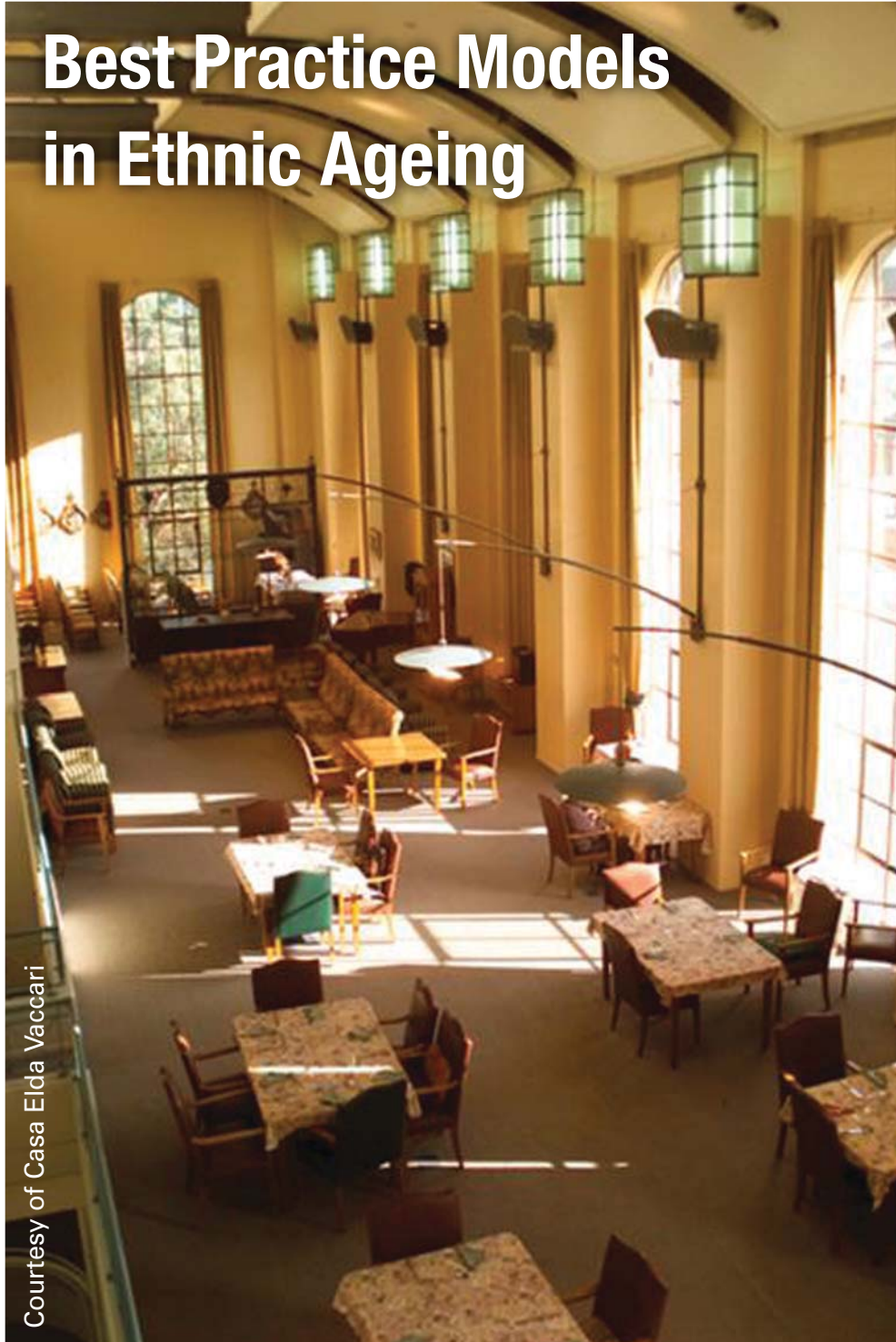




Golden Years

Best Practice Models in Ethnic Ageing



Courtesy of Casa Elda Vaccari

GOLDEN YEARS is a newsletter on ethnic aged care issues produced by the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, jointly supported by the Victorian and Australian Governments.



Do seniors have something tangible to offer back to our community?

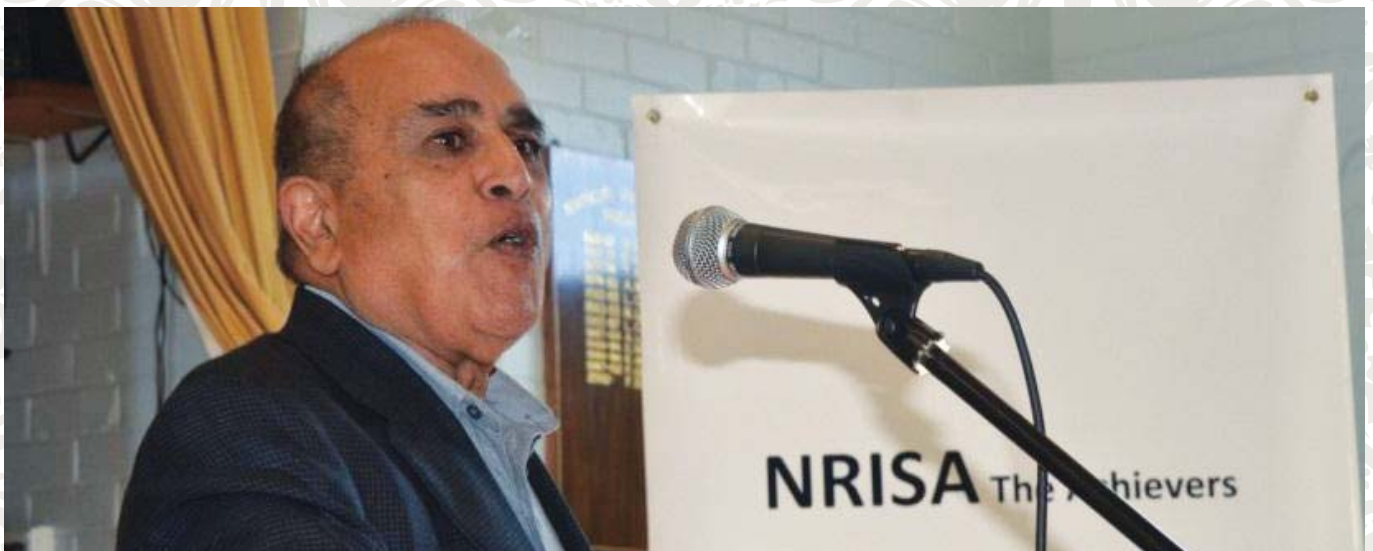
A recent article in The Age by Harold Mitchell discussed, “we should use, not lose, our senior brain power”. The emphasis is on the fact that being a senior does not mean a licence for a lazy life; a phase of uselessness or idleness. That life must go on is clear from the Buddhist saying quoted by Harold, “Before enlightenment – chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment – chop wood, carry water”. Thus the society and the seniors have a joint responsibility to develop a partnership resulting in beneficial outcomes for both. Harnessing profits from seniors would not be large enough to attract private entrepreneur, therefore Government initiatives are desirable, provided seniors can offer tangible contributions. Let us examine this further. The list, “What Government should do for the seniors” is long; it is increasing and over emphasised. However, these demands make only one side of the coin. In this short article, my intention is to shed some

light on other side of this coin. Seniors, who are capable, physically and mentally active, should ask honestly, can they offer anything back to the society and what? To me the answer is YES. I will briefly justify, as the intention here is just to float the idea.

Harold has cited many individual instances and their contributions. However, my idea is to create a parallel wing of the economy that is run by the senior brain power. My preliminary ideas are based on my own background as an academic but can easily be generalised. I can think of interesting challenges for academics to contribute.

Consider:

1. Improve our primary, secondary and tertiary books subjects as well as from external points of view, as what and why are they learning? Is the present subject matter philosophically sufficient?



Dr Santosh Kumar

Is the present subject material covered by our books providing coming generations the right background for them to be good citizens, live according to ethical standards and learn to live in co-existence in the multicultural environment? What children do in schools have a lasting future impression; they are the future generations. Can we leave all such important tasks for one author and select the book as a text book? Remember book writing must have been motivated for monetary returns. How can that motivation look after other aspects of national investments? It is the most important asset of a nation, managed so poorly.

2. As a further example, let us take this idea a bit further in the university sector. Active researchers also retire but their ideas need not die. For example, a graduate scholarship to a student could have saved these ideas and helped a student in gaining research degrees, research training and at the same time providing life to ideas that might have died; a very small expense for big returns.

Dr Santosh Kumar

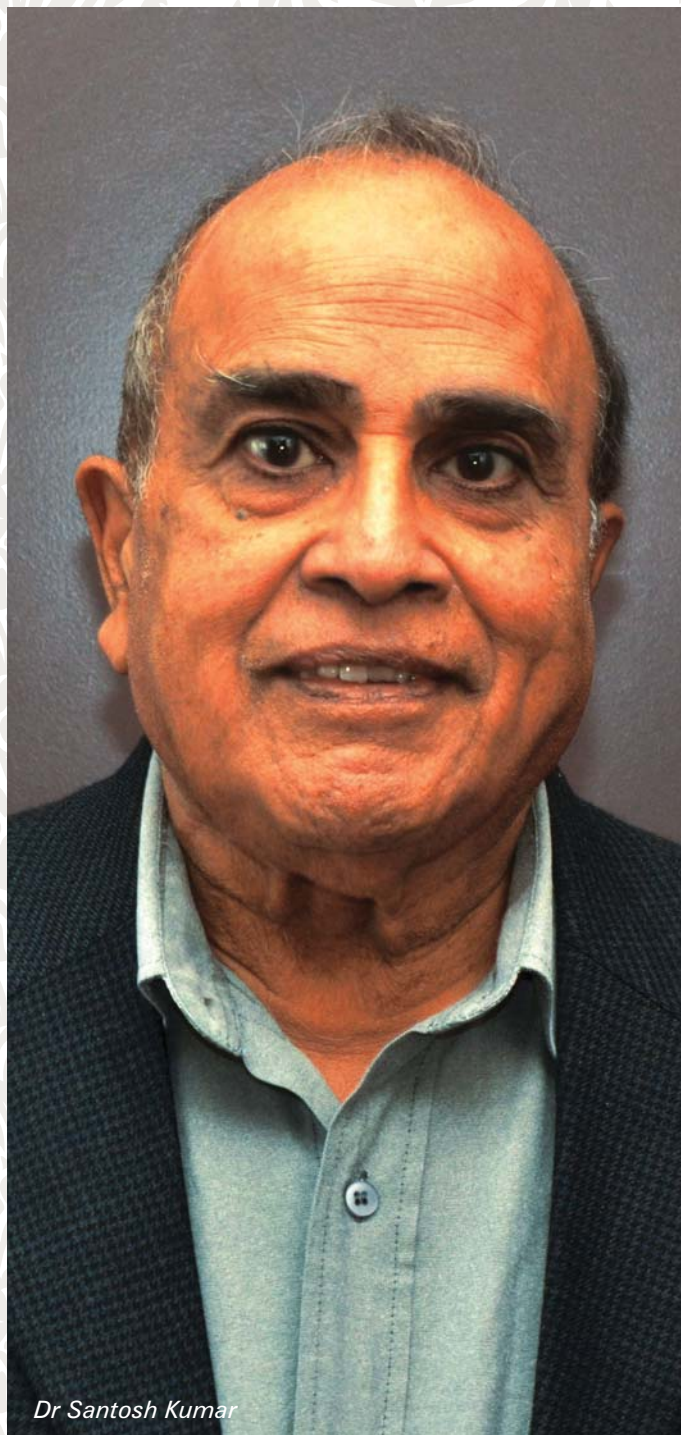
President of the Northern Region Indian Seniors Association

Secretary, Northern Federation of Ethnic Senior Citizens Club

Member of the Executive Committee of the Federation of Indian Associations of Victoria

Santosh.Kumarau@gmail.com

98163401/0411136612



Dr Santosh Kumar