



Event: Launch of Charter of Cultural Diversity and World Kitchen event

Date: Friday 17 March

Location: Wakefield Gardens

Speech notes

Vice-Chancellor Professor Linda Kristjanson

[Introduced by MC Chin Tan]

Thank you Chin.

Welcome

I would like to begin by respectfully acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, the Wurundjeri of the Kulin Nation. I also pay my respects to all Aboriginal Community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region.

Acknowledgements

- Mr. Hong Lim – Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Asia Engagement and Member for Clarinda
- Mr. John Pesutto (MP) – Shadow Attorney – General and Member for Hawthorn
- Ms. Helen Kapalos – Chairperson – Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Diplomatic representatives from Indonesia and Malaysia

Introduction

Welcome to our staff, students and friends of Swinburne.

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to join you today to celebrate the importance of cultural diversity.

At Swinburne, we feel strongly about supporting a sense of belonging and appreciation for all.

Our students and staff come from more than 100 nations, across every continent of the globe. Together, through education, we strive to lead positive social change – here in Australia and beyond our shores.

This work is particularly important in the context of contemporary Australian and international politics and society. The lives of many in our communities are directly - personally - affected by the ideological differences being played out across the world.

Swinburne is a university that encourages a global exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Through staff and student exchange, study tours and research partnerships, Swinburne people are active participants in a global community.

A terrific example of this is Postdoctoral Fellow Dr Han Lin. Originally from China, Dr Lin came to Swinburne in 2009 to undertake a PhD in physics.

After studying the possibilities of graphene technology for seven years, Dr Lin made headlines last year for a technological breakthrough.

He had developed a new type of battery that can be charged in seconds, used millions of times, and is environmentally friendly. As a result of Dr Lin's breakthrough, Swinburne researchers from our Melbourne and Malaysian campuses will work together on a pilot project for advanced manufacturing of graphene super batteries.

This project will develop innovative processes to facilitate the industrialisation of new super battery technology with potential use in solar applications.

It is examples like this - where our researchers come together across national borders - that demonstrate our commitment to learn from each other, and the benefits of collaboration for social and economic good.

Launch of framework

On the eve of Victoria's Cultural Diversity Week, it is with pride that we launch our inaugural cultural diversity charter.

After consulting with the Swinburne community, we have developed a whole-of-university approach for integrating cultural diversity values into all aspects of university life.

This framework is closely linked to the state of Victoria's cultural diversity values and will be pivotal to the university as we move forward.

At Swinburne, we are proud to be a leader in cultural diversity initiatives. In 2016, we were the first university in Australia to appoint a Director of Multicultural Engagement, Mr Chin Tan.

Chin has led the development of this charter and has helped us, as a university, understand the scope of cultural diversity.

The charter, which we will launch today and which will be handed out to you, is underpinned by a set of objectives that place cultural diversity at the centre of university life.

It enshrines our commitment to promoting collaborative cultural diversity efforts and states our continued support for Indigenous Peoples.

I would like to thank everybody who had been involved in the development of this charter. We are in the very early stages of this initiative, but there has already been significant support from all areas of Swinburne.

Invite people to join in World Kitchen celebration

Following the launch of the charter today, I encourage you to join me at the World Kitchen event, where you be able to taste food around the world.

At this event, students from diverse cultural backgrounds share with us their traditional dishes, and the stories of how these foods connect to their cultures.

I encourage you to take this opportunity to expand your knowledge of our Australian community and its incredible diversity.

I have been to a couple of these World Kitchen events now and I can tell you that the food is delicious!

Introduce guest speaker – Mr Hong Lim

Now, our next first guest speaker today is Hong Lim, the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Asia Engagement, as well as the Member for Clarinda.

Hong was the first person of Cambodian-Chinese heritage to be elected to a Parliament anywhere in the English-speaking world and in 1996 he was the first Asian to be elected to a Lower House of Parliament in Australia.

Prior to that, Hong was extensively involved with Victoria's ethnic communities. From 1985 to 1993, he played a pivotal as the Commissioner of the Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Hong's political career spans more than 40 years and during that time he has worked tirelessly to advocate for those from a range of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Please join me in welcoming Hong Lim to the front.