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AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS REPEAL  
BILL 1986

Date introduced: 19 August 1986  
House: House of Representatives  
Presented by: Hon. Chris Hurford, M.P.,  
Minister for Immigration and  
Ethnic Affairs

DIGEST OF BILL

**Purpose**

To abolish the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (the AIMA).

**Background**

In 1977 the Commonwealth Government commissioned a review of post-arrival programs and services for migrants under the chairmanship of Mr F.E. Galbally, C.B.E. The Galbally Report, Migrant Services and Programs, was tabled in May 1978, and expressed the view that Australia was at a critical stage in its development as a cohesive, united, multicultural nation. The Report recommended the establishment of the AIMA to provide advice and information on multiculturalism.

The AIMA was established as an independent statutory authority by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs Act 1979. The objects of the AIMA include the development of an awareness of cultural diversity, the promotion of tolerance, understanding, justice and equity in the Australian community. These objects were to be achieved through providing advice to Government, undertaking community education and research, promoting co-ordination between government and community agencies and encouraging the conservation of cultural materials. These objects were implemented through community activities such as the Unemployed Migrant Youth Project, the Ethnic Aged Project, the Multicultural Television Project and the Social Mobility Project. In the 1984-85 financial year total current expenditure amounted to \$2.37 million.

A more recent Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services (ROMAPAS) has recommended a range of approaches which will more effectively ensure the adoption of multicultural principles. The Government is adopting a strategy aimed at achieving acceptance of the values of multiculturalism. Part of that strategy involves the setting up of an Office of Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs to be staffed and funded within the portfolio of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. The continuation of the Institute is no longer seen as the most effective way of carrying out the Government's strategy and accordingly the Institute will be abolished with a resultant saving of some \$2 million in the first year.

### Main Provisions

The Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs Act 1979 and the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs Amendment Act 1985 will be repealed by clause 3.

The 'commencing day' is a reference to the day on which this Bill comes into operation (clause 4), being a day which will be fixed by Proclamation (clause 2).

On the commencing day the Commonwealth will assume the assets and debts of the Institute (clause 5).

Contracts in force immediately before the commencing day will continue in force, with references to the Institute being construed as a reference to the Commonwealth (clause 6).

Instruments or documents connected with the operation of this Bill will be exempt from tax (clause 7).

The Minister will be obliged to have a report and financial statements prepared, as soon as practicable after the commencing day, of the Institute's last phase of operations (clause 8) and the financial reports will be submitted to the Auditor-General who will prepare a report (clause 9). The report, the financial statements and Auditor-General's report will have to be tabled in both Houses of Parliament (clause 10).

The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs will be able to use unexpended Institute funds to meet the expenses incurred as a result of this Bill (clause 11).

For further information, if required, contact the Law and Government Group.

19 September 1986

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#### Reference

Annual Report 1984-85, Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, Parliamentary Paper No. 56/1986.

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