

MEDIA RELEASE – 7 MAY 2012

**INAUGURAL MEETING OF BARWON SOUTH WEST
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The first meeting of the Victorian Multicultural Commission's (VMC) Barwon South West Regional Advisory Council (RAC) will take place in Geelong Tuesday 8 May.

The Hon. Nicholas Kotsiras MLA, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship and Mr Chin Tan, Chairperson of the VMC will speak at the launch. Speeches commence at **12.30pm sharp**.

The Minister and Mr Tan will be available for interviews and photo opportunities from **12.45pm onwards**.

The RAC will advise the VMC on local multicultural, settlement and citizenship issues. It will also advocate on behalf of diverse communities, assist the VMC to promote the benefits of diversity and boost direct links with local multicultural communities.

The Chair of the Barwon South West RAC is VMC Commissioner Dr Teresa De Fazio. Dr De Fazio is the Assistant Director of Study and Learning at RMIT. She has extensive experience in the fields of languages, teacher education and intercultural education and has worked on various initiatives with organisations such as the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools Association.

Dr De Fazio said she was delighted to be part of the new RAC. She said: "It is a privilege to be a part of the new RAC and I am very much looking forward to the inaugural meeting. The new Council provides an important forum for discussing local issues facing our region's diverse communities and an opportunity to champion the region's multicultural interests."

Highlighting the significance of the RACs, the Chairperson of the VMC, Mr Chin Tan, said "The inaugural Barwon South West RAC meeting is an important milestone for the region. The members who have generously volunteered their time can now proceed with the important work of advising the VMC on local multicultural issues."

Mr Michael Martinez a community representative on the Barwon South West RAC and the CEO of Diversitat, said he is excited to be a part of the new RAC. He said: "The new RAC will provide an important conduit for discussion about the issues in our region and a good opportunity to champion the many benefits our diversity brings to Victoria."

The Barwon South West RAC members are: Helen Flanders, Michael Martinez, Viviana Golding, Cr Eddy Kontelj and Gary Thompson.

RAC members are volunteers and have been selected for their understanding of multicultural issues, in addition to their experience and commitment to their local multicultural communities.

The Barwon South West region includes eight municipalities and approximately 341,000 people of which close to 60 per cent live in Geelong, the largest regional city in Victoria.

For further information on the Regional Advisory Councils:

Visit <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/regional-advisory-councils>

Local media are invited to attend the meeting for photos and interviews.

Media enquires: Call Kathleen Manson at the VMC on **9651 0621**.

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