



*The Hon M Iemma MP,  
Premier and Minister for  
Citizenship*



*The Hon B Perry MP,  
Minister for Juvenile Justice,  
Minister for Western Sydney and  
Minister Assisting the Premier on  
Citizenship*



The Hon M. Iemma MP  
Premier and Minister for Citizenship  
Governor Macquarie Tower  
1 Farrer Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

31 October 2007

My Dear Premier

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report of the Community Relations Commission for the year ended 30 June 2007 for presentation to Parliament.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985*, and includes a statement of affairs pursuant to the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*.

The achievements highlighted in this report were made possible by the commitment of the Commission staff. I take this opportunity to thank them for their dedication throughout the year.

Yours sincerely

Stepan Kerkyasharian AM  
Chairperson  
Community Relations Commission  
For a multicultural NSW

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# VISION, MISSION and VALUES

## VISION

**Be the recognised leader and facilitator of the equal participation of all communities within a harmonious, cohesive and multicultural New South Wales.**

## MISSION

**Through continuous improvement, innovative and efficient management be the central reference point providing leadership and partnership to the Government, the communities and the private sector enabling maximum benefit from our cultural diversity to all the people of New South Wales.**

## VALUES

**The Commission values:**

- **recognising the professionalism of our people by creating a work environment in which openness, honesty, integrity, team work, safety, learning and communication are highly valued.**
- **focusing on the needs and aspirations of the general community, particularly the multicultural community of New South Wales.**
- **integrity and honesty in the way we operate.**
- **community participation and contribution.**
- **willingness to learn and enable learning.**
- **accountability and consistency in everything we do.**

# CHAIRPERSON'S OVERVIEW of 2006-07



*Stepan Kerkyasharian AM*

This reporting year has witnessed significant events that have been both exciting and challenging and have contributed to key elements of the Commission's activities.

The Commission made a number of recommendations in its submission to the review of the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*. These recommendations propose to strengthen some of the terms used in the Act, in order to clarify the meaning of multiculturalism, to reaffirm the objectives and functions of the Commission and to better facilitate work in building collaboration between government and the community.

One of the legislated responsibilities of the Commission is to assist and assess public authorities in observing the principles of multiculturalism and the main vehicle by which this is done is through the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) program. In view of the progress in service provision to multicultural NSW by agencies, the Commission decided to review the EAPS program, and revise the EAPS Standards Framework and supporting handbook. This process has commenced and it is envisaged that the review and revision will be completed by mid 2008.

During this year the Department of Local Government and the Commission, in a joint project, have completed work on a draft multicultural planning framework and information kit to assist local councils to implement the principles of multiculturalism locally. It is expected that this material will be published soon.

The Community Relations Report 2006 was prepared by the Commission on the status of community relations in NSW, with a focus on cultural diversity. The theme of this report was "Harmony in Motion" and highlights Government activities that strengthen community and religious harmony.

A leadership role has been taken by the Commission in coordinating settlement planning in NSW to meet the needs of new arrivals and to maximise the benefits of immigration to the State. The highly competitive global demand for skills means immigration remains crucial to the productivity of the State and NSW continues to be the major destination for new migrants and humanitarian entrants to Australia. Immigration is the driving force behind our evolving multicultural society, and at the same time NSW maintains its humanitarian commitment by accepting around 4,000 refugees and humanitarian entrants each year.

In December 2006, the Commission coordinated the NSW Government submission to the Commonwealth Interdepartmental Committee on Humanitarian Settlement, making recommendations to the Australian Government aimed at improving settlement outcomes for humanitarian entrants. Many of these recommendations were adopted by the Commonwealth.

The *Report of the Community Relations Commission Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW* initiated and carried out by the Commission under Sections 13(c) and 15 of the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* was released in September 2006, where 41 recommendations were made to improve settlement outcomes for refugees and humanitarian entrants from Africa. These recommendations are national in scope and relate to key agencies in both the Australian Government and the NSW Government. The settlement of people from Africa into NSW has been an important focus taken up by the Commission, where a number of initiatives have been introduced to explore and improve ways of supporting these communities. A special taskforce was established to provide recommendations on African needs in the areas of accommodation, employment, youth, law, health and education.

The Commission has been constant in planning and arranging constructive programs, supported by government and non-government stakeholders, to promote social cohesion and to alleviate the tension that had existed in Cronulla and its surrounding areas since the events of 2005. These programs have proved to be invaluable to the state of harmony in the local community and between the different cultures.

To this end exhibitions were held at North Cronulla, as well as at the Day of Cultures at the Royal Easter Show, to promote cultural awareness and community harmony through history, primarily focusing on the art and heritage education of Australia. These events provided an opportunity for local citizens and visitors alike to learn to understand other cultures and traditions and to educate all sections of the Australian community about migration heritage and the contributions made to our society by migrant communities.

The Commission held a Community Relations Symposium in August 2006. This gathering of communities brought together many experienced leaders from around the State under the banner *Engaging Communities* to showcase a wide range of projects. One of the days was dedicated to the youth of NSW who debated modern day issues including drugs, gambling, underage drinking, masculinity, youth leadership and multiculturalism.

The seventh annual Cabramatta CityWatch forum was held on 3 May 2007, when it was confirmed that there has been a perceptible improvement in street safety within the area. The police and the community have been working together with a common purpose of maintaining safety for residents, business owners and visitors.

As part of the Muslim youth project, a summer festival for youth was held in December 2006 at Darling Harbour, which attracted more than 3,000 people. This event, which was supported by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, was aimed specifically at bringing together young people representing different cultural backgrounds, and engaging them in activities to promote understanding of cultural and religious diversity through entertainment, displays and social activities.

While Griffith has been portrayed negatively by the media because of the tragedy that occurred to one of the younger members of the community, the Commission has worked hard to dispel negativity by actively participating and interacting within the community. I particularly acknowledge the work of the Mayor, Clr D. Zappacosta, who played a key role in monitoring community harmony in Griffith.

The Commission participated in the launch of Lismore's Living Library (Don't judge a book by its cover) in November 2006. Living Library works towards building strong and positive community relationships and breaking down barriers within the Lismore community.

In accordance with the NSW State Plan goals to *Keep People Safe* and *Build Harmonious Communities*, the Commission commenced a project to establish a resource list of respected community members to assist the NSW Police Force and the Department of Juvenile Justice in responding to youth offences. These community members will assist with the issue of cautions and will also participate in youth justice conferences.

The MediaLink press reporting service, which offers English reports of articles appearing in ethnic media, has now expanded interstate, covering publications across Australia. Commonwealth and State government agencies and private companies are subscribers to this service.

The CommuniLink web hosting service is a single point of entry that provides the ability to reach out to the diverse communities of NSW. A discussion board is available to encourage participation and involvement in the consideration of specific community issues.

The winners of the categories in the 2006 National Multicultural Marketing awards were announced in November at a dinner hosted by the Premier and Minister for Citizenship, the Hon Morris Iemma MP. The Australian Football League, the governing body of Aussie Rules football, won the grand award for its program to boost multicultural participation in the game and for the key role played with integrating newly arrived immigrants and refugees into this national football game.

Young people (aged between 18 and 25 years) have been appointed to the Commission's Regional Advisory Councils across NSW. These youth representatives are given the opportunity to become involved in raising issues that affect young people in the community. They are mentored in the field of multicultural and community relations and have the skills to provide leadership in this area.

In January 2007 I was delighted to lead a delegation of NSW community leaders who toured Japan at the invitation of the Japan Foundation to discuss issues relevant to multiculturalism, in both a Japanese and Australian context. The purpose of this visit was to promote multicultural coexistence and mutual understanding among different cultures, exchange information and ideas, establish networks with community leaders, youth, academics, non-government organisations and government officials. The invitation from the Japan Foundation is an acknowledgement of the high regard with which NSW public policies in multiculturalism are viewed internationally.

In its activities, the Commission acknowledges the support during the reporting period of the Premier and Minister for Citizenship, the Hon Morris Iemma MP, and the Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship, the Hon Barbara Perry MP.

I thank the Deputy Chairperson, Mr Michael Marx AM, and my fellow Commissioners for their support and advice throughout the year.

I acknowledge the support of the members of the ten Regional Advisory Councils along with their chairpersons for their contribution to the deliberations of the Commission, which it considers to be essential in maintaining links with communities.

The dedication and work of the Commission's staff has made 2006-07 another productive year for the Commission. I am grateful for their efforts and continue to count on their contributions as the Commission faces ongoing and emerging issues in the field of multiculturalism.



Stepan Kerkyasharian AM  
Chairperson  
Community Relations Commission  
For a multicultural NSW

# PRINCIPLES OF MULTICULTURALISM

*Part 1 Section 3(1) of the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000 enacts the following principles of multiculturalism:*

- (1) *Parliament recognises that the people of New South Wales are of different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds, who, either individually or in community with other members of their respective groups, are free to profess, practise and maintain their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage. It does so by supporting and promoting the following principles of multiculturalism:*
  - (a) **Principle 1** – *All individuals in New South Wales should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life in which they may legally participate.*
  - (b) **Principle 2** – *All individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language.*
  - (c) **Principle 3** – *All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programs provided or administered by the Government of New South Wales.*
  - (d) **Principle 4** – *All institutions of New South Wales should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of New South Wales as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State.*
- (2) *Parliament also recognises that those principles are based on citizenship. The expression **citizenship** is not limited to formal Australian citizenship, but refers to the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society in which there is:*
  - (a) *a recognition of the importance of shared values within a democratic framework governed by the rule of law, and*
  - (b) *a unifying commitment to Australia, its interests and future.*

*The principles of multiculturalism are to be construed accordingly.*
- (3) *The principles of multiculturalism are the policy of the State.*
- (4) *Accordingly, each public authority must observe the principles of multiculturalism in conducting its affairs.*
- (5) *It is the duty of the chief executive officer of each public authority to implement the provisions of this section within the area of his or her administration.*

# OBJECTIVES and FUNCTIONS of the COMMISSION

The Community Relations Commission of New South Wales was established as a statutory body on 13 of March, 2001 under the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*. The objectives of the Commission are in Part 3 section 12 and the functions of the Commission are in Part 3 section 13.

## The objectives of the Commission are:

- participation of the people of New South Wales in community life and the public decision making process so that they can exercise their rights and fulfil their obligations
- access to government and community services that is equitable and that has regard to the linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic diversity of the people of New South Wales
- the promotion of a cohesive and harmonious multicultural society with mutual respect for and understanding of cultural diversity
- the enrichment of all sections of society through the benefits of cultural diversity
- the promotion of the principles of multiculturalism and the advantages of a multicultural society
- the promotion of social justice, community development and community initiatives for ethnic communities in New South Wales.

## The functions of the Commission are:

- to undertake systematic and wide ranging consultation with people and groups with respect to its objectives
- to advise and make recommendations to the Minister to promote any of its objectives
- to investigate and report to the Minister on any matter relating to its objectives that the Commission considers appropriate or that the Minister refers to the Commission for investigation and report
- to arrange and participate in forums to promote its objectives
- to facilitate cooperative arrangements involving governmental, business, educational and community groups or bodies to promote its objectives
- to enter into agreements with public authorities in connection with their functions to promote the objectives of the Commission (including, but not limited to, the objective relating to access to government services)
- to assist, and assess the effectiveness of, public authorities in observing the principles of multiculturalism in the conduct of their affairs, particularly in connection with the delivery of government services
- to assist in resolving issues associated with cultural diversity

- to provide (whether within or outside New South Wales) interpreter or other services approved by the Minister
- to advise the Minister on the most effective use of funds appropriated by Parliament for programs related to its objectives (including funds for the provision of resources to community groups that promote the objectives of the Commission)
- to support community initiatives that promote the objectives of the Commission
- to encourage eligible people to become Australian citizens
- to advise and make recommendations to the Anti-Discrimination Board on matters relating to discrimination and racial vilification
- such other functions as are conferred or imposed on it by or under this or any other Act.

# MEMBERS of the COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION

as at 30 June 2007



*Commissioners from left to right:  
standing: Michael Christodoulou, Michael Marx AM (Deputy Chairperson), Gambhir Watts, Katrina Banh, Ned Maruncic OAM.  
seated: Ezel Jupiter, Stepan Kerkyasharian AM (Chairperson), Wajiha Ahmed, Angelique Vongsaya.  
absent: Lydia Kamleh.*

## **Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian AM, Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer**

Appointed 27 February 1989. Appointment expires 14 September 2008.

President, Anti-Discrimination Board

Member, Arabic Youth Partnership Implementation Committee

Member, Commissioner's Advisory Council on Culturally Responsive Policing

Member, Human Services Chief Executive Officers Group

Member, Migration Heritage Centre Panel of Advisors

Member, Standing Committee of Criminal Justice System Chief Executive Officers

Secretary, Cabramatta CityWatch Council.

## **Mr Michael Marx AM, Deputy Chairperson**

Partner, Chalmers Marx Lawyers.

Appointed 22 December 1996. Appointment expires 15 March 2009.

Community involvement:

Trustee, Fund for Jewish Higher Education

Past President and life member, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies

Past President and board member, Waverley Action for Youth Services.

### **Ms Wajiha Ahmed**

Solicitor.

Appointed 15 February 2006. Appointment expires 15 February 2009.

Community involvement:

- Chairperson, Albury Regional Advisory Council
- Chairperson, Griffith Regional Advisory Council
- Lecturer, Insearch, University of Technology, Sydney
- Member, Geographical Names Board
- Member, Youth Justice Advisory Committee
- Pre-selector, 2007 Dendy Award, Sydney Film Festival.

### **Ms Katrina Banh (youth commissioner)**

University student.

Appointed 6 December 2006. Appointment expires 5 December 2008.

Community involvement:

- Chairperson, CRC Multicultural Youth Network
- Chairperson, Central West Regional Advisory Council
- Choreographer, Ming Der Chinese School dance group.

### **Mr Michael Christodoulou DO**

Chiropractor and osteopath

Appointed 2 March 2005. Appointment expires 1 March 2008.

Community involvement:

- Acting Chairperson, Nepean-Blacktown Regional Advisory Council
- Chairperson, Illawarra Regional Advisory Council
- Chairperson, May Murray Neighbourhood Centre Inc.
- Commission representative to the Federation of Community Language Schools
- Commission representative to the 2006 Cohesive Community School Award of the Department of Education and Training
- Coordinator, United Nations Human Rights Day Committee
- Director, Board of Directors of the Stanmore Hawks Football Club
- Member, Board of World Council of Hellenes
- President, Cyprus Community of NSW
- President, Cyprus Communities of Australia and New Zealand.

### **Ms Ezel Jupiter**

Team Leader, Centrelink Multicultural Services.

Appointed 17 October 2001. Appointment expires 13 October 2007.

Community involvement:

- Actively involved in refugee settlement, rural and regional development issues
- Chairperson, Hornsby-Central Coast Regional Advisory Council
- Chairperson, New England Regional Advisory Council
- Member, assessment panel for NSW Refugee Week grants

Member, judging panel of the 2007 Sydney Film Festival  
Member, Management Committee, NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)  
Secretary, NSW Turkish Welfare Association.

### **Ms Lydia Kamleh (nee Muhieddine)**

Solicitor

Appointed 6 December 2006. Appointment expires 5 December 2009.

### **Mr Nedjelko Maruncic OAM**

Company director.

Appointed 11 October 2000. Appointment expires 8 March 2009.

Community involvement:

Chairperson, Macarthur-Liverpool Regional Advisory Council

Vice President, Australian Croatian Community Council

Vice President, Jadran Hajduk Club Limited.

### **Ms Angelique Vongsaya (youth commissioner)**

University student.

Appointed 6 December 2006. Appointment expires 5 December 2009.

Community involvement:

Chairperson, Hunter Regional Advisory Council

Chairperson, Multicultural Youth Network

Member, board of directors, Lao Community Advancement Co-op Ltd.

### **Mr Gambhir Watts**

Company director.

Appointed 6 December 2006. Appointment expires 5 December 2009.

Community involvement:

Chairperson, Northern Regional Advisory Council

Founder director, Australia India Foundation

National treasurer, Australia, India Business Council

President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia.

### **Members of the Commission whose appointment concluded during 2006 - 07**

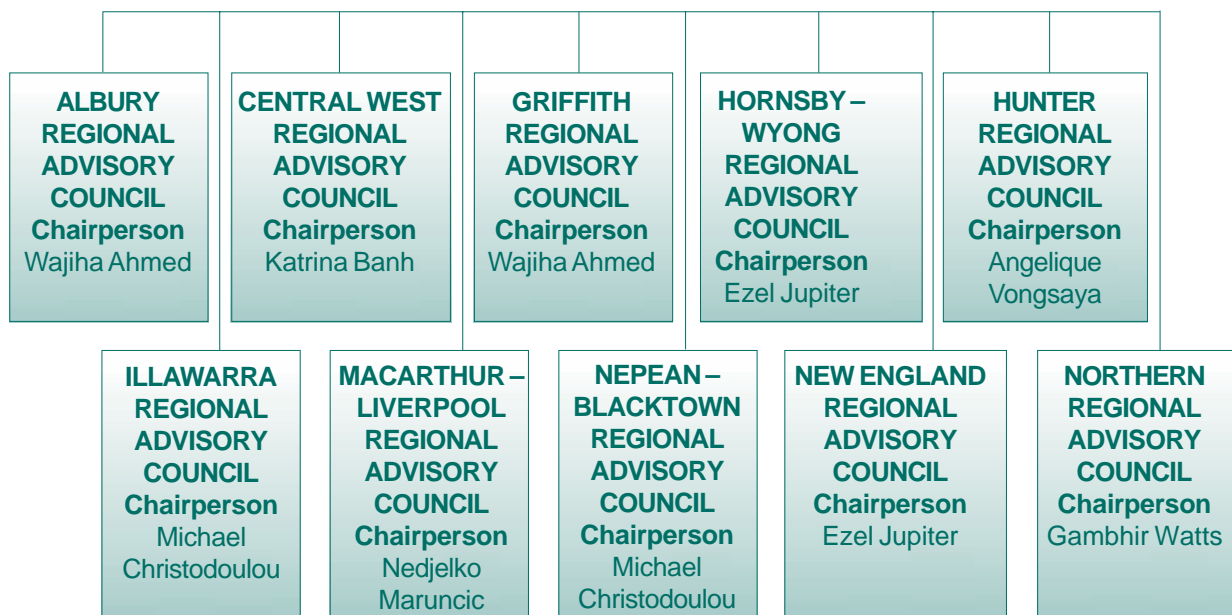
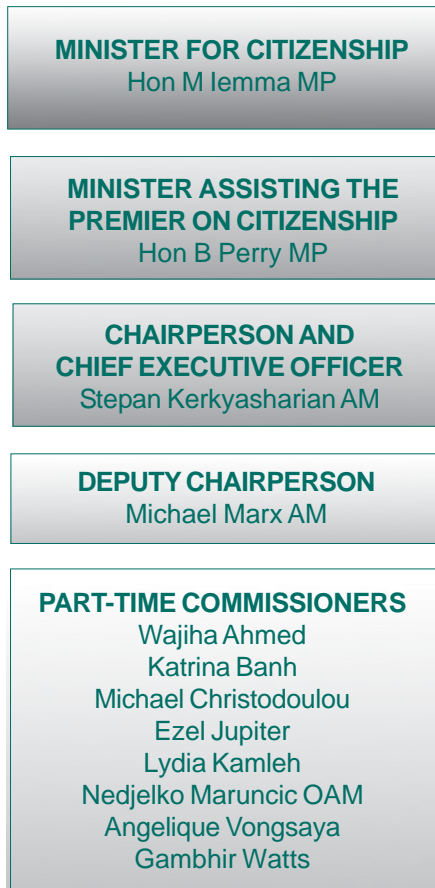
Ms Marta Aquino

Mr Thomas Baena Jr

# ORGANISATION STRUCTURES

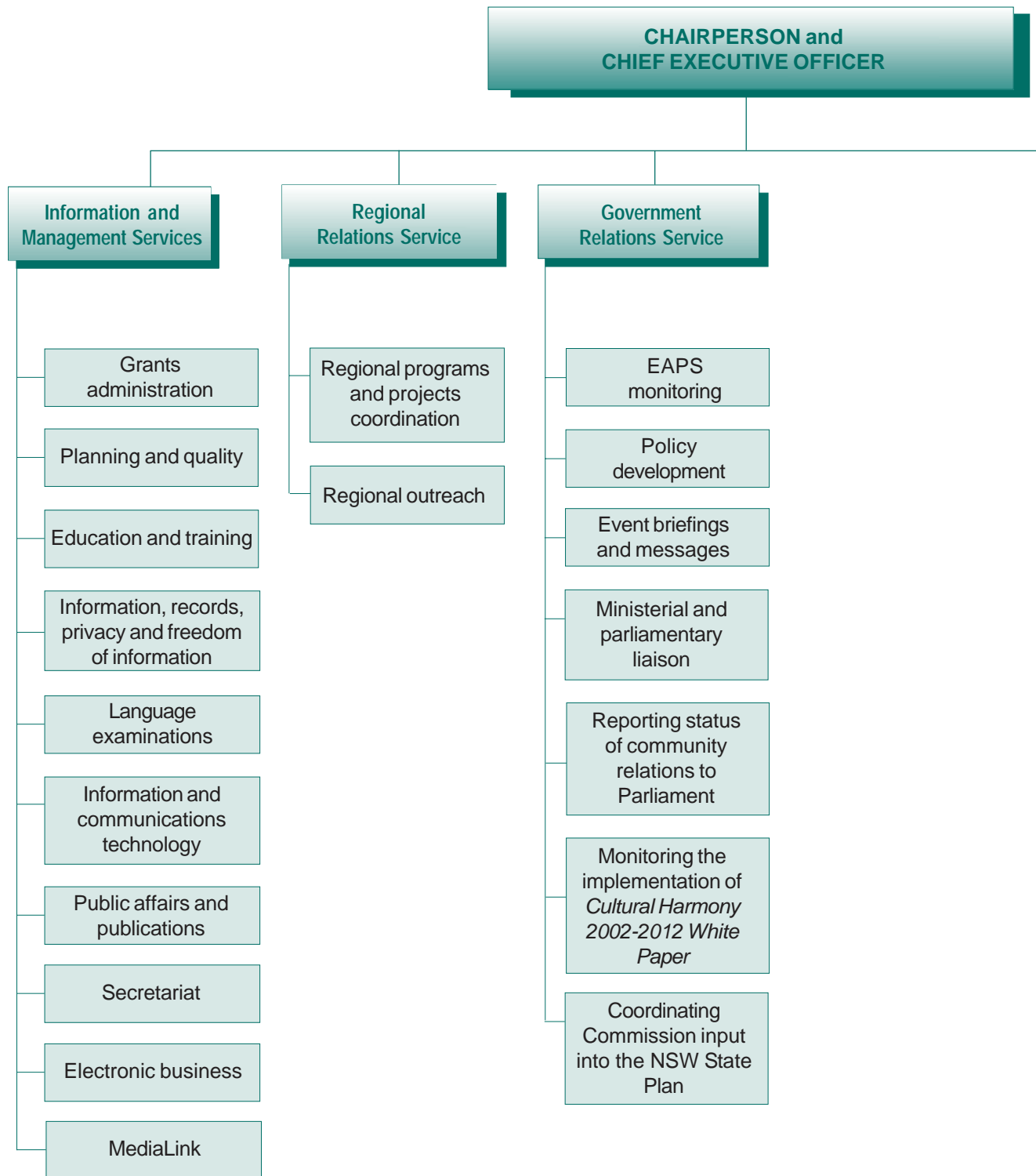
## Organisation structure - boards and committees

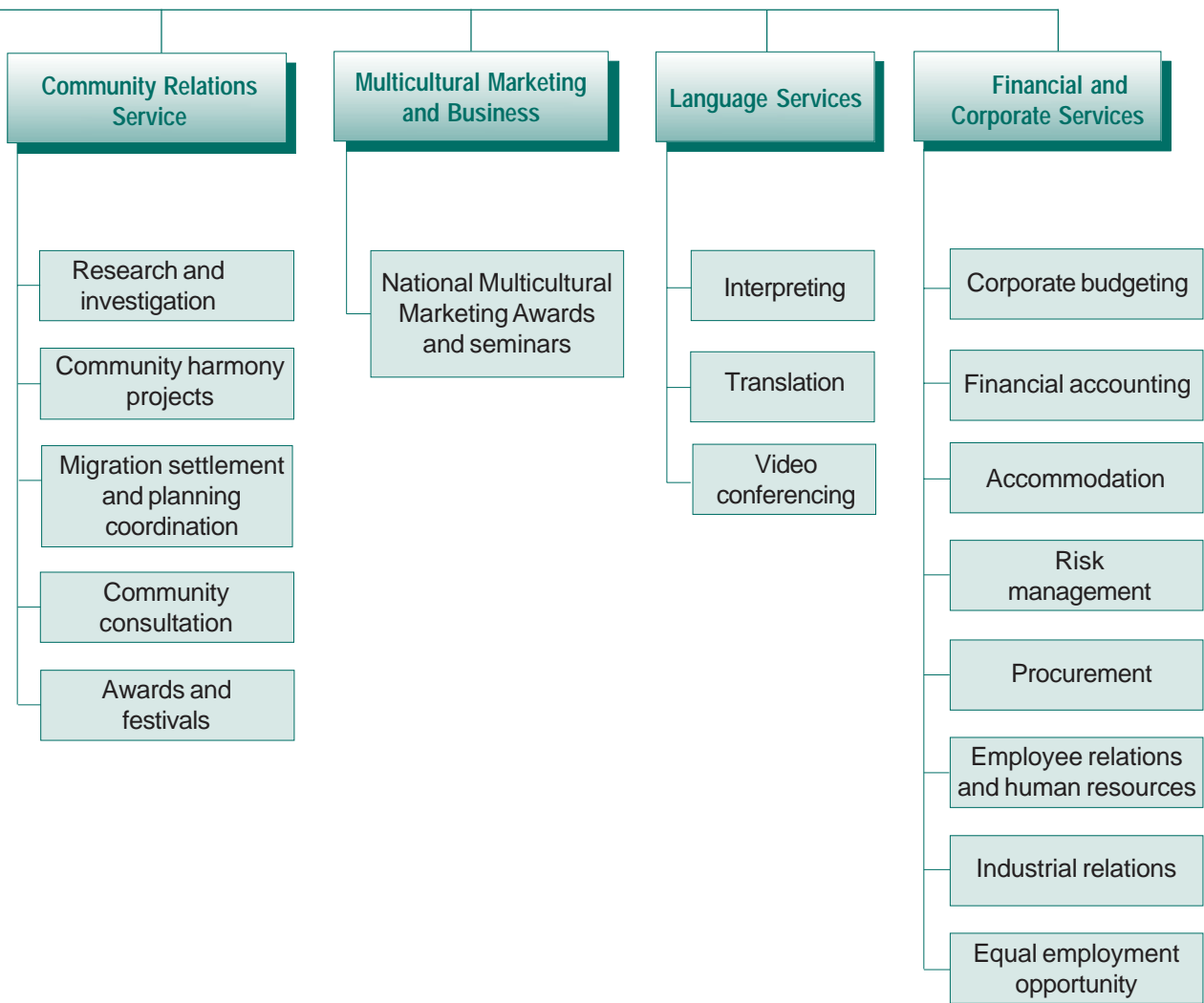
as at 30 June 2007



# Organisation Structure - functional

as at 30 June 2007





# PRINCIPAL STAFF of THE COMMISSION

## CHAIRPERSON AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Stepan Kerkyasharian AM**

## DIVISION HEADS

### Community Relations Service

**Director**

Richard Acheson

### Financial and Corporate Services

**Director**

Hakan Harman FCPA BCom

### Government Relations Service

**Director**

Patricia Giannotto

### Information and Management Services

**Director**

Marte Tagle MBT GCertPSectMgt

### Language Services

**Director**

Ann Groth ALAA

### Regional Relations Services

**Director**

Fadel Benhima PSM