



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Andrew Robb AO MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration
and Multicultural Affairs

001/06

7 March 2006

Business and government unite in reinforcing tolerance and understanding

Nineteen leading business, sporting and community organisations have joined the Australian Government in a campaign to reinforce Australian values that lead to tolerance and understanding.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Andrew Robb, said the organisations are partners in the Australian Government's Harmony Day initiative celebrated on March 21.

Mr Robb said Harmony Day is a time to focus on the values that unite Australians rather than on the distractions that so often grabbed newspaper headlines.

"These values include respect for the rights of the individual, tolerance of differences, a commitment to the country's laws, the equality of men and women and the 'fair go' attitude that is about acceptance, fair play and compassion for those in need," Mr Robb said.

"These values have served us well and have helped us to successfully settle more than 6.1 million people from some 200 countries since 1945.

"By coming to Australia people commit to Australian values and in return Australia makes a commitment to help people by providing, among other things, educational opportunities that lead to real jobs so they have a stake in the country's future."

Mr Robb said since its inception in 1999 Harmony Day had grown in significance and importance with more than 3,000 events planned for this year at schools, shopping malls, workplaces, council chambers, sporting venues, aged care facilities and community groups.

Keynote national activities include themed Australian Football and Rugby League matches in Sydney and Melbourne, street concerts in Adelaide and Brisbane, a cultural diversity and volunteering seminar in Melbourne and beachside activities on the Gold Coast during the National Surf life Saving Championship.

Mr Robb said the Harmony Day partners included Ford Australia, McDonald's, Telstra, Woolworths, AMP, Mt Franklin and Computer Sciences Corporation. Prominent community partners include Surf Life Saving Australia, Volunteering Australia, Scouts Australia and Guides Australia.

Network Ten, Universal McCann, SBS, Austereo and Southern Cross Radio are using their media reach to promote Harmony Day. The AFL, Cricket Australia, NRL and Tennis Australia are promoting the values of harmony and respect to players and supporters.

For more information go to: www.harmony.gov.au

Media inquiries: 0409 842 069