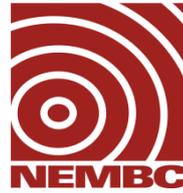


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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **HIRE MORE MIGRANTS, EXPERTS URGE MEDIA BOSSES AT GROUND-BREAKING AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE**

Australian media organisations have been urged to recruit more journalists from new and emerging migrant communities in an effort to combat “thinly-veiled racism and misrepresentation” in the mainstream media.

The recommendation was among a wide-ranging series of actions proposed at the inaugural National Conference on Media, Migration and Integration, co-hosted by Africa Media Australia and the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council (NEMBC) in Melbourne earlier this month.

The two-day conference brought together prominent politicians, media representatives, and multicultural specialists to discuss key issues related to the representation of migrant communities in the mainstream Australian media.

The event was opened by Victoria’s Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Robin Scott, and featured presentations by some of Australia’s most influential social justice campaigners, including World Vision CEO Tim Costello, Chairman of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission John Searle, and Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs Inga Peulich.

“In light of recent statements from new ABC boss Michelle Guthrie to create more diversity at the national broadcaster, it may be the right time for commercial media to realise that it’s imperative for their viability that they address the diversity issue,” said the NEMBC’s Chief Executive Officer, Russell Anderson.

“Diversity in the media is about more than just representation on the screen and in newspapers. It’s about the stories that get told, the issues that get covered, the voices that get heard. It’s about creating a range of voices, accents, languages, and, most importantly, values.”

Clyde Sharady from Africa Media Australia said the conference recommendations provided a vital blueprint to help media bosses overcome “the culture of thinly-veiled racism and misrepresentation” that often clouds their coverage of new and emerging migrant communities.

“Recruiting more journalists from multicultural backgrounds and training journalists on cultural diversity and communication with ethnic communities are just two of the solutions proposed,” Mr Sharady said. “Most of these actions have been proposed before, but to have them all laid out as a single blueprint provides a ground-breaking opportunity for media organisations that really care about equality and social justice to start addressing these issues in a coherent way.”

Among the other recommendations proposed at the conference were the creation of social media forums to promote multicultural media representation, apprenticeships and other ‘pathways’ for

young journalists, academic research projects, and community forums linking community leaders with local journalists and editors.

“All of these recommendations involve the cooperation of government regulators, universities and other tertiary institutions to be more engaged with multicultural communities and more proactive in engaging editors and media owners to react to unbalanced or contentious reporting,” said Russell Anderson.

A summary of key recommendations is provided below.

*For more information, please contact: Clyde Sharady, CEO Africa Media Australia, on 0437 724 469 or Russell Anderson, CEO of the National Ethnic & Multicultural Broadcasters Council on (03) 9486 9549.*

## **Summary of Key Recommendations**

### **Mainstream Media**

#### **Commercial and public media**

- Recruiting more journalists (both cadets and experienced reporters) from multicultural backgrounds.
- Training existing journalists on diversity, cultural competency, and ways of proactively engaging with new and emerging migrant communities.
- Appointing a diversity officer as a dedicated contact with migrant communities within media organisations.
- Creating regular forums for contact between journalists and new migrant communities.

#### **Community media**

- Encouraging and rewarding community media outlets for offering employment pathways and training programs that promote entry-level positions for young journalists from migrant communities.

### **Government and Regulators**

- Promoting forums and events that enable regulators and politicians to increase awareness of the situation through contact with journalists, further training, and research and monitoring initiatives.

### **Universities and Tertiary Institutions**

- Encouraging and funding academics to increase awareness of the situation through relevant research and monitoring projects.
- Strengthening networks through roundtable meetings of interested academics and media and community representatives.

### **Community Organisations**

- Facilitating community organisations to be more proactive in engaging with local journalists and editors.
- Helping NGOs and community organisations to react to specific articles and broadcasts that misrepresent migrant communities or fail to offer them a balanced ‘right of reply’.
- Educating and training community members in writing press releases, identifying media opportunities, and approaching journalists with stories that cast their communities in a positive light.
- Using comedy events and cultural performances to promote positive media stories.