

Joint Standing Committee on Migration

Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia

Submission by Dr JAMES JUPP AM, Australian National University

This submission is directed at what is commonly called Multiculturalism, namely programmes to address cultural diversity. It is not concerned with issues of immigration or refugee policy, which properly belong to another enquiry, in my opinion. Of the seven terms of reference five revive long-standing issues of immigrant and refugee settlement, while only the first two are concerned with social cohesion, integration, diaspora relations etc, which are conventional multicultural issues. Much of it repeats the “productive diversity” approach which was fashionable, but not very effective, more than ten years ago. The suggestion that migrants be assisted to start small businesses is just quaint – they already do in large numbers. Innovative ideas are best based on evidence and within an organisation dedicated to a specific policy area, neither of which has been the case in recent years. They also require regular consultation with the appropriate stakeholders, in this case those working in the area of multicultural programmes and services and community development.

Introduction – a Changing Society

Multiculturalism as a Commonwealth policy was adopted in Australia in 1973 and developed in 1978 through the Galbally report on settlement services. This was at the turning point where continental European migration was starting to decline and the White Australia immigration policy was being abolished. It is worth asking whether local and international society has changed in the past thirty five years to the extent that the policy needs to be changed, abandoned or expanded.

Among changes of importance have been:

*The continuing high level of immigration, within which the balance has moved from Europe to Asia;

- *a growing proportion of the overseas-born, reaching 25% in 2006;
- *the greater emphasis on skill with its emphasis on English, rather than family reunion;
- *the reduction of the manufacturing workforce and consequent youth unemployment in industrial districts;
- *the recent encouragement of temporary migrants who are not expected to remain, and the attraction of very large numbers of Asian students;
- *the shifting of civil war situations to the Balkans, the Middle East and South Asia and the decline of similar situations in Indochina;
- *the reduction of self-described Christians from 86% in 1971 to 64% in 2006;
- *the increase of Muslim and other non-Christian communities to a level of one million, many of them locally born;
- *a growing resistance to mass immigration and multiculturalism in Europe and Britain;
- * the ending of bipartisan agreement on immigration and multiculturalism;
- *the ethnic transformation of segments of the major cities;
- *the rise of environmental movements critical of continuing immigration.
- *the shift away from 'race' to 'values' in international discourse.

An Overdue Reconsideration

An inquiry into Australian Multiculturalism is long overdue and is to be welcomed. Multiculturalism is still the official policy of all Australia's nine governments (Commonwealth, States and Territories) and was officially reasserted in 1999. However the policy has been subject to continuing criticism at least since 1988, and has been allowed to run down in its organisation, effects and structures at least since 1996. This is evidenced by the abolition of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Bureau of Immigration Research in 1996 and the transfer of the policy and its implementation from Prime Minister and Cabinet back to Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC/DIMIA) in the same year. Over the same period the library of DIAC was effectively abolished and the important resources held there dispersed. This is the third such library to be wound down since the 1980s (AIMA, BIMPR and DIAC). Policy oriented research

with public funding largely rests with DIAC, whose work is mainly concerned with visa outcomes and immediate settlement issues. The policy of Access and Equity, which includes regular monitoring of the services of Commonwealth Departments, now also rests with DIAC, which is an inappropriate location. Advocacy of multiculturalism has largely rested with State governments for the past fifteen years, apart from Harmony Day and its associated but limited activities, and naturalisation ceremonies. These have a limited impact on the majority population.

My first concern is that multiculturalism should be transferred from DIAC and located in an effective and autonomous statutory authority, answerable to the Prime minister. The welcome suggestion for a stronger Australian Multicultural Council with more resources in *The People of Australia*, is only a limited reform, already recommended in the 1999 agenda and rejected by the then Commonwealth government. Unless such a Council has full time staff and independent funding comparable to that once available to OMA and the BIMPR, it will be quite ineffectual. I write as a member of the first Multicultural Advisory Council, which created the first agenda in 1989. That Council had the active support of prime minister Bob Hawke and began an era when access and equity, ongoing and reputable research and an impressive public relations campaign were all organised effectively by the first OMA director, Peter Shergold. No subsequent council has been nearly as effective. The first council also included a few members from the majority population, such as Sir William Keys of the RSL. This broadens the impact from the later limitation to "CALD" members only.

To summarise the above:

Multiculturalism should be transferred as a policy, administration and research function to a statutory body answerable to the prime minister, with its own legal status and budget. This should have the following functions:

*policy advice and formulation; advocacy and public relations; professional research; relations with State and Territory counterparts; relations and funding

with FECCA; oversight of access and equity as it concerns the social composition and service delivery of Commonwealth agencies and departments; liaison with comparable overseas agencies such as Metropolis, the Canadian, UK, Swedish and other counterparts; supervision of the AMEP and TIS; liaison with the Human Rights Commission; and such other functions as are not directly concerned with immigration intake and immediate settlement. These transfers would, of course, need to be undertaken gradually and in consultation with other agencies and interest groups.

Rationale:

*Multiculturalism is no longer centred only on recent immigrant arrivals, but extends into subsequent generations, religious bodies, human rights, social cohesion and inclusion and so on – all of them embracing Australians well beyond the limits of those who have been born overseas and have only settled within a five year period (the current DIAC limit of interest).

*DIAC is not an appropriate agency for undertaking most of the functions listed above. Moreover it currently has a poor reputation with most of those organisations and individuals likely to be engaged in multicultural activity.

*Multiculturalism seriously needs to be detached from immigration and refugee issues and policies, as increasing numbers of second and third generation Australians form part of the “cultural and linguistically diverse” constituency.

*Multiculturalism at present has very little impact on or credibility with the large minority of Australians living in regional and remote areas, whose experience of diversity, if any, is mainly with the Indigenous population. (Indigenous affairs should remain, as currently, with distinct agencies).

*DIAC should, of course, be left with all its immigration related functions, including selection, control, refugees, initial settlement services, the *Migration Act*, citizenship, compliance, deportation and detention.

Multicultural Concerns and Policies

Without something like the structural changes suggested above, multiculturalism is likely to remain, as it now is, a marginal element in policy making, confined to those limited metropolitan districts with multicultural populations and

institutions. These know that Australia is multicultural. The problem is to reach those who do not know this or reject it.

There are **several issues which should be of ongoing concern**, requiring policy debate and research leading, where desirable, to legislation and administrative changes over time. This was essentially what was happening between 1978 and 1996. Two areas are mentioned here, but there are several more needing attention such as youth unemployment, refugee settlement, services and rights for temporary migrants, composition of elected and nominated public bodies, social mobility for the second and even third generation of former migrants, and so on.

Racism and Prejudice: these are areas requiring close monitoring of previous policies and programmes here and overseas. They are probably best tackled within a quasi-legal approach, as there are significant conflicts between attacking prejudices while preserving freedom of speech. There are also delicate issues involving religious organisations and constituencies, other than those included in the vague term CALD. Past work in this area has found the most obvious prejudice and discrimination to be against Indigenous Australians. This would best be tackled by a specifically Indigenous council or organisation. Hostility against Muslims has entered public discourse and there is clearly a need for continuing dialogue with representative Muslims. A continuing source of anxiety, here and elsewhere, has been the role of sections of the media and especially talk-back radio, where the claim for freedom of expression has most impact and the strongest supporters. More active complaints against repeat offenders are best based on professional monitoring, which requires an on-going organisation with more influence than the current broadcasting and press monitors. Once again, DIAC is not the appropriate body to undertake this work, which rests largely in the area of “human rights and legislation” and impacts on the Australian-born as well as immigrants.

Languages and Cultures

This is an area littered with programs, mistakes and frustrations. The role of DIAC and its predecessors has rightly and fruitfully been to maintain English learning for recent arrivals. It has no real interest in a national language policy or in teaching languages other than English (LOTEs) in schools and colleges. This area has mainly rested with the Commonwealth and State departments of education. It has been so ineffective, due to conflicting aims, that Australia has one of the lowest levels of educated bilingualism in the developed world. This seems a fitting area for research and policy formulation (again!) by the proposed Multicultural Council. It is absurd that we have literally hundred of thousands of native speakers of Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, Hindi, Korean and so on, but are unable to produce even a minimum of effective bilinguals in these regional languages or to sustain those educational institutions which might produce them.

A related issue concerns the weakening position of regional studies in Asian-Pacific societies and economies at the secondary and tertiary level. Multiculturalism will not be taken seriously if it is only concerned with food and dancing. It needs to be filled out with recognition of the strong and growing links between Australia in general and the original homelands and cultures of several million of its citizens.

Other Issues: are quite various and include: social mobility of cultural groups; the social composition of élites; educational status of cultural groups; differences in outcome between public and private schooling; alienation of minorities; libraries and museums; the national education curriculum; LOTE media; political participation; influence of religions; relations with "homelands"; ageing; and many others.

Conclusions: Strong and Preferably Bipartisan National and Local Leadership

The 1999 agenda stressed the need for strong and consistent leadership for multiculturalism. This was lost sight of in the enthusiasm for testing newcomers in their knowledge of Australian values and history. This is, of course, very important. But it is also important to educate the public about the diversity of modern Australia and the ways in which this makes it different from the Australia of the recent past. This is not done by isolating any small section of the population as unassimilable or a threat to cohesion. Nor is it done by playing the "race card" in politics. This has led in Europe to quite serious strains on rich and democratic societies, which Australia does not need. Strong, bipartisan leadership using policy instruments which have prestige, resources and commitment, has been lost sight of in recent years, when multiculturalism (under whatever name you choose) has been pushed to the edge of public policy.

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APPENDIX: CV of Dr JAMES JUPP AM, relevant to this submission.

DR JAMES JUPP, AM, FASSA,

Australian National University

BORN 23 August 1932 in Croydon, England

Came to Australia in 1956

Naturalised Citizen 1983

B.Sc(Econ), London School of Economics, 1953

M.Sc(Econ), London School of Economics, 1956

Ph.D. London University, Thesis Title: "Some Aspects of Parliamentary Democracy in Ceylon", 1975

Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia since 1989

Member of the Order of Australia (AM) since 2004 for "service to the development of public policy in relation to immigration and multiculturalism, to education, and in the recording of Australian history".

Relevant Academic Appointments

**Director, Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, RSSS,
Australian National University since 1988**

**Adjunct Associate Professor, Australian Demography and Social Research
Institute, Australian National University (current)**

**Executive Director, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia from 1993
to 1995.**

Public Appointments

**Chair, Commonwealth Committee of Review of Migrant and Multicultural
Programs and Services, 1986.**

**Member of the Commonwealth Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs
1988 to 1990.**

**Chair, Bureau of Immigration and Population Research, ACT Reference
Group, from 1990 to 1996.**

**Chair, Multicultural Advisory Council of the ACT, 1991-2 and Member until
1993.**

**Member ACT Regional Planning Council of the Department of Immigration
and Ethnic Affairs 1991 to 2000.**

**Member Steering and Program Committee for the 1995 Global Diversity
Conference, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 1994-5.**

**Member, Advisory Committee, Adult Migrant Education Program Research
Project, Macquarie University, 2005-2007**

Academic Memberships: various periods 2000-2011

International member, Refugee Studies Centre, York University, Canada

**Executive Committee member, politics and ethnicity committee,
International Political Science Association**

Editorial Board, *International Journal* (Canada)

Editorial Board *Reform* (Australian Law Reform Commission)

Advisory editor *Journal of Australian Studies*

Associate editor *Journal of International Migration and Integration* (Canada)

Editorial Board member *Mosaic* (Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia).

Editorial Board member *Migration Action* (Ecumenical Migration Centre)

***Books on immigration and multiculturalism, in order of publication:
(sole author)***

***Arrivals and Departures:* Cheshire-Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1966, pp.195**

***Immigration:* Sydney University Press, 1991: pp.136 (second Edition Oxford University Press, 1998).**

***Exile or Refuge?* AGPS, Canberra, 1994, pp.109.**

***From White Australia to Woomera:* Cambridge University Press, 2002 (second edition 2007), pp.243.**

***The English in Australia:* Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp.216.**

***How Well Does Australian Democracy Serve Immigrant Australians?:* Canberra, Democratic Audit of Australia/Australian National University, 2004, pp.56.**

(Co-authored and edited)

***(editor) Ethnic Politics in Australia:* Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1984, pp.213.**

***(editor) The Challenge of Diversity:* AGPS, Canberra, 1989, pp.303.**

***(editor) The Australian People: an Encyclopedia of the Nation, its People and their Origins:* Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1988, pp.1028.**

***(editor) Access and Equity: Evaluation Research,* AGPS, Canberra, 1992, pp.197.**

***(editor with G. Freeman): Nations of Immigrants:* Oxford University Press, 1992, pp.250.**

(editor with M.Kabala): *The Politics of Australian Immigration*: AGPS, Canberra, 1993, pp.302.

(editor) *Immigration and Multiculturalism – Global Perspectives*: CEDA, Melbourne, 1999.

(editor) *The Australian People 2nd revised edition*: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 940.

(editor with J. Nieuwenhuysen): *Social Cohesion in Australia*: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 228.

(editor) *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 799.

(coauthored): *Australia's Immigration Revolution*; Allen & Unwin,, Sydney, 2009, pp. 172.

(co-editor): *Integration and Multiculturalism*; ANU E Press, Canberra (in press).

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