

Indian High Commission endorses ECCWA website

The Indian High Commission has endorsed the website that ECCWA set up to help overseas students report violent attacks against them.

‘We have seen an article titled “Website to log racist attacks” published in *The Australian* on 22 June, 2009 wherein it has been mentioned that the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia has launched a website for foreign students to confidentially report racist attacks’ said Deputy Indian High Commissioner V.K.Sharma in an email to ECCWA. ‘We shall be grateful if the website address is communicated to us, so that the information about the same is transmitted among the Indian students in WA’ the Deputy High Commissioner concluded.

ECCWA has also met with stakeholders to ensure that action is taken on this matter. This has included participating in an International Students Roundtable, established by the Office of Multicultural Interests, with representation from various community organisations. The last roundtable meeting was addressed by the Police, bringing participants up to date on their response.

The Office of Multicultural Interests have provided a link to ECCWA’s Overseas Students Website via their website at <http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/>

ECCWA has also met with Mike Nahan, MLC, and various student groups, to discuss ways of dealing with the issue. At these meetings ECCWA urged the government to set up a task force to address the problem of violence against overseas students. ‘It is also important to recognise that this is a visible minority issue and not just an Indian student problem’ explained ECCWA Executive Officer Suresh Rajan. ‘Hence we have insisted that Chung Wah Association and the Indian Society of WA be involved in all the discussions.’

ECCWA has also met John Anderton and Phil Levitzke, from Tuart College, to discuss what they do for International students.

ECCWA’s Overseas Students Website can be accessed at <http://overseasstudentsmatter.multiculturalwa.org.au/>.

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ECCWA hosts Save the Children consultation

ECCWA hosted a consultation on children’s rights for Save the Children. The consultation was a chance to convey to Save the Children some of the issues facing CaLD children, young people and their parents.

Held at Multicultural House, on Wednesday 15 July, the consultation attracted over 20 people, born in Australia, China, India, South Africa, Sudan, Zimbabwe, and members of the Romani community.

A wide range of issues were raised. These included the lack of support for children moving from Intensive English Centres to mainstream schools, the need for counselling for refugee children and difficulties faced by migrants/ethnic minority people wanting to get a childcare / day care licence. Other concerns included placing refugee children in classrooms based on age rather than level of education, the labelling of groups of children, particularly members of

visible minority groups as ‘gangs’ and racism.

‘I thought it was a good workshop but we needed more time and perhaps information beforehand on what we were going to be doing,’ Farida Lang, one of the participants told *EthniCity*. ‘If we had known more in advance it would have helped formulate a better outcome’ she added.

Save the Children will use the information gained from the consultation to plan their community development programs to ensure that they meet the current and future needs of families.

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State Library of WA welcomes ECCWA donation

The State Library of Western Australia has welcomed ECCWA’s donation of eight of its publications.



ECCWA donated copies of conference reports and policy papers to the library, where they will be available to researchers and community members.

Picture the Alexander Library Building

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Library_of_Western_Australia

‘These titles will be a welcome and valuable addition to our collection of West Australian publications’ explained Frances Hammond, Librarian: Collection Development. ‘Some were completely new to us and some enable us to provide a second copy for public access.’

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Around the Community

Nominations open for 2009 human rights awards

Australian Human Rights Commission

Since 1987, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has recognized the often extraordinary contribution to Australian society of a wide variety of men and women committed to issues of human rights, social justice and equality through the annual Human Rights Medals and Awards.

Each year AHRC receives outstanding nominations for the Human Rights Medals, Young People’s Human Rights Medal and seven award categories: Law, Community (Organization), Community (Individual), Literature (non-fiction), Print Media, Television and Radio. They may have made an outstanding contribution within their communities or through the practice of law, through writing books about human rights issues or through their work in the media.

All the information you need to know about the 2009 Human Rights Medals and Awards is

State Government support for indigenous artists

Office of the Premier Colin Barnett

The Liberal-National Government has provided a \$30,000 grant to help remote Indigenous communities develop their art as a sustainable means of income.

Premier Colin Barnett confirmed the funding when he visited FORM Contemporary Craft and Design in Port Hedland, as part of his two-day tour of the region, which also includes Karratha. The funding will be used for FORM's 'Let's Get Started!' program, involving a series of painting workshops which support, nurture and develop first time, mid-career and established indigenous artists.

The grant has been issued via the Liberal-National Government's Pilbara Regional Grants Scheme through the Royalties for Regions program.

'The Liberal-National Government has made a strong commitment to improving regional Western Australia and part of that is helping organisations and individuals develop and grow,' Mr Barnett said. 'There is a growing market for high-quality Aboriginal art and WA is well placed with some very talented people to sit at the forefront of that development. Western Australia has more than 280 individual Indigenous communities and the sad reality is not all of them are sustainable. I congratulate FORM for developing a program that aims to keep the unique cultural and social identity of these communities alive while maintaining a sustainable means of income.'

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Local author writes lively collection of stories

Local Romani author Yvonne Slee has written a collection of stories about her ancestors in Germany, from the turn of the Century to after the Second World War.

Torn Away Forever opens with the story of Ms Slee's great-grandfather, August, who was 'torn away' from his Romani family and adopted by an uncaring foster family. Running away, August fell in with a band of Romani who taught him how to survive. As an adult he



married a German woman and raised a family, including the author's grandmother, Elsa.

Elsa's life is an amazing story of courage and survival. In spite of racism, including the constant danger of deportation to a concentration camp during the Nazi era, where an estimated 220,000 to 1,500,000 Roma were murdered, she lived to the ripe age of 80. 'Despite its sad theme the book has many lively incidents' wrote English writer and critic Janna Eliot. 'Yvonne Slee

writes with compassion about a family surviving the Holocaust and war' Ms Eliot added.

Picture Romani prisoners in the Belzec extermination camp from

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porajmos>

Romani community launch magazine

Romani Australian United Perth WA has launched a new magazine to publicise their community's events.



The first issue of *Romani Australian United Perth WA Newsletter* showcases its activities in Perth. These include their participation in the launch of the Office of Multicultural Interests Strategic plan, the communities' Ederlezi Gurgoven celebration and plans for an exhibition in Perth. **Picture A Romani encampment as painted by Vincent Van Gogh**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romani_people

Wet festival wins crowds

Office of John Hyde MLA



Perth MLA, John Hyde extended a Happy New Year to the Thai Community in celebration of the traditional Thai New Year and extended an invitation to local residents to join in the festive season.

Mr Hyde said the celebrations commenced with the Songkran Water Festival held on 26 April at the Macedonian Hall in North Perth.

Picture John Hyde MLA joins Seefah Collingwood-Price, president of the Thai-Australian Association, Olga Ramasamy, Executive Officer of the Australian

Asian Association and other dignitaries in the traditional releasing of pigeons ceremony at the Songkran festival.

'There was a Buddhist ceremony, food stalls, art and craft shops, Thai dances, and the exciting Miss Songkran Pageant,' said Mr Hyde. He said the festival involved throwing water to help ring in the New Year with prosperity.

'The Thai year actually ends on 13 April, and in Thailand you see many people return to their rural families to celebrate. It's one of the few times the streets of Bangkok are literally deserted,' said Mr Hyde. Songkran is a Thai word which means 'move' or 'change place' as it is the day when the sun changes its position in the zodiac. It is also known as the 'Water Festival' as people believe that water will wash away bad luck.

'I hope everyone enjoyed the festivities this year and I'm glad Perth locals experienced the traditional Thai New Year. It's great to see how cultures organise their year and celebrate