



Senate Select Committee on Strengthening Multiculturalism

14 August 2017

Senator the Hon Stephen Parry
President of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr President

Pursuant to resolution, I present to you an interim report of the Senate Select Committee on Strengthening Multiculturalism.

1. On 29 November 2016, the Senate resolved that the Select Committee on Strengthening Multiculturalism (committee) be established on 27 March 2017. The committee is to inquire into and report on ways of protecting and strengthening Australia's multiculturalism and social inclusion, with particular reference to:
 - a) the views and experiences of people from culturally and linguistically diverse, and new and emerging communities;
 - b) the adequacy and accessibility of settlement and social inclusion services and resources available to individuals and communities;
 - c) the adequacy of existing data collection and social research on racially motivated crimes;
 - d) the impact of discrimination, vilification and other forms of exclusion and bigotry on the basis of 'race', colour, national or ethnic origin, culture or religious belief;
 - e) the impact of political leadership and media representation on the prevalence of vilification and other forms of exclusion and bigotry on the basis of 'race', colour, national or ethnic origin, culture or religious belief;
 - f) how to improve the expected standards of public discourse about matters of 'race', colour, national or ethnic origin, culture or religious belief;
 - g) how to better recognise and value the contribution that diverse communities bring to Australian social and community life;
 - h) the potential benefits and disadvantages of enshrining principles of multiculturalism in legislation;
 - i) the potential benefits and disadvantages of establishing a legislative basis for the Multicultural Advisory Council, or for an ongoing Multicultural Commission; and
 - j) any related matters.
2. On 15 June 2017, the Senate agreed to amend the resolution of 29 November 2016 to enable the committee to conduct the inquiry through the use of subcommittees.

Conduct of inquiry

3. The committee advertised the inquiry on its website and wrote to a number of individuals and organisations, inviting submissions by 12 May 2017. The committee continued to accept submissions after this date. In response, the committee received 104 submissions. For administrative purposes, a further 47 submissions were categorised as 'form letters' (or variations of form letters). All correspondence accepted by the committee is listed at Appendix 1.
4. The committee held three public hearings for the inquiry. Public hearings were held on 27 June 2017 in Melbourne, 29 June 2017 in Sydney, and 3 August 2017 in Bendigo.

Reporting

5. The committee is preparing a comprehensive report to address the terms of reference. In order to allow committee members sufficient time to consider the draft report, the committee has agreed to present this interim report with the intention of tabling its final report on or before 17 August 2017.

Recommendation

6. **That the Senate Select Committee on Strengthening Multiculturalism presents its final report on or before 17 August 2017.**

Yours sincerely

Senator Richard Di Natale
Chair