



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF UKRAINIAN AUSTRALIANS TO BE HELD IN SYDNEY – EXTENDING HAND OF MULTICULTURAL MATESHIP

On the occasion of Multicultural March in NSW, Ukrainian Australians are extending the hand of mateship to their Aussie friends, neighbours and workmates of all backgrounds to join them in Sydney on the June long weekend as Ukrainians commemorate 65 years of positive contribution to Australia.

The National Festival of Ukrainian Australians will be a two-day showcase of cultural performances, food and drink, sporting competition, culinary events, historical exhibitions, community workshops, and social gatherings between old and new friends.

“At our National Festival in Sydney in June, Ukrainian Australians will both celebrate our rich heritage and show our gratitude for the many opportunities that Australia has given Ukrainians since we arrived in substantial numbers in 1948,” stated Mr Stefan Romaniw, President of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO) and former Victorian Multicultural Commissioner.

“That’s why we are inviting our Australian friends of all cultural, language and faith backgrounds to join us. It’s the sharing of our respective cultures that makes us all stronger and unified as Australians,” Mr Romaniw said.

“The National Festival is a chance to experience everything from our unique Ukrainian food, such as ‘varenyky’ dumplings, to our world-famous Kozak dancing, as well some fair dinkum Ukrainian hospitality.

“Ukrainians were formally among the first post-war migrants who with patience and perseverance helped build our successful, culturally diverse society at the end of the White Australia Policy. The Festival is also a chance for our community to mark the courage and commitment of our ‘founding fathers and mothers’ who left tyranny in Europe to build vibrant, self-sufficient lives from humble beginnings here, including via migrant reception centres and hostels,” Mr Romaniw said.

The open invitation to the National Festival is in line with the AFUO’s recently adopted Statement on Multiculturalism (see attached).

The National Festival of Ukrainian Australians will be held under the auspices of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations, the peak umbrella body for the Ukrainian Australian community.

Ends

March 1, 2013

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STATEMENT ON MULTICULTURALISM – OUR ROLE, OUR RESPONSIBILITY, OUR COMMITMENT

The Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO), the national umbrella body for the Ukrainian Australian community, strongly supports the principles of multiculturalism as enshrined in policy and legislation.

The AFUO believes that Australia's successful model of diversity is an example to the world of many faiths, cultures and languages contributing to Australia's national strength.

That success is founded on respect. We prosper and grow as a society when each different cultural, linguistic and religious community in Australia respects the unique ancestries of their fellow Australian citizens, workmates and neighbours, and actively upholds our shared values as Australians.

In their own migration, settlement and community development experience, Ukrainian Australians have strongly benefitted from our shared values, such as inclusiveness and equality of opportunity. The AFUO recognises its responsibility to further contribute to the maintenance of these values and the community harmony they bring.

To that end, the AFUO contributes to Australia's successful diversity and upholds the principles of multiculturalism by:

- Acknowledging and respecting Australia's unique history, social and cultural norms, the rule of law, democratic conventions, and pluralistic make-up;
- Respecting our shared values as Australian citizens at the same time that we preserve our Ukrainian heritage in an Australian context;
- Sharing Ukrainian religious, cultural traditions and language with our fellow Australians regardless of their race, religion, language, cultural background or political preference;
- Demonstrating strong respect for the cultural traditions that other ethnic communities contribute to the diversity of Australia;
- Extending the hand of Australian mateship to other culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities;
- Ensuring that Ukrainian community engagement with both government and non-government institutions that promote multiculturalism, such as Commissions, Ethnic Communities' Councils;
- Contributing to the further development of policy and legislation that is relevant to multiculturalism; and
- Providing guidance when requested to emerging culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities as they take part in the migration, settlement and community development experience.