



Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Amendment Bill.

Second Reading

The Hon. JOHN HATZISTERGOS (Minister for Justice, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship) [8.15 p.m.]:
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This amendment to the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act honours a pre-election commitment by the Carr Government, to designate a Commissioner of the Community Relations Commission as a representative of youth from New South Wales' culturally diverse communities.

The amendment, in fact, goes further—it makes provision for two young people aged between 18 and 24 to be appointed to the Commission.

An increase to the number of Commissioners, from nine to eleven, will bring a considerable increase in expertise in youth issues to the Commission.

The appointment of two youth commissioners is provided for in the first two clauses of the amendment.

Since its establishment in 2001, the Community Relations Commission has been increasingly involved in addressing the needs of young people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The Commission works with a wide range of public sector agencies on issues affecting youth as they affect young people from culturally, and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Commission is a government partner in the *Youth Partnership with Arabic speaking and Pacific Islander communities*.

An important feature of the Partnership with Arabic Speaking youth is the support the Commission provides to its Youth Liaison Teams.

These teams consist of Arabic speaking community members drawn from Islamic, Christian and non-denominational backgrounds.

The liaison teams carry out a range of activities including:

- Conflict mediation between young people;
- Difficulties between young people and their parents;
- Educational assistance and guidance; and, in some instances
- Courtship issues between young couples.

Twenty one Youth Liaison Team members now operate in shopping centres, railway stations, sporting venues, and other public spaces on Thursday and Friday nights in Auburn, Parramatta, Liverpool, Bankstown and Darling Harbour.

Last year, the *Youth Partnership with Arabic speaking communities* was the gold winner in the Social Justice category in the 2002 Premier's Public Sector Awards.

The appointment of two young people to the Community Relations Commission will not just give the Commission greater expertise and insights in approaching issues affecting our young people.

It will also harness the vitality, energy, and vision that our young people are capable of producing.

I commend the legislation to the House, and encourage young people to make use of this and other opportunities to

become involved, and to help make decisions that affect our future.

I also commend the final clause of the amendment.

The clause enables the Commission to provide interpreter and other services, as approved by the Minister, outside of New South Wales.

This is particularly important in ensuring that the Commission has the power to market its Community Media Review as a service to promote a better understanding of our culturally diverse community.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS [8.16 p.m.]: The Opposition will not oppose this bill, and I refer all honourable members to the excellent speech on it delivered in the other place by the honourable member for Willoughby.

The Hon. JOHN HATZISTERGOS (Minister for Justice, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship) [8.17 p.m.], in reply: I commend the bill to the House.

[Your feedback](#) [Legal notice](#)

Refer updates to Hansard Office on 02 9230 2233 or use the feedback link above.