

**Joint Standing Committee on Migration****Chair: Ms Vamvakinou MP****Deputy Chair: Mrs Louise Markus MP**

Multiculturalism—sharing the benefits

Canberra is a multicultural community and has relied on migrant skills to build city infrastructure over past decades of capital life. Yet sometimes today the skills of new migrants are not being tapped.

In Canberra this Wednesday, 12 October 2012, Canberra's Multicultural Community Forum Inc will discuss the benefits of multiculturalism and the challenges faced by new migrants and refugees in the nation's capital. The CMCF represents 30 or more of the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities in Canberra and endorses the freedom of all to celebrate and share that diversity.

The Committee will also welcome representatives from the Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Alliance. The AIRWA submission notes that 23.8 per cent of the female population living in Australia self identified in the 2006 Census as migrant or refugee.

AIRWA has identified multiple systemic barriers to equal participation of this relatively large group, reflective of discrimination on the basis of cultural, religious and linguistic background, as well as gender. AIRWA represents women's organisations in all States and Territories.

The Chair of the Committee Ms Vamvakinou MP stated: "The Committee's objective in this inquiry is to discover what is working and what needs review to share the benefits of our multiculturalism more equitably. Peak bodies such as the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum and the Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Alliance play a vital role in grounding national policy development in real community needs."

"The Committee notes, in particular, that many migrant women and refugees continue to suffer social exclusion, despite their great contribution to the successful settlement of their families," Ms Vamvakinou said.

The Committee's public hearing will commence at **10.45 am in Committee Room 1R4, Parliament House, Canberra.**

Proceedings will be audio broadcast on <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

Further information about the inquiry can be obtained from the Committee's website www.aph.gov.au/mig or from the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4560.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Media comment: Committee Chair Ms Maria Vamvakinou, Parliament House 6277 4249 or 0417 541 465 (Basem Abdo)