

MEDIA RELEASE – 4 MAY 2012

**INAUGURAL MEETING OF SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The first meeting of the Victorian Multicultural Commission's (VMC) Southern Metropolitan Regional Advisory Council (RAC) will take place in Caulfield on Monday 7 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 **5.30pm sharp**.

The Minister and Mr Tan will be available for interviews and photo opportunities from **5.45pm 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 Southern Metropolitan RAC is VMC Commissioner Mr Grahame Leonard AM, who has been actively involved with Victoria's diverse faith and ethnic communities for more than 15 years and has held many executive and board positions within a number of peak bodies.

Mr Leonard said: "It is an exciting opportunity and a real privilege to be part of the Southern Metropolitan Regional Advisory Council. The new Council will provide a genuine opportunity for community members to discuss local issues facing diverse communities and champion the region's multicultural interests."

Highlighting the significance of the RACs, the Chairperson of the VMC, Mr Chin Tan, said "The inaugural Southern Metropolitan 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."

Ms Sarah Williams, a community representative on the Southern Metropolitan RAC and an active participant in a variety of culturally and linguistically diverse community organisations, said she is a firm believer in working within your community to gain real and often positive insights. She said: "I am delighted to be a part of the new RAC. It is a good opportunity to discuss the issues that matter to people who live and work in our region and to champion the very real benefits our of cultural and linguistic diversity."

The Southern Metropolitan RAC members are: Grahame Leonard AM (Chair), Hans Christiansen, Kevin Ekendahl, Birgit Goetz, Kalyan Ky, Nellie Khoroshina, Sam Nevarria, Iman Riman, Menachem Vorchheimer, Sarah Williams, Rampal Reddy Muthyala, Cr Claude Ullin and Penny Pavlou.

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 Southern Metropolitan region includes 10 municipalities and around 1.2 million people, representing about one-quarter of Victoria's total population. The municipalities are: Bayside City Council, Cardinia Shire Council, City of Casey, Glen Eira City Council, Frankston City Council, City of Greater Dandenong, City of Kingston, Mornington Peninsula Shire, City of Port Phillip and City of Stonington.

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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