

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 MAY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE11/0763) Program 6.1: Multicultural and Citizenship Services

Senator Mark Furner (written) asked:

Can you provide an overview of the key features of the new multicultural policy?

Answer:

The four key principles of the multicultural policy are:

- Principle 1: The Australian Government celebrates and values the benefits of cultural diversity for all Australians, within the broader aims of national unity, community harmony and maintenance of our democratic values.
- Principle 2: The Australian Government is committed to a just, inclusive and socially cohesive society where everyone can participate in the opportunities that Australia offers and where government services are responsive to the needs of Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Principle 3: The Australian Government welcomes the economic, trade and investment benefits which arise from our successful multicultural nation.
- Principle 4: The Australian Government will act to promote understanding and acceptance while responding to expressions of intolerance and discrimination with strength, and where necessary, with the force of the law.

The key messages of Australia's multicultural policy, *The People of Australia*, include:

- All Australians have the right to practise and share in their cultural traditions and languages within the law and free from discrimination;
- Government services and programs must be responsive to the needs of our cultural diverse community and the Government commits to a strengthened access and equity framework to provide equitable services to Australians from all backgrounds; and
- Australian democracy is built around shared rights and responsibilities as enshrined in our citizenship pledge which includes loyalty to Australia and its people, upholding laws and democracy and respect our rights and liberties.

Key initiatives of the multicultural policy are:

- establishment of a new, independent body, Australian Multicultural Council which includes a multicultural ambassadors program;
- implementation of a new National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy;

- strengthening the access and equity framework through an review of existing service delivery and work with state and territory governments to collect data disaggregated by markers of cultural diversity;
- reprioritise the existing scope of the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program to include funding for multicultural arts and festival small grants; and
- establishment of a Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program managed by the Australian Sports Commission.