



*Issue 16, July 2011*

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## MRC EVENTS

### Phoenix Centre Annual Forum

The Phoenix Centre will hold its annual forum on Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> of August at the Hobart Function and Conference Centre and are excited to announce that Najeeba Wazefoadost will speak at the Forum along with Dr Jill Benson (Director of Cultural Diversity, Health & Human Diversity Unit, University of Adelaide; Senior Medical Officer of Migrant Health Services - South Australia) and Professor Nicholas Proctor (Inaugural Chair; Mental Health Nursing at the University of South Australia & Adjunct Professor at the University of Tasmania).

Najeeba has been a panellist on ABC's Q&A several times during 2011 and is recognised for her work in not-for-profit organisations including the Bamiyan Association and Amnesty International, raising awareness of the plight of refugees and providing tutoring and support for Afghani people in Greater Western Sydney.

Najeeba and her family fled the Taliban's genocidal massacres of the Hazara ethnic minority when she was 12. She arrived in Australia by boat as a refugee with her parents, four siblings and two uncles in September 2000. She and her family spent several months in Curtin Detention Centre before being sent to Tasmania to live. They held Temporary Protection Visas for three years before being granted permission to stay.



*(Photo courtesy of ABC)*

Najeeba was determined to gain an education and she completed a Bachelor of Medical Science at the University of Western Sydney and graduated in 2010.

Najeeba is recognised for courage in repeatedly sharing her experiences in Afghanistan, and promoting the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in Australia.

The winner of the "Young Woman of the West", University of Western Sydney, 2011, Najeeba is currently a Home and Community Care/Youth Project Worker at Auburn Diversity Services Inc.

For further information about the forum please contact Kylie Millar at the Phoenix Centre on 6234 9138.

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### Census 2011 - Make sure Tasmania's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Count in 2011!

The next Census of Population and Housing will be held on Tuesday 9 August 2011 and we encourage all families to fill out their form on Census night.

Information drawn from the Census is a tool to ensure we are able to provide for the current and future needs of Tasmanian CALD communities. The MRC also makes use of Census information for funding applications.

Census information is used by all levels of government, private institutions and community organisations to plan for the future and allocate funds appropriately. Inaccurate Census information can result in your community missing out!

Census Collectors will be knocking on doors and delivering each household a form between the 29<sup>th</sup> July and 7<sup>th</sup> August. Please make sure you get the form and fill it in.

**By filling out your Census form you are helping to make sure your community counts!**

Remember, the information collected during the Census is completely confidential and your personal details will never be shared with any other organisation, including Centrelink, Department of Immigration, Housing or Police.

If you need help filling out your Census form, there will be fill in form sessions held at the following locations in Southern Tasmania:

**MRC Hobart**

49 Molle St Hobart

Monday 8 August	2pm-6pm
Tuesday 9 August	2pm-6pm
Wednesday 10 August	2pm-6pm

**MRC Connect – Glenorchy**

332-334 Main Road Glenorchy

Thursday 11 August	10am-4pm
Friday 12 August	10am-4pm

**Kingston Christian Reformed Church**

17 Denison Street, Kingston

Saturday 13 August	10am-2pm
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For more information please visit the website [www.abs.gov.au/census](http://www.abs.gov.au/census) or call the Census Inquiry Service on 1300 338 776

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**New Australians eager to be counted!**

New Australians TJ and Cindy Bernardo are looking forward to being counted in their first Australian Census since moving from the Philippines to Tasmania in 2008.

The Bernardo’s both studied in Australia when they were younger, and although they thought about moving to the United States of America (after they spent some time travelling there), they both preferred the idea of living in Australia. “We really like the emphasis Australians put on family and community” says Cindy.

Since moving to Tasmania, the Bernardo’s have tested out a few Hobart suburbs before settling in Kingston, where they had their first child, Marcus, earlier this year.



*TJ & Cindy with their baby Marcus*

TJ and Cindy know how important the Census is because they actually used information from the 2006 Census when they were looking to move to Australia. They went on to the Australian Bureau of Statistics website and looked at the population and demographic information from the 2006 Census, along with some Australian land maps. It was this information that helped them choose Tasmania as their new home.

“I was amazed at the wealth of information collected in the Australian Census and how easy it is to find exactly what you’re looking for” says Cindy.

It is important that you fill out your Census form on Census night, Tuesday 9 August 2011. The Census data counts everyone in Australia and where and how they live. This information is used by all levels of government, local councils and community groups to figure out where they need to spend money and plan for new services, such as community centres, housing, roads, hospitals and parks. The personal information collected is completely confidential and is not released to any other agency.

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## **African Community Forum**

On Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July an African Community Forum was held at the Glenorchy Civic Centre. The purpose of this forum was to update on the progress of working groups which are addressing issues affecting the African Communities in Tasmania, and to plan for the future. The working groups were formed after a previous forum was held on April 14. There have been regular meetings with the African Leaders and African Communities Council of Tasmania (ACCT) to address the two main issues identified, these being police and media. The police and media working groups were able to report back to the 65 community members and service providers present at this forum.

Representatives from the African Communities and ACCT introduced themselves and gave a brief background history of where they came from including their arrival experiences to Tasmania. This was followed by an address from The Honourable Cassy O'Connor - Minister for Human Services & Minister for Community Development. The media working group invited Garry Bailey - Editor of The Mercury to address the audience and to answer questions. The Police working group invited Fiona Lieutier, Multicultural Liaison Officer for the Police to address the audience and answer questions. The communities also identified two other issues that are affecting their communities, these being employment and housing. Working groups will be formed to address these issues and work towards reporting back at a larger, open forum later in the year.

Overall it was a very focused and productive forum that has encouraged lots of positive action within the communities.

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## **'Survivors, Protectors and Providers' – The Australian Refugee Women's Dialogue**

The Australian Refugee Women's Dialogue, held in Sydney on 14 June 2011, was the culmination of a series of local dialogues held around regional Australia between March and June 2011, hosted

by organisations such as the Migrant Resource Centre.

Three local dialogues were facilitated by Anna Williams, Project Officer, Settlement Services, for women from the Bhutanese, Afghan and Karen communities of Tasmania. The dialogues were an opportunity for women to speak about their problems and concerns and also to reflect on some of the positive aspects of their settlement experiences in Tasmania.

Anna travelled to Sydney to attend the National Dialogue for Refugee Women held on Tuesday 14 June at the Centre for Refugee Research which is based at the University of New South Wales. The National Dialogue was part of the 2011 Refugee Conference which this year had an overarching theme of 'Looking to the Future, Learning from the Past - A Conference to mark 60 years of the Refugee Convention.'

Paw Htoo Lei, representing the Australian Karen Organisation, Tasmania Branch, also attended the National Dialogue in Sydney and played a key role in assisting to organise the local dialogue for Karen women held on June 7 in Glenorchy.

The National Dialogue provided a forum for sharing information and issues from the local dialogues. Paw Htoo and Anna were able to raise a number of key issues that were identified by dialogue participants from Tasmania. Barriers to accessing educational opportunities and English lessons due to competing demands of motherhood and household chores were a particular concern raised by women of the Karen community. Rising concern for loved ones still in refugee camps in Nepal were a priority for the Bhutanese women and housing and language barriers were raised as important considerations for the Afghan women who attended the dialogue.

The findings and recommendations from the National Dialogue will be published in a report that will ideally be used as a policy tool by both service providers and Government in the future.

Major emerging issues on the National level were around housing, family separation and reunion, language challenges, employment, health and wellbeing, family and inter-generational conflict, racism and discrimination, family violence and the issue of asylum seekers.

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## **Moon Festival**

The Moon (Mid-Autumn Festival) is one of the most important holidays in the Chinese calendar. Farmers celebrate the end of the fall harvesting season on this date. The Festival is held on the 15th day of the eighth month in the Chinese calendar, which is in September or early October in the Gregorian calendar. Traditionally on this day, Chinese family members and friends will gather to admire the bright mid-autumn harvest moon, and eat moon cakes and pomelos under the moon together. Accompanying the celebration, there are additional cultural or regional customs, such as: carrying brightly lit lanterns, lighting lanterns on towers, floating sky lanterns, burning incense in reverence to deities, hanging lanterns on the bamboo pole and putting them on a high point, such as roofs, trees, terraces, etc., collecting dandelion leaves and distributing them evenly among family members. In Taiwan, since the 1980s, barbecuing meat outdoors has become a widespread way to celebrate the Moon Festival.

Moon Festival will be celebrated at the MRC's Chinese Day Centre on Thursday, 15 September with entertainment from Joanna Zhong who is a professional Zither player. Special food will be offered such as Moon Cakes as well as grapefruit which is as close as we can get to Pomelos, another traditional food served at Moon Festival Time!

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## **MRC Service Update**

### **MRC's 'Connect' – Employment Support Services**

Connect is pleased to report that four of Connect's clients were recently assisted with obtaining employment with the upcoming

Census. These clients are from the Bhutanese and Ethiopian communities and have been offered the Special Collectors role. In their Special Collectors role they will help gather the information from these two communities and ensure that the communities receive the vital assistance they need. Not only will the Special Collectors provide an essential service but they will also gain valuable work experience which will help them gain future employment in Australia.

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## **MRC Positions Vacant**

**Chinese Bi-cultural worker:** MRC's Home and Community Care program is seeking to employ a Chinese Bicultural Worker to work at the Chinese Day Centre. This is a part time position for a total of eight hours per week (required to work at the Day Centre on Thursdays between 9 am and 2 pm and 3 hours on Wednesdays at MRC).

For a position description and selection criteria please contact the Migrant Resource Centre on 62210999 or email [reception@mrchobart.org.au](mailto:reception@mrchobart.org.au)

Position closes 5pm Monday, 15 August. Only applications addressing the selection criteria will be considered.

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## **MRC Staff**

MRC bid farewell to Jack Williamson, a teacher with MRC's Learning for Growth project. We would like to acknowledge Jack's significant teaching achievements first as a volunteer and then as a paid staff member here at MRC. Jack has touched many hearts and lives during his tenure at MRC and we wish him well in continuing to make a difference to newly arrived Tasmanians in his new role.

MRC welcomed the following new staff in July 2011:

**Sylvia Wing – Employment Support Services Coordinator North** – Sylvia comes to MRC Connect with extensive experience in Employment Services. She has spent most of her working life working with people looking for

work. She has over 20 years experience working in the Department of Employment, Education and Training and more recently 7 years with Employment Plus. Sylvia has undertaken many and varied projects in the local community and out of Canberra to assist disadvantaged job seekers. She gained her Certificate IV in Employment Services in 2009.

Sylvia is a mentor for "Drive 4 Life" in Launceston and describes her initial experience as a bit scary but now recommends it to anyone with a few hours to spare each week. She spends her spare time playing croquet, walking or with her grandchildren.

Sylvia believes that "no one is unemployable" and that people should follow their dream. She is looking forward to working with people from a refugee and humanitarian background to prepare them to meet the challenges of gaining employment.

**Anneliese Smith- Interim Learning For Growth Project Officer** – Anneliese's folks have lived in Tassie for a mere 200 years! She has come home to roost after teaching ESL to international students in Sydney for sometime. She is enjoying teaching the intermediate class and road tests our fine Pinot Noirs in her time off when not following her beloved Sydney Swans, having been a founding member since that team relocated to Sydney.

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## **Spotlight on Our Volunteers – Acknowledgement of Frank Scarfe**

Frank Scarfe came to the Migrant Resource Centre as a volunteer interested in helping refugees and humanitarian entrants learn to drive. Frank was one of our original supervisor drivers on the TOP GEAR Learn to Drive program since its inception in November 2005. Frank was attracted to the program because he liked driving and was interested in road safety, and he saw himself as having something to share with others and because he wanted to contribute to the community.

Frank found TOP GEAR very rewarding and he gained a sense of achievement that his 'participant' had gained their licence and also the pleasure in forming a relationship with someone from an entirely different background.

Frank understood and acknowledged how hard it must be to gain driving experience if you do not have access to a car/supervisory driver. Frank was a retiree with a small amount of available time to offer his assistance with driving and felt driving is a very practical skill he had and felt that he could transfer to someone else.

Frank was a busy man at home, always renovating or making things and a tribute to this trait is a lectern which Frank designed and hand made for the MRC.

Frank was a special person who will be missed by the numerous people he touched during his volunteering years at MRC and will be remembered forever.

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## **Acknowledgement of Sister Phillipa Chapman**

MRC Staff and Communities mark with great sadness the death of Sister Phillipa Chapman. Sister Phillipa was well known for her support of people from refugee backgrounds over an extended period of time here in Southern Tasmania through Centacare and the Catholic Church. We would like to acknowledge Sister Phillipa's significant support of MRC programs and the support rendered by her to the new and emerging communities in their settlement experience in Tasmania.

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## **Cultural Calendar Dates – August 2011**

**August 1 Mon:** National Day-Benin

**August 1 Mon:** Constitution Day-Cook Islands

**August 1 Mon:** Foundation of the Swiss Confederation-Switzerland

**August 1 Mon:** Ramadan begins - Ramadan is the most auspicious month on the Islamic calendar, being the month in which the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. During Ramadan Muslims around the world fast from sunrise to sunset

**August 5 Fri:** Garma Festival, NT (to 9 Aug) An Indigenous cultural exchange event of clan groups from north east Arnhem Land, the Garma Festival is a celebration of Indigenous cultures

**August 5 Fri:** National Day - Jamaica

**August 6 Sat:** Independence Day - Bolivia

**August 7 Sun:** Ambiwerra Festival, Brisbane - This festival features leading music acts and stalls from Brisbane's restaurants and wineries

**August 7 Sun:** National Day - Côte d'Ivoire

**August 9 Tue:** National Day - Singapore

**August 10 Wed:** National Day - Ecuador

**August 11 Thu:** Darwin Festival (to 28 Aug) - This Festival showcases the distinctive culture and stories of the Northern Territory.

**August 11 Thu:** National Day - Chad

**August 13 Sat:** Raksha Bandham - Raksha Bandham means bond of protection. This Hindu festival honours the love between brothers and sisters and is marked by the tying of a rakhi thread by the sister on the wrist of her brother.

**August 14 Sun:** Independence Day - Pakistan

**August 15 Mon:** Dormition of the Theotokos - This day commemorates the death and burial of the Virgin Mary

**August 15 Mon:** Independence Day - Congo Republic of

**August 15 Mon:** Independence Day - India

**August 15 Mon:** National Day - Liechtenstein

**August 17 Wed:** Townsville Cultural Fest (to 21 August) - Cultural Fest brings the Townsville region to life with dance, food, music, arts, workshops and sports (dates TBC)

**August 17 Wed:** National Day - Gabon

**August 17 Wed:** Proclamation of Independence - Indonesia

**August 19 Fri:** Independence Day - Afghanistan

**August 20 Sat:** Tropical Wave Festival, Cairns - A festival day for the entire family, with multicultural performances and artistic displays

**August 20 Sat:** Henley-On-Todd Regatta, Alice Springs NT - Teams of 'rowers' race their boats on the dry sandy bed of the Todd River. This unique and long running sporting spectacle attracts many participants, with proceeds going to charity

**August 20 Sat:** Day of the Foundation of the State of Hungary and St Stephen's Day August 22 Mon: Krishna Janmashtami - This festival is one of the most important events in the Hindu calendar. It celebrates the birth of Lord Krishna, a Hindu deity, more than 5000 years ago.

**August 24 Wed:** National Day - Ukraine

**August 25 Thu:** Independence Day - Uruguay

**August 27 Sat:** Mareeba Multicultural Festival, Qld - This event celebrates the region's cultural diversity with dances, costumes, entertainment and traditional foods

**August 28 Sun:** National Day - Moldova

**August 28 Sun:** Karen Wrist Tying Ceremony, Hobart - A white thread is tied around the wrists of community members and friends. Many Karen refugees from Burma and Thailand have resettled in Australia and ceremonies such as this contribute to the continuation of Karen culture.

**August 31 Wed:** National Day - Kyrgyzstan

**August 31 Wed:** National Day - Malaysia

**August 31 Wed:** National Day - Trinidad and Tobago

**August 31 Wed:** Eid al Fitr (end of Ramadan) - The Islamic month of fasting, Ramadan, ends with the festival of Eid al Fitr. A celebratory meal breaks the fast and at this time charity and good deeds have special significance. Eid is also a time of forgiveness and making amends

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**Tune in to Hobart FM 96.1 to get more updates from the Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania) Inc on the last Monday of every month. Next broadcast is on Monday, 29 August 2011 at 1pm. If you would like to contribute any community updates or articles, please email**

**[aanil@mrchobart.org.au](mailto:aanil@mrchobart.org.au)**

**Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania) Inc**

**49 Mollie Street, Hobart 7000, Tel: (03) 6221 0999 Fax : (03) 6231 1264**

**[www.mrchobart.org.au](http://www.mrchobart.org.au)**