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The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

# **Inquiry into Migration and Multiculturalism in Australia**

**Joint Standing Committee on Migration**

March 2013  
Canberra

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ISBN 978-0-642-79886-2 (Printed version)

ISBN 978-0-642-79887-9 (HTML version)

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## Foreword

Australia is a country with an ancient indigenous inheritance and a contemporary multicultural society. We are a successful democracy, rich in natural resources, and a diversity of people, who have brought their skills, hopes and commitment to this country. From the earliest arrival of the English, Irish, Scottish, Malay, Chinese and Afghans, through the post war migration program of Arthur Calwell, to more recent migrants, including refugees, from every continent of the world, immigration has been integral to Australia's economic, social and cultural development.

I wish to acknowledge and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who are the original custodians of this land. We acknowledge that their experience of living in Australia is notably different from that of migrants. Based on the terms of reference, the Committee did not address issues affecting indigenous peoples.

Australia, like all societies is dynamic, and can adapt over time to the pressures of changing conditions and differing influences. In our globalised world, the pace of that change can often be fast. Australia is well placed to cope with those changes and to exercise influence in the world. If we are to maintain fairness and respect as the markers of modern Australia, we must also be responsive to the rights and aspirations of all sections of our society.

The inquiry was an opportunity to assess the benefits of migration, refresh our understanding of current issues, and consider the efficacy of multiculturalism as a framework for settlement, integration and participation. We were assisted by the large number of written submissions and the many witnesses who shared their experiences, insights and expertise at hearings in city and regional areas. The evidence was wide ranging, encompassing the experience of both new and established communities in most facets of life. The Committee took a large volume of evidence that supports migration and multiculturalism and addressed the practicalities of settlement. We also took evidence from people opposed to

elements of the migration program and to multiculturalism. The report details the evidence and makes 32 recommendations aimed at promoting social inclusion.

Australia has built commendable settlement services, administered by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, which have aided the settlement and integration of new migrants, including refugees. This has been the result of bipartisan government policies, and has assisted with the integration of new migrants over the past 40 years. However, evidence to the Committee noted that settlement is a long term and, in some cases, an intergenerational process. Unresolved settlement issues can result in integration and participation never being fully realised, or being lost at later stages of life or for the next generation. A whole of government approach therefore is necessary.

To this end, the Committee noted good examples, especially at the state level, of how multiculturalism has been institutionalised into policy development. The Committee also found that the role of local government in the delivery of front line services deserves greater recognition and support. We concluded that better outcomes are more likely if the effort of Australia's three tiers of government are coordinated and based on good quality information and research.

The reduction in national research capacity has had a significant impact on the ability of agencies to deliver, monitor and evaluate their efforts. The absence of qualitative research also hampered the work of the Committee. As such, rebuilding research capacity is a priority to ensure policy and programs are well informed, tailored and effective.

At the practical level, the Committee received evidence that identified systemic weaknesses that need to be rectified. We have recommended, among other things, greater flexibility in delivery of English language training, and support for micro enterprises, especially for women, to enable them to realise their full potential. The Job Services Network must be capable of delivering services to everyone in Australia, including people of diverse backgrounds. The need for cultural awareness in the delivery of these services warrants further investigation.

The Committee also took evidence that highlighted the barriers being faced by Australian residents unable to get their overseas experience and qualification recognised. There are many highly educated and skilled people who come to Australia via the humanitarian program. The well-known syndrome of the over-qualified taxi driver needs to be better researched and addressed. No-one should be left behind, and Australia can ill afford to waste such expertise.

There is an important role for collaboration between government, business and community organisations. There were several examples of diaspora communities facilitating international trade; and local collaborations to create new social enterprises, and work placement initiatives. We were impressed by the

enthusiasm and success of initiatives that included cross cultural awareness and mentoring, which led to permanent employment or the start of a new business. The effort of all sectors working together is powerful and effective. Sharing those experiences can help build capacity across the country, and replicate success.

The Committee found that many positive outcomes have also been achieved through building interfaith relations and intercultural dialogue in the community, especially in the past ten years. Multiculturalism has helped enable this productive work. There is, however, a continuing problem with racism and lack of intercultural understanding that needs to be addressed.

The Committee took numerous submissions from people opposed to multiculturalism, which is seen by some as a dilution of our existing national values. As distinct from Europe, however, immigration and settlement in Australia has always been a nation building exercise. The Australian population has become increasingly diversified since WWII, and, a non-discriminatory immigration program means Australians will have an increasingly diverse heritage. The Committee believes that access to Australian citizenship has been at the heart of the success and cohesion of Australian society. It has been the cornerstone of Australia's approach, and is the acceptance of the rights, responsibilities and privileges of being Australian.

Multiculturalism provides the framework through which to plan for successful settlement that promotes integration and leads to fuller participation in the wider society. It also recognises that freedom to maintain one's cultural and linguistic inheritance is an important factor in developing a confident sense of self and a sense of belonging.

Australian multiculturalism is also an affirmation of the unifying principles of a modern democracy; it signifies the openness of a mature society in which equality is an important principle, and the reality of a population rich in cultural and linguistic diversity. In our context, multiculturalism has always been expressed as existing within the framework of Australian law. It is not a platform for legal pluralism based on religion, culture or ethnicity. Existing civil and political freedoms provide sufficient scope for people to arrange their private affairs according to their own beliefs, provided it does not conflict with obligations enacted through the Australian parliaments. In a mature democracy, there will be debate about where the boundaries lie, and, where rights must be limited, any restriction must be proportionate while also recognising the rights of others.

It must also be said that Australia is a positive and forward looking country that has successfully built a cohesive and stable society. We stand as a good example to the world but we cannot be complacent and there are many challenges along the way. The most recent of these include the heightened concern about terrorism

which has impacted, often adversely, on Australian's of Islamic faith. The report deals with this. An intense focus on boat arrivals, many of whom are fleeing conflicts in the broader Middle East and Sri Lanka, has also become a matter of public concern and debate. In addition, changes in the migration program, mean temporary skilled labour, and international students, are also a larger part of the overall mix. The picture is complex, but Australian society is resilient and capable of meeting the challenges and maintaining our social cohesion.

This has been a rewarding inquiry, and I thank all members of the Committee for their collaboration, dedication and contributions drawn from their many years of experience. The positive contribution of migrants, including refugees, to the social, economic and cultural richness of our nation is indisputable. It is our responsibility to enable all Australians to enjoy the same opportunities and to harness our collective human potential for the good of the nation. The recommendations are aimed at achieving that end.

Finally, I would like to thank The Hon Chris Bowen MP, the then Minister for Immigration and Citizenship for referring this topic for inquiry, and commend the recommendations to the Government and the Parliament.

**Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP**  
**Chair**



## Membership of the Committee

**Chair** Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP

**Deputy Chair** Mrs Louise Markus MP

**Members**

Mrs Yvette D'Ath MP ( <i>until 21/3/11</i> )	Senator Catryna Bilyk ( <i>until 30/6/11</i> )
Hon Teresa Gambaro MP	Senator Sue Boyce ( <i>until 30/6/11</i> )
Mr Steve Georganas MP ( <i>from 21/3/11</i> )	Senator Michaelia Cash ( <i>from 1/7/11</i> )
Mr Rowan Ramsey MP	Senator Alex Gallacher ( <i>from 5/7/11</i> )
Mr Tony Zappia MP	Senator Sarah Hanson-Young
	Senator Anne McEwen ( <i>until 30/6/11</i> )
	Senator the Hon Lisa Singh ( <i>from 1/7/11</i> )

## **Committee Secretariat**

### **Secretary**

Russell Chafer (*from 9/7/12*)

James Catchpole (*until 9/7/12*)

David Monk (*from 26/03/12 until 11/5/12*)

### **Inquiry Secretary**

Katie Ellis (*from 9/7/12*)

Loes Slattery (*from 11/07/11 until 26/10/11*)

Jane Hearn (*until 9/7/12*)

### **Research Officers**

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### **Administrative Officers**

Heidi Luschtnetz

Dorota Cooley (*from 23/7/12*)

Michaela Whyte (*until 20/7/12*)



## Terms of reference

The Joint Standing Committee on Migration shall inquire into the economic, social and cultural impacts of migration in Australia and make recommendations to maximise the positive effects of migration. The inquiry shall examine and report on:

*Multiculturalism, social inclusion and globalisation*

1. The role of multiculturalism in the Federal Government's social inclusion agenda; and
2. The contribution of diaspora communities to Australia's relationships with Europe, the UK, Middle East and the immediate Asia-Pacific Region.

*Settlement and participation*

3. Innovative ideas for settlement programs for new migrants, including refugees, that support their full participation and integration into the broader Australian society; and
4. Incentives to promote long term settlement patterns that achieve greater social and economic benefits for Australian society as a whole.

*National productive capacity*

5. The role migration has played and contributes to building Australia's long term productive capacity;
6. The profile of skilled migration to Australia and the extent to which Australia is fully utilising the skills of all migrants; and
7. Potential government initiatives to better assist migrant communities establish business enterprises.







## List of abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCES	Assisting Collaborative Community Employment Support
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AEU	Australian Education Union
AFIC	Australian Federation of Islamic Councils
AGWS	Australian Greek Welfare Society
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
AIBC	Australia India Business Council
AIJAC	Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council
AIRWA	Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Alliance
AM	Member of the Order of Australia
AMAC	Australian Multicultural Advisory Council
AMC	Australian Multicultural Council
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
AMES	Adult Migrant English Service
ANU	Australian National University

APRID	Asia Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogues
AQIS	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
ATM	Automated teller machine
AUSSTATS	Statistics On Your Desktop website - Australian Bureau of Statistics
AUSTRADE	Australian Trade Commission
BIMPR	Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research
BIR	Bureau of Immigration Research
BRW	Business Review Weekly
BSL	Brotherhood of St Laurence
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
CDD	Community Development Division in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmania
CDS	Cultural Diversity Services
CEDA	Committee for Economic Development in Australia
CEH	Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRC	Community Relations Commission
CSAM	Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants
CSOL	Consolidated Sponsored Occupation List
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
CVEU	Countering Violent Extremism Unit
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DILGEA	Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs
DSCP	Diversity and Social Cohesion Program
EACD	Employment Action for Cultural Diversity
ECCQ	Ethnic Communities' Council Queensland
ECCV	Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria
EOC	Equal Opportunity Commission
FECCA	Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FMI	Fairfield Migrant Interagency
FMRC	Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre
GDP	Gross domestic product
GST	Goods and Services Tax
HSS	Humanitarian Settlement Services
ICCPR	The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICV	Islamic Council of Victoria
IWWCV	Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria
JCA	Job Capacity Assessment
JSA	Job Services Australia
JSCI	Job Seeker Classification Instrument

JSCM	Joint Standing Committee on Migration
LCMN	Limestone Coast Multicultural Network
LLNP	Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program
LOTE	Languages other than English
LSPCs	Local Settlement Planning Committees
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MCCSA	Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia
MDA	Multicultural Development Association
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MMHA	Multicultural Mental Health Australia
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MPSP	Multicultural Policies and Services Program
MYAN	Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network
NAB	National Australia Bank
NARPS	National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy
NBN	National Broadband Network
NEDC	National Ethnic Disability Council
NEIS	New Enterprise Incentive Scheme
NEMBC	National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council
NGO	Non-government organisation
NIIN	Northern Interfaith Intercultural Network
NISS	National Integrated Settlement Strategy
OAM	Medal of the Order of Australia

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMAC	Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship
PJCHR	Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights
PM&C	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
PPMS	Post Program Monitoring Survey
RAC	Regional Advisory Councils
RCOA	Refugee Council of Australia
RDA	Racial Discrimination Act
REENA	Religions, Ethics and Education Network of Australia
RISE	Art Projects Coordinator, Refugees, Survivors and Ex-Detainees
RMIT	RMIT University in Victoria
SARS	Severe acute respiratory syndrome
SBS	Special Broadcasting Services
SBV	Small Business Victoria
SCIS	Select Council on Immigration and Settlement
SCOA	Settlement Council of Australia
SGP	Settlement Grants Program
SkillSelect	Skilled migration selection register
SLASA	Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance
SLPET	Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training
SMI	Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion
SMP	State Migration Plans
SMRC	Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre

SOPEMI	Continuous Reporting System on Migration (known by its French acronym)
SPP	Special Preparatory Program
SSRM	State Specific and Regional Migration
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
UNC	United Nations Convention
UNSWLJ	University of New South Wales Law Journal
VMC	Victorian Multicultural Commission
WELL	Workplace English Language and Literacy Program
WPP	Work Placement Program



# List of recommendations

## 1 Introduction

## 2 Multiculturalism—an overview

### Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government endorse and reaffirm commitment to the Galbally report's vision of multiculturalism as an inclusive policy which respects diversity and fosters engagement with Australian values, identity and citizenship, within the framework of Australian laws.

## 3 The anti-racism framework and multiculturalism

### Recommendation 2

The Committee supports the Government's Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy and recommends that anti-racism messages should celebrate the benefits of cultural diversity and social acceptance.

### Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government assist community organisations and service providers to develop programs and circulate information in community languages to explain that multiculturalism is a policy of social inclusion which connotes a balance of rights, responsibilities and obligations applying to all Australians.

## **4 Religious diversity: questions about Islam**

### **Recommendation 4**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to support initiatives that promote programs in Australian universities, institutions and the community sector, and jointly within the region, to promote intercultural and interfaith understanding.

### **Recommendation 5**

The Committee recommends the Australian Government develop a strategic plan to support the regular convening of interfaith and intercultural dialogues. Objectives, subject to appropriate measurement of outcomes, are to involve the broader community leadership, to better target settlement services, and to foster wider inter-community understanding.

### **Recommendation 6**

The Committee does not support legal pluralism and recommends that the Government promote the message that multiculturalism entails both a respect for cultural diversity and a commitment to the framework of Australian laws and values which underpin social cohesion.

## **5 Multiculturalism and the Social Inclusion Agenda**

### **Recommendation 7**

The Committee recommends that the Social Inclusion Agenda includes a clear definition of social inclusion and in particular how this responds to the needs of a culturally diverse society.

### **Recommendation 8**

The Committee recommends that further development of the Social Inclusion Agenda be more directly informed by multicultural policy through formal links between the Social Inclusion Board and peak bodies in the area of multiculturalism.

### **Recommendation 9**

The Committee recommends that the Social Inclusion Agenda be modified to explicitly incorporate Culturally and Linguistically Diverse factors as indicators of potential social and economic disadvantage, and that the influence of these factors is adequately considered within the continued development of the measurement and reporting framework for social inclusion in Australia.



**Recommendation 10**

The Committee recommends that a strategic research partnership be investigated between the Social Inclusion Board and an independent research institute specialising in multicultural affairs, for the better collection and collation of data to inform the process of ensuring the inclusion of multicultural issues in the Social Inclusion Agenda.

**6 National approach to planning and policy****Recommendation 11**

The Committee recommends reviewing the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society in order to bring it up to date and set benchmarks against which access and equity in provision of services is measured.

**Recommendation 12**

The Committee recommends that the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet be tasked with delivery of a whole-of-government perspective on services to CALD communities including health, education, housing, and employment.

In undertaking this role, the Department should advise on and integrate with the social inclusion agenda, and interact closely with the Australian Multicultural Council in its roles of providing research and advice on multicultural affairs and policy and strengthening the access and equity strategy.

**Recommendation 13**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, through COAG and the AMC, seek to develop national planning and policy infrastructure for CALD services that includes State and Local government.

**7 Research****Recommendation 14**

The Committee recommends increased collection, by the Australian Government, of accurate and up-to-date disaggregated data in order to identify trends in migration and multiculturalism, and to measure and address CALD related disadvantage.

**Recommendation 15**

The Committee recommends the establishment of a government funded, independent collaborative institute for excellence in research into multicultural affairs with functions similar to that of the former Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research.

The institute should have a statutory framework articulating key principles of multiculturalism, functions in research and advice to government, and a cross sectoral independent board.

This institute should actively engage with local communities, private business and non-government organisations and provide data for better informed policy.

The qualitative and quantitative research capabilities of the institute must enable up-to-date and easily accessible data and research analysis on social and multicultural trends.

More dedicated research into long-term migration trends occurring within Australia and the social effects of migration – such as the local impacts of migration on cultural diversity and social inclusion within Australian society – should be supported.

The Committee particularly recommends an increased emphasis on qualitative data collection.

**Recommendation 16**

The Committee recommends the Department of Immigration and Citizenship collect data to support research to collect data on secondary migration in order to better drive services to where needs exist.

**8 Diaspora communities****Recommendation 17**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government undertake greater qualitative and quantitative research on Australian expatriates, and diaspora communities settled in Australia to better inform Government policy. The Committee recommends that such research should be carried out by an independent research institute in collaboration with business councils, chambers of commerce and community groups. This research could be undertaken by the previously proposed independent collaborative institute for research into multicultural affairs.

## **9 Settlement and participation**

### **Recommendation 18**

The Committee recommends that DIAC refine the AMEP through the provision of flexible learning times, greater personalised services and context specific language services related to employment and tertiary study. The Committee recommends an integrated model that links participants to other educational, skills or community based activities.

### **Recommendation 19**

The Committee recommends that the SLPET program be fully embedded within the AMEP model to ensure that all private providers offer an additional 200 hours of vocational specific English training and work experience placement for clients that have completed over 75 per cent of their AMEP tuition.

### **Recommendation 20**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government further explore the issue of standards and official accreditation for cultural competency training. This should include the investigation of existing successful models to enhance cultural competency awareness and ongoing development to meet needs.

### **Recommendation 21**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government recognise the role of ethno-specific organisations in the delivery of aged care services and review the demand for culturally appropriate aged care services in the immediate future.

### **Recommendation 22**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government develop programs designed to reduce the isolation of CALD women and improve their access to employment, education and mainstream services.

### **Recommendation 23**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government evaluate the adequacy of interpreting services available to the CALD community.

### **Recommendation 24**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government works with the State and Territory Governments via COAG to develop programs to address the specific barriers faced by CALD youth.

## 10 National productive capacity

### Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that:

- the Government develop a mechanism (e.g. a 'phase-in' period) to ensure negative implications of sudden visa category changes, particularly for students, are avoided in the future; and
- that the status of those students affected by the implementation of recent sudden visa changes, and who remain in Australia on bridging visas, be reviewed by the Government as a matter of urgency.

### Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that a 12 month progress report on the recently implemented Skills Select program be delivered by DIAC.

### Recommendation 27

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government develop a process to periodically review and formally receive feedback on Australia's skills recognition framework including inviting post skills recognition feedback.

### Recommendation 28

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State Governments through COAG to develop uniform feedback and dispute resolution mechanisms on the skills recognition framework, noting that States and Territories have specific licensing and registration requirements for professional bodies.

## 11 Employment issues

### Recommendation 29

The Committee supports an investigation of the effectiveness of Job Services Australia provision of services to CALD individuals with the aim of improving access to and outcomes from these services.

### Recommendation 30

The Committee recommends Job Services Australia increase its interpreter and translator services, and improve access to these services for its clients.

**Recommendation 31**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government develop initiatives for organisations to provide tailored opportunities for employment for CALD individuals such as the collaboration between National Australia Bank and Jesuit Social Services in delivering the African Australian Inclusion Program.

**12 Incentives to support new business enterprises****Recommendation 32**

The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science, Research and Tertiary Education work with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to investigate the barriers affecting the full participation of CALD individuals in the Australian workforce.

The Committee recommends that the existing New Enterprise Incentive Scheme be expanded beyond Job Services Australia, and adapted to ensure the needs of men and women of CALD background, including refugees, are better catered for. The Enterprising Women Project is a useful model. The expanded Scheme should be flexible in the way it provides incentives to support new migrant businesses, and include initiatives such as mentoring, financial skills and literacy, microcredit and no interest loans.

