



# Australian Malaysian Singaporean Association

Passages  
December 2011 Edition

24<sup>th</sup> December 2011

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## Editor's Note



The year 2011 is drawing to an end and the holiday season is fast approaching. It is often a time for us to share the true spirit of this festive season with our family members and loved ones. It is also a time to reflect upon our accomplishments and disappointments over the past year.

AMSA has had a roller-coaster year of ups and downs. I am proud to announce that the current Committee, consisting of existing and new members, has now emerged stronger and more effective than ever before. We now have a Committee that functions as a team, respects and communicates effectively with each other, and most importantly, operates with a "can-do" attitude. This is all thanks to the leadership of our energetic President Elvan Tong, the insight of our Vice Presidents Prof. James Chin and Evelyn Tian, along with the support of the rest of the Committee members. We have also organised various successful events over the past few months, including but not limited to the Business Forum on Entrepreneurship, which our President will elaborate further in the President's Review section of this issue of *Passages*.

On behalf of the current Committee and all AMSA members, I wish to thank our outgoing editor Dr YKK for his tireless efforts and excellent work in editing previous issues of this magazine.

Alvin Lee

## Editor's Brief Introduction

Alvin Lee was born in Sabah, Malaysia. He first came to Australia in 1998 and spent 8 years in Perth whilst completing his matriculation and university studies. After graduating with a degree in commerce and law, he started his career as a lawyer that saw him practise in Sydney, Canberra and back in Sydney. Alvin now runs his own legal practice in downtown Sydney.



## President's Review

I am pleased to report that this review has taken a more positive outlook for AMSA than the previous issue. For over a short period since July, the new Executive Committee has done an excellent job.

I would like to welcome two new Committee members: Alvin Lee who will also be our new Editor for *Passages* and Douglas Tan. Our existing Committee member, Chrys Voon, has taken the role of Honorary Treasurer following the voluntary resignation of Zack Tare. We now have a total of eight committee members who are committed, responsive and ready to continue with our planned programs, which have so far exceeded our expectations.

Your new Committee has been very busy since July with social, cultural and business events. The "*Sponsors' Lunch*" and "*Seniors' Health Information Lunch/Seminar*" were already reported in the September issue. In September we had the "*Welcome Afternoon Tea*" which was specially held for our new members; "*Pamper Day*" in October for all members; "*Coastal Walk*" in early November for all members; "*Business Forum on Entrepreneurship*" in mid-November for all members. Reports on these events appear in the 'AMSA's Activities' section. Our last event for the year, "*AMSA Christmas Dinner*" in mid-December, is already over-booked.

During September and October, AMSA participated in the activities of other associations and organisations, such as the Australian Asian Association of Bennelong (AAAB), the Moon Festival, the Peranakan Association Australia and celebrations associated with Malaysian National Day, Food Festival and Malaysian Students' activities.

If new membership enrolments and renewals are indications that we are heading in the right direction, we are pleased to report that since the beginning of the year AMSA has recorded 68 new members and 54 renewals. A "Members' Interests Survey" was conducted in August. The results will help us to further improve our services to our members.

In any organisation, front-end events would not be quite as successful without back-end administrative support and other initiatives. Following the upgrading of our membership database, we are able to implement membership drives, issue new AMSA membership cards, develop an AMSA-Provider Promotion program, simplify membership renewals and target broadcasts to certain groups of members.

Some of you may have visited our revamped website and new AMSA Facebook page which are some of our many initiatives that keep our members and young people interested. Both website and Facebook page are being constantly updated to keep you informed. We are confident that these communication tools will increase our exposure, generate more memberships and help build stronger relationships with other associations. We are grateful to have the services of Alex Seng as our Webmaster and Chrys Voon as our Treasurer and Facebook Administrator.

The Committee will take a break in January 2012. We take this opportunity to wish our members, their families, associates and friends a happy and safe season over the Christmas period.

Elvan Tong  
President

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*"We now have a total of eight committee members who are committed, responsive and ready to continue with our planned programs, which have so far exceeded our expectations."*

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## Member's Interest Survey Results

By Elvan Tong

Although communicated to our members by email in September, the survey results on what events members would like to see happening are shown below. There were exactly 30 responses, representing over 20% of our membership at that time, a very good response rate in market research terms.

The results were derived by using frequency distribution over the multiple-choice questions. This simply means counting all the crosses you made, which was expressed as a percentage of the total 30 responses. For example, 90% means there were 27 responses out of 30 in favour; 50% means 15 out of 30 in favour, and so on. As you can see very clearly, the popular activities in each category (50% and over) are highlighted in bold.

Some comments on the results:

1. We are on track in our programs with what you want, e.g. the Seniors' Lunch/Seminar in August on health issues; the Welcome Afternoon Tea in September with open discussion on social and community issues; the Pamper Day on beauty care and massage demonstration in October; the Coastal Walk in early November; the Business Forum on Entrepreneurship in mid- November; the planned Christmas Dinner in December.
2. We have yet to work on day trips and/or combined with picnics that seem to be popular. On stage shows, you were made aware of the classical Indian dances at the Parramasala Festival and *Coup D'Etat* play in November. In golf, we already have a relationship with the Evangelical Chinese Church (ECC) group of over 70 golfers who play monthly. Some AMSA members have joined. In badminton the Australian Community Badminton Association has approached us and may open their doors for AMSA players.
3. We have not had a dinner yet, but the Christmas Dinner promises to be very popular.
4. When we are firmly established in our relationship with other associations we will encourage your participation in their functions. We already had the Tourism Malaysia's Food Festival; the Malaysia Festival at Tumbalong Park; the Malaysian National Day Golf Tournament; the Parramasala Festival in Parramatta. We have a strong reciprocal relationship with the Australian Asian Association of Bennelong (AAAB). With the Chinese Australian Forum we support their activities for those AMSA members who are politically inclined.
5. Please realise that AMSA cannot practically cater for everyone, but we try our best to cater for the majority of our members. AMSA's own events are totally non-discriminatory, secular and apolitical. We will work with any ethnic or community-based associations that pursue multiculturalism and social inclusion.

The Committee wishes to thank the 30 members for participating in this Survey.

Activity Group	Activities/Interests	X
Lunches	Eating only at selected restaurants	33
	Eating plus seminars/talks on relevant topics	90
	Other (specify)	
Dinners	Eating only at selected restaurants	30
	Eating plus entertainment/dancing	50
	Eating plus seminar/speeches	50
	"AMSA's Got Talents" Buffet Dinner and Karaoke	47
	Other (specify)	
Seminars	On business/legal/financial issues	67
	On community/social/cultural issues	73
	On health/lifestyle issues	67
	On political/religious issues	27
	Other (specify)	
Entertainment	Life/stage shows	53
	Karaoke fun singing and competition	43
	Dancing	43
	Other (specify)	
Demonstrations	Cooking	43
	Skin/facial/beauty care	40
	Massage/Tai chi	43
	Floral arrangement	17
	Other (specify)	
Outings	Walks	47
	BBQ/Picnic	67
	Day trips/excursions	80
	Other (specify)	
Sports	Badminton	17
	Ten-pin Bowling	37
	Golf	37
	Other (specify)	
Reciprocal Activities	Social/cultural functions by other associations	57
	Seminars/talks by other associations	43
	Community events at various venues by other organisations	43
	Other (specify)	
<b>Your comments (if any):</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parenting skills; how to handle difficult teenagers.</li> <li>2. Address interests of tertiary students.</li> <li>3. Healthy food, organic gardening, exercises.</li> <li>4. AMSA with political voice.</li> <li>5. Building bridges with other associations.</li> <li>6. Address retirement and related issues.</li> </ol>		

## AMSA's Activities

### Welcome Afternoon Tea

Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2011

By Elvan Tong

We are pleased to report that 82 guests attended the Welcome Afternoon Tea for our new members. This event attracted a further 17 new members. The Afternoon Tea consisted of *nonya kuehs*, noodles and traditional cakes. We are most grateful to Rose Tan for her delicious *nonya kuehs* and Jennifer Chin for her *yi mien* noodles.

We also engaged in an open discussion on issues and concerns close to the hearts and minds of migrants such as ourselves. The open discussion started with President, Elvan Tong, telling "My Story". He simulated a *Kopitiam* chit-chat session by inviting a guest to ask him questions about his experience. The questions touched on why he left Malaysia, how he found life here in the 1970s, what difficulties he faced whilst searching for job, how he managed to live in the Australian society and what was his proudest moment.

**Elvan** left Malaysia in 1971 for personal reasons and immediately became an Australian citizen after having crossed the Rubicon. He had no difficulty returning to Australia because he married an Aussie. After a short period he found a marketing job, although he left behind a rather lucrative executive position in Malaysia. However, he continued to crave for Malaysian food because in the 1970s there were few Malaysian restaurants around and Asian supermarkets were non-existent. As a student at the University of Sydney, he lived with Australian, Polish, the Salvation Army, Lebanese-Christian, Jewish and Yugoslavian families. At one stage he lived with fellow students which had disastrous consequences. So Elvan was quite at home with the populace, having experienced multiculturalism at close quarters long before it became politically correct. He urged students to do the same to expand their horizon and not to return home unaware of the true cultural richness and tolerance of the Australian society. His proudest moment was courting and marrying his second wife, during his 8-year stint with the Australian Eurasian Association of New South Wales in roles as Social Secretary, Editor and President.

Following Elvan, **Tony Pun** shared with us his experiences. Tony came to Australia from Ipoh in 1964 to study. After passing the Leaving School Certificate (Matriculation) he enrolled at the University of New South Wales and was involved in left wing politics and student demonstrations. He became a true blue Aussie.

Like many students in those days, Tony was more into playing than studying. Somehow he graduated and even received a scholarship to do a PhD in Molecular Biology. With this and a job, he became a permanent resident and later a citizen of Australia.

Tony's attachments to all things Australian were so entrenched that he chose to remain, and has been for 48 years. However, deep down his heart is still with the land of his birth, Malaysia.

**James Chin** shared with us his experience in Australia from another perspective. He talked of his experience from another perspective, besides advising university students to challenge their existing notions and to believe in their own abilities. The following is an excerpt of it.

Migrating to Australia  
By James Chin  
Vice-President AMSA

For those of us who have made the journey to a new land, it is easy to reflect on the circumstances that made us take that very first step. For me, it was frustration and an awakening.

I was born in Singapore and remember the turmoil during the Lim Yew Hock days and the relative peace that ensued when Lee Kuan Yew rose to ascendancy. There is no doubt that he is and always will be the father of Singapore but a Lee supporter I am not.

I never liked the rigidity and bureaucracy that was Singapore. I found the academics in the university "tight-arsed" and inflexible. The curriculum was boring and the examinations never ever tested what we could do with what we knew but whether we could regurgitate verbatim, the lectures that I rarely attended, because the lecturers were generally boring and had no idea of how to grip the students and convey them to a world of knowledge and challenge.

I got bored. There is a price to be paid for getting bored in Singapore. One generally lost the opportunity to flow with your friends in the lets-get-a-job torrent. I ended up being a trainee teacher after graduation.

One day, I looked around me and wondered why so many of my university friends were earning more money and appeared to be going places. I was frustrated at my lack of success and the opportunity came when an old lecturer who had migrated to Australia to do his PhD, asked me to join him. I collected my meagre savings and paid my way to a postgraduate program in Queensland University.

The awakening came like a lightning bolt, when the academics at the university looked at my University of Singapore qualifications with disdain. Apparently it was not worth the paper the degree was printed on. To qualify, I had to do third year units, sit for examinations and complete a research project plus thesis, all in one year. Miraculously, I managed to finish the year despite setback after setback, emanating mostly from other Asian students I was living with in a house. They had money and knew how to enjoy life. Drinking, gambling and womanizing reached new depths yet to be fully plumbed. I went back to Singapore as soon as the last exam was completed, woefully depleted of funds.

Back in Singapore, I was reconciled to becoming a teacher once again when destiny took me wilfully along a different path. I got a call from the Head of the School of Medical Sciences who offered me a PhD scholarship. Apparently I had topped in my exams and the research paper I had completed was awesomely good. Strange, such accomplishments had never been my forte. I not only got a scholarship, but they also gave me a visa and subsequently a very much sought after permanent residency in Australia. What a blessing, no more military service in Singapore and goodbye Singapore.

So what is the moral of the story? Did I really study hard to become successful as an academic? Not really. I just moved my floater from one torrent to another. Perhaps the only thing I did differently was that I became purposeful. It may not serve others the same way, but directing one's focus absolutely to achieve a goal even if it means jumping ship in between, has been a philosophy that has served me well.

The moral is: GO FOR IT! And do not look back. What you leave behind is not worth salvaging or even thinking about. That in a nutshell, is my story and also my advice to those who have for one reason or another, become frustrated with their lives and have found themselves stagnating in time











## Pamper Day

Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2011

By Elvan Tong

Pamper Day was a new event for AMSA where we had four demonstration stations to pamper nearly 30 members and their friends.

Uncovering the hidden talents of some AMSA members, Rose Tan and Evelyn Tian demonstrated the art of facial and beauty care using Beauty Line products. Michele McCulloch put the magic of aromatherapy to work with essential oils focusing on the feet. James Chin acquired his chi trigger pointing skills for remedial massage from a Thai monk. Elvan Tong concentrated on the neck, shoulder, back and feet with Swedish massage to loosen tight muscles and ease tension.

It was a casual and fun day for both visitors and demonstrators. Seven visitors joined AMSA following this event. We would like to thank all for attending the event and the Executive Committee for assisting.



## Coastal Walk

Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2011

By Jonathan Ong

6 November 2011 was a beautiful, breezy and sunny Sunday for a Coastal Walk. Seven members responded to the Coogee to Bondi and Watson Bay Coastal Walk organised by AMSA for the first time as a social event. Jonathan Ong, who has plenty of experience with coastal walks, met with the group at Wharf No: 3, Circular Quay at a pre-arranged time. They then took a 45-minute bus ride from Circular Quay to Coogee. There they had a short briefing on what to do and what to expect during the walk.

Every member got to know each other, talking and laughing while enjoying the walk and taking photos of the wonderful and beautiful coastal views at each lookout point. Arriving at Bronte Beach in about an hour, they had about a 20-minute break to re-energise by sharing nuts, sandwiches and fruits. It was fun just watching happy children running, jumping, playing and treated to mini train rides while the older ones were riding the waves with their surf boards and generally having a good family outing.

The second part of the walk took them to Tamarama Beach where some 109 giant sculptures were displayed along the beaches and in open spaces along the three-kilometre walk to Bondi Beach. There were also smaller and miniature-sized sculptures housed in a special building. These displays of arts were for sale, an annual event organised by the Sculptures by the Sea. After Bondi they took another bus to Watson Bay where they had a late lunch of fish n chips at the famous Doyles. By then, all were tired and decided to take a ferry back to Circular Quay.







## Business Forum – Entrepreneurship

Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2011

By Elvan Tong

The Business Forum on Entrepreneurship held on Saturday 19 November was a first for AMSA. This event attracted nearly 30 guests. It was part of the Global Entrepreneur Week occurring across 120 countries. AMSA was fortunate to be involved with the Frank Team, headed by **Nastasha Munasinghe**, the official host in Sydney of GEW. We were also fortunate to have **Juliana Jamal** as convener who adopted a Q&A format that proved to be highly interactive and informative.

Most fortunate of all, we had three speakers from very different personal backgrounds and approaches to business, but all with that unmistakable entrepreneurial spirit. **Mr Shaheer Groban** is an Architect and Urban Designer who underwent a roller coaster of successes and failures in Sydney, Dubai and back again in Sydney. **Mr Phillip Ang** founded Hakka Pty Ltd with his wife, Sue, in 1979 from humble beginnings and, through sheer hard work and focus, the company is now a force in the supermarket scene. **Mr Thomas Sohns**, with his competitiveness in sports at a young age and strong selling background, was well prepared when he went into marketing nutritional supplements seven years ago.

The Q&A format concentrated on four key questions: how the entrepreneurs became what they are; what are the components of the entrepreneurial spirit; their role in the community in giving and support; their vision of the future and the legacy or message they wish to leave behind.

In response to the above questions came these main points, not necessarily in priority order:

1. **Passion** – you have to be passionate in what you do and achieve. If the driving force is absent you lose momentum when things do not go your way. In other words, you must persevere.
2. **Focus** – in order to focus on something, you need to have a powerful vision or long-term objective to focus on. In other words, begin with the end in mind.
3. **Processes** – in both manufacturing and services adopt a continuous improvement approach in the processes, whether in production, management, marketing or administration.
4. **Selling** – in business, you ‘sell’ yourself every day. How you sell yourself is a measure of your success or failure. Above all else have integrity.
5. **Born or learned** – entrepreneurship can either be inborn or learned from experience and reading. To have both and not to stop learning is a blessing.
6. **Creativity** – a creative mind must be practical as well. All talk and no action amounts to naught. To be innovative is to be able to do something different to what is already there but making it better.
7. **Giving** – giving back to the community by a business takes many forms. In monetary terms like donations to charities and similar organisations; in kind like donating products and samples; in pro bono services like donating your time and advice; in personal involvement of time and effort and imparting knowledge are perhaps the most valuable of all. Examples include mentoring, connecting businesses and helping students.
8. **Entrepreneur is not a manager** – a manager supervises, controls, disciplines, goes by the book, is focused on immediate result, is invariably protective of own position. An entrepreneur is a leader of people, leads by example, takes risk, sees the big picture beyond the present, motivates others into action, is not hampered by strict rules, is passionate, is not profit focused short term, takes failures as lessons and is not easily discouraged.

This list is by no means exhaustive, but the distinction between the ordinary and the entrepreneur is pretty clear.

The President concluded the Forum by presenting Certificates of Appreciation and gifts to the speakers and the convener. The five complimentary AMSA memberships were won by non-members Miss Selina Law and Mr Shaheer Groban, and members Jeffrey Lim, Richard Wong and Jonathan Ong.

We thank Daniel Tan for the photography and Committee members Jonathan Ong, Douglas Tan and Alvin Lee for their support. Most importantly, we thank the 30 people who sacrificed a beautiful Saturday morning to join us.





## Christmas Dinner

Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2011

By Elvan Tong

Our Christmas Dinner was held on the evening of Friday 16 December, at Crystal Seafood Restaurant, Strathfield Plaza, Strathfield. This was our seventh AMSA event in six months, a fitting finale to 2011. The 75 who attended were delighted with the delicious 8-course banquet, excellent restaurant service and warm atmosphere of camaraderie throughout the evening. All arrived on time and seated by 7.30 pm when dinner was promptly served.

President Elvan Tong welcomed all members and friends and acknowledged special guests Dr Bin Yap, Ms Yee Wah Choong, Rick Siew and Ms Juliana Jamal. He also gave recognition to Ms Cherry Cheong, Secretary of the Australian Asian Association of Bennelong (AAAB); long time corporate supporter of AMSA, Ms Iris Leong of Amsure Realty; immediate past AMSA President and current President of the Peranakan Association Australia (PAA), Ms Evelyn Tian.

He then asked guests to look around them to witness multiculturalism in action. Their presence this night had made it so. There were people from many countries of origin, not just from Malaysia and Singapore. This was what social inclusion and social cohesion was about. This was what unity (Australian citizenship and Australian residency) through diversity (many nations) was about. This was what the Australian government, the Ethnic Communities Council and the Community Relations Commission have been promoting. For many years AMSA has been practising multiculturalism without making a big song and dance.

During the evening, Vice President James Chin contrived to give away a bottle of wine to a winner at each table that was being hosted by a Committee member. Towards the end of the evening the major free prize, a set of Fitline nutritional supplement products worth \$250 donated by Mr Thomas Sohns of PM-International, was drawn and won by Ms Dimity Ling.

AMSA and the Committee wish to give hearty thanks to all who joined us and to PM-International for donating the major prize."





# Features

## On Retirement

By An Unknown Singaporean Retiree

Sourced By Elvan Tong

### Four pre-conditions for retirement

I retired in year 2000 at the age of 52. I am now 61, thus I can claim that I have more experience at retirement than most. I thought I should share my experience because I have seen too many friends and neighbours who have fallen victim to boredom and eventually become a nuisance to their spouses, children and others.

A few of them have solved the problem by going back to work. They are able to do so because they have a skill/expertise that is still in demand. The rest (and many are my neighbours) live aimlessly or are waiting to die - a very sad situation indeed.

You can retire only when you fulfil these four pre-conditions:

1. **your children are financially independent (e.g. they got jobs);**
2. **you have zero liability (all your borrowings are paid up);**
3. **you have enough savings to support your lifestyle for the rest of your life; and**
4. **you know what you would be doing during your retirement.**

**Do not** retire until you meet ALL four pre-conditions. Of course, you should not retire if you still enjoy working and are getting paid for it.

The problem cases I know of involved those who failed to meet Pre-Condition #4. When asked, "What would you be doing during your retirement?" some replied, "I would be travelling /cruising and seeing the world." When they retired, they did just that. Some even did it for three months before they ran out of ideas. When asked about the same question, some golfers replied, "We could play golf every day." Most could not because they were no longer fit to play well enough to enjoy the game. Those who were physically fit enough needed to overcome another hurdle - they needed to find the "*kakis*" to play with them. It is the same with mahjong, bridge, badminton, trekking and karaoke - you need "*kakis*"!

Most could not find others to share their favourite activities. Playing and singing alone is no fun after all! When they had finally found others to join them, a few of them found that they were not welcome, like my obnoxious neighbour whom everyone avoids. Thus, if you are into group sports or games, you must form your groups *before* you retire. You need to identify your "*kakis*", play with them and discover whether they "click" with you. Those who do not like physical activity "can read all the books they have bought over the years". I know of one such person who would doze off after reading a few pages. He would end up napping most of the time. He eventually discovered that he did not like to read after all. The moral of the story is that we do change as we grow older and may not necessarily enjoy the hobbies we had when we were younger.

### Routine activities to fill your week

For most people, your routine work activities are planned for or dictated to you by others or circumstances. When you retire, you wake up to a new routine - one that you have to establish yourself as nobody else would do it for you. The routine you should establish should keep your body, mind and spirit "sharpened".

A good routine would comprise of the following:

- a) **One weekly physical sport** - you need to keep fit to enjoy your retirement. If you are the non-sporty type you should fire your maid and clean your home without mechanical aids. Dancing and babysitting are good alternatives.
- b) **One weekly mind stimulating activity** - e.g. writing, studying for a degree, acquiring a new skill, solving problems or puzzles, learn or teach something. You need to stimulate your mind to stay alive because the day you stop using your brain is the day you start to die.
- c) **One weekly social activity** - choose a social activity involving many friends and/or neighbours. Get yourself accepted as a member of at least three interests groups. Unless you prefer to be alone, you do need friends more than ever as you get older.

- d) **One weekly community service activity** - you need to give to appreciate what you have taken in this life. It is good to leave some kind of legacy.

With four weekly activities, you have four days out of seven covered. The remaining three days should be devoted to family related activities. In this way you maintain a balance between amusing yourself and your family members.

Any spare time should remain "spare" so that you can capitalise on opportunities that come your way, like responding to an unexpected request to do a job or to take advantage of cheap fares to see places or to visit an exhibition.

#### **Mind stimulating activities**

In the "*Today*" newspaper you would have read of two inspiring oldies. One is of a grandmother who first learned to play the guitar at the age of 60 in order to entertain her grandchildren. She is aged 70 plus today and those grandchildren have grown to play with her.

Another is of an Indian radiologist who, on retirement, qualified as an acupuncturist. He is aged 77 and still offers his services (by appointment only) including free ones to those who cannot afford to pay.

I can guarantee that they are happy people who have discovered a "second wind" to take them to the sunset with a smile on their faces.

Mind stimulating activities are hard to identify. They require your will to do something useful with the rest of your life, a mindset change and the discipline to carry it through.

#### **Your bucket list**

Despite your busy routine, you will at times be bored. Then it is time to turn to your bucket list. Your bucket list contains a list of things to do before you kick the bucket. They are not routine and are usually one-off activities. You need them in order to have something to look forward to.

These include anniversaries, trips (and pilgrimages), visits to friends and relations abroad, renovating your home, attending conferences (related to your hobbies), acquiring a new set of expertise. Four such activities that are spaced out quarterly would be ideal.

#### **Retirement is a serious business**

If you can afford to retire and want to do so, you should prepare to live to your fullest. You need to be fit to enjoy it - therefore get into shape now.

You do not want to get up on a Monday and wonder what to do each week. Therefore, identify your set of weekly routine activities now and try them out to confirm that they are the activities that you will be looking forward to doing each week.

Your bucket list of "rewards" or "projects" or "challenges" is needed to help you break away from the routine, thereby making life worth living. Start listing what you fancy and refine it as you chug along in your retirement. You will have so much fun and eventually wish that you were retired at the age of 21.

## Driving Offences and Penalties

By Jeffrey Lee

### 1. Speeding Penalties

The New South Wales government can issue penalties and licence disqualifications for speeding offences under Regulation 154 of the *Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) (Road Rules) Regulation 1999*. Speeding penalties are prescribed by the Roads and Traffic Authority, New South Wales ("RTA"). As at 1 July 2009, the speeding penalties for Light Vehicles (Ordinary cars) are as follows:

Under Section 205 of the *Road Transport (General) Act 2005 No 11*, a police officer may immediately suspend the licence of a person who has exceeded a speed limit by more than 45 km/h. The suspension will apply for six months. A person driving more than 30 km/h but not more than 45 km/h above the speed limit may have their licence suspended or disqualified for three months. Since 1 July 2007 there is zero tolerance for first-year Provisional 1 drivers caught speeding. Drivers should be aware that certain highways and expressways (eg. the M7) are now fitted with Point to Point Speed Devices. These devices calculate the time taken for a vehicle to travel between two points, based on photographs taken of cars as they pass E-Tag entrance and exit points.

### 2. Alcohol Offences

Section 9 of the *Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act 1999 No 20* describes the offences and penalties for the presence of prescribed concentrations of alcohol in a person's blood. Blood Alcohol Concentration ("BAC") is a measurement of the number of grams of alcohol found in every 100 millilitres of blood. Blood alcohol limits differ according to the type of licence one holds and the vehicle they drive. All Learner, Provisional 1 and Provisional 2 drivers have a blood alcohol limit of zero. A blood alcohol limit of 0.02 applies to drivers of vehicles carrying dangerous goods or heavy vehicles, and to drivers of public vehicles, such as buses and taxis. All other drivers not subject to a 0.02 or zero limit have a blood alcohol limit (or BAC limit) of 0.05. Under Section 205(1)(b) of the *Road Transport (General) Act 2005 No 11*, a police officer may immediately suspend or confiscate a licence if a driver is detected with a mid or high range PCA.

Prescribed Concentration of Alcohol ("PCA") Offence	Penalties (First Offence) (Heavier Penalties Apply for second or subsequent offences)
Low Range PCA (BAC of 0.05 to less than 0.08)	- Maximum fine: \$1,100.00 - Disqualification: Minimum of 3 months maximum of 6 months
Mid Range PCA (BAC of 0.08 to less than 0.15)	- Maximum fine: \$2,200.00 - Maximum gaol term: 9 months - Disqualification: Minimum of 6 months unlimited maximum - Immediate licence suspension
High Range PCA (BAC of 0.15 or above)	- Maximum fine: \$3,300.00 - Maximum gaol term: 18 months - Disqualification: Minimum of 12 months unlimited maximum - Immediate licence suspension

### 3. Demerit Points Scheme and Licence Suspensions

The National Demerit Points Scheme allocates penalty points for driving offences. (While it is common to say that a person has 'lost' points, a driver who has not committed any offences has zero points and accumulates demerit points for each offence.) If a driver accrues a certain number of demerit points within 40 months, their licence may be suspended or application for renewal refused. Demerit points used towards a licence suspension cannot be counted toward future licence suspensions. However, offences and demerit points remain on a person's driving record regardless of the age of the offence. The number of points resulting in licence suspension varies according to the type of licence one holds. Those with a full unrestricted licence can accumulate a maximum of 13 demerit points (increased by 1 point from 12 in January 2011); Professional drivers can have up to 14; Provisional 2 licence holders can gather seven; Provisional 1 licence holders can have four; and those on unrestricted licences with a good behaviour bond have a maximum of two points. When a driver is suspended, all driving is prohibited until the period of disqualification or cancellation has expired. If the licence is still current, the driver can start driving as soon as their suspension period ends. A driver who holds an unrestricted licence and receives a Notice of Suspension due to the



accumulation of demerit points can apply for a 12 month good behaviour period instead of serving a suspension. Drivers who accumulate two or more demerit points while serving a good behaviour bond will be suspended for double the original suspension time. There is no right of appeal against the suspension or refusal of an unrestricted licence on the grounds of demerit points. However, a person who has had their licence immediately suspended and confiscated by a police officer has the right to appeal the suspension at a local court. The appeal must be lodged with a court within 28 days of being issued the notice. Australian states and territories exchange traffic offence information. If a driver holding a New South Wales licence commits an offence in another state, the offence may attract demerit points in New South Wales. Similarly, if a driver holds a licence from another state or territory and commits a driving offence in New South Wales, details of demerit point offence(s) will be sent to the home state and included in their driving record.

#### **4. New Provisional Driver Restrictions**

From 1 July 2007, red P plate (Provisional) drivers caught speeding will automatically lose their licence for at least three months. Provisional 1 ("P1") drivers will also be banned from all mobile phone use while driving, and P1 drivers under the age of 25 will be able to carry only one passenger under 21 between 11.00 pm and 5.00 am, with exemptions applying to particular P1 drivers.

#### **5. Checking Your Driving Record**

You can check the demerit points on your licence and request a copy of your driving record through the RTA website <http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au>. You can also run vehicle checks and submit a notice of disposal at this website.

#### **6. Section 10 of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999**

It may be possible to avoid a criminal conviction being recorded in a person's file (driving records) when Section 10 of the *Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999* ("Section 10") is pleaded by the driver, and the Court is convinced that the Section 10 is to be applied. The Court may order an outright, or a conditional dismissal of a driving charge. The Court will look at many factors, including driving record, character, age and mental condition of the driver, as well as the nature of the offence in deciding whether to give a Section 10.

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## Danger of Heated Bottled Water

Sourced By Elvan Tong

It is very dangerous to drink bottled water left in your car over a period of time! On the Ellen Show, Sheryl Crow said that this is what caused her breast cancer. It has been identified as the most common cause of the high levels of dioxin in breast cancer tissues.

Sheryl Crow's oncologist told her that women should not drink bottled water that has been left in the car. The heat reacts with the chemicals in the plastic of the bottle that releases dioxin into the water. Dioxin is a toxin increasingly found in breast cancer tissues. Use stainless steel canteen or a glass bottle instead.

The following information is also being circulated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center:

1. No plastic containers in microwaves.
2. No plastic water bottles in freezers.
3. No plastic wrap in microwaves.
4. Do not freeze plastic bottles with water in them as this releases dioxins from the plastic.

Recently the Wellness Program Manager at Castle Hospital was on a television program to explain this health hazard. He said that we should not be heating food in the microwave using plastic containers. This especially applies to foods that contain fat. He said that the combination of fat, high heat and plastic releases dioxin into the food. He recommended using glass, such as Pyrex or ceramic containers for heating food. You get the same results, but without the dioxin. Therefore, such things as TV dinners, instant soups, etc., should be removed from their containers and heated in something else. He reminded us that a while ago some of the fast food restaurants moved away from styrene foam containers to paper. The dioxin problem was one of the reasons. He pointed out that plastic wrap, such as Cling film, is just as dangerous when placed over food to be cooked in the microwave. As the food is heated, the high heat causes poisonous toxins to actually melt out of the plastic wrap and drip into the food. Cover food with a paper towel instead.

## MyLanguage – A New Website for Multicultural Australia

Sourced By Elvan Tong

AMSA members who are recent arrivals and those who have settled in Australia for awhile may find themselves lost when it comes to accessing information on various services offered by the Australian Government.

MyLanguage is a web portal to millions of multilingual information resources for new and emergent Australian communities. The new portal provides clear links to multilingual search engines, web directories, government websites, online dictionaries, and syndicated news headlines. It also contains translations of online government and community information relating to health, legal issues, settlement, education and public libraries along with information on multilingual library collections around Australia.

MyLanguage can be accessed at <http://www.mylanguage.gov.au/>

# Opinions

## Citizenship and Multiculturalism – An Opinion

By Dr Anthony Pun, OAM

National President

Chinese Community Council of Australia

Minister Tanya Plibersek should be congratulated for moving one step closer to a much needed public definition of multiculturalism.

I have often stated that the Australian core values are:

1. Parliamentary Democracy;
2. the Rule of Law;
3. the Education System; and
4. English as the 'bonding' language for all Australians.

Not all of these core values are derived from England. They are derived from Greek democracy, Roman law, the Angles, the Saxons (French), and the Magna Carta. They are therefore very much European in nature. These values have now become the 'Australian' core values. They are not static but dynamic and there is a possibility that these may be altered by the diverse nature of the Australian population in the future.

Minister Plibersek has pointed out that part of the Australian core values are already in the Citizen Pledge. She has also named egalitarianism, loyalty, freedom, fair go, mateship and social cohesion. By doing so she has opened an avenue for the Australian Multicultural Council to follow her lead. For Multiculturalism to work, new immigrants must adopt these core values before they can share their culture and traditions with other Australians.

It is notable that citizens are encouraged to learn and renew their pledge but permanent residents have no such obligation. Multiculturalism is for citizens and permanent residents alike, hence some form of Memorandum of Understanding is required to indicate that long-term residents who do not wish to acquire citizenship may wish to express their commitment to the core values of Australian society.

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities can promote and facilitate multiculturalism in their own communities by encouraging their new comers to take up Australian citizenship. Those with a large percentage of permanent residents should be publicly involved in showing a commitment to the Australian lifestyle and adopting its core values. They should celebrate Australia Day, Harmony Day, Anzac Day and other important Australian events. Unless these core values are adopted, multiculturalism will be negatively perceived by the mainstream population. When these conditions are met, opponents of multiculturalism will have no rational reasons for opposing it, because it is inclusive.

The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, said that multiculturalism had failed in Germany. The British Prime Minister, David Cameron, said that the doctrine of state multiculturalism had encouraged different cultures to live apart from mainstream society. Although their comments do not currently reflect the Australian experience, it could happen here if we take multiculturalism for granted by not engaging all Australian communities. CALD communities need to re-think about promoting multiculturalism at every opportunity. It is a common mistake to demand what we want if we fail to do what is expected of us. The success or failure of multiculturalism will depend on the willingness of the government to continue promoting it and the willingness of CALD, Anglo-Celtic and Aboriginal communities to find commonality for social cohesion, community harmony and for the good of future generations.

The Americans are more visible in their display of patriotism than the Australians. Their flag is in every classroom and public office. They have their own 'brand' of multiculturalism whilst the Canadians have one which is between the Australians' and the Americans'. The Americans have one impressionable trait - they call themselves Americans. When I was in Chicago giving a paper at a medical conference, despite my Asian appearance I was introduced as an Australian from Down Under. As I went up the stage, I felt proud of being an Australian. I strongly recommend that we adopt this positive mentality in Australia. Be proud to be Australian but do not speak ill of the country you came from.

# Humour

## Prized Possessions

Sourced By Elvan Tong

A very successful man parked his brand new Lexus in front of his office, ready to show it off to his colleagues. As he was getting out, a truck came along too closely and completely tore off the driver's door.

Fortunately, a cop in a police car was close enough to witness the accident and pulled up behind the Lexus with its lights flashing.

Before the cop had a chance to ask any question, the man started screaming hysterically about how his Lexus, which he had just purchased the day before, was completely ruined and would never be the same again, no matter how many car body shops tried to repair it.

After the man finally wound down from his rant, the cop shook his head in disbelief.

*"I can't believe how materialistic you are," he said. "You are so focused on your possession that you neglect the most important things in life."*

*"How can you say such a thing?"* asked the man.

The cop replied, *"Don't you even realise that your left arm is missing? It was severed when the truck hit you!"*

*"Oh, my God!"* screamed the man. *"My gold Rolex!"*

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