

My submission on Multiculturalism

Sorry it is late, but I've been busy with numerous other issues and events.

I want more education around Australia where people are educated about what multiculturalism is:

not just tokenistic responses to food, music and dance but to really understand and integrate cultures and truly understand how complex an issue multiculturalism really is and how we need to work together to make it happen and be part of the fabric of Australian society.

We need to be leaders in the field and show the world what a success story multiculturalism is in Australia and not a failed policy like in Germany, France, UK and USA.

We need education about what is a migrant, refugee and asylum seeker.

We need to not breach the UN Convention on Human Rights and UN convention on refugees.

1. National Multicultural Festival in Canberra - going for 33 years, started by the ethnic communities that live here. We have 220 nationalities living in Canberra and speak 260 languages and we have more restaurants per capita than anywhere else in Oz. Now the ACT govt has taken over the management and running of the NMF and communities cannot really afford the price to put up a stall at exorbitant and prohibitive costs and forms to be filled out and some of them need a PhD to complete the forms and some ethnic minorities cannot read or write English!

I have been involved in one way or another over the last 20 years or so with the National Multicultural Festival.

This event has a great reputation and has been flourishing, as the community used to run and manage this event. We used to do it with a tiny amount of financial aid from the Govt and bring in huge revenue for the ACT!

Sadly, the NMF has now been chopped from 2 weeks to ONLY 3 days, due to the ACT Government saying that it has no money for the longer and larger festival! I know this to be fiction, as the ACT Govt has already given 5.3million for a concert event extended over three years.

I smell a rat and want this investigated as to how the money has been spent and who pocketed large sums of money that were obtained from organising this event?

The volunteers are the backbone of the NM Festival. I have been informed that the number of volunteers have dwindled, some speak very little English or lack experience.

The so called Managers have never been to the National Multicultural Festival before and are inexperienced and naive in the management and organisation of this event.

How come there is money for this and other projects in the ACT? Also how come we have the same person at the ACT Govt level who manages this event still there after an extended period of time? WE NEED A CHANGE AT THE HEAD of the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Please explain.

I would like to help promote this event and assist with publicity and organisation, but strongly object to the shortening of the time frame and the lack of community involvement and spirit. There is a direct link between the length and the financial status of this event.

If the Govt could be more generous in the funding, there would be more community involvement and greater spin offs with more revenue being raised when many visitors from other states and around the world came over to enjoy this spectacular event.

Playing small does not do anything to improve the image of Canberra.

2. Need to discuss Mental Health.

We need to do something more solid about mental health of people from ethnic backgrounds who come to live in Australia and have suffered torture and trauma and need help and support!

Not further persecution!

We also need mental health education for young ethnic women who suffer post natal depression and aged care people who suffer as well.

Culturally appropriate aged care is critical and important.

Please call me on if you need further information.

Cheers