

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **December 2006**

Dear members,

I wish to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of the Russian Ethnic Community Council of NSW.

The year has gone so quickly that it has caught me by surprise. It only seemed yesterday that we were here for the same special occasion.

The 2006 was a very successful year in term of consolidating on last year's achievements and initiating new strategies for delivering quality programs and activities, particularly in the Community Settlement Services Scheme program (CSSS). This success has been made possible by our dedicated and competent Community worker and the hard working members of the Executive.

There are many challenges facing the non-for profit community organizations like RECC. The relentless task of seeking funding, sponsorships and establishing partnerships in order to meet the goals and objectives that will benefit members of our Russian community is a challenge in itself. Furthermore, this cannot be done without the input and support from the wider community. To achieve this objective the Executive took active steps in establishing new as well as strengthening existing links and partnerships with government bodies, state members, councils and organizations in order to raise the profile of the RECC.

Once again, the Executive committee took on this challenge with outstanding success and will continue to promote awareness of our organization aims and objectives.

It gives me great pleasure in reporting our main achievements and highlights for the year, as well as providing an insight into the diversity of our work.

#### Major achievements and activities over the past year:

- Membership stands at 100 with a potential for a significant increase as more applications for membership are being requested
- Continuing to deliver Settlement Information and Referral Service to the newly arrived Russian Speaking immigrants. During the year more than 900 clients have used the wide range of services and benefited from various seminars, workshops, English and computer classes and social group activities. This year a newly formed partnership with TAFE facilitated the running of a 13 week vocational courses in First Aide and Aged Care. The course was a huge success. This would not have been possible without the initiative, dedication and total commitment of our Community worker Alla Khlebakova . Thank you Alla!
- Bus trips are continuing to be our main community attraction. This year our Coordinator Mr George Skorniakoff organised 8 excursions to places such as Georges River cruise, Jenolan State Forest- mushroom picking, Crookwell Old city town, Zig-Zag Railway, Hunter Valley wineries, Canberra Floriade, Mt

Tomah Botanical Gardens and finally a three day trip to the Russian Monastery at Bomballa. A donation to the value of \$450 was made to the monastery.

All of this could not have been possible without the hard work and the long hours put in by George Skorniakoff and his wife Elena. On behalf of the Executive I would to express a big Thankyou to George and Elena for their commitment in making such community service possible.

- Sponsored the Russian Books Exhibition at Macquarie University. At the Invitation of Macquarie University and State government of NSW Moscow Government delegation headed by Mr Micael L'vovich Scherbachenko, President of Mass Media and Telecommunication Committee arrived with 1400 books for the purpose of organizing the exhibition. The exhibition was held at the Macquarie University Library 2/4/06-5/04/06. The catering for the Opening Night of the Exhibition as well as the Sightseeing tours and a Farewell function for the delegates was organized and funded by the RECC committee.
- Attended Russian Cultural Days in Canberra on Long Weekend in June. Representatives from the Russian Ethnic Representative Council of Victoria, NSW and Canberra in presence of from the Russian Embassy held a brief meeting. Topic for discussion was mainly our role in the community.
- Held a small function for the Russian team of young students (16-17 years old) who were here for the International Olympiad held in Brisbane during 28/06/-12/07.
- A very successful fundraiser at Strathfield Plaza Food Fair in collaboration with the management of Strathfield Plaza was held in August.
- Sponsored the 2006 Russian Film Festival which was held in Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide cities in September.
- In November at the Invitation of Strathfield Council the RECC committee assisted with organization of Men's Health Workshop. The workshop was held at the Strathfield Town Hall. We are very grateful to Drs Anna Yeroshenko and Vadim Leonov for giving up their valuable time, for the presentation and for helping to facilitate the workshop.
- Meeting with a newly appointed Australian Principal Migration Officer at the Moscow Embassy –Ellen Dorfling. The discussion centered around migration and visa policies. Representatives from other organizations were present.
- Sponsored the 2006 Russian Film Festival which was held in Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide cities in September-October.
- A seminar for the aged on “Podiatry and Legal Matters” was held in Russian Club in September. The 2 topics were very well received and due thanks go to the Coordinator of the seminar, Mrs N.Lobastova.
- Sponsored theatre group OstrovOK in the performance of “Out of Order “ at the Gig Tree Theatre in December this year.
- End of year presentation of prizes to the students of community Russian schools and to a student of Russian language at Macquarie University.

This has been a very busy and a very productive year for the organisation. The above achievements would not have been possible without the commitment and hard work by a

small group of dedicated members of the RECC and to whom I would like to express my sincere thanks for their support and untiring effort for the past year.

I would also like to thank the Department of Immigration and Multicultural affairs for funding our settlement program and especially our consultants Mr. Bernie Coombes and Mr. January Blackburn for their guidance and support throughout the year.

In conclusion I would like to thank all the members and supporters of the RECC. Together we can set and achieve many goals that will benefit all members of the Russian community.

Helen Engel  
President  
2005-2006