



# MEDIA RELEASE

**From:**

**African Think Tank Inc.**

**WORKING WITH  
VICTORIA'S AFRICAN COMMUNITY  
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## **AFRICAN-AUSTRALIANS JUBILANT OVER OBAMA VICTORY**

African migrants and their families all over Australia have reacted with jubilation to the historic victory of Barack Obama in yesterday's presidential elections in the United States.

"This is truly a great historic moment", said Dr Berhan Ahmed, chairman of the African Think Tank and president of the Eritrean Community in Australia. "The symbolism of Obama's victory is of incalculable importance. In this one moment, the United States and the Western World has shown that the dream of equality and racial harmony is achievable and real. This is the final and unassailable proof that skin colour is no barrier to high office or high achievement. After a decade of division, it is the United States' olive branch to Africa, to Asia, to Europe and all the world.

"In his victory speech, Barack Obama signalled that this is not the end, but the beginning of a process of change, the re-making of a world order based on unity and equality. But his understanding that there is a need for change and his commitment to it has raised a flag of hope that is seen by the whole world. It is a signal and reminder to us in Australia that we, too, must work together in a spirit of unity to use this special time.

"This is an extraordinary and exciting time. I know that all African-Australians will agree with me when I extend my congratulations to Barack Obama and to the people of the United States of America on this moving and historic achievement."

At the community offices in the State Housing complex in Flemington, workers from the Eritrean, Somalian and Sudanese communities were hard at work when a worker burst into the rooms with the news. Black and white, male and female, gathered around the computers to watch Obama make his victory speech. The tears that came to the eyes of the workers as the candidate graciously thanked his family and workers did nothing to damp the atmosphere of happiness and hope. At the end of the speech, the cheers could have been heard clear across the Flemington housing state.

Barack Obama's victory means much more than just the first time a black man has reached the highest office. Obama not only has a Kenyan father, but an Indonesian stepfather. He has strong ties with Africa and Asia. Yesterday the president of the European Economic Community (EEC) also welcomed the victory on behalf of the EEC countries. The whole world believes that the unilateral and divisive America of the Bush years will be laid to rest. There is now a genuine opportunity for all the nations of the world to work together to heal racial, sexual and economic divides and produce a new era of a united world committed to peace and prosperity.

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The symbolism of Obama's victory therefore goes far further than the symbolism of a black man becoming the most powerful man in the world. It is, even more than that, the symbolism of a man who is multi-racial, of a diverse background, someone who throughout his life has been committed to justice and equality, gaining the White House. In that lies the world's hope.

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