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Multiculturalism—an overview

Introduction

2.1   Since its introduction in the 1970s Australia's policy of multiculturalism has shaped Australia's identity and supported our development as a multi-racial, harmonious and cohesive society.

2.2   While the concept of multiculturalism has been subject to debate and review over time, Australia's non-discriminatory migration system supports cultural diversity. A commitment to multiculturalism to manage this diversity, within the framework of Australian values and laws, has had the broad support of Australian governments for over thirty years.[1]

2.3   This chapter provides a brief history of Australia's multiculturalism and the migration trends that define our cultural diversity. Following this the chapter outlines the Government's new multicultural policy framework, and surveys responses to it, as an introduction to the detailed evaluation of evidence received in the body of this report.

Our cultural diversity: a brief history

2.4   Australia is a multicultural nation with a strong record of peaceful settlement of migrants from all parts of the world. Within the framework of our inherited British legal and political system, cultural and linguistic diversity remains an ever-present feature of our cultural and national life.

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1   Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), *Submission 450*, p. 5.

2.5   Ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity has been a feature of Australian society from the beginning of British colonisation in the eighteenth century. Post settlement migration included Malays, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos and Afghans, as well as Irish, English, Scots and Germans. Prior to this, the Malaccans and Melanesians had traded and periodically co-located over centuries with Indigenous Australians in the far north.[2]

2.6   The end of World War II triggered large scale migration across the globe. While the foundations of the White Australia Policy were laid down in 1901, principally to prohibit importation of Pacific Island sugar workers, Australia's need for labour and an increased population led to the mass settlement of displaced victims of Europe's war.[3]

2.7   Since 1945 approximately seven million people from over 180 countries have migrated to Australia. That is, around one million migrants each decade since 1950.[4] Australia's economy has increased six-fold over that time.[5] Over the last decade migrants from India, China, the Middle East and the African continent have featured, contributing to Australia's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.[6]

2.8   At 2010, Australia was one of the world's top three culturally diverse nations.[7] When Australians with one or both parents born overseas are included nearly 45 per cent of the population has a close overseas connection. Today, over 260 languages are spoken in Australia, by people of 270 different ancestries.[8] Census data shows that more than half of recent arrivals since 2006 speak both another language and English either

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2   Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University, *Submission 386*, pp. 1–3, and see for example H Reynolds, *North of Capricorn: the Untold Story of Australia's North*, Allen and Unwin, 2003.

3   Centre for Dialogue, *Submission 386*, pp. 1–2, and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *3412.0 - Migration, Australia, 2009-10*: *History of the Overseas Born* < www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/ abs@.nsf/Products/1197BC920F1A28E5CA2578B00011976A?opendocument> viewed 26 June 2012.

4   DIAC, *Fact Sheet 2 – Key Facts in Immigration* <www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/02key.htm#a> viewed 26 June 2012.

5   DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 23.

6   DIAC, *Immigration Update 2009–2010*, 2010; DIAC, *Immigration update July to December 2011*, 2012; DIAC, *Trends in Migration: Australia 2010 – 11 Annual submission to the OECD's Continuous Reporting System of Migration* (SOPEMI), 2012 < www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/ statistics/trends-in-migration/trends-in-migration-2010-11.pdf> viewed 2 August 2012.

7   Australia, with 28.6 per cent of the population born overseas, was preceded by Singapore (40.7 per cent) and Hong Kong (38.8 per cent) and followed by New Zealand (22.4 per cent) and Canada (21.3 per cent) in ABS, *Table 4.1 Proportion of Overseas-Born, Selected Countrie*s.

8   Australian Government, *The People of Australia: Australia's Multicultural Policy*, 2011, p. 2.

very well or well.[9] This language diversity gives Australia a competitive edge in an increasingly transnational world.[10]

2.9   Despite this great cultural diversity, Australia remains a predominately Christian and secular community, with the largest minority religion being practiced by roughly two per cent of the population.[11] At the 2006 census, 63.9 per cent of Australians indicated that they were Christian, around 20 per cent had no religion or did not specify a religion, and the remaining held non-Christian religious beliefs, of which the largest proportion were Buddhist at 2.1 per cent and Muslim 1.7 per cent.[12]

The foundations of Australian multicultural policy

2.10   Australia has an enduring history as a successful and productive multi-racial community. What has changed over decades has not been the fact of Australia's population diversity but the different policy frameworks developed by government to develop and interpret that diversity. DIAC states:

> …[M]ulticulturalism is a coordinated long range response to migration patterns that have resulted in diverse people and cultures occupying the same locality, who share the aim of making a home for themselves and their families in a community within a safe, stable and cohesive nation. Over time the term …has come to refer to: the demographic fact of cultural diversity; a set of policies, programs and services; as well as a concept that articulates normative ideals about society.[13]

2.11   Australia's first national policy of multiculturalism followed the recommendations of the Galbally Report (1978). The report was compiled for the Fraser Government as part of its review of migrant services and programs.[14] Key principles enunciated in the report were:

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9   ABS, Re: 2011 Census of Population and Housing, *Media Release–National, C60,* 2 June 2012.

10   Australian Government, *The People of Australia*: *Australia's Multicultural Policy*, 2011, p. 2.

11   Professor Joseph Camilleri, Centre for Dialogue, *Committee Hansard*, 29 March 2011, p. 73.

12   ABS Table 1: 9 Religious Affiliation–Australia: 2001 and 2006 Census <www.omi.wa.gov.au /components/statistics/wapeople2006/sect1/table_1-9.pdf> viewed 2 August 2012.

13   DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 4.

14   F Galbally, *Migrant Services and Programs: Report of the View of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants*, April 1978, in DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 5.

- all members of society are to have equal opportunity to realise their potential and have equal access to programs and services;

- every person to be able to retain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and be encouraged to embrace and understand other cultures;

- migrants' needs are to be met by mainstream services, but special services and programs are to be in place at first; and

- there be full consultation with clients in design and operation of services with a focus on migrants becoming self-reliant quickly.[15]

2.12   The policy represented a distinct shift away from the assimilation approach which had dominated in the 1940s and 1950s.[16] Assimilation demanded surrender of language and cultural heritage and a fast integration into mainstream society. The new cultural policy recognised that migrants could retain their cultural identity and successfully integrate with support over time.[17]

2.13   The abolition of the White Australia Policy in 1973 paved the way for the legislative foundations of the multicultural policy enacted under the Commonwealth *Racial Discrimination Act (RDA)* in 1975. The RDA responded in particular to obligations under the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (ICERD) which was ratified by Australia in September that year.[18]

2.14   Governments in the 1980s and 1990s established advisory councils to assist migrants settle well and also broadened policies to support family reunion, cultural expression, social harmony and social justice.[19] By the mid 1990s, however, this rights-based emphasis lost favour. Government policy emphasised skilled migration and structural reforms saw research capacity reduced and service provision mainstreamed.[20]

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15   Cited in Prof Graeme Hugo, Director, Australian Population and Migration Research Centre, University of Adelaide**,** *Submission 505*, pp. 3–4.

16   For a timeline and discussion see *Submission 274*.

17   Department of the Parliamentary Library, 'Multiculturalism: a Review of Australian Policy Statements and Recent Debates in Australia and Overseas', *Research Paper No. 6,* 2010–11, p. 2.

18   Department of the Parliamentary Library, 'Multiculturalism: a Review of Australian Policy Statements and Recent Debates in Australia and Overseas', *Research Paper No. 6,* 2010–11, p. 8, and see United Nations Treaty Collection <treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src =TREATY &mtdsg_no=IV-2&chapter=4&lang=en> viewed 5 September 2012.

19   Respectively the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs in 1987, reconvened as the National Multicultural Advisory Council in 1994, succeeded by the Council for Multicultural Australia in 2000, see DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 5.

20   Department of the Parliamentary Library, 'Multiculturalism: a Review of Australian Policy

2.15   Nevertheless, national policy frameworks continued to be guided by the fundamentals set out in Galbally report.[21] Those practical elements have consistently included English language tuition, settlement services, and an explicit policy of equal access to government services.[22]

2.16   Every State and Territory has now adopted the policy of multiculturalism. In particular, South Australia, Victoria and NSW have introduced explicit multicultural and community relations legislation.[23] These statutes do not provide for individual rights, but provide a framework for a whole of government commitment to multiculturalism that includes equality of access, the promotion of full participation, and the promotion of inter-cultural understanding.

2.17   In contrast to many other countries, Australia has also promoted permanent settlement and access to citizenship as a central plank of an integrative multiculturalism from early days. In 1949, during the inaugural year of the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948*, Australian citizenship was granted to 2 493 people from just over 35 different nationalities.[24]

2.18   In 2011–12, the total number of people conferred citizenship in Australia was 95 776, up from 85 916 in 2010-11.[25] Australia now has one of the highest take up rates of citizenship among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, with nearly 80 per cent of the Australian population being citizens.[26]

Statements and Recent Debates in Australia and Overseas', *Research Paper No. 6,* 2010–11, pp. 12 –13; and see Dr James Jupp AM, *Submission 100*, p. 2; Australian National University (ANU) College of Law, *Submission 396,* p. 4; Prof G Hugo, *Submission 505*, p. 1.

21   For example, Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre, Prof Andrew Jakubowicz, *Submission 420*, p. 5; Dr Christina Ho, Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre, *Committee Hansard,* 23 February 2012, p. 37; Prof G Hugo, *Submission 505*, p. 10 and in *Committee Hansard,* April 2012, p. 1.

22   For example, under the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* and the *Access and Equity Strategy.*

23   *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* (NSW); *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*; *South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1980.*

24   DIAC, 'Citizenship Facts and Statistics' <www.citizenship.gov.au/learn/facts-and-stats/> viewed 23 May 2012.

25   DIAC, *Annual Report 2011–12*: Outcome 6, p. 276 < www.immi.gov.au/about/reports/ annual/2011-12/pdf/2011-12-diac-annual-report.pdf> viewed 28 November 2012.

26   D Smith, J Wykes, S Jayarajah and T Fabijanic, *Citizenship in Australia*, paper prepared for DIAC, 'Naturalisation and the Socio-Economic Integration of Immigrants and their Children', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Seminar, October 2010, p. 22 <www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/citizenship-in-australia-2011.pdf> viewed 4 September 2012.

The recent migration context

2.19   While the Committee's purpose is not to review Australia's migration policy, any evaluation of the commitment to multicultural policy has to start with the fact of cultural diversity, and the policies that form its make-up.[27]

2.20   As previously noted, Australia has a non-discriminatory migration policy which does not select by country or race but according to criteria determined by government policy and objectives. The two main migration programs are:

- the Migration Program (formerly the General Skilled migration Program), comprising the points tested skilled stream, the employer sponsored and business streams, and the family migration stream, and

- the Humanitarian Migration program, comprising onshore and offshore humanitarian and refugee streams.[28]

2.21   Of these, the General Migration Program has by far the largest visa intake in Australia. During 2011-12, a total of 184 998 entrants came in under this stream; 68 per cent as skilled migrants and 31.7 per cent as family members. By contrast, only 13 759 visas were issued to humanitarian entrants, with 6 718 visas being granted offshore and 7 041 visas onshore.[29]

2.22   **Table 2.1** shows the top ten source countries, by citizenship, for the Migration Program in 2011–12.

Table 2.1   **Migration Program top ten source countries, by citizenship, for 2011–2012[+]**

Country of citizenship	Total
India	29 018
Peoples Republic of China	25 509
United Kingdom	25 274
Philippines	12 933
South Africa	7 640
Sri Lanka	5 577
Malaysia	5 508
Irish Republic	4 938
South Korea	4 874
Vietnam	4 773

+ *Excluding New Zealand, the largest source, which is not counted in migration data*

Source   DIAC, 2011–12 Migration Program Report, Program Year to 30 June 2012, p. 5.

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27   DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 4.

28   For more detail on visas within these programs see DIAC, *Submission 450*, pp. 25–34.

29   DIAC, *Annual Report 2011-12*: Outcome 1, p. 56; and Outcome 2, p. 111.

2.23   As shown in the table, India became the top source country during the period, representing 17.7 per cent of the total migration program. Migration intake from China, the leading source in 2010–11, decreased by 13.8 per cent. By contrast, intake from the United Kingdom (UK) increased by 13.7 per cent.[30]

2.24   DIAC has advised that skilled migration will now be more efficient and demand driven, following implementation of a new skills points test framework in July 2011, the introduction of the SkillsSelect database in July 2012, and the simplification of the skilled visa framework.[31]

2.25   **Table 2.2** shows the fluctuation in skilled migration trends by source citizenship country over the period 2009–12.

Table 2.2   Point tested skilled migration top ten nationalities: trends over 2009–12

Country of citizenship	2009-10	20010-11	2011-12	Percentage Change
India	13 330	12 730	17 030	33.7%
United Kingdom	8 740	8 380	9 820	17.2%
Peoples Republic of China	5 700	12 160	7 900	-35.1%
Sri Lanka	3 530	3 240	3 900	20.2%
Malaysia	3 410	3 030	3 620	19.4%
South Africa	4 490	2 760	3 020	9.4%
Pakistan	1 010	990	2 810	183.3%
Philippines	2 320	1 750	2 470	41.4%
Iran	1 470	1380	2 390	73.2%
Bangladesh	1 460	1 240	1 730	39.5%

Source   DIAC, Annual Report 2011–12*: Outcome 1, Table 7, p. 70.*

2.26   In the wake of significant conflict and destabilisation in three key regions of the world, the main sources of humanitarian entrants in Australia over 2010–2012 were the Middle East and South West Asia, Asia and Africa.[32] During 2011–12 the main groups resettled from these regions were:

- Middle East/South West Asia—Iraqi minorities from a range of countries in the Middle East, and Afghans from Iran and Pakistan;

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30   DIAC*, 2011-12 Migration Program Report, Program Year to 30 June 2012*, pp. 5–6.

31   DIAC, *Annual Report 2011–12*: Outcome 1, pp. 43-45.

32   Outcome 2, DIAC *Annual Report 2010-11*<www.immi.gov.au/about/reports/annual/ 2010-11/html/outcome-2/> viewed 28 November 2012, and DIAC *Annual Report 2011-12*: Outcome 2, p. 111.

- Asia—Burmese refugees from camps along the Thai-Burma border, as well as from Malaysia and India, Burmese Rohingya from Bangladesh and Bhutanese refugees from Nepal; and

- Africa—refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopians and Eritreans.[33]

2.27   A focus of concern in recent political debate has been the evident rise in 'irregular maritime arrivals' (IMAs). Data from DIAC indicates an increase in numbers to 8 371 over 2011–12, compared to 4 910 during 2010–11. Of the 7 041 humanitarian visas granted onshore, 68 per cent were for IMAs. The top three source countries for IMAs granted Protection Visas in 2011-12 (in descending order) were Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.[34]

2.28   Australia's settlement of humanitarian entrants is comparable with the United States (US) and Canada, providing for permanent settlement and citizenship for a pre-determined number of humanitarian entrants. This contrasts with the situation in Europe where the majority of asylum seekers stay on under subsidiary or temporary protection arrangements. In 2010, almost three quarters of the world's asylum seekers went to Europe, with France and Germany receiving a total of 91 000 refugee requests over 2010–11.[35]

2.29   While numbers from the UK have recently increased, Australia now receives more skilled migrants from India, China, the Middle East and West or South Asia and more refugees from Africa, Asia and the Middle East than Europe, which was the top source region prior to 2001.[36] This global trend reflects the change in the migration environment where skill markets are now international and both rich and poor are more mobile than they have been in the past.[37]

2.30   Within this context, Australia's migration policies are designed to attract the best skilled migrants to fill labour shortages, to build business synergies, to boost our population, as well as to meet human rights obligations under international covenants to which Australia is a

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33   DIAC *Annual Report 2011–12*: Outcome 2, p. 112.

34   DIAC, *Annual Report 2011–12*: Outcome 2, p. 113; 218; Acting Secretary's Review, p. 10.

35   OECD, Part 1: *'Trends in International Migration Flows and the Immigration Population', International Migration Outlook 2012,* p. 39.

36   See Table *Submission 450*, Appendix D and see DIAC: *Trends in Migration: Australia 2010–11, SOPEMI, Table 4.2 Humanitarian Program Visa Grants 2010-11: Top Five Source Countries*, p. 53.

37   DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 2; AMAC, *Submission 399*, paras 25, 27; Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA), *Submission 416*, p. 7.

signatory. The numbers accepted depend on annually adjusted quotas set by DIAC in response to changing global and domestic trends and needs.[38]

2.31   As DIAC advised, migration contributes growth to the three components of real GDP identified in the Department of Treasury intergenerational reports, being: Population, Participation and Productivity.[39] Skilled professionals and humanitarian families tend to be younger, which increases the population and diversifies the economy.[40]

2.32   The OECD 'International Migration Outlook 2012 has recently concluded that Australia has been successful compared with other OECD countries in utilising migration policy to meet its social and economic objectives in a time of global recession.[41] The OECD has also noted the release in May 2011 of Australia's first Population Strategy, which emphasised the role of migration in supporting regional growth.[42]

2.33   Australia is thus seen to be in a stronger position to address the challenges of population ageing to be experienced by other advanced economies over the coming decade.[43]

Restating multiculturalism: *the People of Australia*

2.34   On 17 February 2011, the Hon. Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, launched the Government's new multicultural policy *The*

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38   See DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 4 and see 'Secretary's Review', *DIAC Annual Report 2010–11* <www.immi.gov.au/about/reports/annual/2010-11/html/secretarys-review/secretarys-review.htm> viewed at 9 July 2012.

39   DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 24.

40   DIAC, *Submission 450*, pp. 24; 32 and see Prof G Hugo, *Submission 505*, p. 6.

41   Permanent migration numbers increased by about nine per cent in Australia in 2010 compared to 2007. In the OECD they went down on average by 14 per cent over the same period. Permanent migration inflows to Australia were 0.9 per cent of the total population but on average 0.5 per cent went to Europe. Moreover, permanent migration in Australia represented close to 40 per cent of all new entries into the working-age population in 2010, higher than the OECD average of 28 per cent. See OECD *International Migration Outlook 2012 Country Note: Australia* <www.oecd.org/els/internationalmigrationpoliciesanddata/IMO%202012_country%20note_AUS_linked.pdf> viewed 6 July 2012.

42   OECD *International Migration Outlook 2012,* 'IV Country Notes: Australia, Recent Changes in Migration Movements and Policies', p. 210 <www.oecd.org/australia/Australia_country_note.pdf>viewed 20 July 2012.

43   Almost half of OECD countries will experience population ageing. See OECD, 'Part 2: Renewing the Skills of Ageing Workforces: the Role of Immigration', OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2012,* viewed 10 July 2012.

People of Australia.[44] The policy responds to recommendations made by the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC) in its 2010 report of the same name.[45]

2.35   The Government established the AMAC in 2008 to formulate appropriate policy responses to Australia's cultural diversity in the new international migration context. The Council had a finite life,[46] with the objective of advising on:

- social cohesion issues relating to Australia's cultural and religious diversity
- overcoming intolerance and racism in Australia
- communicating the social and economic benefits of Australia's cultural diversity to the broad community
- issues relating to the social and civic participation of migrants in Australian society.[47]

2.36   According to DIAC, the new multicultural policy framework provides for respect for cultural diversity and a commitment to democratic principles and Australian laws:

> Australia's successful multicultural society and democracy are built around shared rights and responsibilities that are fundamental to living in Australia, as broadly enshrined in the citizenship pledge.[48]

2.37   The four principles of the new multicultural policy are that 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 Australia's democratic values;
- 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;

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44   Australian Government, *The People of Australia*: *Australia's Multicultural Policy*, 2011, referred to in DIAC, *Submission 450*, p. 6, and see Appendix A.

45   Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC), *The People of Australia*: *the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council's Statement on Cultural Diversity and Recommendations to Government*, April 2010, and see DIAC: AMAC, *Submission 399*, paras 7-11.

46   The Government re-appointed the Council for a second term from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 see DIAC: AMAC, *Submission 399*, p. 1.

47   AMAC at DIAC <www.immi.gov.au/about/stakeholder-engagement/national/advisory/ amac/> viewed 10 August 2012.

48   DIAC*, Submission 450*, p. 6.

- welcomes the economic, trade and investment benefits which arise from our successful multicultural nation; and

- will act to promote understanding and acceptance while responding to expression of intolerance and discrimination with strength, and where necessary, with the force of the law.[49]

2.38   Key initiatives to promote the new multicultural agenda, include:

- establishing a new Australian Multicultural Council (AMC) with a broader terms of reference than the AMAC to oversee and monitor policy implementation, manage Harmony Day and cultural diversity celebrations, and implement the 'multicultural ambassadors' program;

- strengthen the Government's Access and Equity Strategy under management of the AMC to improve the strategy's reporting structures and the responsiveness of government services to clients disadvantaged by cultural and linguistic barriers and to work across governments to collate relevant data on diversity;

- establishing a new National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy between key government agencies to build expertise on anti -racism, communication strategies to address discrimination and support community leadership; and

- prioritising Multicultural Arts and Festivals grants funding under the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program, and establishing a Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program to involve youth from new and emerging communities.[50]

Support for the policy framework

2.39   Evidence received by the Committee indicated strong overall support for the new multicultural policy among migration experts and government and non-government service providers.[51]

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49   Drawn from Australian Government, *The People of Australia*: *Australia's Multicultural Policy*, 2011, p. 5.

50   Australian Government, *The People of Australia*: *Australia's Multicultural Policy*, 2011, pp. 7–8.

51   Including: Migrant Resource North West Inc., *Submission 8,* p. 1; City of Ballarat, *Submission 356*, p. 3; Centre for Dialogue, *Submission 386*, pp. 7–8; Diversity Health Institute , *Submission 412*, p. 1; Northern Territory Government, *Submission 439*, City of Canterbury, *Submission 440*, p. 2; Maribyrnong City Council, *Submission 453*, Australian Greek Welfare Society (AGWS), *Submission 468*, p. 3. Monash City Council, *Submission 469*; Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tas) Inc. *Submission 498*, p. 3

2.40   Queensland's leading migrant settlement agency, the Multicultural Development Association (MDA), for example, commended the policy as a 'deliberate and conscious strategy' to maximise benefits for all Australians, observing:

> Australian multiculturalism is a source of strength, opportunity and unity. It has never been about cementing divisions between people but rather galvanising the whole community to work together to promote the fundamental principles and values of our shared Australian society and our inclusive citizenship: respect for the rule of law, democracy, freedom, justice, unity, equality, opportunity, gender equity, the right to participate, tolerance…[52]

2.41   Professor Andrew Jakubowicz, Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre, Sydney University of Technology, was among those welcoming the new policy as a timely re-statement and refocussing of core principles of the Galbally report. He observed:

> …over the past thirty-five years globalisation has intensified, the Internet has been created, and population movements have accelerated. New communities have entered Australian society and struggled to find a place here. Australia's philosophical and policy settings have not kept pace. Indeed the failure to regularly refresh the ideas and practices from a solid empirical research base, with a consequential tendency to abandon the debate purely to the realm of emotion and populist pressure groups, has contributed to both social and policy crises.[53]

2.42   The proposed appointment of the Australian Multicultural Council (AMC) to conduct research, monitor and co-ordinate policy implementation measures was generally seen as an advance in this context.[54] There was also support for the body as an independent agency at arms' length from government. In particular, the AMAC commended the Government for its decision to have Council members appointed by an independent panel, along the lines of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) and Special Broadcasting Services (SBS).[55]

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52   Multicultural Development Association (MDA), *Submission 421*, p. 8.

53   Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre, Prof A Jakubowicz, *Submission 420*, p. 2.

54   Dr J Jupp AM, *Submission 100*, pp. 3–5; Settlement Council of Australia (SCoA), *Submission 401*, p. 2; and Prof Hugo, Director, Australian Population and Migration Centre, University of Adelaide, *Committee Hansard,* 2 April 2011, p. 5.

55   AMAC, *Submission 399,* para. 11, see also Australian Refugee and Women's Alliance (AIRWA), *Submission 425*, p. 7, and National Ethnic Disability Association (NEDA*), Submission 117*, p. 7, which asked for non-government representation in the AMC membership.

2.43   Eminent migration historian Dr James Jupp AM, a member of the first
        Multicultural Advisory Council, saw value in appointment of an
        independent statutory body answerable to the Prime Minister and separate
        from DIAC to oversee multicultural policy. However, he also considered that
        the body should be fully staffed and funded along the lines of the former
        Office of Multicultural Affairs if it is to be effective in its mandate.[56]

2.44   There was otherwise strong support for the AMC's role in monitoring the
        Access and Equity Strategy, which aligns with the objectives of the
        Government's Social Inclusion Agenda and its focus on ensuring full
        participation and opportunities for all. Arts and youth initiatives had wide
        support in this context.[57]

2.45   A number of submitters, however, felt the synergies between the
        Government's multicultural policy and its Social Inclusion Agenda were
        underdeveloped, and that there is a need to better target people from
        culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds directly by
        more co-ordinated action.[58]

2.46   A consistent theme was the need to establish cultural indicators to better
        direct policy for this purpose under the Access and Equity Strategy:

> The issue of the social inclusion of CaLD communities will be
> considerably aided by proper process of access and equity. Before
> this can occur there needs to be auditing, benchmarking and
> establishing some form of compliance to meet basic human rights
> standards, especially those pertaining to cultural diversity;
> freedom of religion, belief and non-belief; education (especially the
> higher education sector which has largely failed to keep abreast of
> social, cultural, demographic and intellectual changes, both locally
> and internationally); language; heritage; the equitable allocation of
> resources, and substantive equality – all essential but long overdue
> and neglected in Australia.[59]

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56 Dr J Jupp AM, *Submission 100*, pp. 3–5.

57 See for example, Mr Max Fofo Folly, Mr Sidique Bah, Mentors, and Mr Phil Allan, Senior
    Policy Officer, Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia, *Committee Hansard*,
    28 July 2011, pp. 8–9; Ms Heather Muirhead, Manager, Limestone Coast Migrant Resource
    Centre, *Committee Hansard*, 29 July 2011, p. 17.

58 For example, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ), *Submission 86*, p. 2 ,
    Fairfield Council, *Submission 115*, p. 1; Fairfield Migrant Interagency (FMI), *Submission 345,* p.
    1; Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (Australia), *Submission 392*, p. 3; City of Darebin,
    Submission 394, p. 7; AMAC, *Submission 399,* para. 13; Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research
    Centre, Prof A Jakubowicz, *Submission 420,* p. 6 , Australia Greek Welfare, *Submission 468*, p. 3.

59 Conrad Gershevitch, Amareswar Galla and Maria Dimopolous, *Submission 455,* p. 2.

2.47   Research issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 of this report.

2.48   While the range of views outlined were generally supportive of multiculturalism as a policy there was, however, a pronounced point of disagreement in the evidence. This was over the development of anti-racism measures as part of the social justice framework supporting multiculturalism.

2.49   Where advocates for the Government's multicultural policy saw an overt anti-racism stance as fundamental for building community tolerance and social cohesion,[60] a substantial body of submitters to the inquiry challenged the rights-based framework that supports multiculturalism, and particularly the anti-racism stance that underpins it.

2.50   This aspect of the inquiry raised complex issues about multiculturalism as a social philosophy as well a social policy construct. This is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter on Australia's anti-racism framework and multiculturalism.

Conclusion

2.51   In the Committee's opinion, multiculturalism is an indisputable success story for Australia. The policy has contributed to the transformation of Australia from a small, insular community with a colonial mindset to a sophisticated and cosmopolitan nation that can engage with the region and the world on its own terms.

2.52   For over forty years the policy of multiculturalism has given effect to an ameliorating vision of social harmony, and one which delivers practical commitments to respect difference but invites social inclusion.

2.53   The Committee is strongly committed to that vision, believing that all Australians are entitled to benefit from our cultural diversity. However, it also acknowledges that the effectiveness of multicultural policy has been called into question in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 2001, and events in Europe and Bali. The Committee has, as a consequence, received a large number of submissions focussing on what is perceived as a direct threat to Australian values by migration from Islamic countries.

2.54   Given these developments, the Committee supports the Government's decision to restate and clarify the purpose and distinct principles of

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60   NSW Department of Education and Communities, *Submission 135*, p. 9; Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre, *Submission 420*, p. 1, C Gershevitch, A Galla and M Dimopolous, *Submission 455*, p. 1.

Australia's multicultural policy. In the Committee's opinion, the message conveyed should be that multiculturalism is an inclusive policy which values and respects diversity *and promotes inclusiveness and engagement* within the framework of Australian laws.

2.55   This emphasis reiterates a guiding principle of the Galbally report's first articulation of multiculturalism, being that:

> …every person should be able to retain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and be encouraged to embrace and understand other cultures.[61]

Recommendation 1

2.56   **The Committee recommends that the Australian Government endorse and reaffirm commitment to the Galbally report's vision of multiculturalism as an inclusive policy which respects diversity and fosters engagement with Australian values, identity and citizenship, within the framework of Australian laws.**

2.57   The Committee also believes that balance is required when considering debate about multicultural policy in the context of recent migration trends.

2.58   Currently, members of the Islamic faith comprise less than two per cent of the total population. Other than those born in Australia most arrivals fill skill shortages; others arrive as vulnerable refugees. As set out in this chapter, Australia receives a very small number of humanitarian entrants and refugees compared with Europe and, in contrast to arrangements there, has a well-developed settlement program which works for social inclusion.

2.59   Discussion of racism is unpalatable in Australia but evidence to the Committee generated a large and impassioned debate about its manifestation, or otherwise, in the context of these developments. This is explored in the next chapter which looks at Australia's race discrimination framework and its interaction with multicultural policy. The discussion of Islam within Australia's religious diversity is addressed in the chapter following.

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61   F Galbally, *Migrant Services and Programs: Report of the View of Post-arrival Programs and Services to Migrants*, April 1978, pp. 1–2.