

A submission letter from:-

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SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY “MULTICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIA”

Angels of Mercy is a mobile based service to help newly arrived migrants and refugees **from Africa** to access services that will support their specific needs and will improve their conditions. We also help in capacity building and in supporting the wellbeing of individuals to equip them with the confidence to be self reliant. The project covers all the Western Sydney Region.

I would like to start by saying thank you for reserving our right by giving us an opportunity to express our opinions regarding **Multiculturalism**.

In times of financial restraints – globally and locally – newcomers such as refugees are often viewed as additional financial burdens and seen as taking essential services and resources away from the local population. A fear easily displayed by those in power, i.e. politically or in the media etc., instilling even more reluctance in the local population towards accepting newly arrived migrants and refugees.

As we all know, people or manpower, are themselves one of the major pillars of any nation state's economy. Most western nations are already experiencing major difficulties in finding skilled labour to fill positions and most economists agree that an intake of skilled migrants and refugees whether skilled or unskilled is going to be absolutely necessary for a nation's function in future e.g. we will need a doctor to treat a farmer and we need a farmer to feed a doctor. Both parties play a vital role in our society.

We believe strongly in the great potential which people's skills bring to our society and how on the other hand our government can enhance initiatives which can better assist newly emerging communities to establish their own business enterprises.

Angels of Mercy, through years of experience at the grass roots level, is a staunch believer in multiculturalism. Diversity can be our greatest asset if it is treated with knowledge and respect.

We have identified the importance of these points:-

- Help refugees to feel welcomed in their new home land.
- Help refugees by initiating programs which will help them in building better self confidence so their skills and knowledge are explored better.
- Help refugees to learn more about their human rights and their general responsibilities

- Help refugees to work out where to go for help as communities when needed
- The Lack of the knowledge of the English language in turn denies them opportunities – 510 hours given is not enough for teaching them the language.
- Encourage small local community organisations to sensitively lobby on their behalf
- Recognition of Skills
- Facilitation of more practical learning techniques e.g. in sessions etc...which are more culturally appropriate
- Greater acceptance by the community
- More safeguards against racism and injustice
- Greater respect for choice and decision making
- Greater sense of self worthiness, dignity and self respect
- Greater chance to find secure, improved and peaceful living
- Better and more accessible working opportunities

We encourage multiculturalism and have no hesitation to be involved in any future consultations on issues of multiculturalism, integration and inclusion.

Thank you kindly for this valuable opportunity.

Antoinette Abdelseed
 Co-ordinator
 Angels of Mercy Welfare Services Inc.
 29th March 2011