



Senator Kate Lundy,
Chair,
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Department of House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

14 May 2009

Dear Senator Lundy,

I write in relation to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories Inquiry into the Immigration Bridge Australia Proposal

Immigration Bridge Australia was somewhat taken aback by the "submissions" made against the project that in no way addressed the terms of reference, but were part of an orchestrated campaign to discredit the project by weight of numbers. I hope you are well aware that if I had contacted all the 5,000 or so active participants (History Handrail subscribers, Migrant Book contributors, newsletter subscribers, etc) in the project in the ACT alone and asked them to put in submissions, then the picture would have looked extremely different.

I wish to emphasise that this is a National Community Project which has support from all over Australia, with large numbers of partners in the History Handrail Program, and contributors to the Migration Book coming every State and Territory. I have attached a readout from recent registrations to give you an idea of just how widespread the support is. It seems that the Immigration Bridge Australia project is a flashpoint for some sort of conflict between those who regard Canberra as being solely for Canberrans and those who recognise its other role - that as the nation's capital.

In spite of some adverse publicity the project has received as a result of the inquiry so far, registrations for the History Handrail have developed an increased momentum over the last two months and that leads me to feel that our final targets re numbers will be achieved.

At the same time the collection of migration stories from all over Australia for the Migration Book now number more than 1,200 and they were read by close to 50,000 people in April alone. It is worthy of note that Australians who under normal circumstances would not write a story are doing so because the system is so accessible and user-friendly. Australians are reading the stories in their thousands for the same reason. Their ever-increasing numbers will remain a great source of pride for future generations. All the stories in the Migration Book are published on www.immigrationbridge.com.au

I feel strongly that the sentiments expressed in the submission (#43) by Dr Headon are the most balanced and sensible put forward. I take the liberty of attaching the wonderful, whimsical article by Ian Warden from last Friday's Canberra Times.

I wish to thank you for attending the public hearings.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Baulch

Campaign Director
Immigration Bridge Australia

www.immigrationbridge.com.au

Attachments

List of sources of recent registrations for the History Handrail Program
Article by Ian Warden in Canberra Times