

**Talking Points – Prof. Sev Ozdowski, Chair, Australian Multicultural Council
2019 AGM of Settlement Council of Australia (SCoA)
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, 25 November 2019**

Welcome

Allow me to start with acknowledging the traditional owners of the land we meet on and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

It is my pleasure to welcome:

- Dewani Bakkum, outgoing Chair of the SCoA
- Members of National Executive of SCoA and, in particular, Melissa Monteiro and Eugenia Tsoulis OAM
- Steve Biddel, Director, Dept of Home Affairs
- Mohammad Al-Khafaji, CEO, Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia
- All distinguished guest.

Australian Multicultural Council

It is great to represent Australian Multicultural Council (AMC) at this important AGM. As AMC is no longer advocacy body, not too many people know about our work, so allow us to say few words about who we are and what we do.

The Australian Multicultural Council is a ministerially appointed body that provides independent advice to the Government on multicultural affairs, social cohesion and integration policy and programs.

An example of our advice being taken by the government is the recent announcement by Ministers Coleman and Colbeck the 19 million SPORT2030 grants program which seek to bring communities together through sport.

The Council has a particular focus on:

- Strengthening public understanding of a shared ‘Australian identity’ as a unifying characteristic of Australia.
 - With some 50% of Australians being either first- or second-generation migrants - our diversity is Australia’s new Identity.
- Harnessing the economic and social benefits of our diverse population.
 - Equality of opportunity for all is the key to our successful future! Only with equality we can be a nation of success! And good settlement services do deliver equality of opportunity outcomes for refugees and migrants arriving here.
- Advancing programs and policies aimed at building harmonious and social cohesive communities.
- Promoting the importance of mutual respect and responsibility, which foster our shared Australian values, identity, and citizenship.

- Building stronger and more cohesive communities and addressing barriers to participation, including racism and discrimination
- Promoting greater intercultural and interfaith understanding and dialogue.

And I am inviting you all to join the 3rd Advancing Community Cohesion Conference: 10-13 February 2020

The Council's current term is from June 2018 to June 2021.

The Council brings together experts from a diverse range of backgrounds and reflects both continuity and renewal.

Five of the members, including myself in the position of the Chair, served on the previous Council from 2014-2017; seven are new to the role.

The 12 members are:

- Professor Sev Ozdowski AM, Chair
- Dr Bulent Hass Dellal AO, Deputy Chair - SBS Chair
- Ms Leila Abukar
- Mr Craig Foster, former lead Socceroo player and chief football analyst at SBS
- Ms Anthea Hancocks - of Scanlon Foundation
- Dr Marina Hogan
- Ms Helena Kyriazopoulos
- Ms Claudine Menegazzo
- Mr Vasani Srinivasan
- Mr Tsebin Tchen
- Ms Charlotte Vidor
- Mr Jason Yeap OAM

SCoA and settlement services

Settlement services are key to promoting multiculturalism in Australia.

Without successful settlement there is no successful multiculturalism!

SCoA's services help to make the critical linkages for migrants and refugees with the wider community.

That is an important role and settlement service providers in Australia should be proud of their contribution to helping build harmonious communities.

From a multicultural perspective it is all about brokering partnerships, forming links and building coalitions to work collectively and seamlessly to support migrants and refugees.

And I understand it particularly well as I with my wife and small child arrived in Australia as refugees in 1975.

Without help of a range support networks, access to English language courses, help with recognition of our overseas qualifications, sponsored accommodation on arrival and access

to tertiary institutions to upgrade our qualification – we would not have been as successful as we were in making our contribution to Australia.

We should all be looking at ways to promote linkages across services, and with the private and not-for-profit sector, as well as the broader community to ensure the needs of migrants and refugees are considered in the design and delivery of the programs and services they use.

SCoA is uniquely placed through its peak body role to identify agencies and organisations that settlement services could link with, and to encourage its members to collaborate within and beyond the sector.

SCoA's work over many years has helped support the sector to align with and adapt to changes in the settlement landscape in Australia.

I understand that SCoA has met with many of its members in regional areas and I know that you will share your members' views with Government to help ensure organisations in regional areas are supported to help the people who are choosing to make a regional area their home.

In fact, linkage with the communities and listening to stakeholders are extremely important in development of any policy or program.

However, SCoA's role is much broader than collecting and sharing the views of its members.

SCoA plays also an important role in helping to develop capacity within the sector and promoting best practice.

Through resources like the National Settlement Services Outcomes Standards, SCoA's leadership is contributing to a settlement sector that provides quality services to migrants and refugees regardless of the location in Australia they choose to settle.

The diversity of its membership is testament to the value the sector places on SCoA's work and the sector's openness to hearing about innovation and the benefits of collaboration.

Successful settlement outcomes for migrants and refugees benefits everyone and requires us all to work together.

I am confident that, with SCoA's support, the settlement sector will continue to help Australia remain one of the world's most successful multicultural country.