

**SPEECH BY
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AFFAIRS COMMISSION
AT THE
MULTICULTURAL YOUTH SUMMIT
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BOB HAWKE PRIME MINISTERIAL CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

As Chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Youth Summit.

I am greatly moved to see so many of you giving up the luxury of sleeping in on a Saturday morning to be here today.

Youth and Community leaders coming together shows the importance that you and your organisations have place on meeting the needs of our diverse South Australian population. And I commend you for your efforts.

Ever since being appointed on the Commission, I have been hearing from community leaders about the difficulties they face in getting young people involved in their activities.

As a first step in addressing this issue, the Commission established the Youth Advisory Committee or more commonly known as YAC.

A report released earlier this week by the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS) has found that popular youth participation approaches such as youth advisory boards have largely failed to engage with young people from diverse backgrounds.

YAC is unique in that it has been established to provide recommendations and advice to the Commission relating to issues and concerns of youth **from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds**.

I encourage the youth here today to meet with and get to know your YAC members.

An important aspect of the Committee is the need to be representative of CALD youth and therefore the need for consultation is paramount.

The Commission has encouraged YAC to take on as its first official task, the organising of today's Summit.

We don't pretend to have all the answers and so The *Youth Summit* aims to address the concerns of ethnic community leaders by providing a platform for youth and community leaders to voice their issues, concerns and needs.

It is an opportunity to open up the lines of communication between youth, ethnic community leaders and members of the Youth Advisory Committee.

And to work positively together for the future of your community and the future of multiculturalism in South Australia.

Strong and passionate people are what have made South Australia's multicultural community so vibrant. People with vision, foresight, knowledge and skills, people with compassion and drive, people who take the initiative and who are not afraid to work hard, to make their vision a reality.

Many of your forefathers came to South Australia in search of a better life and new opportunities for their children and thought nothing of making great sacrifices to achieve this.

The establishment of clubs and associations by some of you here today or your forefathers, has become a lifeline for many ethnic communities, providing centres for social and cultural activities that have brought and continue to bring people together and keep members of the community in touch.

Ethnic communities have enriched our cultural, social and economic life immensely and have contributed much to the arts, professions and sciences in South Australia.

I am hopeful that the younger members of the many ethnic communities in South Australia will honour the legacy of the pioneers who worked hard to establish the community and its institutions.

Whether first, second or third generation, we all have unique challenges that we face.

I can appreciate the difficulties of adjusting to a new country as I was a refugee myself.

As hard as it may seem, I can also appreciate the turbulent and challenging times of youth as I too was one myself.

These difficulties are sometimes compounded by the lack of understanding that often exists between parents and their teenagers about the unique set of challenges that youth face and the struggle for youth to maintain a balance between cultural expectations of their parents and the pressure to fit in with their peers.

The establishment of organisations such as the Sudanese Tertiary Student Association, the Young Druze Professionals and It.sa, to name a few, have shown great foresight on the community's behalf and the potential for these challenges to be addressed.

To the Leaders;

I strongly encourage you to provide young people in your communities with the support , guidance and encouragement that they need to be successful future leaders of your communities.

To the youth;

I hope that you can appreciate the hard work your forefathers have done to establish your communities.

Only when we know where we come from, can we know where we are going, and only then can we make our forefathers proud of our achievements!

They faced many challenges that second and third generation migrants have not had to face.

As second and third generation migrants, you have been able to take full advantage of the many opportunities that South Australia has to offer.

You are confident, educated and are comfortable with your environment and its surroundings.

Some of you here today are from new and emerging communities and are currently facing many of the early challenges that now established migrant communities once faced.

And today is a great opportunity for you to learn from their mistakes and borrow from their successes.

Aristotle said: *“The greatest virtues are those which are most useful to other people.”*

Young people, I hope that you will respond accordingly in the future by bringing your skills, your ideals, your energy, and the practical abilities you possess to your Community organisation and to become the community leaders of tomorrow.

Young South Australians – you have a challenge ahead of you. Strive for more than your parents, your grandparents and their forefathers!

Continue to firmly etch your achievements and your vibrant culture into our great state.

My very best wishes to each and every one of you, and for a successful Youth Summit.