

MEDIA RELEASE – 23 APRIL 2012

**INAUGURAL MEETING OF NORTH AND WEST METROPOLITAN
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The first meeting of the Victorian Multicultural Commission's (VMC) North and West Metropolitan Regional Advisory Council (RAC) will take place in Coburg tomorrow.

Mr Chin Tan, Chairperson of the VMC, and Mr Craig Ondarchie MLC for Northern Metropolitan will speak at the launch. Speeches commence at **5.30pm sharp**.

Both Chin Tan and Craig Ondarchie 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 North and West Metropolitan RAC is VMC Commissioner Ms Jenny Matic, who has extensive experience working within government as well as serving on boards in the public health sector and the community.

Ms Matic said "It is a privilege and pleasure to be part of the North and West Metropolitan Regional Advisory Council, which will provide a great 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 North and West 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."

Mohammed El-leissy, a community representative on the North and West Metropolitan RAC and a youth worker with the Islamic Council of Victoria, said he is delighted to be part of the RAC. "I'm looking forward to working with members on cross cultural interaction and addressing whole-of-community issues in the area such as youth, employment and enhancing the spirit of community. I hope the RAC will open up lines of communication and partnership amongst all sectors of the local community, to foster a more harmonious and thriving region," he said.

The North West Metropolitan RAC members are: Jenny Matic (Chair), Afshan Mantoo, Anne Cox, Deepak Vinayak, Diana Krause, Ivan Chan, Jagjit Gurm, Mohammed El-leissy, Samli Ozturk, Walter Villagonzalo, Chandra Bamunusinghe, Rick Nugent, Mary Laliou and Arden Joseph.

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 North and West Metropolitan region includes 14 municipalities and around 1.68 million people, over 30 per cent of Victoria's total population.

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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