

NRN Australia Second National Bi Annual Conference 7 July 2007

Non Resident Nepalese (NRN Australia) – National Coordination Committee (NCC) organized its Second Bi National Conference in Australia on 7 July 2007 at Ashfield Town Hall in Sydney. Dr Upendra Mahato, the President of the NRN International Co-ordination Committee inaugurated the conference and Mr. Mana KC, the President of NRN Australia chaired the conference.



Mr. Shanker D Bairagi – Charge D’affaires Nepali Embassy Canberra, Mr. Shamsar S Thapa Coopted Member ICC, Mr. Deepak Khadka ICC Executive Member, Dr. Upendra Mahato ICC President, Mr. D M Hirachan ICC Vice President East Asia, Mr. Jiba Nath Lamichhane ICC Executive Member Russia, Christine Gee, Nepali Consulate General Sydney, Ms. Indra Ban ICC Vice President Australia Region, Mr. Jay Dhungel ICC Coopted Member Australia,

This whole day event was intended to share the NRN journey with all Non Resident Nepalese living in Australia. It was informative, humorous, provided a platform for network by linking with each other and integrated all the thoughts of moving forward the Non Resident Nepalese residing in Australia. It included different Nepali organizations, business communities, patrons, advisors, NRN ICC members, key community leaders and Nepalese intellectuals. One of the most important parts of the conference was the encouraging number of interstate participants that travelled from different states including Victoria, Queensland, and Australian Capital Territory.

The key attraction of the day was the attendants, the Non Resident Nepali (NRN) International Coordination Committee Chairman, Dr. Upendra Mahato, the several other ICC key representatives from different countries including Mr. D M Hirachan, Vice President (East Asia), Ms. Indra Ban, Vice President (Australia Region), Mr. Jiba Nath Lamichhane ICC Member (Russia), Mr. Deepak Khadka ICC Member (Australia), Mr. Shamsar S Thapa ICC Coopted Member Australia, My. Jay Dhungel

ICC Coopted Member Australia, Ms. Christine Gee, Nepalese Consulate General Sydney and the Charge D'affaires of Nepali Embassy – Mr. Shanker D. Bairagi. Other major attraction of the day was the representative of the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Fierravanti Wells, Federal Member of Parliament and the Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Mr. Laurie Ferguson both of whom addressed the conference.

Several concurrent issues were discussed in relation to NRN movement enlightening the progress made so far. The expectations of the NRNs and the public were also highlighted. The discussions also centered on how the NCC's could be more productive and supportive of the movement, snapshot of the proposed NRN Bill, dual citizenship issues, initiating NRN community projects in Nepal, presenting awards to most outstanding Nepali community members and also discussed the issues to be raised during the NRN ICC Third Global Conference which will be held on 15 to 17 October 2007 in Kathmandu.

The following personalities received the most outstanding Nepali Community Awards for 2006.

- Most Outstanding Student of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community HSC Level – Ms. Rajaswi Saninju (OP2- UAI +90%) QLD.
- Most Outstanding Student of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community University Level – Mrs. Bunu Gautam First Nepali Women admitted to work as a solicitor in Australia (QLD)
- Most Outstanding Sports Personality of the Year 2006- Nepali Community – Mr. Anil Thapa Magar (NSW)
- Most Outstanding Community Services Personality of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community – Mr. Chandra Yonzon (VIC)
- Most Outstanding Cultural Ambassador of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community- Mrs. Bhoma Limbu (NSW)
- Long Term Community Service Award – Nepali Community – Ms. Indra Ban (NSW), Dr. Narayan Pradhan (NSW)

The conference successfully elected new executive committee members for the next two years including Mr. Goba Katuwal CPA – President, Dr. Ashok Shrestha Vice President, Mr. Yuba Raj Bhattarai - Vice President, Mr. Raju Shakya – Vice President Mr. Dhurba Raj Subedi- National Coordinator, Mrs. Bhoma Limbu – Joint National Coordinator, Mr. Ramji Bista - Treasurer and other 14 executive members.

Coinciding with the historically most important event of Nepal's transitional mode, it is paramount that we all NRN's unite for this very cause of linking all Nepalis back into Nepal regardless of where they live and whatever they do, that is ultimate theme of NRN Not to mention, we all are NRNs and it pays to belong to one national body as "united we stand and divided we fall". The issues raised by NRN movement are for the benefit of all Nepalese living abroad, their younger and future generations and also for Nepal and Nepalese living within Nepal. It is our collective responsibility to take this movement to a higher platform. Whilst Nepal is going through a historical transition, it is perfectly necessary to accommodate and define NRN rights in the form of NRN Act, long-term visas and dual citizenship in its respective order.

Almost all of the speakers and participants agreed NRN Bill, the dual citizenship provision can increase the inflow of investment funds to Nepal, skill transfer from the readily available skill pool in different countries and improve employment rates in Nepal. Nepalis are Nepalis regardless where they live and what they do, their heart and minds are back in Nepal therefore let them participate in the work to be done towards making a peaceful and prosperous new Nepal.

Full Reports:

The widely communicated Second National Bi Annual Conference of NRN Australia was held on 7 July 2007 at Ashfield Town Hall in Sydney.

The conference divided into three sessions including opening session, workshop and election of the new NCC executive body.

Inauguration Session

More than 350 participants were present at the conference. The formal programme commenced with the registration of these participants followed by welcome song by Popular Nepali artist Mrs. Sujata KC from Sydney and the welcome dance by Neha Subba, Salu Limbu, Pallavi Thapa, Himali Gurung, which was directed by famous Nepali Cultural programs organiser from Sydney Mrs. Bhoma Limbu, NRN Australia Executive Member and a welcome speech by Mr. Mana KC, NRN Australia President. He welcomed the visiting guests and the audiences

ICC President Dr. Upendra Mahato inaugurated the Second Bi Annual National Conference of Australia. Ms. Indra Ban NRN ICC Vice President (Australia Region) gave the remarks speech followed by brief addressed by Ms. Christine Gee, Nepalese Consulate General Sydney. She expressed her views regarding the success of the conference and pledged support in its future activities if necessary. Chare D'affaires of Nepali Embassy Canberra Mr. Shanker D Bairagi addressed the conference.

The representative of the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Fierravanti Wells addressed the conference.



Senator Fierravanti Wells addressing the conference.

Senator Fierravanti Wells read out message from Minister Andrews on his behalf, as follows: *'I am disappointed not to be able to speak at your conference and also learn more about your ongoing work to achieve mutual benefits for all non-resident Nepalis and the people of Nepal. I applaud this work as vital in maintaining a link to your home country, as well as enriching Australia through the benefit of your unique cultural perspectives. Australia has a strong relationship with Nepal, which predates the establishment of diplomatic links in 1960. We are not only linked by migration, but through trade, consular relations and development assistance. Your work in uniting Nepali migrants is of special significance in our modern globalised world. Today people are more likely to move away from the country of their birth and in doing so, will need to adjust to a new society and culture. We ask people living in Australia to integrate into our society and embrace the core values, which define us as a people.*

These values include our respect for the freedom and the dignity of the individual, support for democracy, our commitment to the rule of law, the equality of men and women, respect for all races and cultures, the spirit of a 'fair go', mutual respect, compassion for those in need and promoting the interests of the community as a whole. At the same time, we also respect the traditions and cultures migrants bring with them and encourage them to use these to further enrich Australian society.

I wish everyone well for the conference, and in your future efforts to work for the further advancement of your people, both here in Australia, and in Nepal ." The Hon Kevin Andrews MP, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

She addressed “ I wish to endorse the Minister's remarks and particularly commend the NRN National Coordination Committee for organising this conference. This event provides a wonderful opportunity for non-resident Nepalis living in Australia to come together to discuss important issues relating to all non-resident Nepalis and the people of Nepal. As this is the second of these conferences, it is exciting to see your work gathering momentum and I look forward to further growth and success in the future” (Details refer to Annex 1)

Federal Member of Parliament and the Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Laurie Ferguson addressed the conference." It is very pleasing to represent Kevin Rudd – a leader who appreciates the world is larger than London, Jarkata, Beijing and Washington. He is a person who understands the need for multilateral activity and engagement, most particularly with Asia.



Federal Member of Parliament and the Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Laurie Ferguson addressing the conference.

I welcome the opportunity to connect with the Nepali community. I have met quite a few Nepalis through immigration work in my office, at Australian Citizenship events, and when door-knocking to encourage people to register on the electoral roll. However, it wasn't until today that I truly appreciated the large numbers of Nepalis in this area.

He outlined that the equivalent figures for the 2006 Census are not yet available but the 2001 Census noted a massive 77% growth in Nepalese in Australia, and given the fact that the &KDJp d'affaires indicated there were 7000 students from Nepal here last year, it is highly predictable that the 2006 Census would record a large Nepalese growth. Obviously, Nepalis, like any population, are diverse. However, because of the way they entered Australia, they were characterised by high educational and training accomplishment.

Some statistics: 64% of Nepali-born people have some form of qualifications; for Australia, the whole figure is 46%. Nepalis have a workforce participation of 77%; for Australia, it is 63%. Further, 94% of Nepalis speak English at home. However, due to barriers in the Australian workplace, 41% of Nepalis are in unskilled jobs – Australians, 19%.

I hope to be invited here again next year and I thank you very much for your warm welcome. I will try to make myself available for your issues and concerns.

Laurie Ferguson MP Federal Member for Reid Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs Urban Development & Constriction. (Details refer to Annex 2)”

Mr. Chandra Yonzon Vice President NRN Australia gave the vote of thanks. He outlined that how NRN Australia achieved this height in the last two years. He thanked all the community members including NRN Australia team for their contributions.

Second Session

Charge D' affaires Nepali Embassy Mr. Shanker D. Bairagi presented opening highlights of Nepali Embassy. He outlined, "The Embassy of Nepal has recently been established. With this, your long-standing desire has now been fulfilled. I would say your dream has come true! I appreciate your warmth with which you all have welcomed and received the Embassy. I would emphasize that the establishment of a residential Embassy underscores the importance that Nepal has attached to its multidimensional relations with Australia that have always been friendly, cordial and cooperative. We deeply appreciate Australia's assistance in our development endeavours. The present democratic Government in Nepal remains committed to bringing Nepal-Australia relations to a new height of mutual satisfaction. Needless to mention, the restoration of democracy in Nepal last year has brought our two countries even closer as both share democracy, human rights and the rule of law as common values.

He further said, "The Embassy acknowledges the contribution made by the NRN Australia. Since its establishment in July 2005, the NRN Australia has been making good efforts in bringing together NRNs in Australia under its umbrella. Its future direction, as stated in its brochure, appears to be encouraging as it aims at connecting Nepali business and communities, promoting Nepali culture and tourism and creating and connecting investment opportunities in Nepal" (Details refer to Annex 3)

Mr. Jiba Nath Lamichhane, Executive Member NRNA ICC (Russia) addressed the workshop. Similarly, Mr. D M Hirachan Vice President (East Asia) NRNA ICC highlighted the NRN activities and he also informed that Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Singapore. He briefly outlined the Third Global conference agendas and the preparation of the conference as a Coordinator of the Organising Committee of the Third Global Conference, which is scheduled on 15-17 October 2007 in Kathmandu Nepal.

Dr. Upendra Mahato, NRNA ICC President outlined why NRN is needed. Furthermore, he outlined the objectives of NRN and the strategic activities needed to achieve its goals. He also highlighted the events and the activities that were currently being carried out by NRN globally. He informed about the progress especially the NRN bills and changes to the legislation currently being lobbied with the Nepali Government. He gave a hint about the struggles, obstacles and challenges being faced by NRN. He informed us about the formation of NRN chapters in different countries. There are 34 countries where NRN National Coordination Council was established. He encouraged attendance and participation in the Third Global NRN Conference to be held in Kathmandu Nepal from 15th to 17th October 2007.



Dr. Upendra Mahato NRNA ICC President addressing the conference.

NRN Australia National Coordinator Mr. Goba Katuwal explained the stages and the activities carried out by the NRN Australia. He thanked all the committee members, NRN Australia Team, supporters, well wishers and the participants who helped directly or indirectly in establishing NRN Australia and carried out the activities. He also took the opportunity to acknowledge the sponsors and donors who have contributed generously to the event. He also mentioned about the eagerness and positive response shown by the Australian Nepali Business Community and its sponsorship of the second NRN National Conference in Australia.

Award Presentation

Mr. Shamsar S Thapa NRNA ICC Coopted Member expressed the main purpose of these awards is to acknowledge and promote talents and resources amongst the people from Nepalese background in Australia. These awards may also assist in the career development of the winners.



He outlined the selection producers and nomination received to closing date as at 31 July 2007.

1. Most Outstanding Student of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community HSC Level

Name of Nominees	Remarks	State
Ms. Jeena KC	UAI of 80 Plus NSW	NSW
Ms. Aakriti Shrestha	OP 4	QLD
Ms. Rajaswi Saninju	OP2 Winner	QLD

2 Most Outstanding Student of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community University Level

Name of Nominees	Remarks	State
Mrs. Bunu Gautam	First Nepali women admitted to work as a solicitor in Australia (Winner)	QLD
Mr. Bipin Adhikari		QLD



Mrs. Bunu Gautam receiving Most Outstanding Student of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community University Level award – Nepali Community by Mr. Shesh Ghale most Successful Nepali Entrepreneur from Victoria in the filed of the education and CEO of the MIT Group Holdings Pty Ltd.

3. Most Outstanding Sports Personality of the Year 2006- Nepali Community

Name of Nominees	Remarks	State
Mr. Om Gurung		NSW
Mr. Anil Thapa Magar	Winner	NSW
Mr. Rajiv Pradhan		NSW
Baglung Australian Community		NSW

4. Most Outstanding Community Services Personality of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community

Name of Nominees	Remarks	State
Mr. Goba Katuwal		NSW
Mr. Bhala Rai		NSW
Ms. Indra Ban		NSW
Dr. Raju Adhikari		VIC
Mr. Chandra Yonzon	Winner	VIC
Mr. Hari Khadka		QLD



Mr. Chandra Yonzon receiving Most Outstanding Community Services Personality of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community.

5. Most Outstanding Cultural Ambassador of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community

Name of Nominees	Remarks	State
Mrs. Bhoma Limbu	Winner	NSW
Ms. Bona Rai		NSW
Mr. Ganesh KC		NSW
Mrs. Bashodha Rai		NSW
Bona Rai		NSW
Menuka Rai		NSW
Sima Chhetri		NSW
Sion Chhetri		NSW
Himali Gurung		NSW
Neha Subba		NSW
Salu Limbu		NSW
Sampatha Gurung		NSW
Pallavi Thapa		NSW
Maria Gurung		NSW
Mr. Ranjan Vaidya		VIC



Mrs. Bhoma Limbu receiving Most Outstanding Cultural Ambassador of the Year 2006 – Nepali Community award by Mr. Shanker D Bairagi Charge D ‘ Affairs Nepali Embassy Canberra.

5. Long Term Community Service Award – Nepali Community

Name of Nominees	Remarks	State
Ms. Indra Ban	Winner	NSW
Dr. Narayan Pradhan	Winner	NSW



Dr. Narayan Pradhan receiving the Long Term Community Service Award – Nepali Community by Dr. Upendra Mahato NRNA ICC President.



Ms. Indra Ban receiving the Long Term Community Service Award – Nepali Community by Dr. Upendra Mahato NRNA ICC President.

Mr. Deepak Khadka NRNA ICC executive member and the Director of the Crown Institute of Business and Technology, Sydney gave the remarked speech why NRN Australia instituted the awarding the most outstanding personalities of the Nepali community residing in Australia. He sponsored all the awards presented to the most outstanding personalities of the Nepali community awards.



The program was hosted by Miss. Prakati KC, Mr. Laxman Pandit, Mr. Mana KC, Mr. Niraj Shrestha followed by Mr. Deepash Shrestha and then handed over to the election committee.

The election committee coordinator Mr. Bawani Oli explained the rules, regulations and the election procedures. He proposed the committee views regarding the election, which were approved by the floor:

The election committee announced the following positions were elected unanimously:

President
Vice President (NSW)
Vice President (QLD)
Treasurer

The election was held for National Coordinator, Joint Coordinator and executive committee members due to an expressed interest to participate in EC by more than the required number by constitution.

The newly elected NRN Executive Committee is comprised of as follows:

President	Mr. Goba Katuwal
Vice President	Mr. Yuba Raj Bhattarai (NSW)
Vice President	Mr. Raju Shakya (VIC)
Vice President	Dr. Ashok Shrestha (QLD)
National Coordinator	Mr. Dhurba Subedi
Treasurer	Mr. Ramji Bista
Joint Coordinator	Mrs. Bhoma Limbu
(1) Member	Mr. Pradip Dhakal (NSW)
(2) Member	Mrs. Sujata KC (NSW)
(3) Member	Mr. Ganesh KC (NSW)
(4) Member	Mr. Shishir Nepal (NSW)
(5) Member	Dr. Krishna Hamal (ACT)
(6) Member	Mr. Surendra Sedhai (VIC)
(7) Member	Mr. Tenzing Gurung (VIC)
(8) Member	Mr. Sudhir Shakya (VIC)
(9) Member	Mr. Ashok Dhakal (QLD)
(10) Member	Mr. Deepak Bista (S A)
(11) Member	Reserved for Western Australia member -TBA
(11) Member	Reserved for NT member - TBA
(12) Member	Mr. Himlal Baral (Tasmania)
(13) Member	Mr. Shanker Gurung (Nominated by President)
(14) Member	Mr. Shyam KC (Nominated by President)
(15) Member	Mr. Shamim Anwar

Advisers:

- Dr. Bhesh Raj Bhandari (QLD)
- Dr. Hom Moorti Pant (ACT)

- Dr. Durga Dutta Kandel (ACT)
- Dr. Narayan Pradhan (NSW)
- Mr. Kiran Chalise (NSW)
- Mr. Satish Koirala (NSW)
- Dr. Ram Neupane (NSW)
- Dr. Indra Jowarchan (NSW)
- Mr. Lok Man Limbu (NSW)
- Mr. Ranjan Vaidya – (VIC)
- Mr. Chandra Yonzon (VIC)
- Mr. Jog Limbu (VIC)
- Dr. Raju Adhikari (VIC)
- Dr. Deepak Raj Pant (VIC)
- Mr. Mana KC (NRN Australia Outgoing President)

Subject to approval by the NRN Executive meeting which will be held on 12 August 2007. (**Consultation to finalise the advisory board is in progress.**)

In addition to above members, all registered Nepali Associations in Australia are honoured as patrons of NRN Australia.

The NRN Australia may from time to time decide to appoint people of high stature or those with a long and/or outstanding record of contributions to the development of the Nepali community or any other person deemed deserving by the executive committee as patrons, honorary members and advisers of NRN Australia. Advisers shall be invited to attend the executive committee meetings and express their opinions and offer advice but shall not have any voting rights. Consultation to finalise the advisory board is in progress.

Due to the time and hall management issues, newly elected committee president Mr. Goba Katuwal could not make a speech. He released **expression of gratitude** and thanked all the participants and the members (Refer to Annex 4).

The event brought Nepalese from around Australia together. It reinforced the constructive relationship and networking forged at the conference between distant groups in Australia. These are the people amongst achievers in Australia; share a common dream of a peaceful and prosperous Nepali community and eager to be a part of our community development.

Conference concluded at 9.30 PM

Working together we can make a difference! “United we stand Divided we Fall”

“Be Part of an Australian Nepali family”

Thanks to all the supporters for making this conference GRAND SUCCESS!!

Reported by:

Goba Katuwal

President

NRN National Coordination Committee (NCC), Australia

For further details, please visit www.nrn.org.au

Annex 1

Minister Andrews sends his best wishes for a successful conference, and has asked me to read a short message on his behalf, as follows:

I am disappointed not to be able to speak at your conference and also learn more about your ongoing work to achieve mutual benefits for all non-resident Nepalis and the people of Nepal. I applaud this work as vital in maintaining a link to your home country, as well as enriching Australia through the benefit of your unique cultural perspectives. Australia has a strong relationship with Nepal, which predates the establishment of diplomatic links in 1960. We are not only linked by migration, but through trade, consular relations and development assistance.

Your work in uniting Nepali migrants is of special significance in our modern globalised world. Today people are more likely to move away from the country of their birth and in doing so, will need to adjust to a new society and culture. We ask people living in Australia to integrate into our society and embrace the core values, which define us as a people.

These values include our respect for the freedom and the dignity of the individual, support for democracy, our commitment to the rule of law, the equality of men and women, respect for all races and cultures, the spirit of a 'fair go', mutual respect, compassion for those in need and promoting the interests of the community as a whole. At the same time, we also respect the traditions and cultures migrants bring with them and encourage them to use these to further enrich Australian society.

I wish everyone well for the conference, and in your future efforts to work for the further advancement of your people, both here in Australia, and in Nepal."

The Hon Kevin Andrews MP, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

Introduction continued:

I wish to endorse the Minister's remarks and particularly commend the NRN National Coordination Committee for organising this conference. This event provides a wonderful opportunity for non-resident Nepalis living in Australia to come together to discuss important issues relating to all non-resident Nepalis and the people of Nepal. As this is the second of these conferences, it is exciting to see your work gathering momentum and I look forward to further growth and success in the future.

Integration

As the Minister indicated, with increasing globalisation, people are moving more freely around the world, leading to greater international cultural exchange and diversity. As Australia continues to welcome people of different cultures and religious faiths to live here, there is increasing awareness of this diversity. The good news is that we have such a strong and proud record in this country of integrating people of different cultures.

Since 1945, more than 6.6 million people have arrived in Australia as migrants, coming from all the countries of the world and including around 675,000 refugee and

humanitarian arrivals. I am proud to say that my parents are amongst the millions of migrants to Australia, having come from Italy in the 1950s. And we have relatively little discord among the people of different cultural backgrounds in Australia. Our migration success has played a key part in the building of the modern Australian nation. This contribution has been across all sectors of business, academia, sport, the arts and economic spheres. With 43 per cent of Australians having been born overseas or having a parent who was born overseas, we have a huge pool of people with the knowledge and skills to continue our trade and diplomatic influence across the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

The integration and settlement of our migrant and refugee and humanitarian entrants is a two-way process. The people we welcome from other lands enrich our society in a range of cultural, economic and other ways. They receive the many benefits and opportunities of living in Australia, including the opportunity to apply for citizenship and participate fully in Australia's way of life. In return, we ask migrants to accept and live by the values the Minister mentioned in his message and to participate as fully as possible in their community. These directions are reflected in the stronger emphasis we are placing in our settlement programmes on assisting people to integrate through finding a job, learning English, understanding Australian values and participating in mainstream activities.

To achieve this, we are developing whole-of-government approaches to Government services, such as the recent Budget announcement on additional support for the quick settlement of our refugee and humanitarian arrivals. We are also encouraging stronger English language skills and an understanding of rights and responsibilities in a democratic society through the introduction of a formal citizenship test. To encourage further understanding of the importance of positive and mutual respect for one another, we have been refocussing our *Living in Harmony* programme around mutual respect and participation. In 2006, we introduced the National Action Plan to address isolation, exclusion and extremism in our community.

And we have enhanced our successful Community Liaison Network to reach beyond migrant communities and support interaction with mainstream organisations.

The Nepal-born community

In 2001, more than 2500 Nepal-born people were living in Australia. Sixty-seven per cent of this group was residing here in New South Wales, and there had been an increase in this group of 77 per cent since 1996. There have also been an increasing number of Nepali students coming to Australia through the Overseas Student Programme. This programme enables people who are not Australian Citizens or permanent residents to study in Australia. One of the success stories of people supported by the government in this way is a Nepali student who has now permanently migrated to Australia.

Aditya Tater, a Nepali citizen, came to Australia in 2001 to study for his Masters degree in business administration at Griffith University. After a chance meeting with a migration officer, Aditya decided to pursue permanent residency in Australia through the General Skilled Migration Programme. On completing his degree he accepted a senior position with Medibank Private, as a state manager with the

overseas student cover health unit. Since then Aditya has been successful in being granted Australian citizenship. Aditya is just one of many migrants from Nepal who have enriched Australia by helping to create a diverse and highly skilled workforce.

Australian religious diversity

Australia is home to a diversity of faiths, encompassing all world religions, and we uphold the rights of citizens to maintain and develop their cultural and religious beliefs in an Australian context. One of the important values that all Australians share is the mutual respect we show each other and to people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. The respect we show at a personal level between people of different cultures contributes to building a stronger and resilient nation.

In this context, I would like to quote from some remarks made by the Prime Minister earlier this year, when he said:

'Our lives are enriched by the mosaic of cultures which collectively form our modern society.'

'Our cultural and ethnic diversity is a deliberate choice, which delivers enormous advantages in this fast- changing world. The Australian Government firmly believes in a modern, vital and diverse Australia in which all people have the freedom to express and share their cultural values. The genuine commitment of all Australians to a nation united by tolerance, mutual respect and care for others — continues to support and strengthen this country.'

Conclusion

In closing, I would like to thank you for inviting me here today and I commend the NRN National Coordination Committee Australia for organising this event.

Furthermore, I would like to congratulate in advance, the people who will receive awards this afternoon, and I urge you to continue with the excellent achievements that are being recognised today. It has been a pleasure to speak to everyone here today and I wish you all the best for the rest of the conference and for your future work to achieve mutual benefits (**Hon. Senator Fierravanti Wells, Representative of the Hon. Minister for Immigration and Citizenship**)

Annex 2

It is very pleasing to represent Kevin Rudd – a leader who appreciates the world is larger than London, Djakarta, Beijing and Washington. He is a person who understands the need for multilateral activity and engagement, most particularly with Asia.

I welcome the opportunity to connect with the Nepali community. I have met quite a few Nepalis through immigration work in my office, at Australian Citizenship events, and when door-knocking to encourage people to register on the electoral roll. However, it wasn't until today that I truly appreciated the large numbers of Nepalis in this area.

It was enlightening when Indra told me that 60 families lived in Granville and Guildford, and it has been very worthwhile to meet so many people here today. I would particularly bear in mind the huge concentration of Nepalis in John St, Granville.

People had spoken about globalisation earlier. The previous week I attended a reunion dinner with six school friends, and decided to kill time at an East Sydney Hotel beforehand. As it happens, the woman next to me started up a conversation and it turned out that the man with her was a Dane who ran a trekking business in Nepal and they'd met each other through that experience. They were amazed when I told them that I would be attending a Nepali conference a week later!

The equivalent figures for the 2006 Census are not yet available but the 2001 Census noted a massive 77% growth in Nepalese in Australia, and given the fact that the &KDUJp d'affaires indicated there were 7000 students from Nepal here last year, it is highly predictable that the 2006 Census would record a large Nepalese growth. Obviously, Nepalis, like any population, are diverse. However, because of the way they entered Australia, they were characterised by high educational and training accomplishment.

Some statistics: 64% of Nepali-born people have some form of qualifications; for Australia, the whole figure is 46%. Nepalis have a workforce participation of 77%; for Australia, it is 63%. Further, 94% of Nepalis speak English at home. However, due to barriers in the Australian workplace, 41% of Nepalis are in unskilled jobs – Australians, 19%.

I am very much against the recent changes to Australian Citizenship rules, noting that the Government had essentially capitulated on the question of English and knowledge tests and in the end, obtained about 10% of what they originally threatened.

Another aspect I have railed against is the extension of permanent residence, now requiring four years, as opposed to the earlier two years residence. This places restrictions on children accessing university because the HECS scheme is connected to Citizenship. Similarly, people will not be able to enter our public service for an extra two years. Australia's historical emphasis had been on inclusion of people, to bring them in, certainly not exclusion and marginalisation. The worst thing a country can do to foster terrorism is to make people feel they're second-class citizens and outside society.

I hope to be invited here again next year and I thank you very much for your warm welcome. I will try to make myself available for your issues and concerns.

Laurie Ferguson MP
Federal Member for Reid
Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Urban Development & Constrictions

Opening statement by the Charge' d'affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Nepal in Australia, Mr. Shanker D. Bairagi at the Second Annual Conference of the NRN Australia, Sydney, July 7, 2007

Mr. President, NRN Australia

Hon. Senator Fierravanti Wells, Representative of the Hon. Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

Hon. Ferguson, Member of Parliament (Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs)

Dr. Upendra Mahato, NRNA ICC President

Ms. Indra Ban, Vice President, NRNA ICC

Ms. Christine Gee, Hon. Consul General of Nepal

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon to all of you! I am, indeed, very much delighted to be amongst you here this afternoon. I wish to begin by extending my sincere thanks to the NRN Australia for organizing this important event, the Second Annual Conference, and for giving me this opportunity to speak a few words on behalf of the newly established Embassy of Nepal in Australia. I am very pleased to see the excellent arrangements made for the Conference in terms of both substance and logistics. I commend your efforts.

The Embassy of Nepal has recently been established. With this, your long-standing desire has now been fulfilled. I would say your dream has come true! I appreciate your warmth with which you all have welcomed and received the Embassy. I would emphasize that the establishment of a residential Embassy underscores the importance that Nepal has attached to its multidimensional relations with Australia that have always been friendly, cordial and cooperative. We deeply appreciate Australia's assistance in our development endeavours. The present democratic Government in Nepal remains committed to bringing Nepal-Australia relations to a new height of mutual satisfaction. Needless to mention, the restoration of democracy in Nepal last year has brought our two countries even closer as both share democracy, human rights and the rule of law as common values.

We, in collaboration with our consulates in Australia and the Nepalese community living here, will strive hard to expand the scope and enrich the substance of bilateral relations. The potential areas in which bilateral cooperation could be mutually beneficial include trade, tourism and investment. We would make efforts to promote Nepal as a preferred destination for Australian visitors as well as investors. We would also have to work for popularizing the Nepalese products among the Australian friends. Here, I would underline the need for establishing a bilateral chamber of commerce. I am hopeful you all would give a serious thought to it.

Just for your information, the Embassy has started functioning on a normal basis. Passport, visa and other consular services are available from the Embassy. For

detailed information on Embassy's activities and services, I would request you to visit our web page www.necan.gov.np, which is under construction, however. We are open to your ideas and suggestions and would heartily welcome them if they contribute towards making service delivery more effective and efficient.

Mr. President,

Let me share a few remarks on NRN movement. NRN today is not a dream; rather it is a reality. You have traversed a lot and more achievements appear on the horizon. It is commendable that within a short span of time you have been able to pull together visions, ideas and resources of all people of Nepalese origin living in different corners of the world. Your motto " by Nepali and for Nepali" has attracted considerable national attention. In the past, we used to talk about brain drain. Now the process has been reversed and we are talking about brain gain. This is particularly important in the context of an emerging knowledge-based society where the source of prosperity is knowledge, not the fixed asset or territory. There is a growing realization that Nepal stands to gain from material and intellectual resources of NRNs, if mobilized properly. The new development paradigm encourages forging synergetic partnership and collaborative efforts among the various actors and stakeholders-the Government, the private and the civil society. And, you are a key partner for development in the changed context and, of course, in new Nepal that is emerging.

I realize that the enactment of the NRN Act would go a long way in promoting the interest of the NRNs and in mobilizing their resources for country's socio-economic development. The Government of Nepal recognizes the role of NRN in nation building. The Annual Policies and Programme of the Government announced earlier this week is a clear testimony to this fact and I quote the relevant text " A policy shall be followed to utilize the skill, capital and entrepreneurship of Non-Resident Nepalese (NRN) for nation building" quote ends. We believe that mobilization of the NRN resources in the areas of tourism, hydropower development, IT&C and infrastructure development could have a positive impact on the process of economic transformation. In addition, we believe that NRN could be a vibrant force in the following specific tasks of vital importance:

- Promoting Nepal's overall image in the international arena
- Promoting Nepal's economic diplomacy of which export trade, foreign investment, tourism and employment for youths are the key components
- Promoting technological innovation through enhanced level of skill, knowledge and expertise
- Enhancing the share of remittances in the national economy by promoting the use banking channels for currency transfer
- Promoting Nepal's cultural treasures

- Promoting people-to-people contact thereby solidifying the foundation of inter-state relationship

Mr. President,

You all are aware that Nepal is, at present, passing through a critical phase of transition towards lasting peace and full-fledged democracy. Creation of an inclusive Nepali State on the foundation of universally accepted norms of democracy and political pluralism, liberalism, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, and good governance has been the overarching goal of the Government of Nepal. The forthcoming elections to the Constituent Assembly are critically important in erecting the edifice of a new Nepal that is peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous.

We have seen elsewhere that economic distress remains at the core of political instability. This is equally true in our case as well. Unless and until we are able to overcome the massive challenges of reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the post conflict situation, our goal to achieve sustainable peace will continue to elude us. The Government of Nepal is serious to address these challenges to ensure lasting peace and stability in Nepal. While there has been a profound national commitment, these challenges, given their magnitude and scope, will not be overcome easily in the absence of credible international support and cooperation. As one of the least-developed countries with a background of a decade-long conflict and as an innovator of the self-induced peace process, Nepal deserves concrete support and cooperation from the international community, its well wishers and the NRN.

Mr. President,

The Embassy acknowledges the contribution made by the NRN Australia. Since its establishment in July 2005, the NRN Australia has been making good efforts in bringing together NRNs in Australia under its umbrella. Its future direction, as stated in its brochure, appears to be encouraging as it aims at connecting Nepali business and communities, promoting Nepali culture and tourism and creating and connecting investment opportunities in Nepal.

Finally, let me briefly update you on the recent developments on NRN related activities. I am pleased to inform you that, through a recent decision of the Government of Nepal, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has now been designated as the overall focal point for NRN activities. This means that the Embassy will now have to prepare itself to provide an institutional mechanism to deal with NRN matters in Australia. The Third NRN Conference will be held in Kathmandu from October 15 to 17 this year and a high level organizing committee has been constituted under the convenorship of the Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal. The Government has also agreed to provide NRS 2 million as grant for the Conference. It has been said that the basic objectives of the Third NRN Conference would be to:

- Identify the role and place of NRNs in the emerging “New Nepal”

- Interact with newly emerged political leadership of Nepal
- Acquaint further Nepali society and leadership with the expectations of Nepal
- Identify the challenges of NRN movement and workout a roadmap to move ahead
- Adopt the Charter of NRNA
- Elect a new leadership of the NRNA which will steer the movement for at least the next two years

Against the backdrop of these encouraging developments, I would like to assure you that the Embassy would sincerely look forward to working closely with you in the days to come.

I wish the Conference a grand success!

I thank you all!

Annex 4

Dear friends

NRN Australia Second National Conference 7 July 2007 EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

NRN Australia Second National Conference held on 7 July 2007 was an overall success.

On behalf of NRN Australia, I would like to convey my sincere appreciation and gratitude to everyone for making the NRN Australia Second Bi Annual Conference in Sydney happen. Organising an event of this magnitude and complexity required a lot of logistics, planning, support and volunteers.

For those who took time out from their busy schedule to get involved and to contribute, we would say “thank you” for your support and understanding.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our sponsors and donors who have contributed generously to the event. We would specially like to mention the following:

- Bakers Delight Kellyville and Richmond (Director Mr. Bijaya Phuyal)
- Everest Communications Families (Director Mr. Yuba Raj Bhattarai)
- Gurkhas (Director Mr. Chandra Yonzon Melbourne)
- Himalayan Education & Migration Services (Mr. Man B Bhandari)
- K & G Associates (Mr. Pralhad KC)
- MIT Group Holdings Pty Ltd (CEO Mr. Shesh Ghale)
- Nepalese Consulate General (Hon. Consular Ms. Christine Gee)
- Oli & Associates (Principal Mr. Bhabani P Oli)
- Pacific College of Technology (Director Mr. Pradip Dhakal)
- 4 Corners Australia (Principal Mr. Mana KC)
- ACME Home Loans Pty Ltd
- Great Southern Limited
- Thapa’s Agency (Director Mr. Tapindra Thapa)
- Yeti Travels (Principal Mr. Mahendra Lamsal)
- Air Universe Travel Pty Ltd (Ravi Dai and Punam Bhaju)
- Australia Education Pty Ltd (Director Govinda Jee and Santosh Jee)
- 4 Corner Bazaar (Principal Mr Shyam KC)
- Crown Institute of Business & Technology (Director Mr. Deepak Khadka)

I would like to thank my friends specially Mr. Sagar Shrestha, Mr. Bharat Raj Pant, Mr. Bishnu Hamal, Mr. Bhabani P Oli, Mr. Umesh Panta, Mr. Ganesh Tamang, Mr. Naresh Thapa, Mr. Bigyan Karki, Mr. Hari Ram Malla, Mr. Kumar Shrestha, Mr. Tika Karki, Mr. Komal Khatiwada and Mr. Dipak Khanal, Nandu Gurung, Surendra

Sigdel who together formed the backbone of the whole conference. Without you guys, we could not have staged the conference.

I would to thank the families and the spouses of the key persons, without whose support and understanding we could not have managed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Rajish Aryal and Mr. Samir Ghimire, host of SBS Nepali Program, Mr. Tika Karki of Himalayan Radio, and Mr Ranjan Vaidya of Melbourne Chautari for all the publicity and marketing the conference to the Nepalese community in Australia.

My special thanks goes to all inter- state NRN friends for attending the conference and their vigorous effort in organising the event: -

Dr. Ashok Shrestha QLD
Mr. Ashok Dhakal QLD
Mr. Hari Khadka QLD
Dr. Krishna Hamal ACT
Dr. Hom Moorti Pant ACT
Dr. Durga Dutta Kandel ACT
Mr. Chandra Yonzon VIC
Mr. Jog Man Limbu VIC
Mr. Shesh Ghale and Mrs. Ghale VIC
Mr. Ranjan Vaidya VIC

Further, I would like to thank all the volunteers and friends for their tremendous input and hard work specially:

Mr. Bishnu Hamal
Mr. Bharat Pant
Mr. Mahendra Oli
Mr. Dhurba Subedi
Mr. Shishir Nepal
Mr. Umesh Panta
Mrs. Durga Bastola
Mr. Man B Bhandari
Mr. Lekh Gurung
Mr. Ganesh KC
Mr. Komal Khatiwada
Mr. Samindra Shrestha
Mr Tika Karki Representative form Baglung Committee
Mr. Bhim Kharel
Mr. Sagar Shrestha
Mr. Mohan Neupane
Mr. Shaker Shrestha
Mr. Laximun Pandit (MC)
Ms. Prakriti KC (MC)
Mr. Deepesh Shrestha (MC)

Last but not the least, I would like to thank all Nepalese communities and organizations for supporting us and for believing in our efforts to stage the conference in Sydney for our agendas.

Finally, I would like to thank the out going President Mr. Mana KC who was truly a great leader of NRN Australia. I enjoyed working with him for the last two years. I will really miss you in my team. I promise you that I will continue your vision and the stand you put for NRN Australia. Your past contribution is truly acknowledged and I seek your continuous support as an adviser of my team. I would also like to thank all the out going team members for their contribution towards the NRN Australia, including Mrs. Ranju Thapa Mr. Shyam KC, Mr. Niraj Shrestha, Mrs. Renu Ghimire, Mrs. Durga Bastola, Mr. Shree Napit, Mr. Pabi Raj Subba, Mrs. Bina Poudel, Mr. Ram Gurung, and Mr Man B Bhandari. I will miss you all. Nevertheless, I will expect your continuous support, wisdom and advise to my team.

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge and thank the rest of the community members and the names, which I have not stated above.

Once again, thank you all for your support. You have truly made a remarkable difference.

Sincerely

**Goba Katuwal CPA, PNA
President
NRN National Coordination Committee
Australia**

**Tel: 612 96373134
Fax: 612 96373134
Email: gobakatuwal@hotmail.com
www.nrn.org.au**