Embracing our multiculturalism

Editorial

By THOMAS MOWBRAY, JAY WARNER and TY RICKARD

AUSTRALIA is a multicultural society and has been since European settlement in 1788. Sometimes this history is forgotten, when we see asylum seekers arriving illegally by boat and the government and opposition both creating noise about “stopping the boats.”

Refugees, asylum seekers and other immigrants should be allowed to come to a different country to escape fears and troubles in their own country, or simply to have a better life. They have the same basic human rights and should be treated with respect.

Sadly, in Australia, asylum seekers, who are seeking protection but haven’t been officially recognised as a refugee, are often treated with no respect, especially if they arrive without joining a “queue.” Letting refugees into Australia is like helping a friend running from dangers such as war, corruption, violence or persecution. Refugees are treated like outsiders, people who don’t belong. When refugees come to Australia, they are usually put into small camps or detention centres far from friends and family.

This is not the Australian “way of life” on which our country prides itself. The idea of mateship and life on which our country prides itself; the idea of mateship and life on which our country prides itself; the idea of mateship and life on which our country prides itself; the idea of mateship and life on which our country prides itself.

How different would our future look without the brilliant Dr Victor Chang, who pioneered heart transplant surgery? Frank Lowy, Australia’s richest man, was a refugee. Dr Karl Kruszelnicki, a scientist, an author and TV presenter who holds mathematics, biomedical engineering, medicine and surgery degrees, was also a refugee.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott migrated to Australia when they were children. The list goes on – comedian Aunty Do, and his brother, Khaa Do, a filmmaker, screenwriter and Young Australian of the Year in 2003; SBS’s Les Murray; author Bryce Courtenay; and artist Judy Cassab, the only female to win the Archibald Prize twice.

That’s without mentioning the hardworking immigrants and former refugees who contribute daily to an Australia that would be much poorer without multiculturalism. Many refugees go through a lot of risk to get to a country such as Australia; they go through situations that many Australians couldn’t even imagine, situations that could get them killed. They are desperate and imagine, situations that could get them killed. They are desperate and imagine, situations that could get them killed. They are desperate and imagine, situations that could get them killed.

As Australians, we should be proud our country is so great that people feel that it’s the best place for them and their children. We should embrace multicultural society. Let’s learn from each other and celebrate our special culture.

Wetlands centre gets an update

By ABBI FOLBIGG and LAURA GILES

HUNTER Wetlands Centre Shortland, a wildlife sanctuary only 10 minutes from Newcastle CBD, is getting a revamp.

The centre is 28 years old and a winner of an International Ramsar education award in 2007. Two new projects are renovating the visitor centre and the creation of a reptile stadium.

The roof and ceiling were funded by the NSW government, with contributions from Newcastle City Council, the Nature Animal Trust Fund and the Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority.

The stadium will have fish, non-venomous snakes and lizards.

It will be used for educational purposes like animal familiarisation.

The new visitor centre will be opened on June 21.

Another project is new paths, bridges, boardwalks, water tanks and outdoor education and event areas, funded by the NSW government.

The centre has also installed new solar water heaters at the visitor centre.

Edging for the new paths will be made out of recycled plastics from printer cartridges and milk bottles.

Centre principal Peter Jones said a school was put there so the wider community could learn about the wonders of wildlife.

Wake up to a great start

By CHARLETTE TAYLOR-VINCER and EBONY WARNER

BREAKFAST is the most important meal of the day because it “breaks the fast” that your body has endured through the night. Eating breakfast helps with mental alertness through the morning and may prevent overeating throughout the rest of the day.

Unfortunately, due to busy lifestyles, sometimes breakfast can be “forgotten” meal. But at Waratah Public School parents and teachers make sure everyone has a healthy start to the day through a Breakfast Club for students.

It offers fresh fruit, Vegemite on toast and healthy drinks.

None of this would be possible without the support of parents, staff and local businesses, including Bakers Delight and Coles supermarket at Waratah Village.

A healthy diet should include fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grains and cereals, dairy, and lean protein, and not too many processed foods like chips, lollies and soft drinks.

Nutrition project officer from the NSW Cancer Council Tammy Wilson said the best option was to eat different coloured fruits.

She also said that increasing the amounts of fruits and vegetables in your diet reduces risk of cancer.

Volunteers provide valuable hands for all

By SAMUEL WESTON and MACKENZIE TWISS

NATIONAL Volunteer Week from May 14 to 20 is the largest celebration of volunteers in Australia, highlighting their important role in our community.

More than 6.4 million Australians volunteer.

One of the largest groups is the State Emergency Service (SES).

The SES helps people during natural disasters and accidents. There are more than 10,000 members in NSW.

They are trained in first-aid, map reading, how to use flood boats and chainsaws, and climbing ladders in harsh conditions.

Australian volunteers are essential contributing more than 700 million hours of community service.

Many charities would struggle to survive without their support.

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