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Dear Ms Vamvakinou

The Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW is pleased to provide input into the Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia.

Australia is without question one of the most successful migrant receiving nations in the world. Where other countries have found that multiculturalism as a policy has failed, Australia has encouraged the full participation of immigrants into the life of Australia. As a result, we have a generally harmonious and cohesive society, which grows in its cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

New South Wales has had a strong commitment to multicultural policy. Since 2000, Principles of Multiculturalism, as outlined in the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*, have been the law of the State. Legislated accountabilities mean that the chief executive of every NSW public authorities is directly responsible for their implementation, and the Community Relations Commission is charged with central agency oversight of multicultural implementation progress.

In fact, all Australian States and Territories have some combination of multicultural charter or legislation, policies and governance structures in place. Such policies help guide society to 'where we what to be' – going further than the traditional 'access and equity' elements of multicultural intervention, to one which encourages people to participate, engages the whole community in celebrating this diversity, and builds on the cultural and linguistic assets of the community to ensure an innovative and forward looking Australia.

The Australian Government renewed commitment to multiculturalism is welcomed, as it's the release of the policy, called *The People of Australia: Australia's Multicultural Policy*. The Commission notes that for some time there has been a noticeable policy vacuum nationally in this area.

To give weight to the policy framework, and ensure its effective implementation, the Commission would recommend that the Australian Government:

- give consideration to placing multicultural principles into Federal legislation.
- charge the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet with central responsibility for developing strategy on the implementation of the Principles, and coordinating and providing oversight of it
- establishing performance indicators relating to cultural, religious and linguistic diversity into the social inclusion agenda, and access and equity activity of government agencies, and
- taking national leadership in key areas, such as building social cohesion.

With 35 years of expertise in New South Wales in building what is today the most successful form of multicultural governance, the Community Relations Commission has found that aspirational statements will gain no momentum unless they are supported by centralised guidance, monitoring against meaningful performance indicators and public accountability measures which require leadership and commitment from executives.

The Commission has also written to the Inquiry, expressing its willingness to make available appropriate officials to give evidence at a future hearing of the Inquiry. Arrangements for appropriate representation may be made by contacting Ms Beverley Bell, Executive Assistant to the Chairperson, on telephone (02) 8255 6789.

Yours sincerely

Stepan Kerkyasharian
Chairperson



**Community Relations Commission
For a multicultural NSW**

Submission to the

Parliament of Australia

Joint Standing Committee on Migration

Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia

April 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia is without question one of the most successful immigrant receiving nations in the world. People from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds comprise 22.2% of the Australian population (2006 Census), with 15.8% of the population speaking a language other than English at home.

There is wide recognition that this diversity has contributed to the growth and dynamism of Australia. Yet, in recent years the concept of ‘multiculturalism’ has been exposed to increasingly sensationalized public debate, and withered without a strong national leadership.

The Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW therefore welcomes the renewed endorsement by the Australian Government of both the term ‘multiculturalism’, and the multicultural policy principles as expressed in *The People of Australia: Australia’s Multicultural Policy*. This policy reinforces that ‘Australia’s multicultural composition is at the heart of our national identity and is intrinsic to our history and character’ – it is part of our vision for ‘a just, inclusive and socially cohesive Australia’ (Principle 2).

The Commission also welcomes the Australian Government’s Inquiry into Multiculturalism, which will examine aspects of the social, cultural and economic impacts of migration and aims to make recommendations to maximize the positive effects of immigration. Multiculturalism is a policy for the creation of a cohesive society providing maximum possible security and a sense of belonging to a democratic society that values its cultural diversity. In this context, programs which are welfare oriented should only be considered with respect to their cultural diversity, and given the same emphasis as the economic and social cohesion aspects of multiculturalism.

In its submission, the Commission urges the Inquiry to consider a comprehensive approach to the implementation of multicultural policy principles, noting that the traditional access and equity, and the more contemporary social inclusion, policies are too narrow in their scope to deliver the coordinated whole-of-government approach required to achieve the social, cultural and economic benefits envisaged in the multicultural policy principles.

Furthermore, the coupling of multiculturalism too closely with immigration deflects from the multigenerational strength of our country’s cultural diversity. That is, a truly multicultural society does not comprise a single generation of immigrants, but will reflect layers of cultural diversity and complex cultural identity that is influenced by ethnicity, cultural heritage, language, religion and the path towards residence in Australia (whether that be through birth or migration). The Community Relations

Commission urges the Inquiry to maintain a standing interest in Australia's immigration and settlement history, as well as seeking evidence of the multigenerational contribution of cultural diversity to our economic, social and cultural development. This is consistent with the argument presented throughout this submission that settlement is an ongoing process that may take years, and even generations, to achieve solid productive diversity. However, once immigrant communities have established strong roots and self-sufficiency, their potential to grow Australia is limitless.

In the view of the Commission, a central agency, such as the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, should be responsible for strategic development and oversight of the implementation of multicultural principles, given their broad and well established relationship with the full spectrum of government agencies. Central agencies, in the Commission's view, are best positioned to achieve cross-portfolio partnerships and achieve longer term, sustainable outcomes.

The Commission therefore makes a number of recommendations on the mechanisms required to bring this new federal policy and its four multicultural principles to fruition. Whilst these are outside of the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry, the Commission seeks to offer our experiences and insights into building a strong and cohesive society, supported by multicultural legislation, policy frameworks and oversight mechanisms in New South Wales.

Demographic Trends – New South Wales

New South Wales is the largest State in Australia, with the largest number of overseas-born residents, and the largest number of residents who have one or both parents born overseas. This diversity is likely to increase, as New South Wales, and particularly Sydney, continue to attract over a third of new entrants into Australia.

For example, during 2001-06 New South Wales received:

- almost 83,556 (or 42.9% of the national total) of migrants under the Family Migration Stream, reflecting the diversity and length of establishment of ethnic communities in the state.
- 99,457 (or 31.3% of the national total) arrived under the Skilled Migration Scheme, and
- the highest number of permanent settlers identified as being most in need of settlement support. This includes permanent settlers who arrived as humanitarian entrants, as family stream migrants with low levels of English proficiency, or as dependents of skilled migrants with low levels of English proficiency settling in regional areas of the State.

Principles-based policy in New South Wales

New South Wales has consistently attracted high levels of migrants arriving in Australia, as both a primary and secondary destination (see 'Demographic Trends' box). The Principles of Multiculturalism established through the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* ('the Act') were enacted into New South Wales law in response to that diversity. The first two Principles recognize that:

- the people of New South Wales are of different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds who, either individually or in community with other members of their respective groups, are free to profess, practise and maintain their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage,
- all individuals in New South Wales, irrespective of their linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds, should demonstrate a unified commitment to Australia, its interests and future and should recognise the importance of shared values governed by the rule of law within a democratic framework (*Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*).

The remaining four Principles describe how New South Wales will ensure that all people in the state have the greatest opportunity to contribute to all aspects of public life; public institutions make provision for the culture, language and religion of others; individuals can make use of and participate in government programs and activities, and the linguistic and cultural assets of the State are seen as a valuable resource, which is used to maximize the development of the State. A copy of the Principles of Multiculturalism is attached as Appendix 1.

These laws are not simply aspirational, they are supported by a unique multicultural program consisting of policy frameworks, public accountability measures, and oversight mechanisms. A review of the program in 2008 found that New South Wales has the most effective example of multicultural governance both within Australia and internationally [*25 Years of EAPS: Review of EAPS Operation in NSW*, conducted by the University of NSW].

Today all Australian States and Territories have some combination of multicultural charter or legislation, policies and governance structures in place. They vary however in their approach, from legislatively

enshrined principles, statutory bodies and mandatory reporting requirements to declaratory policy statements.

The release of the Australian Government's multicultural policy, *The People of Australia: Australia's Multicultural Policy*, opens the way for greater dialogue about national and state priorities and strategic directions in responding to our culturally diverse community.

Communication mechanisms, such as the former Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and its Standing Committee, should in the view of the Commission be strengthened to ensure that a uniform approach being taken by Federal and State in terms of their multicultural charter. A common definition, or greater clarity of what the term 'multiculturalism' refers to in the Federal arena would be a welcome development.

Stronger Performance Measures and Accountabilities

A renewed commitment to multicultural policy, will require coordination and oversight of multicultural governance within Australian government agencies to maximally achieve the policy's expectations.

In New South Wales, the implementation of multicultural legislation is supported by policy frameworks, public accountability measures, and oversight mechanisms.

The Principles of Multiculturalism are part of the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*. Under this legislation, from the year 2000 the chief executive of each NSW public authority has been responsible for the implementation of the Principles, and the Community Relations Commission was made responsible for oversight of sector-wide implementation progress. The Commission was also charged with producing an annual report to be tabled in Parliament on community relations in NSW. The Community Relations Report includes an account of the multicultural planning and implementation of NSW Government agencies, Universities based in NSW and local councils, and makes commentary on matters of interest that occurred throughout the year.

In contrast, multicultural principles expressed in *The People of Australia: Australia's Multicultural Policy* are not enshrined in Federal legislation, and there are no accountability mechanisms binding the Australian Government or its agencies for their implementation.

Currently Australian Government agencies are required to report annually to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) about their progress in implementing access and equity under the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society.

The Commission notes that this mechanism lacks the rigour of the contemporary NSW model of multicultural governance as there is no mandatory compliance obligation and no framework or structure to support agencies to implement the Charter.

The Commission also notes that an independent body called the Australian Multicultural Council will be established, which will manage the access and equity strategy from 2012. The Community Relations Commission seeks clarification on the proposed legal status of this Council, making the recommendations that an autonomous body with legislated independence will be better positioned to meet its objectives. As an advisory body, the Community Relations Commission does not consider that the proposed Council would have the resources to monitor or provide practical support to agencies in multicultural implementation, nor does it have the legislative standing within government to compel agencies to comply. The Council is well placed, however, to provide expert advice from external stakeholders, particularly in identifying emerging issues and cross-portfolio areas which should be addressed by Australian government agencies.

The Commission recommends that consideration be given to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) having responsibility for implementation of the Australian Government's Multicultural Principles, as DPMC is already responsible for the development of national strategic priorities, identifying long-term strategic issues, and ensuring national coherence in the development of economic, productivity and social policies. As a central agency, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet can ensure a whole-of-government response to the implementation of the Principles, in the same way that it already has oversight of reporting progress on the social inclusion strategy.

Greater Coordination by Australian Government on National Multicultural Priorities

The release of the Australian Government's multicultural policy is also an opportunity for greater coordination and leadership nationally between the different levels of government in Australia. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) process, Commonwealth-State working parties and strategic policy and direction by the Department of Premier and Cabinet are existing mechanisms which can build stronger integration and cooperation between the different levels of government in Australia. For example, community concerns continue to be raised in New South Wales about the funding formula for settlement services which expires after the first five years of settlement. Settlement is neither easy nor uniform. Many state-based service providers report that complex settlement issues continue to manifest well after the expiration of this five year period, particularly with regard to health (especially mental health), education, law and justice and a range of

predominantly state responsibilities. Therefore the Commission recommends that the Australian Government maintain national oversight and support for settlement issues which require longer term support, and coordinate responses in this area.

The Commission would also see a greater role for the Australian Government in the following areas:

- development of national strategic priorities and broad performance indicators which support the implementation of the Australian Government's multicultural principles, coordination and oversight of cross-portfolio partnerships, and integration of the social inclusion, access and equity and multicultural policy agendas by a central agency such as the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- national policy setting, research and coordination of national response in specific policy areas – these could include the integration of international students into community networks; impact on community cohesion of an increasing numbers of Australian residents on temporary visas; greater leverage between the skilled migration program and Australia's international diplomacy and trade.
- national leadership in the planning and coordination of settlement programs across States and Territories, and into regional areas, to ensure better integration of immigrants into the community, and support capacity building in these regions.
- national leadership on issues requiring a long term and coordinated response, such as a cross-portfolio response to building social cohesion, and addressing threats to community harmony. Current community harmony initiatives are more limited in their focus and effect.
- given the significant reliance on temporary visas, a critical mass of residents now have an impact on Australian society. Therefore, they should not be excluded from coverage of multicultural policies, programs and services. To exclude them would potentially expose Australia to similar consequences of intercultural issues currently facing some European countries that relied on 'guestworker' programs ignoring the social dynamics its cultural diversity created.
- commission evidence based research in key sectors relating to cultural diversity, such as public policy, health, education and employment, as well as researching the contribution of immigrants to the economy, international relationships and trade, and the development of new markets and innovation.

- conduct research into the recognition / or under-utilisation of overseas qualifications, with particular attention to barriers faced by new immigrants, such as the lack of local Australian experience in gaining employment.
- national leadership in initiatives to support productive diversity, through for example, working with ethno-specific chambers of commerce to identify trade and investment opportunities, or using the skills and expertise of business migrants to develop new markets in Australia or internationally.

The Commisison makes 21 specific recommendations addressing the issues of the terms of Reference (see next page), and the following general Recommendations :

- Australian Government to utilise mechanisms such as the former Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, and its Standing Committee, to provide oversight on the status and implementation nationally and within States and Territories of the various multicultural charters or legislation, policies and governance structures. Work towards a common approach in multicultural governance and reporting mechanisms.
- Assign responsibility for the development of national strategic priorities, and oversight of implementation of the Australian Government multicultural principles to a central agency, such as the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to support a coordinated and whole-of-government response.
- Provide greater coordination and leadership nationally between the different levels of government in Australia, by using existing mechanisms such as the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) process, Commonwealth–State working parties and strategic policy and direction by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to build greater integration and cooperation in achieving the implementation of the multicultural principles.

FULL LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION

Issue 1: The role of multiculturalism in the Federal Government's social inclusion agenda

In order to strengthen the outcomes achieved within the social inclusion agenda for clients from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds, the Commission would recommend that:

1. The social inclusion agenda should make explicit reference to the access and equity obligations towards people from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds, noting that language and cultural barriers can contribute directly to social exclusion. .
2. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet oversight implementation of access and equity obligations associated with cultural diversity, which complement its existing oversight of reporting on the social inclusion strategy. A central agency such as the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet can develop a whole-of-government response, and develop high level priorities against which performance indicators flow, and are supported by the collection of data to support monitoring and evaluation.
3. All agencies funded by the Australian Government to comply with cultural diversity access and equity obligations, relating to the provision of interpreters, collection of ethnicity data and targeting of services to the needs of the client group.
4. Compulsory independent annual reporting to Parliament on implementation of the multicultural principles, similar to the Community Relations Report prepared in NSW.

Issue 2: The contribution of diaspora communities to Australia's relationships with Europe, the UK, Middle East and the immediate Asia-Pacific Region.

The Community Relations Commission recommends that:

5. the term 'diaspora' be dropped in terms of the Inquiry, as it detracts from multicultural principles that encourage people from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds to become citizens of Australia (meaning both formal and informal citizenship).

6. the Inquiry broaden its Terms of Reference to include Africa, the America's and broader Asia region, as well as considering the role of particular groups within Australia, such as international students, to furthering Australia's international relationships.
7. the Inquiry seek information from Industry and Investment NSW about strategies to support trade and investment opportunities, by using the international skills and expertise of business people living in Australia.
8. the Inquiry note the findings of the *Building Arabic Businesses* relating to a low level of awareness within Arabic-speaking businesses of programs offering start up, growth and development assistance.
9. Government agencies work through established and trusted channels within key ethnic groups, such as Chambers of Commerce, finance institutions providing services to target communities, to disseminate and ensure take up of information.

Issue 3: Innovative ideas for settlement programs for new migrants, including refugees, that support their full participation and integration into the broader Australian society.

The Commission recommends that:

10. the Australian Government provide greater coordination and leadership in relation to settlement services between the different levels of government in Australia, by using existing mechanisms such as the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) process, Commonwealth–State working parties and strategic policy and direction by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to build greater integration and cooperation in achieving the implementation of the multicultural principles.
11. the Australian Government provide national leadership in the planning and coordination of settlement programs to ensure better integration of immigrants into the community and support capacity building, particularly in regional areas.
12. the Australian Government provide more flexible funding models for settlement support that acknowledge that effective settlement is not bound by time, but rather by responsiveness to concerns as they arise. That is, funding support should be activated as specific settlement needs arise, noting that many settlement needs may not manifest until several years after arrival.

13. The Australian Government work collaboratively with all layers of government to develop means of supporting skilled migrants to settle and contribute to the prosperity of Australia.
14. The Australian Government extend multicultural programs, policies and services to all arrivals in Australia, including those under temporary and other non-permanent visas.

Issue 4: Incentives to promote long term settlement patterns that achieve greater social and economic benefits for Australia as a whole.

The Commission recommends that:

15. Consideration be given to Social Enterprise initiatives that support the development of pathways into stable and secure employment options, especially for skilled migrants. That research be undertaken to explore those factors that have contributed to successful settlement outcomes for more established immigrant communities, and that the findings be translated to support mechanisms for newer and emerging settlers.
16. That governments work collaboratively with not-for-profit ethnic community organisations, in developing and recognising the skills and leadership required for paid employment.
17. Immigration processing take into consideration the longer-term settlement needs of applicants, by attending to the immediate mental and physical health needs of applicants, and rapidly linking children and adults with educational and other opportunities for self-sufficiency.

Issue 5: The role migration has played and contributes to building Australia's long term productive capacity

The Commission recommends that:

18. the Australian Government provide national leadership in initiatives which support productive diversity, through for example, working with ethno-specific chambers of commerce to identify trade and investment opportunities, or using the skills and expertise of business migrants to develop new markets in Australia or internationally.
19. the Australian Government fund research into the contribution of immigrants to Australia's productive diversity, to support an evidence-based approach for future Government assistance and program development.

Issue 6: The profile of skilled migration to Australia and the extent to which Australia is fully utilising the skills of all migrants.

The Commission recommends that:

20. the Australian Government fund research into the recognition / or under-utilisation of overseas qualifications, with particular attention to barriers faced by new immigrants, such as the lack of local Australian experience in gaining employment.
21. Support continue to be provided to those awards, festivals and events that acknowledge and recognize the social, cultural and economic skills of migrants and the positive contribution they make to our society.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF INQUIRY

TOPIC ONE: MULTICULTURALISM, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND GLOBALISATION

ISSUE 1: THE ROLE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL INCLUSION AGENDA

Language, culture and religion can present barriers for people from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds when seeking to access government programs and services. For this reason, the traditional access and equity principles should be addressed within the social inclusion agenda.

However, the Community Relations Commission is concerned that the collapsing of multiculturalism into the social inclusion agenda does not sufficiently acknowledge the complexity of the multicultural policy agenda nor its contribution to Australian life.

The social inclusion policy has a primary focus on 'disadvantage' within six priority areas in the community, including children at risk of long term disadvantage, jobless families, disability and mental illness, those at risk of homeless and indigenous Australians . While some individuals from non-English speaking, migrant or refugee backgrounds may fall under one or more of these priority areas, the Commission maintains two distinct concerns with this focus. The first being that multiculturalism is much broader in scope than disadvantage, focusing on both social justice obligations and the positive social and economic contribution of cultural diversity. The Commission considers that the social inclusion agenda will not deliver on the broader multicultural principles in *The People of Australia: Australia's Multicultural Policy* - for example, it will not address productive diversity issues or the social or economic leverage that can be achieved by working collaboratively with our culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse community.

It is worth noting, that the Social Inclusion agenda does not make specific reference to the concept of 'social cohesion', a concept that lies at the heart of the NSW *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* ('the Act'). Globally, social cohesion has been interpreted as being fundamental to a society's capacity to ensure the wellbeing of all of its members by minimizing

divisiveness and avoiding marginalization.¹ One of the key means of ensuring social cohesion, has been the promotion of policies that facilitate diverse representation and participation in public institutions and civic life². There are a number of synergies between the Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion agendas, namely that both promote equitable participation, shared responsibility and an emphasis on belonging. The Community Relations Commission recommends that the inquiry give consideration to integrating social cohesion discourse into the federal agenda, thereby creating greater linkages with state based multicultural policies.

The second concern relates to the fact that the needs of people from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds are not seen as an explicit priority under the social inclusion policy agenda, excepting that of refugees and new and emerging communities. This dilutes the very real issues experienced by many groups within our culturally and linguistically diverse community, and does not shine a spotlight on ethnicity as an issue for policy development. Further, the Commission notes that public accountability and reporting measures within the social inclusion agenda do not include indicators relating to the cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of clients (page 69, *A Stronger, Fairer Australia*, 2009)

Unless policy and performance indicators relating to cultural, religious or linguistic diversity are included and their implementation monitored, the outcomes achieved by government agencies in planning, resourcing, and the development and implementation of programs and services will be limited.

New South Wales has found that a number of inter-related mechanisms are required to achieve sustained and effective multicultural implementation across all government agencies. The local experience includes:

- multicultural principles that are enshrined in State legislation, with the responsibility for their implementation delegated to the chief executive of each public authority.
- a central agency (the Community Relations Commission) is charged with oversight of the multicultural program within NSW government agencies, and has direct reporting line to either the NSW Premier or Minister.
- a multicultural governance program, known as the Multicultural Policies and Services Program, supports planning, resourcing and implementation of programs and services for public authorities.

¹ The Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion.
www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/Conf%202011/Charter_en.pdf

² Canadian Council on Social Development, Uwww.ccsd.ca/subsites/inclusion/bp/as.htm

- all NSW government agencies required to report on implementation progress against their multicultural plan through their Annual Reports
- central agency (the Community Relations Commission) required to assist and assess agencies on implementation of their multicultural plan, and produce an annual report to the NSW Parliament
- annual reporting to Parliament on the 'state of community relations'[see also Appendix 2 for more detail about multicultural legislation, policy and frameworks in New South Wales].

Issue 1: Recommendations from the Community Relations Commission

In order to strengthen the outcomes achieved within the social inclusion agenda for clients from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds, the Commission would recommend that:

- The social inclusion agenda should make explicit reference to the access and equity obligations towards people from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds, noting that language and cultural barriers can contribute directly to social exclusion.
- The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet oversight implementation of access and equity obligations associated with cultural diversity, which complement its existing oversight of reporting on the social inclusion strategy. A central agency such as the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet can develop a whole-of-government response, and develop high level priorities against which performance indicators flow, and are supported by the collection of data to support monitoring and evaluation.
- All agencies funded by the Australian Government to comply with cultural diversity access and equity obligations, relating to the provision of interpreters, collection of ethnicity data and targeting of services to the needs of the client group.
- Compulsory independent annual reporting to Parliament on implementation of the multicultural principles, similar to the Community Relations Report prepared in NSW.

ISSUE 2: THE CONTRIBUTION OF DIASPORA COMMUNITIES TO AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH EUROPE, THE UNITED KINGDOM, MIDDLE EAST AND THE IMMEDIATE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION.

Inappropriate use of the word 'diaspora'

The Community Relations Commission notes the inappropriate use of the word diaspora, which arises from the Greek verb meaning 'to sow over' or a 'scattering or sowing of seeds' which is used to refer to the scattering of people across spaces, borders or nations who share a national or ethnic identity away from an established or ancestral homeland.

The use of such terminology is at odds with spirit of the Principles of Multiculturalism, which are the law of the State in New South Wales. These Principles, acknowledge that the people of New South Wales '... are free to profess, practise and maintain their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage', but that they also '... demonstrate a unified commitment to Australia, its interests and future and should recognise the importance of shared values governed by the rule of law within a democratic framework.' Therefore, the Principles of Multiculturalism are based on the concept of citizenship which is not limited to formal Australian citizenship, but refers to the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society recognising 'shared values governed by the rule of law within a democratic framework' (s.3 *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*).

The use of the term 'diaspora' is misleading, as it implies that immigrant communities 'plant' their homeland culture and values into their new country without regard to the values of their new home.

Omission of significant regions of world as reflected in Australia's immigration program

The Commission is concerned that Africa, the America's and broader Asia region are specifically excluded from the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry.

Australia receives significant intakes of people from countries in the African continent, and there are considerable numbers of immigrants, skilled migrants and international students from the Indian sub-continent. The Commission would therefore recommend that the Inquiry broaden its Terms of Reference in this area, to encompass the relationship facilitated by immigrants to all regions of the world.

Consideration of the role of international students in supporting Australia's international relationships

The Community Relations Commission notes that it is not only permanent residents of Australia which contribute to Australia's relationship with the international community.

The Colombo Plan was a strategy which also supported the building of long term and strategic diplomatic and economic relationship in the Asia-Pacific region, built on by the connections and goodwill developed in the international student body. With significant numbers of international students in Australia today, the Inquiry should investigate the role and influence of this group in building long term relationships between Australia and their home country.

International Chambers of Commerce

The Commission notes the existence of many international Chambers of Commerce in New South Wales, including Arabic, Lebanese, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese Chambers of Commerce. These bodies promote and encourage conditions for trade between NSW and their respective countries, by exploring opportunities and reducing barriers to international commerce. As other ethnic communities become more established in Australia, and as settlement outcomes improve for newer or emerging communities, we can expect other ethnic Chambers of Commerce to be established.

The Commission is aware that Industry and Investment NSW works with culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the State to support trade and investment opportunities, as follows:

- The NSW-Asia Business Council was established in 2000, and advises the NSW Minister for State and Regional Development. The Council engages with the Asian business community in New South Wales, and builds stronger business relations for NSW with the Asian region. Council members maintain strong links with NSW business communities from China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. The Council hosts the Premier's Asia Business Dinner, which provides a multicultural networking event that strengthens engagement between and among business people and Asian business communities in NSW.
- In 2009-10 the Department of Industry and Investment (State & Regional Development and Tourism NSW) worked with international chambers of commerce to ensure business owners from culturally diverse backgrounds were given the opportunity to receive assistance and make business links. The Department was involved with the Australia-China Chamber of Commerce

and Industry (NSW) to support the Australia-China Sister Cities Summit and the Australia-China Business Summit. The Department also partnered with the Australia-India Business Council, the Australia China Business Council, the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce and the French Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry to promote targeted events to ethnic communities for the Small Business Week.

- In 2010, Business Advisory Services (BAS) delivered special information services for particular language groups, and spoke at NSW Adult Migrant English Service Centres to highlight BAS services. The Sydney BAS ran regular Import Export workshops, which drew high participation from the multicultural community. During 2010, the Sydney BAS spoke to multicultural communities in metropolitan areas of Sydney including: Fairfield (Vietnamese), Bankstown (Arabic), Strathfield (Korean), Blacktown (Sudanese) and Hurstville (Chinese).
- State & Regional Development and Tourism NSW (SRDT) funded for a study into Arabic-speaking owner-operated businesses in the Auburn-Bankstown corridor of Sydney. Managed by the University of Western Sydney Urban Research Centre, the study examined business practices in the community and investigated strategies to encourage employment generation. The research found that government agencies could do more to promote programs offering start up, growth and development assistance to Arabic-speaking businesses. The research found that ‘with the exception of importing food stuffs, there were surprisingly few transnational connections and trade links to the Middle East. The infrequently realised aspirations amongst our respondents to export or set up offices in the Middle East suggests that a concerted effort may need to be made by Austrade or ACCI to connect with business thinking of exporting in Sydney’s West Central planning sub-region to encourage the mobilisation of transnational linkages’ (page 7, *Building Arabic Businesses: Alternative Pathways to Employment Generation in Sydney’s Auburn-Bankstown Corridor*, University of Western Sydney 2011).

Awards and events recognising the contributions of ethnic communities towards Australia’s relations with the world

New South Wales acknowledges Awards and celebratory events as means of encouraging and supporting migrant contributions to public, social, economic and cultural life. The Community relations Commission supports a number of initiatives that directly encourage migrants in NSW to continue fostering relationships with their homeland.

Since 2005, long-standing presence of the Chinese community in NSW has been recognised through the annual NSW Premier's Chinese Community Service Awards. Here since the earliest days of the colony of New South Wales and now one of the largest and fastest growing groups in Australia, the Chinese community has long been active in philanthropic and voluntary community activities. In particular, the community has raised local awareness of Chinese political relations, and promoted international dialogue and trade between the two countries. The awards are presented as an acknowledgement of the social value of voluntary work within the Chinese community to those who have demonstrated active and distinguished service to the community. In 2011, Premier's awards were also presented to the Indian Subcontinent, Lebanese, Vietnamese and Filipino communities in honour of their long history in NSW and their economic, cultural and social contribution to the State.

The annual Community Relations Commission Awards for Volunteering honour individuals in NSW whose community service has enhanced the cultural and social wellbeing of their migrant communities. The purpose of these awards is to highlight the cultural diversity of those undertaking voluntary work and to foster a greater understanding of the value of their contributions. NSW recognises the crucial role that volunteering plays in social cohesion and community building. There should be far greater acknowledgement of the value and necessity of volunteering and renewed efforts to expand and volunteering opportunities and mechanisms e.g. through workplaces. Again, recipients of these Awards frequently make contribution to enhanced relationships between Australia and other nations.

Issue 2: Recommendations from the Community Relations Commission

The Community Relations Commission recommends that:

- the term 'diaspora' be dropped in terms of the Inquiry, as it detracts from multicultural principles that encourage people from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds to become citizens of Australia (meaning both formal and informal citizenship).
- the Inquiry broaden its Terms of Reference to include Africa, the America's and broader Asia region, as well as considering the role of particular groups within Australia, such as international students, to furthering Australia's international relationships.
- the Inquiry seek information from Industry and Investment NSW about strategies to support trade and investment opportunities, by using the international skills and expertise of business people living in Australia.

- the Inquiry note the findings of the *Building Arabic Businesses* relating to a low level of awareness within Arabic-speaking businesses of programs offering start up, growth and development assistance.
- Government agencies work through established and trusted channels within key ethnic groups, such as Chambers of Commerce, finance institutions providing services to target communities, to disseminate and ensure take up of information.

TOPIC TWO: SETTLEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

ISSUE 3: INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS FOR NEW MIGRANTS, INCLUDING REFUGEES, THAT SUPPORT THEIR FULL PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATION INTO THE BROADER AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY.

Settlement services act as critical steps in integrating immigrants and refugees into Australian society. In funding services, the Australian Government must ensure services are tailored to meet the needs of individual settlers. Access to education and employment in particular, adequate housing, generating a sense of personal security and social outlets, are key prongs in supporting self-sufficiency and stronger long term settlement outcomes.

The Commission notes that the fundamental requirements for successful settlement and full participation and integration into Australian society remain:

- the acquisition of English language, at a sufficient level that immigrants can communicate socially, but also are able to participate in the workforce at a level appropriate to their qualifications and skills
- information about government services, and migrant networks and organisations
- appropriate housing
- information about the process of skills recognition, as well as opportunities to gain and local work experience, to assist in accessing the Australian job market
- bridging or training courses which assist entry to employment.

These are not innovative strategies, but they require better and more innovative delivery mechanisms. More efficient coordination between Federal and State agencies could have a significant impact on the accessibility and effectiveness of these settlement measures.

As the lead government agency supporting multiculturalism in NSW, the CRC builds strong relationships with ethnic community groups and develops and fosters extensive networks throughout various communities through its programs and services. As such, the CRC is positioned to provide comprehensive advice to government on multicultural issues. The Commission has 15 Commissioners

and 10 Regional Advisory Councils working to assist with the interaction between the Commission and people representing the multicultural community in rural and regional areas.

In June 2006, the Community Relations Commission released the 'Investigation into African humanitarian settlement in NSW' Report. The findings identify many challenges and barriers to successful settlement encountered by newly arrived humanitarian entrants from Africa. The report also includes a number of recommendations that would assist in ensuring that services were relevant and sufficient. A copy of the report is available on the Commission's website:

http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/publications/documents/african_humanitarian_settlement.

A project concept that aims to strengthen the voice of multicultural young people in NSW is being developed by the Commission. The project would link with the **Multicultural Youth Network** and encourage young people from different cultural backgrounds to identify and implement new projects with the goal of engaging other young people; it will assist the development of their leadership and capacity; and it will encourage their voices to be heard in the broader NSW community.

Access to information technology, innovation and creative opportunities is essential to bringing new generations of migrants, and culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse people together for common purpose. The Commission recommends that the federal government facilitate new forms of multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-sectoral cooperation to focus on longer term outcomes rather than short term quick fixes. By engaging and empowering younger people, we can ensure that future generations are not left to resolve potential future problems associated with community disharmony or lack of social cohesion.

In this submission, the Commission has already recommended that the Australian Government provide greater coordination and leadership between the different levels of government in Australia, by using existing mechanisms such as the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) process, Commonwealth-State working parties and strategic policy and direction by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to build greater integration and cooperation in achieving the implementation of the multicultural principles.

The Commission notes that New South Wales continues to attract among the highest number of permanent settlers who are identified as being most in need of settlement support. This includes permanent settlers who arrived as humanitarian entrants, as family stream migrants with low levels of

English proficiency, or as dependents of skilled migrants with low levels of English proficiency settling in regional areas of the State.

Community concerns continue to be raised in New South Wales about the funding formula for settlement services which expires after the first five years of settlement, noting that the settlement experience is frequently incomplete at the end of that time period, with many settlement related issues only arising some time after the acute short-term settlement issues have been resolved. In particular, mental health issues may only surface after the initial settlement crisis is complete. Secondary migration to other regions within a state, or interstate, may occur several years after initial settlement. This may result in dramatic changes for individuals, families and recipient communities that had not been anticipated at initial settlement. Again, the Commission suggests that national oversight and co-ordination is critical. Furthermore, limitations on resources means that there is currently no formal settlement support for *skilled* migrants or their spouses in Australia. While Migrant Resource Centres provide support for the immediate or longer term integration needs of refugees and newly arrived migrants (not on skilled migrant visas) to assist them in reaching their full potential, these programs cannot be accessed by skilled migrants and their families. The means, the strengths, skills and resources this group of migrants bring to Australia are not appropriately acknowledged, developed or tapped.

Issue 3: Recommendations from the Community Relations Commission

The Commission recommends that:

- the Australian Government provide greater co-ordination and leadership in relation to settlement services between the different levels of government in Australia, by using existing mechanisms such as the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) process, Commonwealth–State working parties and strategic policy and direction by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to build greater integration and co-operation in achieving the implementation of the multicultural principles.
- the Australian Government provide national leadership in the planning and coordination of settlement programs to ensure better integration of immigrants into the community and support capacity building, particularly in regional areas.
- the Australian Government provide more flexible funding models for settlement support that acknowledge that effective settlement is not bound by time, but rather by responsiveness to concerns as they arise. That is, funding support should be activated as specific settlement needs arise, noting that many settlement needs may not manifest until several years after arrival.

- The Australian Government work collaboratively with all layers of government to develop means of supporting skilled migrants to settle and contribute to the prosperity of Australia.
- The Australian Government extend multicultural programs, policies and services to all arrivals in Australia, including those under temporary and other non-permanent visas.

ISSUE 4: INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE LONG TERM SETTLEMENT PATTERNS THAT ACHIEVE GREATER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.

A common issue arising from the Community Relations Commission consultations with the community and through the Commission's formal mechanisms (such as the Multicultural Co-ordinators Forums and Regional Advisory Councils) is that of the importance of personal economic stability to settlement outcomes. Many immigrants, including skilled migrants, continue to face significant barriers to ongoing, stable employment. This impacts families and entire communities and the relationships they form in Australia.

Governments and other funding bodies could consider developing stronger partnerships with social enterprises that support the creation of pathways into sustainable employment and programs focusing on work readiness, traineeships and work experience. Organizations such as Social Ventures Australia support the development of social enterprises including those that create new jobs for people excluded from the labour market. Their programs include providing the long-term unemployed with time-limited waged employment in a genuine work environment, with the goal of assisting these individuals to ultimately transition to the mainstream labour market.

There is also a need for research into successful strategies that have enabled migrant communities to develop and apply skills and knowledge locally is required. Learnings could then be adapted to other contexts. This become particularly relevant when we consider that skilled migrants are not eligible for specific settlement support, yet continue to report significant barriers to successful settlement (especially with regard to employment).

Increased, ongoing (government) support to build the capacity of the not-for-profit sector working with migrant communities would facilitate the delivery of improved services and skills development. Opportunities for community members to participate in the management and evolution of ethnic-specific organizations would increase the contribution of individuals and groups and, in the longer term, potentially alleviate the need for government support.

Small ethnic specific community organizations are already supporting their communities through volunteering activities and ‘add-ons’ to existing workloads that save government agencies significant amounts of money. However, these additional responsibilities are rarely quantified or formally acknowledged. Consideration should be given to understanding and measuring the true cost of supporting new and longer term migrant communities, including the methods and scale of un-paid work required.

In 2005, the Community Relations Commission provided a submission into the Inquiry into the *Migration Act (1958) NSW*. In that submission, NSW stated that:

- the Commonwealth Government’s assistance for individuals in detention, those released from detention centres into the community, humanitarian entrants, and refugees was inadequate.
- NSW government agencies did not support the detainment of children in immigration detention and raised serious concerns about the welfare of children in detention centres and the long-term impact upon their development and well-being.
- NSW government agencies advocated that detainees be treated in a humane and dignified manner and strongly supported efforts to expedite the processing of applications for refugee status.
- NSW government agencies were concerned about the consequences of long-term detention and the unmet psychological and physical health needs of adult detainees. The Commonwealth Government-provided health services in detention centres were inadequate, leading to flow-on effects for the health and well-being of detainees once they were released into the community.
- Educational services available to detainees whilst in detention were inadequate, despite efforts by NSW government agencies, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government.
- NSW government agencies were concerned that the Commonwealth Government was not taking adequate measures to ensure that sponsors under the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) were supporting the needs of the SHP entrants. The continued failure of sponsors to meet their obligations has a significant impact on NSW Government services. NSW raised the issue of the Commonwealth’s duty of care to SHP entrants in this regard.

The spirit of these statements underscores the notion that the manner in which a migrant is treated on arrival can have a major impact upon their capacity to settle quickly and effectively. Mental and physical health is a critical consideration for refugees and humanitarian entrants in particular. NSW argues that long-term settlement prognosis cannot be separated from the immigrant processing experience, noting that settlement is an ongoing process that may last for several years, and even decades and generations.

Issue 4: Recommendations from the Community Relations Commission

The Commission recommends that:

- Consideration be given to Social Enterprise initiatives that support the development of pathways into stable and secure employment options, especially for skilled migrants. Research may be undertaken to explore those factors that have contributed to successful settlement outcomes for more established immigrant communities, and that the findings be translated to support mechanisms for newer and emerging settlers.
- Governments work collaboratively with not-for-profit ethnic community organisations, in developing and recognising the skills and leadership required for paid employment.
- Immigration processing take into consideration the longer-term settlement needs of applicants, by attending to the immediate mental and physical health needs of applicants, and rapidly linking children and adults with educational and other opportunities for self-sufficiency.

TOPIC THREE: NATIONAL PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY

ISSUE 5: THE ROLE MIGRATION HAS PLAYED AND CONTRIBUTES TO BUILDING AUSTRALIA'S LONG TERM PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY.

The Commission notes that there is a paucity of research and analysis in this important area. Evidence based research is required into the contribution of immigrants to the economy, international relationships and trade, as well as researching the development of new markets and innovation. The Australian Government has in the past funded the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Policy Research to conduct such research, a body which was able to develop in-depth and targeted research into key areas.

In 2011, a number of immigrant communities are considered to be so well established that they are seldom regarded as requiring government support. Aspects of their culture, language and/or religious practices are considered to be mainstream features of Australian life. For example, the Greeks and Italians and other Europeans that arrived pre and post- World War II now feature prominently in public life with many politicians, heads of organizations and other business figures having these immigrant backgrounds. Their food, architecture, design and other cultural expressions are widely adopted. While these particular communities have struggled with the migrant experience, they played an important role in nation-building activities and are now well recognized for their contribution to the country's infrastructure. Later waves of immigrants, such as the Vietnamese and Lebanese, still require some support and face challenges but have found avenues for commerce and other forms of enterprise that contribute to the country's broader productive capacity.

Many immigrants arriving in Australia as students through the Colombo Plan from the 1950s have gone on to become academics, politicians, bureaucrats, business people and other successful workers that have contributed to Australia's economy. These migrants brought with them their culture, and many have raised families in Australia. It remains difficult to measure the contribution of successive generations on Australia's productivity.

The move to a demand driven skilled migration policy has resulted in businesses and states becoming more competitive for skilled labour, leaving gaps across various industries that are difficult to fill in the short term. The creation of opportunities for international students to partly

or completely fill these gaps (through work experience, mentoring etc) could ease some of demand and, at the same time, contribute to long term settlement opportunities for international students. Furthermore, greater support for skilled migrants would likely create better outcomes for entire ethnic communities. As mentioned previously in this submission, the Commission is aware that Industry and Investment NSW works with culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the State to support trade and investment opportunities, through bodies such as the NSW-Asia Business Council which engages with the Asian business community in New South Wales, and builds stronger business relations for NSW with the Asian region. It also works with international chambers of commerce to ensure business owners from culturally diverse backgrounds are given assistance and make business links.

Issue 5: Recommendations from the Community Relations Commission

The Commission recommends that:

- the Australian Government provide national leadership in initiatives which support productive diversity, through for example, working with ethno-specific chambers of commerce to identify trade and investment opportunities, or using the skills and expertise of business migrants to develop new markets in Australia or internationally.
- the Australian Government fund research into the contribution of immigrants to Australia's productive diversity, to support an evidence-based approach for future Government assistance and program development.

ISSUE 6: THE PROFILE OF SKILLED MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH AUSTRALIA IS FULLY UTILISING THE SKILLS OF ALL MIGRANTS.

The Commission notes that there is a paucity of research and analysis in this area, however anecdotal evidence to the Commission suggests that the qualifications of skilled migrants are under-utilised. Evidence based research is required into this area, together with the development of effective strategies which support the best utilisation of overseas skills and qualifications. The Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Policy Research, funded by the Australian Government, in the past produced sound research in this area.

The Commission has provided submissions to a number of inquiries on matters related to Skilled Migration:

- **Inquiry into Overseas Skills Recognition, Upgrading and Licensing, July 2005**

NSW Government submission to the House of Representatives Joint Standing Committee on Migration (Copy Attached). 14 Recommendations were made.

- **Inquiry into skills shortages in rural and regional NSW , September 2005**

Commission Submission to the Parliament of NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on State Development (Copy Attached). The submission identified state-wide skills shortages, both in the public and private sectors, in the areas of construction, planning, engineering, manufacturing, and in the automotive, electrical, and food trades, as well as critical shortages in human services areas such as childcare and nursing, including aged care.

The Submission outlined the acute problems of skills shortages in rural and regional NSW and addressed the on-going challenges of attracting and retaining skilled workers in rural and regional areas of the State, of recognizing overseas skills and qualifications and of establishing adequate settlement services, including skills training for refugee settlers in regional NSW.

- **Evaluation of Skilled Migration to the Riverina**

The 'Report of the Commonwealth/NSW Working Party on Migration to Sydney and Regional NSW' was jointly endorsed by the NSW Premier and the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs in 2004. The report identified a number of

strategies for a whole-of-government approach to promoting business and skilled migration to regional NSW.

The *Evaluation of Skilled Migration to the Riverina* examined a number of measures that have been taken subsequent to the recommendations of the Working Party report, especially as they pertain to initiatives undertaken in the NSW Riverina. The evaluation is encouraging of skilled migration initiatives in the region and recognises the benefits that skilled migration to the Riverina can bring for employers, migrants, and host communities .

Further information regarding these submissions can be provided on request.

The Community Relations Commission acknowledges and celebrates the contributions of migrant communities in NSW through a variety of other awards, that recognise the skills and positive contribution migrants can make to our cultural and economic landscape. These include:

- the annual National Multicultural Marketing Awards, which encourages and rewards the efforts of businesses and organisations that focus on the cultural diversity of Australia in their overall marketing strategies. The awards promote best practice in marketing. Organisations recognised by the awards are regarded as leaders in the industry and role models in seizing business opportunities through inclusive marketing.
- the annual Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Award for a poem best highlighting the value of cultural diversity within the Australian community.
- the biennial NSW Premier's Translation Prize offered by the New South Wales Government through Arts NSW and the Community Relations Commission For a Multicultural NSW in association with Sydney PEN. The prize is intended to acknowledge the contribution made to literary culture by Australian translators. It is offered only to translators who translate works into English from other languages.
- the Sydney Film Festival short film award given to films that reflect the multicultural experience in Australia. The film must contain material of a language which celebrates the cultural and linguistic diversity of Australia, explore issues arising from the Australian immigration and settlement process; and, explore general issues in one or more cross-cultural setting.

Issue 6: Recommendations from the Community Relations Commission

The Commission recommends that:

- the Australian Government fund research into the recognition / or under-utilisation of overseas qualifications, with particular attention to barriers faced by new immigrants, such as the lack of local Australian experience in gaining employment.
- Support continue to be provided to those awards, festivals and events that acknowledge and recognize the social, cultural and economic skills of migrants and the positive contribution they make to our society.

APPENDIX 1:

s. 3 Principles of multiculturalism (*Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000 NSW*)

(1) Multiculturalism is founded on the following principles (the "principles of multiculturalism"):

(a) the people of New South Wales are of different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds who, either individually or in community with other members of their respective groups, are free to profess, practise and maintain their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage,

(b) all individuals in New South Wales, irrespective of their linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds, should demonstrate a unified commitment to Australia, its interests and future and should recognise the importance of shared values governed by the rule of law within a democratic framework,

(c) all individuals in New South Wales should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life in which they may legally participate,

(d) all individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language,

(e) all individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programmes provided or administered by the Government of New South Wales,

(f) all institutions of New South Wales should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of New South Wales as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State.

(2) Parliament recognises that the principles of multiculturalism are based on citizenship. The expression "citizenship" is not limited to formal Australian citizenship, but refers to the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society.

(3) The principles of multiculturalism are the policy of the State.

(4) Accordingly, each public authority must observe the principles of multiculturalism in conducting its affairs.

(5) It is the duty of the chief executive officer of each public authority to implement the provisions of this section within the area of his or her administration.

APPENDIX 2:

For 35 years New South Wales has progressively built a strong and consistent governance model to support its multicultural policy and planning. A number of key milestones mark the progress of multicultural governance in NSW:

- From 1976 either the NSW Premier, and/or a particular Minister has been expressly responsible for the portfolio that has been variously named ethnic affairs, multicultural affairs and then citizenship.
- Further, multicultural policy has had bipartisan support within the NSW Parliament, both for the establishment and continuous maintenance of a stand-alone multicultural agency, and for the integration of public accountability mechanisms for multicultural governance.
- The Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW was established in 1979 as a stand-alone multicultural agency with legislated functions, reporting directly to the Minister. In 2001, the Commission was renamed and given additional functions, when it became the Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW.
- The Ethnic Affairs Policies Statement (EAPS) program was introduced in 1983 to assist NSW government agencies in their ‘access and equity’ obligations – which at the time meant program and service delivery that addressed the needs of people from non-English speaking backgrounds. This program has developed into a sophisticated model of corporate governance, which now places greater emphasis on integrating multicultural obligations into corporate planning, developing leadership across cultural diversity, human resourcing, and innovation on partnership arrangements. The program is now known as the Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP). Under the MPSP, NSW Government agencies are supported to develop and monitor their multicultural activities through structured performance indicators.
- New South Wales was the first of the Australian States or Territories to enshrine Principles of Multiculturalism in State law. The Principles are part of the *Community Relations Commission and Principles for Multiculturalism Act 2000*, and are binding upon all NSW public authorities.

Similar to the principles proposed under the Australian Government’s recent policy, these Principles recognise that the people of New South Wales are of different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds who, either individually or in community with other members of

their respective groups, are free to profess, practise and maintain their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage.

They also emphasise that all individuals in New South Wales, irrespective of their linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds, should demonstrate a unified commitment to Australia, its interests and future and should recognise the importance of shared values governed by the rule of law within a democratic framework. Therefore, the Principles are based on the concept of 'citizenship' which is not limited to formal Australian citizenship, but refers to the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society.

- The *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* introduced stringent accountability measures for multicultural planning and implementation, when it made the chief executive of all New South Wales government agencies directly accountable for the implementation of the Principles under their area of administration. The Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP) is the main vehicle for the implementation of the Principles.
- The Community Relations Commission was also charged with the responsibility for coordinating and assessing implementation of this Program. As a further accountability measure, the Community Relations Commission is required to produce an annual report on the state of community relations in NSW and multicultural implementation and progress across the NSW public sector. The yearly *Community Relations Report* is tabled by the Minister for Citizenship in the NSW Parliament.
- In June 2010 the NSW Parliament made further amendments to the *Community Relations Commission and the Principles of Multiculturalism Act (2000)*. These changes affirm the role of the Commission as an independent statutory body, and cement its role as the pivotal advisory body on multicultural affairs to the NSW Government.

Most States and Territories of Australia have some combination of multicultural charter or legislation, policies and governance structures in place, however few have such depth of structure or longevity as the NSW model (see *25 Years of EAPS: Review of EAPS Operation in New South Wales*, Community Relations Commission, March 2009 or *Research Paper 2010-11 Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas*, Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia).

