

Supplementary Submission to the Inquiry into Multiculturalism

Individual Supplementary Submission-March 2012

Yabbo Thompson (Ms)
(private capacity)

Introduction

Tasmania is uniquely placed to demonstrate positive multiculturalism with social inclusion in its broad mix of nationalities but much is still required before this can be the reality. Support programs for those of migrant or refugee background must also contain components that enable government, business and non-government organisations as well as wider community's cultural understanding.

There needs to be more promotion by government of the positive benefits and engagement of the wider society with multiculturalism.

Australia wide we also need to be taking in aspects of other cultures, it needs to be affecting the ways we think and feel, not just about enjoying different foods etc. This would make us truly multicultural. But we can never be properly multicultural til we listen and act on Aboriginal (Indigenous) people's needs.

Further Recommendations

Communities

- There is a need to empower diverse communities. I have continued the advocacy work from a National Project in 2010, *Points of Departure*, through the Multicultural Women's Health Centre in Melbourne. This is a train the trainer approach with women from migrant/refugee background. I have seen how this has given women confidence as they find out more about how our governance and systems work. I would like to see ongoing funds directed into this kind of program. (I am happy to supply further details)
- Funding for programs with communities must be done with community involvement from the beginning and more funding needs to be directed to CALD community organisations with support from mentors.
- For wider community, empowerment programs are needed for those who are not accessing education, health care or not feeling socially included, which can also assist their understanding and appreciation of difference. (When I was coordinating the Global

Learning Centre we accessed a grant to do this to excellent results-again I am happy to supply further details)

Formal Education sector

- Encompass a global to local perspective (includes understanding of; interdependence of the world, working towards overcoming poverty, moving to a just, peaceful, sustainable world and will also include perspectives for understanding people from migrant/refugee background) from pre-school onwards (I coordinated a Global Learning Centre for some years but there was never enough funding to encourage global perspectives in formal education and wider community.)
- Funding for the teaching of languages other than English-this is part of gaining a global perspective encouraging greater understanding and empathy.
- For Learners of English, more hours, flexibility (for instance, for older people they need a bi-cultural worker alongside with translations) and more relevant English on the job training.

Service providers/business & wider community

- Cultural awareness/engagement/competence required for employers and in broader community
- All community funded services need to be able to access the Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS) cost free to allow better access to services.
- Recognition is required that people from a refugee background can show signs of earlier ageing, in their 40s or 50s, which has implications for systemic discrimination, funding for HACC (Home and Community Care) and other programs for older people, need to take that into account.

Research and Action

- I have been part of surveys/research into aspects of the Humanitarian program, which can involve over-consultation, but rarely see the results. Greater transparency in this area is required and
- More research is required, for instance how many who arrive in Tasmania leave after a time and why, which would surely help in how services etc can better respond and enable successful settlement.