

Submission 3 - Multicultural communities

Multicultural communities 'betrayed' by Albanese government

Leaders of multicultural communities say they are being betrayed by the Albanese Government. Tired of seeing the weaponisation of hatred and discrimination towards migrants for political gain, they had hoped that the resounding election result and the removal of Peter Dutton from office would end the dog whistling and race baiting that has dominated Australia's politics for over a decade.

Instead, in the past week the Government has shocked communities by introducing a new Anti-Fairness Bill – legislation that strips migrants and refugees of their most basic legal right to fairness when facing deportation to third countries like Nauru. At the same time, the Government signed a secretive \$400 million deal with Nauru to take people deported from Australia.

Community leaders say the Bill and the deal send a devastating message – that people who migrated to Australia are treated under a different set of rules, facing different and harsher consequences than others in the community. Unless you were born here or hold citizenship, there is now the ever-present fear that you could be deported.

The Bill and the deal have already created widespread fear and anxiety in migrant communities. Refugees, people seeking asylum, and other migrants who have built their lives in Australia are now left wondering whether they or their loved ones could be targeted in the future. Community organisations have already received calls from people desperate for answers and reassurance.

Multicultural community leaders are calling on the Albanese Government to immediately abandon the Anti-Fairness Bill and cancel the secretive Nauru deal. They urge all MPs and Senators who value fairness and justice to reject this dangerous path.

Vithyaa Thavapalan, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the South Asian Foundation Australia said:

“The South Asian Foundation Australia strongly opposes this secretive bill because it undermines justice, fairness, and accountability. By stripping people of their right to challenge wrongful decisions, forcing unsafe deportations, and validating errors in law, the government is putting vulnerable communities at risk. We are appalled that such a move is being pushed through in secrecy, as it will have a massive and devastating impact on multicultural communities across Australia including South Asians who contribute so much to this nation. Australia's strength lies in its diversity and compassion, and this bill betrays those values. We call on the Albanese to withdraw this legislation and protect the rights and dignity of all communities.”

Hassan Moussa, Chief Executive Officer of the Arab Council Australia said:

“Arab Council Australia is deeply concerned about the so-called Anti-Fairness Bill and the secretive \$400 million Nauru deal. These measures dangerously undermine fundamental rights, instil fear, and send a disturbing message that migrants and refugees are held to a different standard of justice.

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Australia must not return to policies rooted in cruelty and division. We urge the Albanese Government to withdraw this legislation and reaffirm its commitment to fairness, dignity, and equal treatment for all.”

Dr Berhan M Ahmed, Chief Executive Officer of Africause Youth and Community Service and Victorian Australian of the Year 2009 said:

“You can’t at the same time be condemning the anti-migration rallies over the weekend but then treating migrant communities in this way – by threatening and planning to send people to Nauru. Our political leaders have to open their arms to help because otherwise they create an environment of stress, fear, danger and harm towards migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum. If you are for people, you have to be for all people.”

Kenyatta Dei Wal, Program Manager, South Sudanese Community Support Groups, auspiced by the Centre for Multicultural Youth said:

“This Government was elected on a promise of compassion and fairness — but it has turned its back on the very people who clung to that promise with hope in their hearts. With this Bill, multicultural communities are not just pushed aside – they are cast out, punished, and betrayed by a system they believed would protect them.”

Irfan Ali Turi, President of the Grand Parachinar Committee said:

“We strongly oppose this bill that allows people to be detained, stripped of their visas, and deported to Nauru without fair process. It is unjust, inhumane, and strips people of their basic rights. Our community placed its hopes in Labor, supported labor, believing in fairness and compassion, but instead we are left deeply disappointed and hopeless by these cruel laws. Australia must not abandon its moral and legal obligations – dignity and justice must come before punishment and exile.”

Liaquat Ali, Hazara Cultural Association said:

“In the last election, Australians rejected the politics of fear and the scapegoating of refugees and people seeking asylum. Yet, Labor’s new bill represents another troubling attempt to target some of the most vulnerable members of our community. We are deeply disappointed.”

Renuga Inpakumar from the Tamil Refugee Council said:

“This Bill is an attack on the most vulnerable people in our community — refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants who have already endured so much. We expected Labor to bring compassion and fairness, but instead they have deepened the cruelty and fear. This government was elected on hope, yet it has chosen to betray that hope by stripping away basic rights.”

Nos Hosseini from the Iranian Women’s Association said:

“The broad use of these powers poses a grave threat to the lives of those seeking asylum. It is deeply concerning to see individuals who become trapped in a seemingly endless legal cycle, a process that offers little hope, left vulnerable to deportation.

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“Our association is particularly alarmed by the risk of refoulement, a practice that forcibly returns people to the very country they fled – and that is very possible under these powers. We are especially concerned about the fate of Iranians who could be refouled to Iran, where a person is reportedly executed every six hours. This highlights a profound failure of the system to uphold its core duty of protection.”