



# MEDIA RELEASE

From:

African Think Tank Inc.

WORKING WITH  
VICTORIA'S AFRICAN COMMUNITY

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HARMONY DAY



EVERYONE BELONGS

DATE: 21 March 2009

## **African Australians celebrating harmony day to promote Peace, Harmony, Unity & No to racism**

"African-Australian refugees and migrants often come from situations of significant trauma and violence, with many having been in numerous countries and suffered severe dislocation before arriving here", *African Think Tank* chairperson and Victorian of the Year 2009, Dr Berhan Ahmed said today. "Many have been victims of torture. Some have lost their entire families". The experience of racism and intolerance after arriving in Australia can slow down successful settlement and integration into our society. It can slow down the great contribution these new arrivals have the capacity to make. Like previous waves of post-war migrants and refugees, given time, African-Australians will soon be seen as Australian as other older migrant groups have become.

Today, 21 March, marks the United Nations international day for the elimination of racial discrimination. Dr Ahmed said he welcomed the federal government's recommitment to addressing racism and intolerance through its new "Diverse Australia" program and its encouragement of schools, community groups, local governments and business to all get behind today's *Harmony Day* and make it a day of celebrating our community's rich diversity.

Dr Ahmed also said he: "congratulates the State Government on the recent launch of its new multicultural policy, its great energy in strengthening multiculturalism in Victoria and its support of multicultural groups and events; not just as we come to the end of *Cultural Diversity Week*, but all year around".

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