

# Government announce funding to engage ethnic minorities



Ethnic minority communities across Scotland are being encouraged to get involved in the Year of Homecoming 2014.

Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop has announced that almost £40,000 will be provided to BEMIS (Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure Scotland) to help the organisation run a number of inclusive events, such as free film screenings and a national showcase of Scotland's cultural diversity in areas like music, poetry, photography and art.

Ms Hyslop said: "Everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy the excitement of the Year of Homecoming celebrations. The events being lined up for next year are designed to attract both visitors to Scotland and as many Scottish residents as possible. That is why we are helping BEMIS with its plans to ensure Homecoming can embrace a wide spectrum of activities, reaching out to every corner of our communities.

"Ethnic minorities have a vital part to play in the fabric of Scottish society and, working with partners like BEMIS, the Scottish Football Association and Glasgow University, ethnic communities across the country will be invited to celebrate what Homecoming means for them."

Homecoming Scotland 2014 will celebrate all that's best about Scotland and reinforce Scotland's reputation on the international stage as a dynamic and creative nation.

The Culture Secretary was speaking today at the Voice of Culture and Leisure (VOCAL) Providers Conference which brings together managers working in culture and leisure from across Scotland's local authorities.

Ms Hyslop added: "Culture and leisure managers from Scotland's local authorities should be commended for their dedication as providers of culture and heritage for all Scotland's people. They have a distinct understanding of what makes effective engagement at a grass-roots level, and I know they will be working hard next year to deliver Year of Homecoming projects across the country."

Chief Executive of BEMIS, Rami Ousta said: "As a national umbrella organisation for the diverse ethnic and cultural minority third sector in Scotland, BEMIS has always confirmed, based on solid experience and informed knowledge that Scotland is well advanced compared to other EU countries and even the UK with regards to race equality and acknowledging and empowering the diverse communities at various levels.

"Homecoming Scotland 2014 provides a unique platform for celebrating this and reflecting the diverse cultural heritage of Scotland. The Scottish Government's support to this program reflects a serious commitment to stimulating and empowering active participation of the diverse communities in line with the wider civic society."