

The Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
PO Box 6021, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission in Support of Immigration Bridge Australia Proposal

As the former Chair of Australia's peak multicultural organisation -the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia and the ACT Migrant Resource Centre, I wish to make the point that the Immigration Bridge proposal is a very important monument, a commemorative project designed to acknowledge the enormous contributions of migrants since 1788, especially over the past 64 years since the culmination of WW 2.

Furthermore, as a person who has been involved with multicultural communities over the past 30 years, I am aware that both the proposal and concept has considerable support from such communities from across Australia (including the broad Australian community)-and this is demonstrated not only from the many thousands of people who have to date subscribed to having their family name embellished on the handrail of the bridge together with their 'Migration Story', but also from the many people of note who have agreed to be 'Honorary Ambassadors'. At the same time, it would appear that both the project and concept must have considerable support from the majority of Australian in view of the insignificant number (less than 70) of both positive and negative submissions received to date.

It should also be acknowledged that this project not only highlights the significant role of immigration in the development of Australia as a modern and successful multicultural society but also the value of multiculturalism in successfully settling millions of migrants from every continent of the globe-serving as a beacon to the rest of the world. It is for this reason that such a monument should be constructed in the National Capital of Australia.

A pedestrian bridge is the right concept as envisaged by the founding committee as it provides the opportunity for subscribers to 'become part of such an important commemorative monument' -providing a 'bridge' to those migrants-past, present and future and thereby adding greater significance to the Immigration Bridge as an Australian landmark. And, it is especially fitting that the completion of such a landmark should coincide with Canberra's Centenary celebrations in 2013.

It is also important to note that up to 200,000 people will have the opportunity to have their names engraved on the bridge's handrail, allowing for members of small, large, established and newly arrived communities (including Burmese, Eritreans, Somalians and Sudanese) to be part of such an important monument-not only now but in the future.

As someone who has been involved in establishing a national building in the A.C.T, I can attest to the fact that it is quite proper to seek subscriptions as a demonstration that the organisation has been able to raise money of its

own prior to seeking any governments funds to cover part of the total cost of the project. And, as far as involving the stakeholders in the project, this should take place fully once the National Capital Authority has given their approval to the concept design as it is in the interests of the Immigration Bridge Australia Committee and its supporters that the lake users (especially rowers and sailors) see the pedestrian bridge not as an obstacle but as a wonderful addition to the Canberra skyline as is the case in Melbourne and other capital cities .

In conclusion, it cannot be overemphasised how important such a commemorative project is, not only for multicultural Australia but Australia as a whole.

With kind regards

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