



POD Project Bulletin Issue 4

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Opportunities for debate

Introduction

One of the major tasks of the MCWH advocacy project is to identify opportunities to debate around issues affecting immigrant and refugee women, to bring these to the fore, and to lobby stakeholders to address these issues. To date, this has taken place at different levels and has been achieved through different efforts, such as networking at every opportunity, project publicity, and teleconferencing. Yet another opportunity for debate, a National Forum, has been planned to take place in April 2009.

The January teleconference

To date, two teleconferences with members of the expert advisory committee (EAC) have been held. The second POD teleconference was held on the 27th of January 2009. Eleven members of EAC participated in the teleconference, whose main objective was to comment on the discussion paper that had been circulated prior to the conference. Members also took time to discuss the planned National Forum.

There was general consensus amongst members of the EAC that the discussion paper covered the key issues affecting immigrant and refugee women. However, members noted that there had been recent developments in specific areas raised in the discussion paper, such as the citizenship test and immigration detention issues, and therefore suggested that these be presented more accurately, taking into account the latest debates around them. As the discussion paper will form the basis of the National Forum in April, it will be circulated to stakeholders across Australia who have been invited to attend the Forum. Participants at the Forum are expected to have read the discussion paper and prepared their responses by the time they come to the Forum.

The National Forum

The National Forum will be held on the 8th of April 2009, at the Richmond Town Hall in Melbourne. Invitations have already gone out to about 100 stakeholders from across Australia, and we

expect a good turn out. Keynote speakers with expertise in immigrant and refugee women's issues will be invited to provide their perspectives and to further stimulate debate on issues raised in the discussion paper, among other issues.

In one of the sessions, members of the EAC will guide discussions around specific issues to be chosen from a list of key social inclusion indicators. As stakeholders will be coming from relevant areas of expertise, they will be expected to provide case studies as evidence on the challenges faced by immigrant and refugee women from their work. Written responses to the discussion paper are also expected from participants.

Videoconferencing

Stakeholders who are unable to travel to Melbourne for the National Forum will be allowed the opportunity to participate and make their invaluable contributions by way of videoconferencing. Information on where participants can converge in their respective areas will be communicated in due course. This is to ensure that the wide range of expertise on immigrant and refugee women's issues is tapped into.

Registration for the National Forum is currently underway. Interested stakeholders can download the registration form from the MCWH website - www.mcwh.com.au. All queries can be directed to:

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