

Promotion of functions, events, multicultural events

Forming relationships with local MPs

Invite MPs/councils to speak with community members

Education/community services

Networking/attend meetings

Outreach programs

Cultural awareness

Form relationships with DIAC, Centrelink Liaison Officer, MRCSA etc

African communities to take action themselves



YOUTH

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Mentoring/counselling

- ♦ Mentoring within the family/community structure
- ♦ Mentoring for new arrivals by the broader Australian community
- ♦ Social isolation – young people do not know where youth services are and how to access them
- ♦ Low self esteem – ‘who am I?’
- ♦ Lack of community support and awareness to deal with bicultural issues
- ♦ Career guidance/counselling – to prevent high school ‘drop out’ and assist young people with appropriate career pathways
- ♦ Need for more cross cultural community development
- ♦ Imbalance between background culture and ‘new’ Australian culture
- ♦ Limited community based resources
- ♦ Challenges with respect to parenting styles
- ♦ Need for more culturally appropriate personal counselling and career counselling
- ♦ Opportunities needed for children and young people to come together socially - eg through cultural, social and sporting groups and activities including age and gender specific groups (ie 10-13 years, 13-18 years etc).

2. Legal Education

- ♦ Limited legal information
- ♦ What services are available for young people
- ♦ Lack of representation in the Youth Court
- ♦ Domestic violence, child abuse

3. Health Education

- ♦ Improving the knowledge of young refugees about the health system and how they can access the information they require
- ♦ Health promotion
- ♦ Developing the cultural competencies of health services
- ♦ Limited understanding of Australian health system

ACTIONS

Provide education to African communities focusing on parenting skills, different services including transport services, and obtaining a driver’s licence.

Community leaders to identify children and young people who require additional assistance and support – at home, school and the broader community. These young people should be provided with a school-based buddy system, mentoring and career guidance/ counselling and other supports. Also, extra orientation and follow up by universities and TAFEs for undergraduates.

Social interaction activities for young people including informal sport and social events, camps and youth activities that are gender and age specific. These events should incorporate information/training on health and wellbeing.

Ongoing Youth Leadership Program through the MRCSA to train young leaders.

Youth representation on African community management committees. Also, every community should have a ‘youth focus’ committee.

Information should be targeted and delivered to young people at an appropriate time in their settlement process so as to not overload them.

- ♦ Lack of access to health information, including information about diet and nutrition
- ♦ Computer skills – accessing health information online
- ♦ Teenage pregnancy
- ♦ Psychological and emotional health - stigma attached to 'mental health'.
- ♦ Health service providers lack flexibility and cultural sensitivity /awareness
- ♦ Lack of physical activity & obesity (especially women)
- ♦ Limited understanding about legal ramifications in relation to drug and alcohol abuse etc.

OTHER ISSUES

What is the actual definition of 'youth' and how do you cater to the different needs of different age groups within the broader 'youth' category – ie 12 year olds versus 18 year olds?

How do we channel the natural passion of young people?

18-25 year olds need opportunities to participate and contribute to their communities, separate from their parents and as young adults.

Young people need to be encouraged to participate and have a role in the African communities. Consultation with and within the African communities needs to actively involve young people.

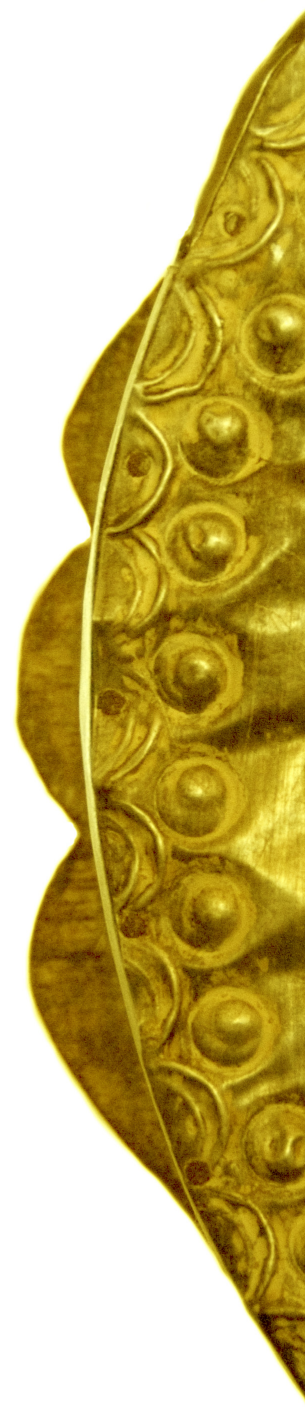
Consultations with community leaders that include and are led by young people, leading to partnerships and collaboration between the African community and services.

Tensions arise as children assimilate more quickly into the wider community, exposing them to different values. Expectations of discipline and parental control for example can be very different between parents and children. Parental power is reduced in Australia compared to Africa.

African families in Australia can be isolated due to a lack of community structures.

The MRCSA to organise another Youth Leadership Residential Conference to develop practical action from the priority issues related to:

Mentoring/Counselling
Youth Education and Employment
Legal Education
Health Education
Decision Making
Cultural Identity
Youth Leadership and Community Development



Perceptions of children and young people about the world are affected by experiences of severe trauma. Trauma histories of children are not always revealed to DIAC.

Knowledge of the affects of trauma on brain development can be applied to working with African children.

Language & Education

- ♦ Limited education – literacy and numeracy
- ♦ Different education methodology
- ♦ Frustration – inability to express self
- ♦ Low self esteem
- ♦ Limited familiarity with technology
- ♦ Pressure to work at the expense of further study
- ♦ Non-recognition/transferability of previous qualifications and experience
- ♦ Support for students in relation to schoolwork – eg tutoring programs, homework support groups, internet access, school-parent liaison. These do not need to culture-specific.

ZAINA

SWAHILI SONG PERFORMED AT THE SPEAK OUT BY MWAJEMI HUSSEIN FROM THE CONGOLESE COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Zaina, Zaina, Zaina
Elimu kitu bora we Zaina
Kaza mwendo dada
Twende mbele Zaina

Zaina ukumbuke we Zaina
Elimu si mchezo we Zaina
Jikaze sana mama Zaina
Twende mbele Zaina

Zaina ukisoma we Zaina
Tutakutegemea we Zaina
Kuelimisha wamama Zaina
Twende mbele Zaina

Elimu yako wewe we Zaina
Faida kwa watoto we Zaina
Taifa letu kesho Zaina
Twende mbele Zaina

Hujachelewa bado we Zaina
Jaribu mara tena we Zaina
Usivunjike moyo we Zaina
Twende mbele we Zaina

Zaina nakujali we Zaina
Napenda uinuke we Zaina
Usaidie jamii we Zaina
Twende mbele we Zaina

Mchango wako pia we Zaina
Taifa lauhitaji we Zaina
Kuendeleza jamii we Zaina
Twende mbele we Zaina

Omba mafunzo mengi we Zaina
Uliza mashirika we Zaina
Watakusaidia we Zaina
Twende mbele we zaina

Zaina usilale we Zaina
Tetea haki yako we Zaina
Simama uwe wima we Zaina
Twende mbele we Zaina

Misho namalizia we Zaina
Kumbuka wewe ni mama
Wa ulimwengu mzima we Zaina
Twende mbele we Zaina

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Zaina, Zaina, Zaina
Education is very important Zaina
Hurry up to acquire education Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina

Zaina, please remember Zaina
Don't take education for granted Zaina
Try hard my friend Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina

Zaina if you are educated Zaina
You'll get a job and be able to support us
Zaina
And encourage other women Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina

Your skills are important Zaina
For the education of future generations—
children
Zaina go forward Zaina

It's never too late Zaina
Try again and again Zaina
Don't give up Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina

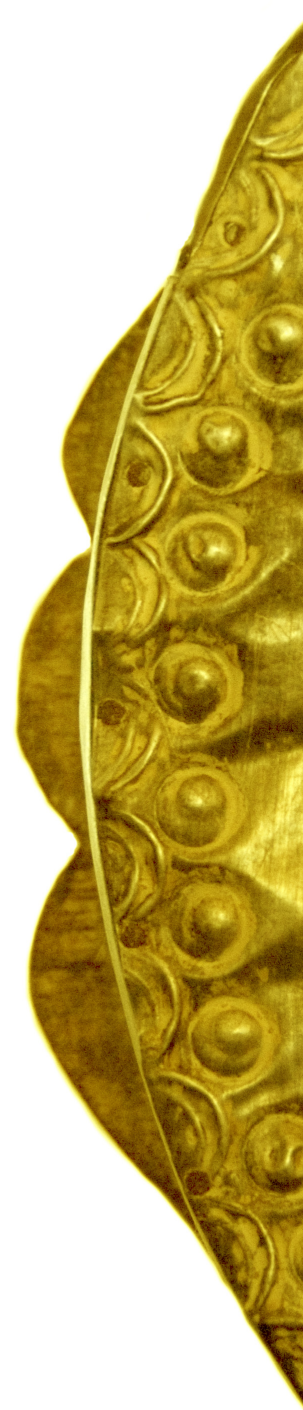
Zaina I care about you Zaina
That's why I want you to progress Zaina
So that you can help our community Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina

Our community Zaina
Needs your contribution Zaina
For its development Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina

Ask for more training Zaina
Ask different organisations and associations
Zaina
They may help you Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina

Don't close your eyes Zaina
Fight for your rights Zaina
Get up, stand up for your rights Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina

Finally I'd like to remind you Zaina
To know who you are Zaina
You are a 'mother' of all the world Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina



AFRICAN COMMUNITIES SPEAK OUT

PROGRAM

8.30am REGISTRATION

9.00am WELCOME — DR JOSEPH MASIKA

Chairperson, African Communities Council of SA

LAUNCH OF SPEAK OUT — MR HIEU VAN LE

Lieutenant Governor of South Australia

Chairman, SA Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission

GUEST SPEAKER - MR ABESELOM NEGA

Chair, Federation of African Communities Council

Steering Committee Member - African Australian Project,

Australian Human Rights Commission

FORUM EXPECTATIONS - MS EUGENIA TSOULIS OAM

Executive Director, Migrant Resource Centre of SA

Steering Committee Member, African Australian Project,

Australian Human Rights Commission

Executive Member, Settlement Council of Australia

10.30am REFRESHMENTS

11.00am ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION — COMMUNITY FACILITATORS

Addressing our priority needs, hopes and aspirations

12.30pm LUNCH

1.30pm GUEST SPEAKER — MR DAVID EDWARDS

Acting State Director, Department of Immigration and Citizenship

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION — COMMUNITY FACILITATORS

Actioning our priorities

3.30pm GUEST SPEAKER - DR LYNN ARNOLD AO

CEO, Anglicare SA

Former CEO, World Vision, South East Asia

Former Premier of South Australia

ROUND TABLE PRESENTATIONS - COMMUNITY FACILITATORS

4.30pm CLOSING REMARKS - DR JOSEPH MASIKA

Chairperson, African Communities Council of SA

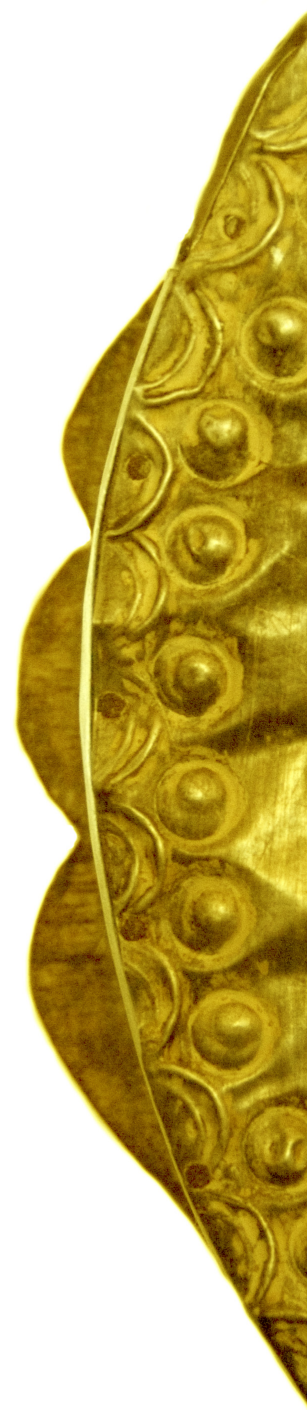
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Abak Keyvan
 Abdallah Mohmoud
 Aboki Odangi
 Abuyi Juma
 Adiya Nancy
 Agalla John
 Aka Alexander
 Aleum Assefa
 Aluong Isaac
 Amglo Afi
 Amonzou Teko
 Arnold Lynn
 Atem Paul
 Bah Sidique
 Bezen Priscilla
 Bisengeta Remy
 Bledde Reagan
 Bockarie Sahr
 Cameron Paul
 Chuol Gafluct
 Cole Catherine
 Cox Robert
 Coxell Judith
 Cronshaw Mark
 Cross Kerin
 Deah Martha
 Deng Kev
 Deng Paul
 Diessa Possible Muyaya
 Dojiok Buk
 Dunn Sandy
 Edwards David
 Fajardo Emma
 Ferguson Cecile
 Folly Fofo
 Folly Frederic
 Fomba George
 Fomba Veronica
 Fombason Joseph
 Foster Kym
 Gani Nadia
 Gbeintor Rose
 Gbla Kadija
 Geri Emmanuel
 Gibbs Dave
 Gluyas Marie
 Griffiths Mary-Lou
 Grigsby Naomi Alice
 Hassan Omar
 Hess Margaret
 Hoffman Sharon
 Hussein Mariam
 Hussein Mwajemi
 Inarukundo Lidia
 Jabateh Ibrahim

Southern Primary Health - Marion Youth
 Sudanese Community
 Congolese Community
 Community Elder, Acholi Community
 Migrant Resource Centre of SA
 Sudanese Community
 Vice Chairperson, Cameroon Community
 Ethiopian Community
 Office for Youth A Team
 Togolese Community
 Togolese Community
 Chief Executive, Anglicare SA
 Community Elder, Sudanese Community
 Community Elder, Sierra Leonean Community of SA
 Workskil Inc
 Community Elder, Congolese Community
 Chairperson, Liberian Community Association of SA

 Mission Australia
 Sudanese Community
 Chairperson, United Liberian Women's Association of SA
 Centacare Catholic Family Services
 Adelaide University Student
 Centrelink – Multicultural Services
 Office for Recreation and Sport
 Sudanese Community
 Office for Youth A Team
 Office for Youth A Team
 Burundian Community of SA
 Chairperson, Nuer Community Association of SA
 Health Promotions Unit – DASSA
 Department of Immigration and Citizenship
 Cancer Council of SA
 Mental Illness Fellowship of SA Inc
 Togolese Community
 Togolese Community
 Vice Chairperson, Liberian Community Association of SA
 Treasurer, Liberian Community Association of SA
 Chairperson, Cameroon Association of SA
 SA Police
 Multicultural SA
 Liberian Women's Group
 Sierra Leonean Community / Youth A Team
 Sudanese Community
 Centrelink – Multicultural Services
 Mission Australia
 Nexus Recruitment & Training
 Chairperson, United Liberian Girls Association of SA

 Refugee Services - Families SA
 Northern Carers Network
 Burundian Women's Group
 Deputy Secretary, United Congolese Women's Association of SA
 Chairperson, Burundian Women's Group
 Liberian Community



Jock David
 Kagwa Nagitha
 Kallon Hannah
 Kamara Athens
 Kamati Fina
 Karanastasis Tina
 Kasangu Mary
 Kibunga Neema
 Kidega Celian
 Kiosoglous John
 Kromah Bindu
 Kydadzo Dela
 Kyuhumakabano Martin
 Lane Susan
 Le Hieu Van

Lino James
 Lubari Felix
 Mahmoud Fatma
 Makdadi Nadia
 Manyon Amel

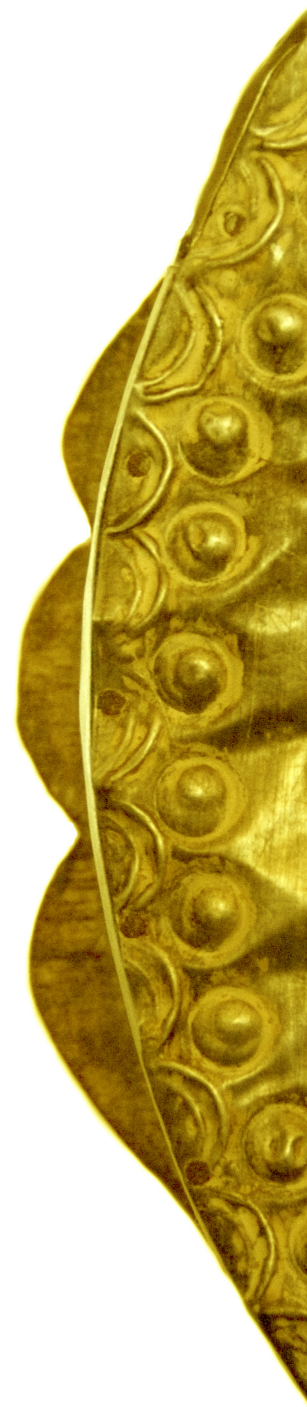
Marnie Pam
 Marshall Julie
 Masika Joseph
 Masika Peter
 Masika Prince
 Mastaki Rukukuye
 Maya Martin
 McAllister Julie
 McBean Sue
 Mesganaw Aden
 Metaxas Susan
 Mitima Emery
 Minani Fidesine
 Modi Cezzarina
 Mohamed Najema
 Mpawenayo Margaret
 Mpenda Simon
 Mpenda Veronique
 Msenga Mediatrice
 Muchondo Gamaliel
 Munya Isha
 Murulu Lucy
 Mwanri Lillian
 Myers Evelyn
 Nega Abeselom
 Ngendarimana Sylvia
 Niyokwizera Rachel
 Njuki Patricia W.
 Odermatt Krystyna
 Ogbalidet Melite
 Ojaba Grace
 O'Loughlin Emily
 Opi Bosco
 Parkin Nicola
 Parsons Darren

Sudanese Community
 Ugandan Community
 Liberian Women's Group
 Chairperson, Sierra Leonean Community of SA / Anglicare
 Tanzanian Community / Baptist Care SA
 Migrant Resource Centre of SA
 Vice Chairperson, United Congolese Women's Association of SA
 Congolese Community
 Sudanese Community
 Ethnic Schools Board
 Liberian Community
 Togolese Community
 Burundian Community
 Southern Primary Health - Marion Youth
 Lieutenant Governor of South Australia
 Chairman, SA Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission
 Community Elder, Kuku Welfare Community
 Sudanese Community
 Uniting Care Wesley Bowden
 Algerian Community
 Secretary for Women's and Children's Affairs,
 Sudanese Community Association of Australia Inc (SA Branch)
 Families SA
 The Smith Family
 Chairperson – African Communities Council of SA
 Tanzanian Community
 Tanzanian Community
 Community Elder, Congolese Community
 Secretary, Sudanese Community Association of SA
 Port Adelaide Primary Health Care Services
 Dept Correctional Services - Courts Unit/Adelaide CCC
 Ethiopian Community
 Department of Immigration and Citizenship
 Burundian Community
 Burundian Community
 Port Adelaide Primary Health Care Services
 SA FGM Program
 Burundian Women's Group
 Community Elder, Congolese Community
 Congolese Community
 Congolese Community
 Burundian Community
 Treasurer, Somali Community Development Organisation
 Madi Community
 Executive Member, Tanzanian Community Association SA
 Liberian Community
 Chairperson, Federation of African Communities Council
 Chairperson, Burundian Women's Association of SA
 Burundian Women's Group
 Community Elder, Kenyan Community
 Nexus Recruitment & Training
 Eritrean Community
 Cameroon Community
 Centacare Navigate Mental Health
 Community Elder, Sudanese Community
 SA Community Foodies
 Centacare Navigate Mental Health

Paye Larry
Polepole Odette
Pope Julie
Riem Marlies
Rinny Athieng
Riviere Jacqueline
Ross Maria
Sebit Isaac
Sebit Philip
Sheriff Fata
Sheriff Sekou
Spellacy Matti
Steinhausser Cornelia
Taban Lucy
Tait Clara
Tamlin Amanda
Thomas Augustina
Thomas Romeo
Togba Pricilla
Tshiaba Francois
Tsoulis Eugenia
Uwayizeye Emmanuela
Vears Lynn
Wadlow Ginny
Weah Cephus Shie
Wilkes Susan
Williams Philip
Wilson Matt
Wright Julie

Office for Youth A Team
Chairperson, United Congolese Women's Association
Workskil Inc
Inner Southern Community Health Services
Sudanese Community
Shine SA
Northern Carers Network
Sudanese Community
Sudanese Community
Liberian Community
Liberian Community
Migrant Resource Centre of SA
Dept Correctional Services - Courts Unit/Adelaide CCC
Sudanese Community
Cancer Council of SA
Department of Immigration and Citizenship
SA FGM Program
Liberian Community
Liberian Community
Community Elder, Congolese Community
Migrant Resource Centre of SA
Community Elder, Burundian Community
Anglicare SA
Central Domestic Violence Service
Liberian Community
Mental Illness Fellowship of SA Inc

TAFE SA - ELS
Southern Primary Health-Marion Youth



SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

DR JOSEPH MASIKA

Mr Hieu Van Le, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia and Chairman of the SA Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission
Mr Abeselom Nega, Chairperson of the Federation of African Communities Council of Australia
Ms Eugenia Tsoulis, Executive Director of the MRCSA
Mr David Edwards, Acting Director of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship
Dr Lynn Arnold, CEO of Anglicare SA
Mr John Kiosoglous, Chairman of the Ethnic Schools Board of South Australia
My fellow Community Leaders
Representatives of Service Providers

And my fellow African communities members, ladies and gentlemen.

It is an exciting time for the African people in South Australia to be here today on the 27th of November 2008 to rise up their hopes, aspirations and ambitions and pursue them to the maximum.

The African Community in South Australia acknowledges and appreciates that part of what makes Australia unique is its history of immigration. Immigrants' hopes and dreams are integral to Australia's hopes and dreams for itself.

Distinguished guests, we African people are here today to consolidate our hopes, aspirations and ambitions, and set up a strategic direction of achieving those hopes, aspiration and ambitions.

The African Community members in South Australia and their peak body organisation, the African Communities Council of South Australia (ACCSA), are aware that tapping into opportunity can be a challenge for immigrants, including access to employment and affordable accommodation etc. It is very exciting to let this audience know that the ACCSA and networks of African ethnic groups will facilitate this process of realisation of our hopes, dreams and aspirations for our African community. We want our children in many next generations to come to read from our remaining skulls and acknowledge that their fore-grandparents and community leaders had a vision, hopes and aspirations for them.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the African Community in South Australia would like to speak today with confidence that this Forum will be a vehicle of change in our community and other new migrants in South Australia. Our hopes, aspirations and ambitions will make many things possible in our community.

My fellow African community members, as the Chairperson of ACCSA I would like to encourage all Africans in South Australia to take control of our community destinies, hopes, ambitions, aspirations and success. We should not wait for others to act first on our behalf. We should all support each other and do our part. On the same note, I would like to say to the Federal and State governments that it is crucial to continue to eliminate barriers to opportunity and ensure the Australian Dream is possible for all, especially newcomers who are anxious to take up the responsibilities and contribute to their adopted country. Greater support for programs that facilitate integration and civic participation for immigrants should be owned by migrants themselves. This will make integration and civic participation possible and multiply the impact of governments to the community.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you once again for taking your precious time to come and be with us at this crucial time of building our hopes, aspirations and ambitions.

MR HIEU VAN LE

Dr Joseph Masika, Chairperson of the African Communities Council of South Australia
Ms Eugenia Tsoulis, Executive Director of the Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia
Guest speakers for this forum, Mr Abeselom Nega, Mr David Edwards and Dr Lynn Arnold
Members of South Australia's African communities
Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning.

It's a pleasure to join you for what promises to be a positive and constructive forum. We have in our hands today a terrific opportunity. South Australia's fast-growing African communities have the chance to discuss a wide range of prevailing issues and concerns. And we'll have the chance to hear from three guest speakers, all of whom will provide valuable perspectives and – I trust – wise counsel.

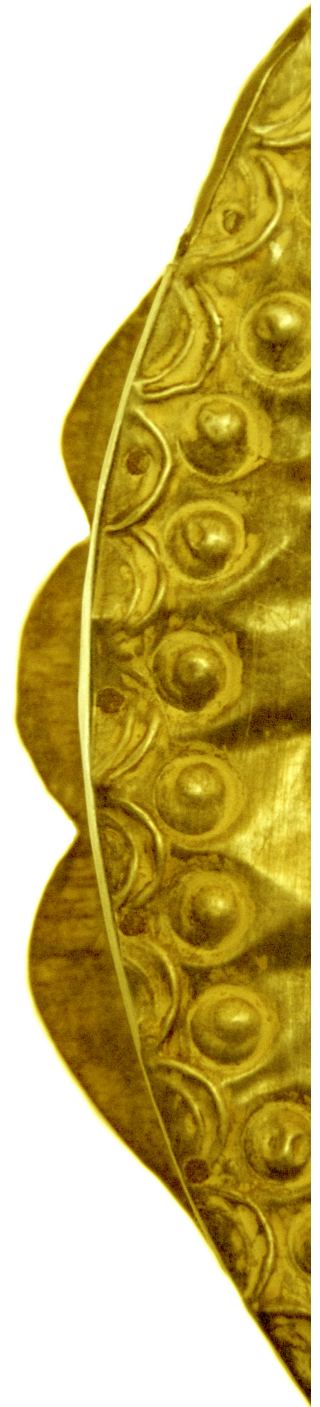
I hope that the tone of this forum will be characterised by two qualities – and they are understanding and communication. The principal thing that all of us need to understand – and the wider community needs to understand – is that there is no one, monolithic African community. The Africans who today call South Australia home are a wonderfully diverse people. There are great differences in ethnicity, culture, language, history, traditions and faith among them. And – especially among recent arrivals – there are huge differences in the lives these Africans led immediately before coming to Australia. I see this diversity as both an asset and a challenge. It's a challenge in the sense that – when it comes to providing settlement services – a “one-size-fits-all” approach is clearly not going to be effective.

We, together, must think about the particular needs of the various African groups in our State and do our very best to cater to them. At the same time, we must also accept that government agencies, in particular, cannot do everything.

African communities, themselves, must work together constructively, provide practical assistance, and demonstrate bold, strong and unified leadership. On this topic, I want to applaud the response of the Sudanese community, in particular, to the recent incident that tragically claimed the life of one of their own, young Daniel Awak. The community responded promptly and effectively when I called an urgent meeting involving the Premier, the Attorney-General and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, and other interested parties. Our Sudanese friends – in very trying circumstances – demonstrated that they are clearly a peace-loving, united and law-abiding people. And they properly emphasised that the incident that robbed us a good-hearted, promising youngster arose from a disagreement between individuals and that – contrary to some reports – it was not associated with gangs or community division.

On the topic of broader community leadership, Africans have recently demonstrated obvious skill and potential. I was delighted, for example, to see Africans among the finalists of the Governor's Multicultural Awards for 2008, which were presented just last week.

As I suggested a moment ago, I believe that all South Australians should understand that our State is today home to many African communities. Our learning about their individual histories and cultures will help Africans to settle more easily, and to lead rich and fulfilling lives. Virtually every new wave of settlers has experienced some degree of uncertain or negative public reaction on arrival in this State – and sometimes well after settlement. Arguably our first “ethnic” community – the Germans of the 1800s – went through very difficult times. And I can tell you – from personal experience – that it wasn't all plain sailing for the Vietnamese boat people of the 1970s. Still, each successive group – partly through the simple passage of time – has managed to settle, and to settle well. And each wave has both added to – and shared in – South Australia's undoubted economic and social wealth. Most important, these groups have together established a form of multiculturalism that is admired around the world and that helps to unify our country.



Incidentally, the State Government recently carried out a household survey – under the auspices of South Australia’s Strategic Plan – on the topic of cultural diversity. That survey found that almost 90 per cent of respondents believed that cultural diversity was a positive influence in the community.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I said at the start, the other quality that I trust will characterise today’s forum is communication. We want open, free-flowing, constructive and respectful discussion today – such that as many people as possible can put forward their views and that no single perspective will dominate. From my experience as Chairman of SAMEAC, I’m very confident we can do this. Last year, for example, we ran a very successful African Family Forum, which was attended by more than 50 African community leaders. And, more recently, young members of local African communities have made sensible and valuable contributions to SAMEAC’s Youth Advisory Committee and to the Youth Summit.

Before closing, I want to urge all the men here today to support the White Ribbon Day campaign, which is designed to eliminate violence against women. Thousands of men – including me – wore a white ribbon on Tuesday of this week to mark this special United Nations-sponsored day. But we want people to keep up the campaign all year round – with the aim of stopping men, across the world, from committing or condoning violence against women. Fiona and Nicole are here today with application forms allowing men to become White Ribbon Ambassadors, so I hope you’ll consider taking part in this worthy initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, this forum has all the ingredients necessary to be a great success – a great success not just on the day, but for the long term. With understanding, communication and respect, I believe that we can talk openly about overcoming challenges. And I’m very confident we can come up with ideas and solutions that can practically improve the lives of Africans in South Australia.

I wish you all the very best for today and for the future. And I’m now both honoured and proud to declare this African Communities Speak Out forum officially open.

MR DAVID EDWARDS

Acknowledgements

Mr Hieu Van Le, Lieutenant Governor of SA, Chairman, South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission

Mr Abelsom Nega, Chair, Federation of African Communities Council Member Steering Committee – African Australian Project, Australian Human Rights Commission

Dr Lynn Arnold, Chief Executive Officer, Anglicare SA

Dr Joseph Masika, Chairperson, African Communities Council of SA

Ms Eugenia Tsoulis, Executive Director, Migrant Resource Centre of SA

It is a great pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with you today on behalf of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Today's forum will focus on the needs and issues African communities have identified throughout their settlement process and their hopes for the future. We all have a role to play to ensure people welcomed to our shores are given the opportunity to be active and equal members of our society.

Background

Migrants and refugees come to Australia under our Migration and Humanitarian Programs.

Since 1945 over 6.5 million migrants have arrived in Australia, with the largest groups coming from India and China. This changes the face of our nation. This year, close to 200,000 people will migrate to Australia, a record year. In addition, 13,500 people will come to Australia as refugees and humanitarian entrants. Glenda Lodge from our office, who some of you will know, is currently in Africa helping to select those people.

During the past 4 years, close to 16,000 African Humanitarian entrants have settled in Australia. This year, South Australia has already welcomed 250 people from African countries including the Sudan, Liberia, Burundi and Sierra Leone.

The Humanitarian program has changed the face of this nation and the African communities have played an integral role in positively contributing to Australia, culturally, socially and economically. As Australians, we admire the courage and resilience new arrivals have shown throughout their migration journey.

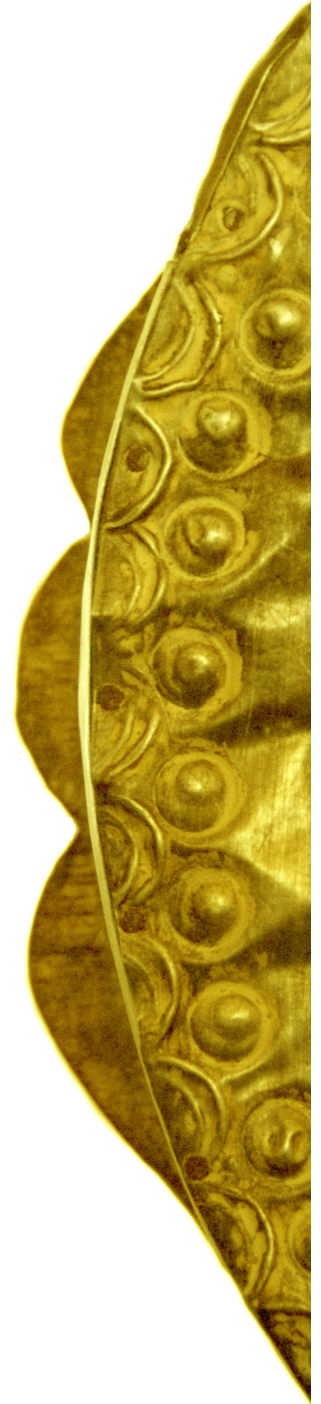
With each new wave of migration, there have been some challenges. New arrivals face many challenges when settling in Australia. Commonly these include:

- ♦ increasing rental costs and the limited availability of suitable housing
- ♦ difficulty accessing effective pathways to employment. We recognise that some of our humanitarian migrants are in fact highly skilled, but they often lack the networks in Australia to open the doors into jobs in their areas of expertise.
- ♦ low levels of literacy and English language skills
- ♦ learning about financial management
- ♦ accessing interpreters in new and emerging languages

Whilst providing a refuge for humanitarian entrants, it is important we maintain social cohesion by supporting new migrants to settle and participate fully in Australian society. This is a significant challenge but one that is achievable. Our presence here today is a commitment towards meeting this challenge and recognition that we all must take an active and positive role in building a just and inclusive society.

Settlement services

Every new migrant or refugee needs to get off to a quick start on the path towards full inclusion in Australian society – for the benefit of themselves and their families, and the nation as a whole.



The Government's settlement services are critical in assisting new arrivals' inclusion and active participation in Australian society. They focus on building self-reliance, developing English language skills and fostering connections with mainstream services in the early settlement period.

Many of you are aware of the services available under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS). Other programs include English language classes and those that help to link communities into mainstream agencies as soon as possible.

The Department currently funds 27 Settlement Grants projects in SA and more than half are designed to specifically assist the African community. These projects are run through a number of organisations including the African Communities Council, the Migrant Resource Centre, Australian Refugee Association and Lutheran Community Care.

Recent initiatives

This year the government has made many improvements in the area of settlement services, demonstrating our understanding of their important contribution to social inclusion for very vulnerable new members of our society.

For Humanitarian Program entrants, enhancements include additional English language tuition for children and additional funding for torture and trauma counselling.

Under a new approach, Complex Case Support services were rolled out nationally during August-October 2008, delivering specialised and intensive case management for those whose pre-migration experiences present significant barriers to successful settlement.

A Policing Project will help identify and promote initiatives that build relationships between police and communities, and raise awareness of Australian laws and the justice system.

And a New Interpreters Project will help respond to interpreter shortages.

As a Department, we work hard to ensure our settlement programs and policies are appropriate and responsive to Australia's growing migrant population. This is where we need your assistance. All communities, including African communities have a role to play in ensuring the adequacy of programs/policies. To this end we encourage African communities to:

"Speak out" about their issues/needs. This is why today's forum is invaluable for my Department. We will listen because we want to know what is working well for you and what is not working too well.

Seek out opportunities to collaboratively work with Government departments at all levels, organisations and members of the community.

Look to a way forward and plan a future of self-determination, unity and independence.

Successful settlement in Australia is not possible without the hard work and dedication of our service providers and community organisations. I would like to commend the role of many African community leaders who work tirelessly for the community voluntarily. I am impressed with their professionalism, vision and leadership, and I am impressed with the messages I heard earlier showing a community looking forward.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship is committed to continue working with African communities to ensure smooth transition and settlement into Australian society.



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