

## **How to Be “When in Australia, Do as the Australians do.”? - Sharing of Initiatives for Integration and Adaptation of New Migrants**

Every newly arrived migrant looks forward to starting a new life in Australia, but the deviations in traditions, lifestyles, codes of behaviour and even laws originated from different cultural communities, significantly influence their mutual communication and interaction in multicultural Australia.

Mr. Yung of CASS shared with us the culture diversity in Australia, “Many of the new migrants try hard to adapt into the local communities. However, their inherited habits and behaviour together with insufficient understanding of the Australian culture and norms may create culture clash and misconception during their interaction with local people.” “As I know, some of the migrants suffer criticism or even violate Australia’s law unintentionally just because they are not conversant with proper legal procedures. Therefore, an English proverb -” When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” may probably be the top-of-mind priority for many new migrants.”

“Some new migrants may not be aware that traditional Chinese and Australians hold very diverse views on parenting and education principles. Some of the Chinese families still believe that austere disciplines, including beating, are necessary to bring up good children. Nevertheless, under Australia’s child protection laws, children’s right, physical and mental health are well protected. Beating a child can be considered as child abuse and unlawful. Interpretation of “privacy” is another issue reflecting the wide variation among different ethnicities. Chinese elder may habitually ask the younger people some personal questions such as “How old are you?”, “How much you earn?”, or “Are you married?”, etc as an expression of caring. These questions relate to personal privacy which concerns matters not obliged to be shared with others from the angle of western culture. Apart from this, verbal agreements in buying and leasing houses also attach different interpretations among different cultural groups. Local people value the importance of proper lawful procedures to protect the rights and interests of both the landlord and the tenant, while some new migrants may think differently.” These are some more examples illustrated by Mr. Yung.

Mr. Yung further elaborated, “CASS launched the project of “When Chinese and Korean meet Australian – Integration of new migrants into Australian society”, funded by the Federal Government. It aimed at assisting multicultural groups in embracing Australian culture, values and laws, in order to lessen misunderstanding and unnecessary discrimination. We introduced 12 types of etiquette that may be a norm in their home country but not meeting the social or even legal requirements in Australia. They were posted on newspaper and social media platforms, also published as a booklet with lively illustration and distributed to the new migrants.”

“With nearly 40 years of development, our clients are no longer limited to Chinese migrants. CASS services have been extended to other multicultural communities, including Korean, Vietnamese, Indonesian and the general public. Therefore, a Korean version of the booklet was also produced and widely disseminated among the Korean community.”

“We are one, but we are many; and from all the lands on earth we come; I am, you are, we are Australian”. The song “I am Australian” exactly brings out the essence of cultural diversity. We hope to take a step further towards true multiculturalism in Australia from this project.



(Photo: Cover Picture of “When Chinese and Korean meet Australian – Integration of new migrants into Australian Society)