

**MEDIA RELEASE – 8 MAY 2012**

**INAUGURAL MEETING OF GIPPSLAND  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The first meeting of the Victorian Multicultural Commission's (VMC) Gippsland Regional Advisory Council (RAC) will take place in Traralgon on Thursday 10 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 **12.00pm sharp**.

The Minister and Mr Tan will be available for interviews and photo opportunities from **12.15pm 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 Gippsland RAC is VMC Commissioner Ms Elizabeth Drozd. Ms Drozd has considerable experience in the not-for-profit community services sector and local government, showing dedication to issues affecting multicultural communities, particularly in the area of migrant and refugee settlement as well as access and equity.

Ms Drozd said she was delighted to be part of the new RAC. She said: "It is exciting to be part of this new initiative and I am looking forward to working closely with the other members. The new RAC provides an important forum to discuss community issues at a grassroots level and a good opportunity to advocate for the benefits that multiculturalism brings to this region."

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

Mrs Theodosia Kanellopoulos is a community representative on the Gippsland RAC and a recipient of Victoria's Multicultural Award for Excellence in Multicultural Services. She said: "It's a pleasure and a privilege to be part of this region's RAC. I have 40 years' experience in this area, interacting with many CALD and other communities through my work as a registered nurse and as a volunteer. I am looking forward to working with and addressing the issues in our region with other RAC members."

The Gippsland RAC members are: Anna Hall, Ali Khan, Sandy Kam, Abraham Maluk, Theodosia Kanellopoulos, Christine Lee, John Loble, Lisa Sinha, Local Government Representatives, Cr Gregg Cook and Bernadette Murphy .

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 Gippsland region includes six municipalities and approximately 247,000 residents.

For further information on the Regional Advisory Councils:

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

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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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