

NEMA to Host 2008 Regional Multicultural Conference

The North East Multicultural Association (NEMA) was represented at Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria's (ECCV) state-wide conference held in Bendigo on the 5th of May 2007. A group of NEMA members made the trip to the conference where they participated in a variety of activities based on the theme of settlement for new migrants.

Victoria is undergoing great changes in its cultural make-up and all regions are seeing increased migration from a wide

variety of countries and cultures. Attracting migrants to our region is a necessary strategy to support future social and economic growth and NEMA aims to be well prepared to meet the needs of those new migrants.

The ECCV conference was the perfect venue to keep up-to-date with migration trends and developments in other regions and to familiarise the NEMA members with future needs.

The local group's attendance at

the conference also paid dividends in a different way when NEMA's bid to host the 2008 conference in Wangaratta was successful.

NEMA President, Rozi Parisotto was delighted by the decision and said, "The fact that our bid is successful is recognition of NEMA's hard work, but more importantly, I believe it is recognition that the North East is a place where migrants are welcomed and valued as productive members of our community."



Rozi Parisotto addressing the conference

The conference in progress



NEMA display



NEMA representatives at the conference

The Spice of Life

Celebrate our Cultural Diversity Week saw NEMA hard at work to take the message to as many people as possible in the North East. The week kicked off with the opening on Monday the 19th of March of The Spice of Life, a week-long exhibition of photographs depicting the vibrant multicultural flavour of our region. This was the inaugural exhibition at the newly opened Wangaratta Library gallery and consisted mainly of photographs taken by NEMA member, Dezi Freeman.

NEMA proceeded to take the exhibition on the road to the other libraries in the region over the following four weeks. Rozi Parisotto also used the opening as the perfect opportunity to present a donation to the library for the purchase of multicultural books which will be available to residents at library branches across the region.



The NEMA exhibition of photographs and audio-visual material



Photographer Dezi Freeman with his wife, Mali and son, Koah at the opening



Dezi with Cr Don Joyce, Mayor of the Rural City of Wangaratta



Rozi Parisotto presenting NEMA's donation to High Country Library Corporation CEO, Elaine Richmond, and Wangaratta Branch Manager, Loueen Twyford

Tour of VMC Multicultural Ambassador Award

Monday the 19th of March also marked the beginning of a five shires tour of NEMA's VMC Multicultural Ambassador Award. NEMA's monthly general meetings are rotated around the five Local Government Areas (LGA) in which the association operates, and March was Benalla Rural City's turn.

Diversity Week provided the perfect forum to officially hand over the VMC award on loan to the Mayor, Cr Pat Claridge. The award resided in Benalla Council for a month before moving on to the next council. Each of NEMA's five LGA has also been presented with a framed copy of the award citation to be retained for display in the council buildings.



NEMA Vice-President, Nino Mautone, watched by Cr John Brownstein, Benalla Rural City's NEMA representative, passing the VMC Multicultural Ambassador award to Cr Pat Claridge, Mayor of Benalla Rural City

Mansfield Shire Mayor, Cr Sandie Jeffcoat receiving the VMC Multicultural Ambassador Award from NEMA President, Rozi Parisotto, watched by Michelle Harmer, NEMA Committee Member for Mansfield Shire



Rozi Parisotto handing over the VMC Multicultural Ambassador Award to Indigo Shire Mayor, Cr Peter Graham OAM, watched by Di Mangan, the RCOW Manager of Cultural Services, and a happy group of NEMA members

Common Threads - The Stories of Migrant Women

Tuesday the 20th of March saw the opening of Common Threads, a joint Rural City of Wangaratta/ Pangerang Community House/Regional Migration Incentive Fund project which brought to the public the stories of five local migrant women. The stories were presented in photographs, in print and with culturally significant personal artefacts. Although NEMA was not directly involved in the staging of this event, support was provided by introducing NEMA members as potential subjects to the project coordinators.



NEMA members Lahakpa Sherpa, left, and Yen Ng, right, with fellow member Kaomi Sunderland, one of the exhibition's subjects



Kaomi's children, Alistair and Kie were surprised to see their lunch boxes on display at the exhibition

Community Accord Signing at Parliament House

On Wednesday the 21st of March, Mr Daniel Andrews MP, Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs, Commissioner George Lekakis, Chairperson of the Victorian Multicultural Commission and Phong Nguyen, Chairperson of the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV), were joined by members of the ECCV in the symbolic signing of the Community Accord at the Queen's Hall in Parliament House.

NEMA was represented by our members, Tomohiro Takeo and Frances Salenga. Both were the signatories to confirm NEMA's commitment to the principles of the accord alongside Mr Andrews MP and Commissioner Lekakis.

The Community Accord recognises Victoria as a vibrant, diverse and progressive state in which all people live, work and prosper together. It promotes respect for diversity across different communities and advocates for the elimination of racial and religious intolerance. The principles that every NEMA member definitely stands for.



Frances Salenga and Tomohiro Takeo signing on the Community Accord



Frances and Tomohiro with Commissioner George Lekakis, left, and Mr Daniel Andrews MP, third from left

Diversity in the Park Concert

What better way to end the working week than a spectacular outdoor concert. On Friday the 23rd of March, NEMA staged Diversity in the Park in Wangaratta and combined local multicultural entertainment with the rich professional sound of Inka Marka and its special brand of Andean rhythms. The concert commenced with a Welcome-to-Country performed by a representative of the traditional custodians of the area, Bangerang man Colin Tass. Kaye Darveniza, the Member for Northern Province and Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development, then welcomed the audience and spoke of her delight in seeing so many people turn out to display their belief in cultural diversity and to enjoy the show.

The weather forecasts had warned of thunder storms and rain but the Beechworth Irish Dancers, the Dildaar Toli Indian Dance Troupe and the Trentini Italian Folk Performers provided ample distraction from trivial concerns such as the weather. By the time Inka Marka came on, the crowd was ready to move and Rozi Parisotto, a renowned dance floor demon, was one of the first up, unable to resist the rhythms.

With fabulous entertainment on stage, a variety of international cuisine available from the onsite catering and the delicious Italian crostoli and fritole made by NEMA members, the crowd of around 300 had their needs met on all sides.

Check out the exciting photos on the next page!

Benalla Festival Street Parade

Phew..., what a week! Surprisingly, NEMA members still had enough energy left to take part in the Benalla Festival Street Parade on Saturday the 24th of March. Many of the association's members were unavailable due to them travelling down to Melbourne for the Premier's Gala Dinner, but a nice mix of young and slightly old marched in the parade to highlight the cultural diversity of the region.

NEMA members represented Chinese, Greek, Japanese and Singaporean cultures and the costumes were a hit with the spectators, even though one little boy, on seeing the association's placard, called out, "Where is Nema?"



The small but enthusiastic NEMA contingent showed their cultural pride



NEMA represents all cultures, even the cute little member on the right from Fairyland!

Diversity in the Park Concert



Colin Tass and members of Inka Marka and Dildaar Toli joined Kaye Darveniza and Rozi Parisotto on stage before the concert



Colin Tass opened the concert by performing the Welcome-to Country



Kaye Darveniza enjoying the show in beautiful Merriwa Park



The Beechworth Irish Dancers kicked up a storm but thankfully not a rain storm



Dildaar Toli's Balvinda Gabbi preparing the audience for a display of energetic Indian dancing



The Trentino Italian Folk Performers impressed the audience with their beautiful costumes and skilful footwork

Inka Marka really got the crowd moving with their exotic Andean rhythms



Benalla Festival Balalaika Concert

From the enticing rhythms of South America the previous night to the more formal strains of the Balalaika and grand piano this night. Multi-culture meets high culture. On Saturday (24th of March) evening, NEMA's Benalla Committee member Rita Trewin and her Russian group worked with the Benalla Art Gallery to host this wonderful evening of Russian music and food. The musical performance by renowned balalaika virtuoso, Yuriy Mougerman and his wife, Izabella on grand piano was followed by a light supper consisting of a delicious array of Rita's Russian delicacies. This was certainly a week of gorging oneself on all the sights, sounds and tastes cultural diversity has to offer.

NEMA's Benalla Committee Member, Rita Trewin standing proudly by the fruits of her labour



Rita with Yuriy and Izabella Mougerman

Premier's Gala Dinner

NEMA hit the road on Saturday with a large contingent of members travelling south to attend the Premier's Gala Dinner. This is one of the more eagerly anticipated events on the multicultural calendar and NEMA was out in force.

Leading the charge was our energetic President, Rozi Parisotto and there were undoubtedly some ears burning in Melbourne that night. Apart from the fantastic entertainment, this event provides regional associations such as NEMA with a valuable opportunity to make contact with a variety of similar organisations as well as Government agencies.



There was no escape for Mr Daniel Andrews MP or for Mr Telmo Languiller MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Community Services, as NEMA members surrounded them at the Premier's Gala Dinner

Multicultural Moments

NEMA Good Samaritans

Local men, Peter Barker of Barker's Sewing Centre, and Chris Coucill share a deep concern for members of disadvantaged communities both in Australia and overseas. The two have joined forces to scour the North East for unwanted and discarded sewing machines which they will refurbish and take to the Philippines, where they will work with locals to establish a self-sufficient community based garment manufacturing business.

Both men have visited the Philippines and have seen first hand how the lack of local industry in some areas has made life difficult for many people. A

strong desire to help such people prompted Mr Barker and Mr Coucill to come up with the idea of helping the locals to establish their own industry.

With the support of NEMA of which the men are members, they are now seeking further donations of unwanted or outdated sewing machines and equipment. Mr Coucill has become acquainted with the Governor of the province of Misamis Occidental on the island of Mindanao and has received his pledge of support for the venture.

All that remains to be done now is to

collect the necessary machines and then these two NEMA good Samaritans will be on their way to help others in need. Anyone wishing to donate equipment can contact Mr Barker at Barkers Sewing Centre in Murphy Street, Wangaratta on 5721 1455 or Mr Coucill on 0428 256 640.



Training Activities



Cultural Awareness Training facilitated by Frances Salenga on the 23rd of April

Level 2 First Aid Course conducted by Chris Coucill on the 29th of April



NEMA Welcomes New Citizen

Frances Salenga: "Understanding and appreciating Australian culture was a long journey for me... Embracing Australian values is my commitment as a new citizen and I also endeavour to promote inter-cultural understanding in my own little ways as my contribution to Australian society."



**NEMA Family:
"Congratulations,
Frances!"**

Calendar of Events

Event	Date	Day	Time	Venue	Cost
Citizenship Forum	23 August 2007	Thursday	6.30pm to 8.30pm	GOTAFE Auditorium, Wangaratta	Nil
Victorian Government Achievements in Multicultural Affairs - Public Consultation	3 September 2007	Monday	7.00pm to 8.30pm	Wangaratta Government Centre	Nil
White Balloon Day	4 September 2007	Tuesday	TBA	Myrtleford	Nil
NEMA Annual General Meeting (refer to advertisement)	10 September 2007	Monday	7.00pm to 9.30pm	RC of Wangaratta Council Offices	Nil
Panayeri	24 September 2007	Monday	8.30am to 2.30pm	Greek Orthodox Church, Wangaratta	Nil
Food Handlers Course	27 September 2007	Thursday	TBA	GOTAFE, Wangaratta	Free for members
International Film Night	TBA	TBA	TBA	Wangaratta	TBA
International Film Night	TBA	TBA	TBA	Myrtleford	TBA
Car Rally - CO.AS.IT	7 October 2007	Sunday	TBA	Myrtleford & Wangaratta	TBA
NEMA General Meeting	8 October 2007	Monday	7.00pm to 9.30pm	Benalla Rural City Council Chambers	Nil
Greek Taverna	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
NEMA General Meeting	12 November 2007	Monday	7.00pm to 9.30pm	RC of Wangaratta Council Chambers	Nil
NEMA Multicultural Buffet & Show	1 December 2007	Saturday	7.00pm to 12 midnight	Benalla	\$30
Eldorado Festival	1 - 2 December 2007	Saturday - Sunday	TBA	TBA	TBA
Pasko Sa Canberra	2 December 2007	Sunday	TBA	Philippine Embassy, Canberra	Nil
Bonegilla 60th Anniversary	8 - 9 December 2007	Saturday - Sunday	All Day	Various Venues, Wodonga	Some charges

North East Multicultural Association

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, 10 September 2007 at 7.00pm

Rural City of Wangaratta Council Offices
62 - 68 Ovens Street, Wangaratta

All are welcome - supper provided after the meeting

Editor's Corner

Welcome to the fifth edition of NEMA News.

Have you noticed that NEMA News is growing in volume? I hope that you will take some time to read about the many multicultural events and activities that NEMA has participated in the past few months.

Yen Ng

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