



Chinese Community Council of Australia Inc

澳華社區議會

## MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 15 September 2010

### PRIME MINISTER – WHAT ABOUT MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS?

“It is regrettable that multicultural affairs should be left out in the newly announced Gillard ministry portfolios yesterday, according to Dr Anthony Pun, President of the Chinese Community Council of Australia (CCCA).

“From this decision, the Prime Minister seems to be taking us back to the dying days of the Howard Government when the then Prime Minister dumped the words *multicultural affairs* from its ministry and shifted its focus away from multicultural affairs to citizenship.

“It was briefly reinstated under the Rudd Government. So I hope that it was just an oversight, and not a return to the Howard days where multicultural affairs was overlooked and ignored.

“The Prime Minister has reacted positively to the advice provided by the Higher Education and Indigenous communities’ representatives where last minute changes were made. We are hoping that the multicultural sector could voice their opinions on this decision and place their views forward to the new Gillard government.

“There is a still lot of work to do such as improving language services, focusing on our increasingly ageing multicultural communities and introducing a Commonwealth Multicultural Act in line with other Australian jurisdictions. It is unrealistic to think that we as a nation have moved on in this space since there’s a number of existing and new issues we must address for both the short and long term.

“According to the 2006 Census, 22 per cent of all Australians were born overseas. In recent years, people from around 185 different countries, speaking over 100 languages and dialects have made Australia home. These figures greatly reflect on the growing diversity of Australia’s society. With this significant cultural diversity it is important that the Federal Government continues to promote community harmony for all Australians.



Chinese Community Council of Australia Inc

澳華社區議會

These efforts must target both more established Australian communities and more culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

“We must face the fact that community harmony and the promotion of multiculturalism and cultural diversity is vital to the long term objectives of a sustainable Australia. Priorities around policy development to encourage cultural diversity and support our growing CALD communities should be at the forefront as our society continues to grow more complex and culturally diverse.

CCCA recommends that the new Gillard Government reintroduce the position of multicultural affairs in her ministry and develop a long term strategic plan during its three year term.

“The support of our CALD communities will indeed require more targeted spending and specific policies on infrastructure, education, housing, health and aged care. As they continue to go through the settlement process, we need to ensure that government and policy focus and support comes from the very top,” concluded Dr Pun.

*For further information please contact Dr Anthony Pun on 0414 976 363*