



*The Islamic Women's Welfare Association*

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Jane Hearn  
Inquiry Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Migration

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Dear Jane

I sincerely apologise for the delay in responding to your request for IWWA's (Islamic Women's Welfare Association) contribution to the above inquiry which took longer than anticipated.

Please find attached IWWA's suggestions which has been collated from its interaction, observations and responses from its members and the local community.

On Behalf,of

Abla Kadous/President IWWA

Multiculturalism, social inclusion and globalization

1. The role of multiculturalism in the Federal Government's social inclusion agenda; and

To recognize the impact and the contribution made by migrant communities and to ensure that policies and procedures are made with greater understanding and sensitivity to their needs.

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

The diaspora communities migrate with their own rich cultural, religious, culinary, music and culture. Some may even have emotional and psychological and medical requirements to assist with settling here in Australia.

Settlement and participation

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

In the case of migrant Muslim communities (be they just migrants or refugees) they prefer to be in close proximity to other Muslims. Primarily because they immediately feel accepted and supported hence they adapt easily and are more receptive to the Australian way of life. Incentives such as first home buyers scheme are indeed helpful as they assist us to buy a home to live. In order to encourage long term settlement patterns, Australia should consider how to facilitate the purchase of homes for new migrants. Some innovative ideas for settlement programs should aim at facilitating the quality of life for new migrants including refugees:

1. Introduction of a buddy system whereby new migrants are assisted and followed up until period of integration ie one to two years in particular for families with children;
2. Cultivating a spirit of tolerance for others in the community for all races and their needs;
3. Introduction of tax deduction for travelling costs for new migrants who have to travel in their first few years of settlement to visit close relatives in their country of birth. Migrants face a lot of sacrifices such as having to travelling long distances to visit relatives, spending on communication costs, missing out on some events occurring in native countries etc. This loss should be compensated by the Government in one way or the other to retain migrants in their country of adoption.
4. Facilitate the migration of other members of the family without the selection criteria as it currently exist that half of the family members should already be here before one can apply under Family sponsorship. A few migrants have been using alternative ways to secure stay in Australia by enrolling/renewing their university courses to secure residence on temporary basis.
5. Australia tax system needs to be reviewed – as there is no incentive to recognise that migrants have family living overseas whom they are supporting. Currently income tax deductions can only be made for support of elderly relatives who live within Australia.
4. Incentives to promote long term settlement patterns that achieve greater social and economic benefits for Australian society as a whole.

In order to introduce incentives to promote long term settlement patterns that achieve, it is worth considering the problems faced by migrant communities and design systems or ways of reducing these problems.

Problems being Faced by Migrant Communities which impact on long term settlement patterns are:-

- Social

Used to the extended family and friends.

Language, education, economic status are seen as barriers in being accepted into social circles.

- Economic

Often come to their adopted countries with little or nothing and have to start from scratch. This changes the focus from family and friends to material things.

Have to work harder to prove themselves at work and often be given secondary consideration.

- Education

Language and prior qualifications often a barrier to entry in similar position as in their country of birth.

- Qualifications are not recognised.

Work ethics and policies are completely different, there is an adjustment time period.

Often placed into junior position where as in their countries of birth they hold responsible senior positions.

- Cultural

Wish to maintain their own cultural identity, to be accepted and at the same time, they to wish to understand and be able to accept and fit into the adopted country's culture. Often these are in stark contrast and there is a huge adjustment time.

- Religious

Migrants need the freedom to be able to build their own places of worship within their communities without prejudice or discrimination from the communities in which they live or from disguised government's policies and procedures.

In addition to designing ways and systems to reduce problems as above, the following could be implemented:

- Ø Monetary incentives to live and work in specific regions in need of the migrants skill sets. This would ensure that there is already a similar cultural presence in these regions.

- Ø Ensuring there is access to cultural, religious, interpreters, to relevant refresher courses in TAFES and Universities to polish their existing qualifications including initial affordable housing assistance schemes.

- Ø Support for children while mums and dads during the settling in phase.

Thanks