



Media Release **FINAL**

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CULTURAL DIVERSITY OVERLOOKED IN WORKPLACE CONCERNS

Cultural diversity is considered a lower priority issue among Australian businesses, despite a new survey finding more than 90 per cent of employers believe that racist attitudes still exist in the workplace.

The survey, conducted by Diversity Council Australia (DCA) in conjunction with the Scanlon Foundation, found that almost 30 per cent of Australian businesses ranked gender diversity as the most important issue to address, while only 13 per cent said cultural diversity is the key priority.

"Cultural diversity ranks behind gender and flexibility as the most important organisational issues. While it's important that employers recognise the issue of gender, promoting cultural diversity should also be a key focus," DCA's Cultural Diversity Director Katriina Tahka said.

"However, it's encouraging that many businesses have undertaken tangible actions on cultural diversity, or plan to in 2014."

"It's also good to see there is strong recognition that racist attitudes are a problem in Australia – because acknowledging a problem is the first step to effectively addressing it."

The Scanlon Foundation created its annual initiative, *A Taste of Harmony*, specifically to break down cultural barriers in the workplace and urged all Australian businesses to register.

"These survey results demonstrate there are still improvements to be made in promoting cultural diversity in our workplaces," Mr Scanlon said.

"Australia is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world: one in two Australians is either born overseas or has a parent from another country. *A Taste of Harmony* is a great opportunity to celebrate our multiculturalism in the workplace and help others to feel accepted and equal at work."

The week-long event, held in March 17-23, encourages Australians to take a plate of food to work that represents their cultural background and share it with their colleagues.

Of the 75 Australian employers surveyed, almost 70 per cent said they had cultural diversity initiatives in the workplace, such as *A Taste of Harmony*, and another 60 per cent said they were starting new initiatives to recognise cultural diversity in 2014.

"*A Taste of Harmony* gives all Australian businesses the opportunity to achieve greater understanding and appreciation cultural diversity, which is a key strength of our nation," Mr Scanlon said.

"*A Taste of Harmony* is a great platform for organisations wanting to develop more comprehensive strategies to capitalise on the business benefits of cultural diversity," Ms Tahka added.

For more information about how to register for the event, visit tasteofharmony.org.au

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