

*Multiculturalism, social inclusion and globalisation.*

Australia has a diverse mix of cultures. The Netherlandic immigrants largely immigrated from the late 40's through to late 60's and have integrated well into Australian society adopting the Australian culture and language. Dutch speaking immigrants did not generally form clusters in particular suburbs but tended to disperse and blend into the wider community. Their attitude was to adopt the English language and Australian way of life to build a better life for themselves in their new country.

Some of these early immigrants from the Netherlands were well educated but struggled to have their qualifications recognised, and for some it took many years, if not decades, to get recognition for their academic achievements. However they all contributed to the development of Australia and made good lives for themselves and their children in their new adopted homeland.

In recent years there has been a small wave of new immigration from the Netherlands and other western European countries to Australia, but this time the majority are well educated. Again some of these qualified immigrants have trouble getting their qualifications recognised. The cost and time to get qualifications certified and translated is a contributing factor. Schooling in today's Netherlands encourages students to learn several languages with English taught as the second language. Therefore the overwhelming majority of the new immigrants have good English skills on arrival, yet are held back from utilising their skills when arriving in Australia.

I feel that in today's globalised world this would be the case for immigrants from many other European and Asian countries and consideration should be given to assisting and streamlining the process of qualification recognition so that Australia can benefit from the skills that these new immigrants possess.

**Marius Van Helden**

Manager Community Service

Dutch Aged Care - NAASA

ph 8296 5922 fax: 8296 3699

[community-manager@naasa.org.au](mailto:community-manager@naasa.org.au)

Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards. - Soren Kierkegaard

