

## **PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN SUDAN AND NEWCASTLE**

Member for Newcastle, Sharon Grierson, yesterday reaffirmed her support for the Sudanese community in Newcastle, saying the recent celebration of cultural diversity attended by over 600 Novocastrians shows the welcoming nature of the city.

Ms Grierson was speaking in support of a motion urging the Australian Government to support United Nations intervention in the ongoing humanitarian and human rights crisis in the Darfur region of Western Sudan.

"It is important that all Australians continue to welcome newcomers to our nation, particularly those seeking refuge from war, poverty and human rights abuses," Ms Grierson said.

"The Sudanese in Newcastle have survived horrors unimaginable to most Australians," she said. "I am proud of the way our city has supported and welcomed them."

Many in the Sudanese community have had to overcome not only the escape from war and the process of settling in a foreign land, but have also recently faced attempts at vilification by a small number of misguided people in Newcastle. "This sort of racism has no place in Australian society, and I applaud the majority of Novocastrians who are actively standing up for multicultural diversity and enrichment.

Notwithstanding the many challenges faced, the Sudanese in Newcastle are optimistic about their future and highly motivated to find work and educational opportunities.

"The efforts of the Newcastle Migrant Resource Centre and the Newcastle and Hunter Region Ethnic Communities Council to promote inclusiveness, tolerance and understanding have been of great assistance to the Sudanese, and have made our community overall a better place to live."

**For more information contact Sharon Grierson on 4926 1555**