

Wednesday 22 July 2015

Signing signifies Ryde is a better place for everyone, everyday

City of Ryde Council and the Ryde Multicultural Centre will celebrate the signing of a **Racism. It Stops With Me** Australian Human Rights Commission agreement, at a community barbeque.

The barbeque will be held on Saturday 25 July, between 11.00am – 1.00pm, at the Ryde Multicultural Centre, Lions Park, West Ryde.

The agreement signing is an important milestone in the Council's social inclusion policy and promotes the City of Ryde as a welcoming community where everyone feels equal, safe and included.

It also acknowledges how Ryde's diversity enriches all aspects of our social and economic life and is an opportunity for everyone to come together to celebrate what has helped to shape the unique character of our city.

President of The Ryde Multicultural Centre, Cllr Sarkis Yedellian said that the signing of the **Racism. It Stops With Me** agreement, "highlights the crucial role community organisations and their members have in making Ryde a welcoming place that is inclusive and harmonious."

Australian Human Rights Commission's Race Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Tim Soutphommasane, commended the Ryde Multicultural Centre for "taking a stand against bigotry and racism ... and sending a strong statement in support of multicultural tolerance."

The event will kick off with a fair dinkum Aussie barbeque, with a halal option, and includes multicultural performances with singing and dancing.

Some interesting statistics:

Of the City of Ryde's 110,000 population:

- 36% of residents come from non-English speaking backgrounds
- 7% of residents have limited English fluency
- In 35% of houses, at least two languages are spoken
- 42% of people speak a language other than English at home
- 60% of residents follow Christianity with a combined 11% following Buddhism Hinduism and Islam and the remainder stating no religion.

Research from 2011 shows that one in seven Australians say they experienced discrimination because of their colour or background. This figure has been increasing steadily in recent years.

Strategies and inclusive actions taken by City of Ryde Council:

- 2013 declared City of Ryde a Refugee Welcome Zone
- Community Migrant Resource Centre , Northern Region Eastwood offices open in 2013
- March 2014 joined the **Racism. It Stops With Me** campaign
- Anti-Racism Police and Community Leaders BBQ in 2014
- Multi-lingual Welcome Guide for Asylum Seekers and Refugees produced in 2014
- NAIDOC WEEK annual events
- Harmony Day annual events
- Annual program of inclusive activities for families, children and preschoolers – (Go4Fun, Preparing for Big School)

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Dr Tim Soutphommasane full quote.

"I commend Ryde Multicultural Centre for taking a stand against bigotry and racism. Through pledging support for "Racism. It Stops with Me" and publicising your support through this community event, you are sending a strong statement in support for multicultural tolerance. Our communities are better places when everyone can belong. I look forward to working with Ryde Multicultural Centre in the future. You can count on the support and solidarity of the Australian Human Rights Commission".