

Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP
Federal Member for Calwell
Chair of Standing Committee on Migration

Joint Standing Committee on Migration
2011
P.O.Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

6th April,

Dear Ms Vamvakinou,

Please find attached submission into the Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia.

After acquainting myself with the Federal Government's Social Inclusion Agenda I felt that the economic side of the issue was well addressed so I would like to comment on the Social and Cultural aspects that impact on immigration generally in Australia but focusing mostly on NSW as this is where I live, and I am more familiar on issues that occur here.

Most Immigrants seem to settle in the main cities, that being Melbourne or Sydney. This is because understandably they may have relatives or know people who would lend support. This situation places enormous strain on resources such as local government, housing, medical facilities, transport, welfare agencies, employment and education and other similar organizations or agencies. It also causes unrest among the residents of the particular suburb.

Australians respect the right of Freedom of Religion and try to embrace the different cultures that have come our way but also feel that immigrants should not be treated more generously than other Australians and that they should try to conform to our customs and laws seeing they have chosen to come here.

We read or hear about the way gestures of difference and open defiance occur where certain people have blurred the line between culture and religion, a prime example of this is the wearing of the burkas. There was recently a court case involving a policeman being accused of racism due to the burka a Muslim woman was wearing. Also why is it that motor bike helmets have to be removed in certain places and not burkas? The wearing of the burka is a cultural tradition not religious.

Other countries such as France and the UK have had to contend with large Muslim communities which nurture unacceptance of multiculturalism especially among young men generating riots and the London bombing.

Britain's Prime Minister, in a speech in Munich began by distinguishing between the religion of Islam and the ideology of Islamist extremism stating "Islam is a religion which is observed peacefully and devoutly by over a billion people. Islamist extremism is a political ideology supported by a minority. We here in Sydney have experienced riots in Cronulla and lately have seen other religions persecuted for example a Hindu Temple in Auburn, was shot at and damaged by a hail of bullets. The Temple is surrounded by a large Muslim population. The saddest part of this action is, that this action was done by Australian born Muslims. It is also common knowledge that many of these youths have been recruited by members of Biker Gangs. One can only surmise that this relationship gives them a feeling of belonging. It seems to me that these young men have a culture identity problem because their families have not accepted the Australian way.

We are very fortunate to have and had many wonderful people such as our present Governor Marie Bashir, who is of Lebanese –born parents and who is married to a famous Australian Rugby Player, Nicholas Shehadie. The brilliant Victor Chang who was born in Shanghai, China to Australian born Chinese parents and Sir John Monash, his parents were both born of German Polish Jewish origin .

In 1949 an army of workers who came from more than thirty countries to fill Australia's serious post-war shortage of skilled and un-skilled workers, many recruited directly and many sent to the Snowy scheme as part of the indenture system called the Displaced Persons Scheme. This brought displaced persons from War-torn Europe to Australia where they had to work for two years or wherever you were sent by the government. The work was tough and dangerous the Snowy Mountains was conducted by Basques, Bulgarians and Byelorussians, Croats, Serbs, Poles, Ukrainians and Anglo-Indians, and dozens of other cultural and national groups. But it was the tens of thousands of skilled and unskilled migrant workers who created the mighty scheme. They gave to the project their determination to succeed in their new land. Most of these workers were single and later married Australian women.

Perhaps we need today a scheme that could play a part to unite people and accept and embrace their new country. Heaven knows we could utilize extra people to rebuild Queensland and Northern NSW due to the recent floods and cyclone.

Illegal immigrants are another point of contention as Australians do not like queue jumpers it is most unAustralian simply because they take the place of other refugees who would like to come here and have followed the correct procedure. Most Australians agree that

Australia is far safer than living in a war zone in Afghanistan and, as well you are given all the benefits by way of the generous Social Security System the Australian Tax payer provides. There are a few steps to take such as, destroy all relevant papers like passports, this makes it had to determine what kind of refugee you are. Or sending an unaccompanied child (usually male) and then the advocates will claim that the child needs his parents/family. Then you destroy the boat on which you arrived via Indonesia, which is not permitted under the United Nations Policy as you have travelled through other countries.

I grew up in the 50s and 60s and Australia was a much safer and comfortable country.

The only unrest that I can remember came from the Union Movements, some Underbelly type crime in Kings Cross Sydney and some banter between the Catholics and Protestants

Our education system worked, we all spoke English, even our "New Australians" as immigrants were fondly called, fitted into our education and workplace systems as most came from parallel /similar cultures. Maybe we should go back and not use this new speak name for immigrants such as African -Australian, lets' just say New Australian.

I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity,

Sincerely