

The Secretary of the Committee

Re: Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia.

As a 1<sup>st</sup> generation Australian on my father's side and 4<sup>th</sup> on my mother's side I come from a perspective of having lived surrounded by different ethnic viewpoints and standards. I have also lived in Europe for seven (7) years and could not speak the language so I have some understanding of what it means to be a foreigner in a country.

Apart from our Aboriginal sisters and brother, we are all migrants to this great South Land Australia. Our heritage is Christian and our Constitution has allowed our country to develop without having to fight for our freedom as has happened in many British colonies.

What is multiculturalism? Whitlam was the Prime Minister who introduced it to Australia. Since then it has been deleted, added and deleted again from Government Departments and last year it was removed and now it has been given status once again.

The United States of America, the country with most ethnic groups has never used the word multiculturalism. Everyone is referred to as American Hispanics etc.

England and Europe have realised that multiculturalism does not work and are working to bring about change. Yet here our Australian government once again promotes something that will divide our nation.

What does the Federal Government actually mean with regards to its "social inclusion agenda"? Does it mean allowing migrants and refugees to import their own lifestyle which in many cases is quite different to that of Australians? Is assimilation no longer a requirement?

Already we have seen the use of halal products in the production of food including cheese, yoghurt, Cadbury's chocolate and biscuits along with many other products. Manufacturers pay to use halal seals on products but unlike the Heart Foundation's Red Tick, we don't know where this money goes.

We have to seriously look at the way animals are killed to produce halal products. The RSPCA does not agree with the way the animals are killed. Our banks are already working towards Sharia banking. What next – Sharia law which allows for the stoning of females!

This is not being bigoted or racist but just facing facts. I am just questioning why halal food is forced upon all Australians when the percentage of Muslims is a very small part of our population.

We have many small businesses that sell products specifically for different nationalities which is great and everyone is free to shop in those stores. These foods have opened up a whole new way of

eating in Australia which is great. Lygon St in Melbourne is a perfect example of how the Italians have introduced their culinary expertise into our culture without interfering with the production of our food.

The refugees from war torn Somalia have had trouble fitting into our society but when you look at the cultural differences one can understand why this is happening. We bring them in and just dump them in suburbs without much support. It is left to the many social justice groups from a variety of churches to assist these people. Learning to speak the language is of vital importance but not enough funding is provided for such projects and many volunteers have picked up the slack to assist these people.

It was migrant workers who, under extreme conditions, built the Snowy Mountains Scheme which has benefited Australia. The market gardeners, the wine growers, they have all made good in their new homeland of Australia. Do we offer the same opportunity to refugees? Maybe for some yes, but for most NO.

Instead of lumping all people under the one title of multiculturalism, we need to look at each group separately. Each group has different needs. Those needs must be dealt with so that all Australians, both new and old, can live together in peace, harmony and freedom. This is what our soldiers fought and died for in WWI and II.

I believe that migrants and refugees come to Australia for a better way of life free from strife, conflict and wars.

However if they come with the intention of changing our way of life to reflect that of the country they have left behind then that is unacceptable. Multiculturalism allows this to happen.