

**Australian Parliament
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Submission No. 35**

Maria Vamvakinou MP
Migration Committee

Dear Maria

Thank you for the opportunity to make a brief submission to your committee on the subject of multiculturalism. My wife and I spent 22 years living in 3 African countries in a number of differing cultural situations. We consider our experience as something we value greatly and we keep close contact with close friends in those cultures. We have also lived in Switzerland and visited other countries where there are cultural differences.

We have, therefore, been able to evaluate our own Australian culture compared with these others that we have experienced and have concluded that our Australian culture is unique and that it is to be guarded. The Christian values upon which our Australian culture is based have ensured to our citizens standards of education, health care, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, human rights and a standard of living which are second to none. We must not allow Australia to lose these values. **Australia must continue to be a Christian nation.**

We have lived in countries where there is no freedom of religion or expression and poor records of human rights and low standards of living. Many of those people coming to Australia do so because of what we have to offer and if they choose to come here they should accept our culture. Of course culture is always flexible and newcomers to Australia bring new aspects of culture, many of which we do well to integrate into the Australian culture

We need to guard against having a number of separate cultures alongside one another. This often leads to the establishing of ghettos and can bring conflict. **We must have ONE Australian culture to which all newcomers can contribute.**

Having people choosing to come and share our culture is a great blessing to Australia. Some integrate well but sadly others want us all to adopt their culture - a culture from which many have fled.. "Democracy", while not perfect, is something we value highly. There are many countries which talk about democracy but they mean something entirely different from the democracy we enjoy. Let us not lose it.

The freedom we have in Australia comes from our belief that all people are equal. This equality and freedom is something foreign to some cultures and to many who come here.

When a person becomes an Australian it should mean that he or she accepts our Australian culture.

Perhaps the term "multiculturalism" should be scrapped. It can be misleading and divisive.

Yours faithfully

1 April 2011