

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

Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia

The Parliament's Migration Committee launched an inquiry into multiculturalism in Australia today. Chair of the Committee, Maria Vamvakinou MP, welcomed the inquiry and the opportunity to hear directly from migrant communities.

"Australia is a diverse society - it is part of who we are as Australians both in the city and the bush. Some European leaders have suggested that multiculturalism has failed in Europe. The lessons from Europe are important, but multiculturalism in Australia and Australian society is quite different," Ms Vamvakinou said.

"Migration has brought enormous benefits to Australia, adding to the vibrancy of our society and increasing its productivity. We are a multicultural society but we need to stay in touch with the challenges that migrant communities face.

"It is timely to consider whether a new policy on multiculturalism is needed, and how to ensure the Government's social inclusion agenda also meets the needs of migrant communities. Australia's settlement programs, which play an important role in assisting new migrants integrate and participate fully in society, will also be scrutinised.

"As a society, we will all benefit from harnessing the skills, initiative and optimism of new migrants to this country. The inquiry will also look into how best to utilise the skills of migrants, and incentives to encourage entrepreneurship," she said

The Committee is interested in hearing directly from individuals, community leaders, the business community, support organisations and service providers.

The deadline for submissions is **Friday 8 April 2011**. 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.

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