

GRIFFITH MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY GROUP

P.O. Box 1626 Griffith NSW 2680

**Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Regional Services
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600**

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRALIA'S REGIONAL AREAS

The Griffith Multicultural Community Group is composed of members and representatives of ethnic community groups and local and regional service providers who work with ethnic community groups.

The objectives of the Group are as follows;

1. To provide opportunity to the members of the Griffith Multicultural community to participate equitably in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Australia.
2. To provide equitable access to a share of the resources which the Government manages on behalf of the multicultural community.
3. To provide opportunity to the multicultural community to participate in and influence the design and operation of Government policies, programs and services.
4. To make the multicultural community aware of their right within the law, to enjoy their own religion, to use their own language and respect the rights of others to their own culture, religion and language.
5. To provide equitable opportunity and access to education and employment.

The issues of concern raised by members of the community relate to the successful settlement of migrants and refugees of non-English speaking background into our community. This part of the population of Griffith make up a large proportion of the local workforce, and are integral to the growth and development of our community. It is therefore appropriate that the members of the Griffith Multicultural Community Group have input into

the development of infrastructure in our region and it is for this purpose that we address this submission to you.

The issues of concern to us are;

Accommodation / Housing

In order to achieve successful settlement in the region, affordable accommodation is required. The shortage of housing in Griffith has obvious implications for the retention of workers in this area.

Information Services

In order to ease the settlement of migrants and refugees into the community, many communities, specifically the urban centres, have Migrant Resource Centres, where new arrivals can obtain information about the services available in a culturally appropriate and sensitive environment. The migrant and refugee members of the Griffith community are disadvantaged by the fact that no such central information service exists in our region.

There is also a need for the Council and the Government to work closely with local groups such as the Multicultural Community Group in order to ensure the provision of information to migrants is addressed appropriately.

TAFE course provision

The number of students required to run English language classes at TAFE is not appropriate for country regions .

Some people are unable to access free tuition at TAFE due to the category of their visa. This is an issue as the need to learn English is the greatest during the first few years after arrival in Australia.

Provision of Information to people prior to migration

People need to have accurate information about the region they are migrating to before they leave their country of origin.

Public Transport

Need for better, more frequent and more extensive services.

Employment issues

There is a need to make the process of sponsoring people for work in the region easier. This applies for example to the case of a major employer of migrants in this region, (Bartters).

Health Care Services

More doctors and specialists needed. Overseas qualified medical staff should be encouraged by easing the procedures for employing these.

Language Services

More accredited interpreters required in this region.

Immigration Information

There is a need for regular immigration information provision in the region. This could be achieved by, for example, ensuring that Immigration Department officials visit the region regularly to give information.

Thanking you and I hope that your Committee will give our concerns and issues the appropriate consideration they deserve.

Yours Sincerely

Carmel La Rocca
Chairperson

13.4.1999