

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**Question No. 11**

**Senator Barnett asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May 2009:**

In relation to the Australian Multicultural Foundation;

- a) state the reasons for the appointment,
- b) provide a copy of the Foundation's constitution, and
- c) provide details in terms of the Foundation's objective.

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

- a) The AMF was appointed to undertake this research because of:
  - specialist knowledge
  - national and international recognition for relevant expertise
  - independence
  - no religious affiliations
  - a strong community reputation

These criteria were essential for engaging with diverse religious communities during the consultations. Furthermore:

- the AMF's members include many prominent Australians, including current and past Prime Ministers from both sides of political spectrum. Details of the Board of Directors and Membership are attached.
- the research team have demonstrated their capacity to work in a successful model in their previous collaboration, *Religion, Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding Australia* (2004), commissioned by the (then) Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
- the research team had already developed relationships with religious communities during the consultations for the DIMA project
- The Commission's Freedom of Religion and Belief in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century project intended to build on the work already done in the 2004 report.

It was therefore considered appropriate to commission the same research team to undertake the Freedom of Religion and Belief in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century report.

- b) A copy of the Foundation's Memorandum of Association and Objects is attached.
- c) The AMF is a not-for-profit, non-political organisation which aims to:
  - cultivate in all Australians a strong commitment to Australia as one people drawn from many cultures and by so doing to advance its social and economic well-being
  - promote an awareness among all Australians of the diversity of cultures within Australia and the contribution of people from all cultures to the development of Australia
  - spread respect and understanding between all cultural groups through appropriate means.