

**Joint Standing Committee on Migration****Chair: Ms Vamvakinou MP****Deputy Chair: Mrs Louise Markus MP**

Addressing the needs of newly settled Muslim women

The Joint Standing Committee on Migration will discuss some of the issues faced by Muslim women in Victoria with the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights on Wednesday, 29 February.

Committee Chair Maria Vamvakinou said the Centre's advocacy for the full participation of Muslim women in Australian society has been significant.

"The ability for Muslim women to actively participate in Australian society is fundamental to the effective functioning of multiculturalism," Ms Vamvakinou said. "In this light, the Centre's provision of services and support for Muslim women is vital in overcoming issues of settlement,"

Ms Vamvakinou said that like all settling migrants, Muslim women can initially be overwhelmed by the settlement process, which can lead to their exclusion from mainstream Australian society.

"Social exclusion can trigger a wide range of internal community problems and contribute to a negative perception of the Muslim community. This is not just a problem for Muslim women, but for many newly settled migrants in Australia."

The Centre delivers support, research, communication skill development, research and training programmes in order to address the issues of settlement, poverty, housing and violence against Muslim women."

While acknowledging that some of the submissions to the inquiry have voiced concern over the role of Islam within Australia, the Federal member for Calwell said that organisations such as the Centre create awareness and enable newly arrive ethnic communities to participate in Australian society.

"Through firsthand experience, the Centre is well informed by the diverse needs of local Muslim women from various cultural backgrounds. Muslim women have the right to participate in all areas of the Australian community on an equal footing with all Australians."

The Committee's public hearing will commence at **10.45 am in Committee Room 1R4, Parliament House, Canberra.**

Audio of proceedings in Committee Room 1R4 on 29 February will be webcast on <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>.

Full program and other information about the inquiry can be obtained from the Committee's website www.aph.gov.au/mig or from the secretariat on (02) 6277 4560

MEDIA CONTACTS:**Media comment: Committee Chair Ms Maria Vamvakinou (03) 9309 3655 or 0417 541 465 (Basem Abdo)****Background: Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 2300**