



MEDIA RELEASE

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FAIR GO FOR WOMEN FROM DIVERSE CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC BACKGROUNDS

Women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds need to be visible and heard, says South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Chairman John Kiosoglous.

"An ideal time to celebrate the achievements and contributions of such women is this International Women's Day (IWD) next Monday 8 March," he said.

"However, IWD also should prompt communities, government agencies and others to look at ways of breaking down the barriers to women's equal participation and access to services.

"Some women are not getting access to services and programs, are not well represented or able to be representatives in their communities, and often are isolated and excluded.

"Why is it that so many migrant and second generation women, through their own efforts, achieve university qualifications, but so few are in a leadership position?"

Mr Kiosoglous said the Commission was continuing to tackle barriers to women from non-English speaking backgrounds through a number of strategies.

"The appointment of three excellent women to the Commission in January is an example of how greater representation on boards and committees can help in this process."

Commission initiatives include women's leadership courses, a mentoring program, provision of direct support under the Multicultural Grants Scheme and providing advice to Government through the Commission's Women's Advisory Committee.

Coinciding with International Women's Day, Multicultural Affairs Minister Michael Atkinson will present certificates to 19 women who completed the Commission's *Advanced Leadership Course for Women of Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds* at a graduation on Friday 26 March.

The Commission also will launch a mentoring program to develop personal learning and development plans; assist those who want to find employment or take on a leadership role in their community; and explore leadership opportunities within the community.

“I call on other government agencies, community groups, businesses and the media to look more carefully at the ways in which they can ensure women from diverse cultural and linguistic background get a ‘fair go’,” Mr Kiosoglous said.

“There is no doubt that there are many women from diverse backgrounds in our community who have considerable skills, knowledge and expertise to contribute, but need more confidence, training and opportunities to push through the barriers.”

International Women’s Day activities involving women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds include the:

- annual IWD luncheon at the Convention Centre on Thursday 11 March at which the Irene Krastev Awards for outstanding achievement in the community will be announced;
- *Moving On*, an IWD celebration jointly sponsored by the Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia, Middle Eastern Communities Council of SA and the African Communities Council of SA, on Tuesday 9 March at the MRC Community Centre, 23 Coglein Street, Adelaide; and
- IWD March and Festival on Saturday 13 March with a rally in Victoria Square at 11.00 am, then march to the new Adelaide University Maths Lawns for the traditional women's festival.

Further details from Ms Joy de Leo 8226 1944.