

Multicultural Festival of 5 Senses – Grafton 28th May 2006

Today I especially welcome Mrs Marta Aquino a Commissioner on the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW and also Mr Fadel Benhima who is the Commission's Director of Regional Services.

I bring you greetings and a warm welcome from Clarence Valley Council as we today celebrate and conduct the very first Multicultural Festival of 5 Senses in Grafton City for the citizens of our Clarence Valley.

I acknowledge the first peoples on this land, the traditional custodians, the Bungelung, Gumbadgir and Yaegl nations. May I also welcome those elders, especially uncle Linky Gordon, who are present today.

It is important that I make special mention of Sorry Day, our National Day of Healing which we are also commemorating this weekend. At this special time of reflection about the issues surrounding and need for genuine Reconciliation, let us undertake together as one community, to build a better Clarence valley and a better Australia.

Your Council congratulates the working party of local organisers and all associated with this inaugural Festival. As we know this Street Festival is an initiative of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW. It is especially pleasing to Commission representatives present with us on this special occasion.

Street festivals commenced in 2000 at the Olympics in Sydney. Clarence Valley Council has been able to secure three years of funding through the Commission towards conduct of annual Festivals. On your behalf I thank the NSW State Government for its financial contribution and the Community Relations Commission for its great support and advice. This Festival will rotate across our Valley in future years.

Without doubt there is a need in our Clarence Valley community for more understanding and acceptance of cultural difference.

We have today a showcase of multiculturalism in our Grafton City and Valley.

We have a free array of international music, of dance, foods and arts and crafts.

We witness today a celebration of our Valley's cultural diversity.

We now have a special opportunity to interact with and experience other cultures, to build and strengthen our community networks and also to strengthen local community cohesion and unity.

Today we have the chance to try new things and new experiences that we would not otherwise see or do.

May you all have a most enjoyable and rewarding day.

I have much pleasure in declaring officially open, the first Clarence Valley Multicultural Festival of the Five Senses.

Ian Tiley
Mayor CVC
28th May 2006.