

PRESS RELEASE

**“CANBERRA MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY FORUM COMMENTS ON
DRAFT ACT MULTICULTURAL STRATEGY”**

The Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF) Inc. eagerly welcomes the ACT Government’s invitation to comment on the draft ACT Multicultural Strategy.

“Developing a whole of Government approach to multiculturalism, based on community consultation, demonstrates the Government’s commitment to this important issue,” said Mr Sam Wong AM, Chair of the CMCF, at its General Meeting, on 5 October 2006.

“Multiculturalism is an aspect of the ACT that needs to be celebrated and embraced and not managed.”

The draft Strategy sets out overarching principles to underpin Government programs and policy that spells out individual rights and responsibilities.

“I hope that it will be amended to also spell out the Government’s roles and responsibility”, said Mr Wong.

It goes on to identify issues under ten themes and presents the ACT Government’s position on these issues.

While the draft document has been labelled “a Strategy”, it does not contain specific plans, actions, or funding, and reads more like an overarching framework. The ACT community needs to know how these important issues will be tackled.

The CMCF encourages all community groups to provide feedback on the draft strategy to ensure that it incorporates the views of the whole community.

The draft document needs community input to refine it. For example, a key theme area is aged care, specifically nursing home care. Ageing is a vital issue for multicultural communities, but this strategy should focus on more than just care. It is not just about providing care to those who are frail, it is also about helping people to stay healthy for longer. It is about, supporting carers, better health care throughout life, promoting healthy lifestyles, social activities for elders who are socially isolated and providing care to help people stay at home for longer.

This document, along with the Government’s commitment to the ACT Human Rights Act is a strong indicator of continuing support for multiculturalism in the ACT.

“We look forward to a revised version of the strategy and a commitment to continued funding for multiculturalism from the Act Government”, says Mr Wong.

Feedback on the draft strategy is due by 13 October 2006 and can be faxed to (02) 6207 5862 or emailed to nic.manikis@act.gov.au

For further information, please contact Sam Wong on 0411 417 666.
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