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ABN No. 940 354 114 00

SEVA INTERNATIONAL INC.
(An acronym for)
(SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURES OF AUSTRALIAN SOUTH ASIANS)
SOCIAL UNITY IN DIVERSITY.

SEVA International is a non profit, non religious, non political Incorporated Association in NSW. It is a community initiative of a representative group of dedicated, committed, like minded professionals of South Asian background located in Sydney, NSW.

As a premier South Asian community initiative its primary focus is to address the social welfare and settlement needs of the fast growing numbers of the migrant community of people of Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangla Deshi, Nepali and Bhutani descent.

SEVA sees itself as a liaison organization between its three main stake holders – the local South Asian community, the local South Asian businesses and relevant service providers and agencies at the federal, state and local government levels and to act mainly as a facilitator and integrator.

OUR MISSION

SEVA seeks to identify and support individuals and communities to work together in partnerships to address relevant issues of common interest in order to:-

- enable links and liaison between groups (formal and informal) and individuals to evolve around issues of common concern on the basis of mutual respect whilst respecting their diversity and differences;
- promote and develop models of partnerships and organizational structures (such as self- help groups, community action groups, strategic alliances, MoUs) to empower local communities to influence decision makers – where required in partnership/ association with businesses, service agencies and providers at all levels;

- Acknowledge the specific professional and personal experiences and skills of all individuals in the community to enable them to play a greater role within the wider community of which they are a part.

For more information please refer to:- www.sevainternational.org or call – 94495582 (Ram) or 0422-282-608 (Shantha)

The South Asian Community in NSW

The South Asian community is the fastest growing migrant community in Australia today of which Sydney/ NSW has the largest component estimated at over 105,098 according to the 2001 census figures (based on country of birth).

As with any migrant community, the South Asian migrants also face a whole range of migrant settlement issues and concerns which need to be addressed. These needs are felt by all sections – the newly arrived as well as the well established, the young and the aged, the mature and young families, women and children. Absence of any ethno- specific and culturally appropriate social programs and services within the community are an added concern to the community.

Despite their growing presence, there has apparently been no organized / concerted efforts to meet these concerns and needs.

SEVA'S VISION

A unique community of Australian South Asians living in Sydney being actively involved in the social welfare issues which affect their lives:

* With a commitment to equal partnership between all those involved through sharing of skills, knowledge and experience in order to bring about social change:

* resulting in a vibrant confident, involved, motivated and enterprising community seeking to enhance the quality and content of their relationship with the wider Australian community.

General settlement Information.

The information in this folder is intended to provide some general information to guide newly arrived migrants in their settlement process, particularly in areas such as education, welfare, employment and health.

Any migrant arriving under family, skilled or humanitarian or other categories should soon after arrival:-

- Apply for a Tax file number with the ATO;
- Register with Medicare;
- open a Bank account;
- register with Centrelink;
- contact local Health services;
- enrol children at schools;
- secure a driver's license;
- seek skills and qualifications assessment (1300-362-079)

For further information refer to:-

- www.immi.gov.au/settle
- www.myfuture.edu.au
- www.workplace.gov.au
- Job network - 136268
- www.sevainternational.org will provide further resource material.

Welfare:

Welfare benefits in the form of income and other support services were needed is available to all Australian residents under the social security benefits scheme.

The social security system in Australia provides these services to eligible people through the government agency called Centrelink. Tel: 131202. Access to Centrelink payments depend on individual visa categories. Even if one were to become a permanent citizen of Australia, a waiting period for payments could apply.

An individual would need to provide identification documents – passport, travel documents, bank account and accommodation details to Centrelink while applying. Full details of the documentary requirements are available on their website –

www.centrelink.gov.au

The individual should have a Tax File number in order to receive any Centrelink payments. Application forms to apply for a TFN to ATO are also available with Centrelink.

Waiting periods, Exemptions and Special benefits:

Normally all newly arrived migrants have to live in Australia for a period of two years before qualifying to receive any social security benefits including unemployment, student allowance and a number of other benefits. To qualify for Age and disability pensions an individual has generally to have lived in Australia for 10 years.

However Refugee and humanitarian migrants are exempt from the two years waiting period.

A payment called Special Benefits may also be available during the waiting period in very limited circumstances if one is in extreme hardship.

Migrants with dependent children may also be able to receive a Family Tax Benefit and Child care benefit – only as an income supplement (details Family Assistance Office – 136150 – or www.familyassist.gov.au)

For all Centrelink related enquiries contact:-

Employment services, Newstart, Special Benefits	- 131 250
Age pension, Pension concessions cards	- 132300
Family Assistance Office	- 136150
Youth Assistance and Students Services	- 132490
Disability, Sickness and Carers	- 132717
Centrelink International Services (overseas pension)	- 131673

Disclaimer: - The guides are produced in good faith. SEVA does not accept any responsibility for the contents whatsoever. Readers should rely on their own independent enquiries by reference to any of the above authorities.

Education:

Newly arrived migrants require assistance in accessing information and resources on various areas of education, be it further research in their own field of specialty; higher education; skills recognition; labour market regulations; training needs and opportunities; skills development and other allied areas.

Australian scholarships is an Australian Government initiative that provides opportunities for students from the Asia Pacific region. It brings under one umbrella existing scholarships program

managed by AUSAID and the Department of Education, Science and Training – DEST.

For enquiries on recognition of overseas qualifications,
Call – 1800-020-108 or Email: noosr@dest.org.au.

For all enquiries regarding education and training (e.g.: TAFE, Apprenticeships; Migrant Adult English education etc ;) the NSW Department of Education and Training would be the best source.

Migrant Resource Centres located around Sydney, and the Local Councils could also be another primary source of general information.

Useful Websites:

www.dest.qoc.au – Dep't. Of Education and Training;

<http://www.endeavour.dest.gov.au> – (for enquiries on study, research, scholarships/awards etc.

www.immi.gov.au

Employment:

Employment is perhaps the greatest facilitator of settlement for a migrant. Lack of adequate pre and post arrival settlement information on employment opportunities; lack of jobs in their respective professional areas of expertise; inadequate language skills; and consequent underemployment are some of the major hurdles faced by new migrants. Extended delays in validation or recognition of overseas professional skills and qualifications; needs for retraining; lack of local work experience are also further impediments to a successful employment outcome for new migrants.

The Department of Immigrations website referred below has guides which provide an overview for 14 most popular professions including Engineering, Law, Accountancy; Architecture; Medicine; IT; Management and others. These guides include information on recognition of overseas qualifications, the job market, as well as advice on looking for work.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations - (DEWR) – their Job Net work is another good source of information on job prospects in different professional and skills areas.

Useful Websites:

www.immi.gov.au – Dept. of Immigration.

www.workchoices.gov.au; www.jobsearch.gov.au

www.dewr.gov.au - (job network and job seekers – 146268)
www.centrelink.gov.au (T: 132850)

Health:

With health requirements and eligibility criteria ensuring that only those in good health generally migrate to Australia, people in Australia who were overseas born have been found to be generally in good health as compared to Australian born people. This better health and a good range of health services available in Australia is reflected in lo a longer life expectancy, lower death, disability and hospitalization rates; a lower prevalence of some life style related risk factors amongst the migrant communities on the whole.

However as time goes by, the 'healthy migrant effect' seems to diminish and for some conditions, health outcomes for Asian born Australians seem to decline. The importance of primary health care delivered by general practitioners; practice Nurses and other health care professionals in delivering primary health care needs emphasis. Community Health care services are also provided at strategic locations in metropolitan city and rural areas.

Increased interaction and consultations with migrant community groups will facilitate on-going integrated development of health services appropriate to the community in specialized areas such as mental health, disability, aged care, women's' health and other special needs.

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