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Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
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AUSTRALIA

Inquiry Into Multiculturalism in Australia

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views in relation to multiculturalism.

I am third generation Australian. I am a social worker with 30 years professional experience. I am the founder and CEO of a charity providing relief to individuals and families suffering severe poverty. At least half of the clients we provide support to are refugees or immigrants.

I support the idea of Australia being a multiracial country, but I do not support multiculturalism.

We learnt in Sociology 101 that any society must have shared values and customs in order for there to be harmony and a shared sense of community. The more multicultural we become in Australia, the less there is any sense of a shared set of values, culture or social practices.

A lack of shared values is becoming a growing crisis in Australia, leading to a loss of a sense of community, among other things.

Ultimately, it is highly likely to lead to social divisions and conflict, as we have seen in many other countries. Indeed we have already seen the start of such divisions in the sports arena (football) where police and security forces need to supervise matches and dissolve violent disputes between warring ethnic groups.

How could we follow any policy that could threaten the remarkable social harmony Australia has always enjoyed?

Multiculturalism is a brave social experiment that takes a long time to show whether it has worked or failed. There are clear signs around the world that multiculturalism is beginning to fail in a number of major western nations.

This failure is occurring in countries whose multiculturalism is further developed than ours. The outcomes they are experiencing of conflict and division and violence are still ahead for us.

Australia may be slower to respond than other countries because of our easygoing ways and our habit of being accepting towards others. However, many older Australians experience despair at the changes occurring in our society, and anger is growing among the masses due to the rapid and unwelcome social change that is being foisted upon this previously stable and harmonious country.

There is no doubt that the coming of people from other lands has greatly enriched our nation. Historically, these people assimilated, whether asked to or not. They came from cultures that

were not so dissimilar to our own that they couldn't happily adopt our cultural framework, and aspire to be 'Aussies'. They valued family and community, they had a friendly and generous spirit towards others, they believed in monogamy, they practiced their religion privately, they worked hard and won the hearts of the people of their new country.

Modern multiculturalism involves the introduction of people from nations with a strong socio-political ideology, who openly state that they want to impose their culture on the incompatible and (to their minds) inferior Australian culture. There is no nation on earth now, or at any previous time in history, who would not have reacted against such a movement, nor have perceived it as a threat.

In Australia we have an ideological bias that says that reacting against the risks and losses that come with multiculturalism is racist, rather than being a reasonable self-protective response.

Welcoming immigrants, in whatever numbers, even if they have been unwisely brought in in numbers that threaten to swamp the existing culture, has been made the moral high ground. Woe betide anyone who doesn't feel this way!

Why can we not also respect the needs and feelings of the existing Australian population? Why do we have to make only the needs and feelings of would-be immigrants all that matters?

A desire not to lose ones familiar cultural milieu is as old as man – part of who we are, or who some of us are: perhaps even the silent majority.

But it isn't just the numbers that threaten our cultural identity, it is the purposeful ideology that is inherent in multiculturalism that says, "come here and be who you used to be in the country you came from – there is no need to become 'one of us' ". Australians should be entitled to be concerned by this, without the risk of being labeled racist.

Such concerns are not about the newcomer – they are about us: how to remain the country we recognise, how to retain the fantastic national characteristics that have set us apart the world over, throughout the last two hundred years and beyond: brave, innovative, resourceful, clever and fair-minded.

The Australian national character has been shaped by our pioneering and convict past, and these two influences have fashioned a great survivor and problem-solver. The most obvious examples have been our farming community and our soldiers, although the city contingent has also been shaped in a similar way.

Are we entitled to recognise this very positive national persona? Are we entitled to seek to preserve it?

In talking about a threat from multiculturalism to our national identity, coming from an influx of strong alternative identities, I am not identifying so much a different religious framework, but more a cultural one.

I do believe that the coming of 'middle-easternism' is a threat to Australia because of its patriarchy, the supremacy of its males, the subjugation of women and children, and its brutal and unjust treatment of women, and of those who do not bow to their ideology, in the countries of the middle east, and elsewhere.

It is basically a social system that is at odds with our own.

I know families of middle-eastern origin who are Christian and who practice the same violence and oppression towards women as some Muslim families may. This is a pervasive paternalistic social, cultural, and political phenomenon that goes beyond religion.

I do believe that Islam brings threats of its own, however. We all know that the majority of Muslims are moderate, and not a threat. However, their failure to furiously oppose the acts of terrorism and murder enacted by members of their own religion in the name of their religion, leaves them and us in a state of limbo and vulnerability.

Why do moderate Muslims not rail against the deadly deeds of their fellow believers? Is it because the Q'ran supports these violent actions, or is it because they fear for their own lives if they spoke up or protested?

If it is the former, then we cannot support Islam, and if it is the latter then lets recognise what a treacherous political system we are up against.

Whichever is the case, it appears that we are being confronted by a danger we seem unable to even recognise, much less respond to.

Can we not recognise the importance of not letting such a religious/political system take hold in Australia?

The practice of multiculturalism leaves us with no capacity to defend ourselves against this threat.

Perhaps the Australian population isn't really aware of what occurs in other places. As one who regularly speaks to refugees in the course of my charity work, I know some of the suffering experienced by non-Muslims who have sought asylum in Australia, hoping to find refuge from Muslim regimes.

Islam has a pattern of trying to impose itself and take over – often by the use of violence or threat of death – in every nation to which it has gone.

Courageous people such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali – an ex-muslim from Somalia – who speak up about the serious problems associated with allowing Islam to take root in any nation, must live with 24-hour bodyguards for the rest of their lives. This should tell us something.

The threat to inflict 100 lashes and kill a British teacher when she innocently agreed to a child's request to name a teddy bear 'Mohammed' should tell us something.

The 110 deaths and countless riots around the world that resulted from a cartoon depicting the prophet Mohammed, should tell us something.

The countless rapes, murders and 'honour killings' of innocent women in middle eastern countries should tell us something.

Female genital mutilation, the push for polygamy, the desire to cut off people's hands for stealing – these and so many other practices associated with Islam should be telling us that it is dangerous to invite people from such cultures to come to Australia and practise their culture.

Right now, it is easy to say that the worst of these practices are illegal here, and would be prosecuted. This is naïve. There are families practising female genital mutilation in Australia right now. There is polygamy being practiced here right now. It would be a very small percentage of these offences that are discovered and prosecuted.

Furthermore, as the numbers of middle eastern immigrants and refugees grow, they will quite quickly outnumber the existing population due to their greater family size. As they increase in number, it will become appropriate for them to become parliamentarians, if parliament represents the population. Once there is a strong enough presence of Muslims in parliament, it will eventually become possible for Sharia law to replace our Westminster system. This is the process of democracy.

At the end of the day, we will become victims of our own goodness. Our kindly acceptance of difference, our embracing of others regardless of their sociopolitical stance, our innocent trust in the magnanimity of others who may, in fact, hate us, will lead eventually to the loss and total destruction of all the wonderful qualities we love about Australia.

We need to look forward now with wisdom and foresight, learn from the painful lessons of other countries and use simple logic to see what is coming, because by the time the actual signs of these developments are here to see, it will be far too late to prevent this outcome.

We need to change direction now and adopt an ideology that insists upon unity and like-mindedness for all citizens within the Australian community.

Islamic interest groups, even some who have made submissions to this enquiry, refer to the 'Islamic community' and what their rights should be in this nation, without recognising that the fact that there is a sub-community able to be so labeled, is already a problem – one that wars against a sense of unity and community in a nation.

There is so much more that could be said. I find it perplexing how as a nation we have refused to look honestly at some very real threats facing us and take action that would be in our own long term interests.

We seem blinded by an ideology of our own that says we must be accepting of all people no matter what, and we are not allowed to think badly of any group even if there may be some compelling evidence for linking their group with violence against others. There is a place for healthy self-interest. Not all acts of self-interest are selfish or bad.

I fear that our own ideological blinkers now render us quite incapable of recognising dangers, or of shaping our immigration policy in a way that will save Australia from losing the things that are greatest about it, and which most Australians cherish.

If we want to continue to claim to be a democracy, then I believe we must hold a referendum urgently on matters of immigration, multiculturalism and religion, ask questions fearlessly, and be committed to implementing the will of the people. Many Australians are deeply dissatisfied with the changes occurring in our nation, and their feelings should be considered as much as the feelings of would-be immigrants.

Please remember that I am someone who cares about people in general, and gives generously to immigrant and refugee peoples through my charity.

I have no lack of sympathy for people who need to flee hostile regimes or other threats. We regularly support people such as these.

Nevertheless, I really believe that the Australian people, and indeed any nation, has a right to maintain their culture if they wish to. I believe that this right has been taken from the Australian people since the advent of multiculturalism.

Inherent in this policy is the loss of the right to maintain one mainstream culture.

Furthermore, this has been made a 'moral principle' and any who happen to want or need the stability and familiarity of old ways is decried as being 'racist' or some other derogatory term. This is a terrible abandonment of the rights of long term citizens of this country, and of freedom of thought and speech.

It is not only long term members of the Australian community whose wishes and concerns need to be listened to and respected. As mentioned, I have heard many immigrants who have suffered persecution in their own homeland and come to Australia as a result, say they came here as a place of refuge from an Islamist incursion, and it frightens them to see Islam gaining a foothold in this country.

Above all, the needs and feelings of the Australian people should be considered important by government. A desire not to feel a stranger in ones own land should be deemed important, and a right to be protected, rather than being ridiculed and denigrated as it is.

Governments need to consult the sociologists and learn what we have known for decades, that social change must come slowly if it is to be accepted by the populus.

Social change has come too rapidly in the last two decades, and it is leading to problems we have barely seen the size of yet.

Multiculturalism may be a lovely notion, but the reality is that there are many Australians who are incensed by the experience that the Australia they once knew is being taken from them, and this is causing a serious level of angst from one sector of the community against another. Politicians and social planners need to not underestimate the significance of this internal division.

The alternative to multiculturalism is a multi-racial society, where immigrants are asked to integrate – to appreciate their own heritage, but to adopt the cultural stance and practices of our country. This would allow us to value the positive characteristics of newcomers, without inheriting risks to our own culture.

I hope our government can be enlightened enough to realise the importance of these ideas, and have the courage to act upon them, to the benefit of all future Australians.