Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities 2013 Conference

Supporting integration and accomplishment for Australians of all backgrounds

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# TRUE ACCEPTANCE OF DIVERSITY - IS AWARENESS ENOUGH?

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

I am delighted to be invited to contribute in this important Summit.

Thank you Dr Ibrahim for your introduction. I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we stand, and pay my respects to their elders both past and present.

Today I have been asked to talk about history of Australian multiculturalism and in particular to address the question: ***Weather true awareness of diversity is enough for its acceptance?***

In order to answer this question, I will briefly examine the Australia’s historical background, with particular focus on elements that contributed to success of Australian multiculturalism.

Before doing this I need to declare conflict of interest – as I may not be the most objective analyst to answer this question. In fact, I am biased, because:

* I have chosen to migrate to Australia because of its multicultural policies;
* I have worked on key multicultural policies, including:
  + In OMA – developed “National Agenda”, Evaluation of Access and Equity
* I have advocated for multiculturalism in various Fora and have a vested interest in its success; and
* conducted a range of official inquiries that relate to multiculturalism, including the 2004 Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention

**2. EMERGENCE OF AUSTRALIA AS A DIVERSE NATION.**

Let us start with brief examination of our history and in doing so, let us focus on the facts that contributed to the creation of modern multicultural Australia.

**First,** Australia is a very young country, especially when one draws comparison with the old world. In fact, the history of modern Australia began on the day Captain James Cook arrived at Botany Bay in the *HMS Endeavour* in 1770 and formally took possession of the east coast of New Holland (as it was then called) for Britain. First settlement was established only in 1788.

To put the timing into the perspective, it was the time when Europe was about to be shaken by the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars; when the United States of America were consolidating after its War of Independence and Chinese troops occupied Thang Long, the capital of Vietnam.

Politically it was only in 1901 that Australia became a united entity, as a dominion, with full independence from Britain in international affairs and defence to arrive much later. The process of nation building is not yet finished in Australia.

**Second**, Australia has always had a culturally diverse population and this diversity has to be managed by the government of the day.

Australia began as a white settlement in a land inhibited by Indigenous people. The clash at the frontier between the Indigenous population and white settlers was cruel, hateful and has left long lasting consequences. [Aboriginal resistance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Frontier_Wars) against the settlers was widespread, and prolonged fighting between 1788 and the 1920s led to the deaths of at least 20,000 Indigenous people and between 2,000 and 2,500 Europeans. (Grey, 2008) [[1]](#footnote-1). There was a massive government involvement with this conflict.

Other conflicts developed along ethnic and religious lines. The settlers imported into Australia the conflict between the Protestant English and Catholic Irish. These old prejudices and hatreds did not subside but flourished in Australia until the early post WWII years when they finally started to wane.

A conflict also developed between White and Chinese miners in the Gold Fields of Victoria and elsewhere during the 1850s. According to John Knott (2001)[[2]](#footnote-2): ‘*There were allegations that the Chinese were immoral, that their methods of mining were wasteful, that they were unwilling to prospect for new fields, that they spread disease, that they would marry white women and that their weight of numbers would eventually swamp British character of the colony’.*

What was particularity resented was that Chinese were very industrious, hardworking and were able to earn income from claims abandoned by white settlers. In other words, Chinese were accused of amongst other things unfair labour competition because they worked too hard. Their work practices were clearly seen by white miners as undermining what they understood to be the *‘fair go’* principles and no equal two way interaction was established between the Chinese and European miners.

This conflict led to the establishment of the White Australia policy.

World War I (WWI) and WWII saw the government establishing the internment camps in remote locations for thousands of men, women and children classed as 'enemy aliens'.

During WWI Australia interned almost 7000 people during WWI, of who about 4500 were enemy aliens and British nationals of German ancestry already resident in Australia. During WWII Japanese, Germans and Italians were also interned based on their ethnicity, even if they were British nationals.

So, the government involvement with management of cultural diversity was always enormous.

**Third,** since its early days Australia was built as an egalitarian society, with limited class divisions and a culture of ‘fair go’ and social justice.

Captain Arthur Phillip given command of the first fleet of convict settlers was remarkably successful at delivering them alive and relatively well to the shores of Australia. Looking back, a large part of Capitan Phillip’s success was his insistence that proper food be provided to the convicts and that they be regularly allowed out of the holds and up on deck. [[3]](#footnote-3)

When Phillip became the first governor of Australia, one of his earliest decisions was to distribute the food equally amongst the convicts and freeman. He realised almost immediately that food was going to be an issue in the new colony and that any system that distributed it unfairly would result in civil unrest. This was not a decision that his men and officers agreed with, particularly when he had anybody who stole from the stores, convict or freeman, flogged.

He also very quickly set up an emancipation system whereby convicts could earn their freedom and take land grants in the new colony. By 1790 there was a growing population of emancipated convicts and ex-military establishing private enterprise.

It started with Capitan Arthur Phillip’s focus on equal access to food for all during his epic journey and early settlement, his focus on emancipation of convicts and his little attention to class barriers. It is not without some cause that we can describe Governor Arthur Phillip as the founder of the *‘fair go’* ethos in Australia.

A succession of Governors, some better than others, continued to build a society based on Phillip’s foundations. Governor Lachlan Macquarie, for example, much to the chagrin of the free settlers, appointed emancipated convicts to high government office including Francis Greenway as the colonial architect and Dr William Redfern as the colonial surgeon. He even appointed one former convict, Andrew Thompson as a magistrate. In the old world, this disregard for class barriers would simply not have been possible.

In fact, it is the egalitarian streak in Australia’s national character, and not the past racism and xenophobia, that provided an effective groundwork for establishment of contemporary multiculturalism.

This notion of a *‘fair go’* and equality of all men continued post federation. In 1907, Justice Higgins used Australia’s innovative conciliation and arbitrations industrial relations system to bring down the landmark Harvester decision and established a concept of the living, or basic, wage.

As a result employer was obliged to pay his employees a *‘fair and reasonable wage’* that guaranteed them a standard of living that was reasonable for *‘a human being in a civilised community’,* whether or not the employer has the capacity to pay. [[4]](#footnote-4) Another of the industrial court’s early acts was to set the standard working week at 48 hours. What all this meant was that employers had to factor the cost of a decent standard of living into their operating expenses.

The concept of a *‘fair go’* was grounded in this interventionist approach into employment relations and in the resulting flat class structure of Australian society. In particular, the Australian governments had been seen as the custodians of the *‘fair go’* principle and the key function of any government has been to remove disadvantage, deliver housing, schools and hospitals and tax out of existence tall poppies, as electors will take care of politicians who become too full of themselves.

In fact, despite their focus on egalitarianism, Australians display enormous trust in the government and tend to respect and follow the rules.

The extension of *‘fair go’* ethos applying from British men was extended since the colonial days to include new categories of people, such as women, non-British men, Aboriginals, disabled, gay and lesbians and others must be seen as an extension of Australian democracy and economic inclusion. In particular Australian multiculturalism extended liberty, equality and economic wealth to waves of migrants joining the Australian society and offered them a sense of belonging, unparalleled opportunities and integration into democratic institutions.

**Fourth,** Australia is a migrant country and to put it boldly there would not be contemporary Australia without mass migration. Every person who lives in Australia, with exception of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, is either a migrant or a descendent of a migrant.

Having said this, it must be acknowledged that since the very early days Australians have developed a strong national identity, separate from their British nationality and on the ‘Australian way of life’.

Furthermore, Immigration to Australia has always been tightly controlled by the government(s) of the day. (Ozdowski, 1985) [[5]](#footnote-5) Initially Great Britain sent predominantly British and Irish convicts together with accompanying officials and military. As early as 1790, [Governor Arthur Phillip](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor_Arthur_Phillip) wrote to England imploring the British authorities to send skilled migrants to assist with economic development.

The first free settlers arrived in 1793, but numerically significant free migration started in 1820s.

The British government in 1831 established the first scheme of assisted emigration to New South Wales and Tasmania. (Oxley & Richards, 2001) [[6]](#footnote-6) Then a range of different assisted migration schemes and selection procedures were developed over time by the different colonies to bring in the most desirable migrants, needed for economic development. In 1836 the colony of South Australia was established for free settlers from Great Britain, with notable German language settlement. Skilled tradesmen and wealthy individuals were often the target of the early migration schemes.

Governments temporarily lost control over immigration in early 1950’s after the discovery of gold. During this time, the level of overseas immigration to colonial Australia was unrestricted and reached its peak as the population of Australia had grown from 437,655 to 1,151,947 and the population of Victoria from 77,000 to 540,000. Although the vast majority of newcomers emigrated from the British Isles, there were some Chinese, Americans, Canadians, Germans, French, Scandinavians, Italians and the Poles arriving in this period. The Chinese constituted the largest non-British group numbering about 34,000 people in 1858 and accounting for about 20% of mining population in Victoria. According to Phillip Lynch, the Fraser government Immigration Minister, Chinese ‘did not intend permanent settlement’ and ‘lived on the gold field as closed communities’ (Lynch, 1971;2)[[7]](#footnote-7).

The conflict between the Chinese and White miners resulted in the Victorian government legislating in 1855 to restrict the entry of Chinese into the colony, and then other colonies followed the suite resulting in a significant drop in the Chinese population.

From 1856 the Australian colonies, except Western Australia, became self-governing and took over the management of migration issues, including controls over the levels of immigration, selection of migrants and management of various forms of assistance. This enabled the colonies to adjust immigration intake to changing economic circumstances and labour conditions. Particular attention was paid by the legislators to political pressures to ensure that labour competition between settled colonialist and newcomers was minimalized. (Martin, 2001)[[8]](#footnote-8)

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, several colonies continued funding passage assistance of skilled immigrants mainly from Great Britain but also from Europe and the British government paid for the passage of convicts, paupers, the military and civil servants. From 1880 the Australian colonies adopted the White Australia Policy, the policy of excluding all non-European people from immigrating into Australia that was later unified under national legislation.

The first acts of the Federal Parliament established very strong controls over immigration to Australia. The first act was *The Immigration Restriction Act* 1901, which established the ‘White Australia Policy’ and the famous dictation test to be taken by potential immigrants in any European language, at discretion of immigration officials.

In 1903 the federal Parliament enacted *The Naturalisation Act,* which talks about Australians as British subjects rather than Australian citizenship. It also establishes that Asians and other non-Europeans were to be denied right to apply for naturalisation and that resident non-European males would not be allowed to bring Asian wives into Australia.

Everything changed when WWII came to Australia and when Australia was nearly invaded by the Japanese who flattened Darwin and attacked Sydney.

WWII made it obvious that Australia’s population was too small to defend the continent. In 1945, Minister for Immigration, [Arthur Calwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Calwell) (1945)[[9]](#footnote-9) wrote: ‘*If the experience of the Pacific War has taught us one thing, it surely is that seven million Australians cannot hold three million square miles of this earth’s surface indefinitely.’*

The old cry ‘*populate or perish’* won new currency with all major parties and mass migration started. Between 1945 and 2011 some 7.2 million immigrants have arrived and Australia’s population has increased from about seven million in 1945 to almost twenty three million today.

WWII challenged the old alliance with Britain when Australia had to repatriate, despite Churchill’s protest, two Australian divisions were moved from Egypt to Asia Pacific war theatre. A new alliance was formed with the USA when the US military entered the war in the Pacific and then strengthened when USA decided to continue with their significant military and economic presence in the region.

The post-war years seen Australia to embrace its independence and grow as a modern nation in its region.

**3. WHAT ARE OUR DEMOGRAPHICS AND WHERE ARE THEY HEADING?**

Although historically, the majority of migration had come from Europe, the post WWII abolition of White Australia Policy and progressive introduction of globalised intake of migrants resulted in modern Australia being one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse societies in the world.

Today’s Australia is clearly a multicultural society in the descriptive use of this word. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Australian Census over a quarter (26% or 5.3 million) of Australia's population was born overseas and a further one fifth (20% or 4.1 million) had at least one overseas-born parent.

When we look at cultural heritage, over 300 ancestries were separately identified in the 2011 Census. The most commonly reported were English (36%) and Australian (35%). A further six of the leading ten ancestries reflected the European heritage in Australia with the two remaining ancestries being Chinese (4%) and Indian (2%).

Today Australians speak more than 400 languages – this includes some 40 Aboriginal languages. Apart from English the most commonly used are Chinese (largely Mandarin and Cantonese), Italian, Greek, Arabic and Vietnamese languages.

There is also enormous religious diversity. In the 2006 Census data there are 137 religion categories, based on the Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups (ASCRG) 2nd Edition. The top ten religions in Australia account for less than 63% of the population[[10]](#footnote-10) with some 61 % reporting affiliation to Christianity in 2011 Census and 7.2% reporting an affiliation to non-Christian religions, and 22% reporting *‘No Religion’*. The last figure is important to remember when we talk about multi-faith dialogue.

Considering that new migrants concentrate in urban areas, the above figures do ont show adequately the density of diversity in our cities.

Considering the past trends and future predictions by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship both the future migrant intake will grow. DIAC forecasted a gradual rise of the Net Overseas Migration (NOM - made up of overseas arrivals less overseas departures) from 219,400 in 2012 to around 262 000 by June 2016.

Considering the global nature of the Australia’s immigration intake and the recent increase in the number of refugees, it is likely that future immigration will add further to Australia’s diversity.

**4. MULTICULTURAL COMPACT - SOCIAL AND CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING, AND THE HIDDEN ASSUMPTIONS**

The history of multiculturalism in Australia reflects a journey. It has been the journey from British oriented nationalism and the ‘Australian way of life’, through reluctant acceptance of the need to ‘*populate or perish’* of the immediate post war years through the end of a ‘White Australia Policy’ and to the inclusion of diversity into its liberal democracy and the significant more recent growth of Asian migration.

The journey is a direct result of the fact that increasing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity required appropriate policy and program response, both managed by governments. After an initial period of measures designed to assimilate the non-anglo-saxon migrants, since the early seventies successive governments commenced the development of multicultural policies. This was a pragmatic response to the growing proportion of non-British settlers in the Australian community and to the growth of their wealth and political influence.

These policies moved to extend the coverage of Australian liberties and egalitarianism ethos further to include all with their cultural, linguistic and religious differences within some democratic structures.

**From Assimilation to Multiculturalism**

Initially, assimilation of non-British migrants and continuation of a mono-cultural ‘Australian way of life’ was the ideal followed. The expectation of the post-WWII Australian immigration policy was that these non-British European migrants would in (short) time melt seamlessly into Australian society and adopt as fast as possible the Australian lifestyle, become local patriots and abandon their past national allegiances and cultural *‘baggage’.*

‘New Australians’ had to speak English, not live in cultural ghettos and wherever possible marry into the Australian-born community. In fact, the first Immigration Minister Calwell was also a vigorous defender of the White Australia policy although it must be said his views reflected the views of the Australian public at the time. It was generally believed that it might take a generation but a conscious policy of assimilation would see a cohesive mono-culture ‘*without self-perpetuating enclaves and undigested minorities.’* (Lynch, 1971)[[11]](#footnote-11).

However upon their arrival non-British migrants did not dissolve easily into the Anglo-Celtic melting pot, but established their own lively communities with churches, sporting, youth and cultural clubs, associations, language schools, welfare and financial institutions. They established these to maintain their culture and to help themselves in the process of settlement as only minimum welfare services were available to them.

‘New Australians’ also developed their organisational leaderships and started to participate in political processes. It is important, however to note, that the ethnic communities established their institutions in the broader context of Australian society. Their aim was to participate on equal terms and not to build ethnic ghettos or to separate from the community at large. The good integration of the second generation into broader Australian community is the best indicator of success of such approach.

The changes away from the policy of assimilation towards multiculturalism, political and civic openness and participation were gaining momentum in the late sixties. To start with, the policy of assimilation did not have the moral high ground in a globalising world and both the migrants and many British Australians rejected it as inhumane. The ideals of racial equality were gaining acceptance as geographic and social integration of migrants progressed.

A loose alliance formed between ethnically based and Aboriginal grass-root groups and community organisations and there was a concerted push to legitimise their cultures of both by recognising their value and by ensuring that individuals had the right to continue practising their culture within an Australian context. A culinary revolution and a high rate of intermarriage also played a role in this process.

Further, because of the mass European migration the demographic composition of Australian society had been irrevocably changed and Australia became a multicultural society in the demographic sense of the word. With the increase in numbers and growing wealth of New Australians, political influence of ethnic minorities grew and the so-called ethnic vote started to make difference in particular in the marginal electorates.

Finally, there was a clear leadership provided by both Labor and Coalition politicians in support of multiculturalism and against any form of discrimination.

By the early seventies it was also becoming more and more obvious that entrenched cultures carried to Australia by immigrants were not going to go away and that the nation would be better served by accepting diversity rather than trying to eradicate it. This was especially true, when considering the growing political influence and wealth of continental migrants in the Australian society. The ethnic vote was well organised making it difficult, especially in some urban areas, to win a parliamentary election without appealing to minority voters. The threat of the emergence of ‘*self-perpetuating enclaves and undigested minorities’*, was no longer realistic as many migrants were not staying in places of their original settlement but became geographically mobile, using their newly created wealth to settle in the suburbs they aspired to.

**Formal adoption of Multiculturalism – Whitlam’s Labor Government (1972-1975)**

On 5 December 1972 Australia elected the Whitlam’s Labor government, the first Labor government in more than two decades, and it set out to change Australia through a wide-ranging reform program.

In 1973 Whitlam’s Minister for Immigration, Al Grassby after a trip to Canada had issued a reference paper entitled ‘A multi-cultural society for the future.’ Although Grassby never proposed a precise definition of multiculturalism, his speeches suggested that for him multiculturalism was a range of different ideas, concepts and policies associated with migrant settlement, welfare and socio-cultural policy. (Grassby, 1973)[[12]](#footnote-12) His description of 'the family of the nation' came close to being the first official definition of multiculturalism:

“In a family the overall attachment to the common good need not impose sameness on the outlook or activity of each member, nor need these members deny their individuality and distinctiveness in order to seek a superficial and unnatural conformity. The important thing is that all are committed to the good of all.”*[[13]](#footnote-13)*

The Whitlam government’s practical approach to cultural and religious diversity was to remove the discriminatory provision of the immigration legislation, empower the migrants with anti-discrimination legislation and promote both of these things as good for Australia. *The Racial Discrimination Act* was enacted in 1975 to implement Australia’s obligations under the newly ratified UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and an office of Commissioner for Community Relations was established. At a ceremony proclaiming the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, the Prime Minister referred to Australia as a 'multicultural nation'. The Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, made speeches demonstrating for the first time that multiculturalism was becoming a major political priority on both sides of politics.

**Ethno-specific services - Multiculturalism under Fraser (1975-1983)**

When Malcolm Fraser’s conservative coalition government came to power in late 1975 it adopted the Labor foundations and significantly extended Australian multiculturalism both as a concept and as a practical policy and program response to diversity. The Fraser’s adoption of Labor multicultural framework established a degree of bipartisan support for multiculturalism that has lasted until now.

Fraser firmly believed that Australia’s culture is greatly enriched by the maintenance of diversity and linked his political success with the advancement of multicultural policies. Under Fraser, multiculturalism also emerged as a concept that articulated a normative ideal of a society based on the principles of social cohesion, equality of opportunity and cultural identity.

The Fraser government also believed that it is the government’s responsibility to respond to the settlement needs of migrants, and here I wish to acknowledge the pioneering role of Professor George Zubrzycki and his Australian Population and Immigration Council in defining the normative concept of Australian multiculturalism. A tribute needs also to be paid to the Fraser government for the establishment of a first consultative and advisory body the ‘Australian Ethnic Affairs Council’ which recommended a public policy of multiculturalism in its report Australia as a multicultural society.

In August 1977, responding to the decreasing European migration and intake of refugees from South-East Asia, the Fraser government established the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants to be undertaken by a Melbourne barrister Frank Galbally.

The Galbally Review provided a watershed in the development of Australia’s multiculturalism. The resulting 1978 Report identified a need to provide ethno-specific services and programs for all migrants to ensure equal opportunity of access to government funded programs and services with a view to helping migrants to be self-reliant.

It has also spelled out in ‘*Guiding Principles’* (Galbally) what needed to be done to continue developing Australia as ‘*a cohesive, united and multicultural nation’*. The report identified the right of all Australians to maintain their culture without fear of prejudice and identified the need to provide special services and programs to all migrants to ensure equality of access and provision and proposed establishment of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA) on the consideration that *'there is very little information available on multicultural developments in Australia and overseas*.’

In 1979 AIMA was established by legislation as an independent statutory authority. The objects of the AIMA included the development of an awareness of cultural diversity, the promotion of tolerance, understanding, justice and equity in the Australian community. These objects were to be achieved through providing advice to Government, undertaking community education and research, promoting coordination between government and community agencies and encouraging the conservation of cultural materials.

Amongst the many programs set up by the Fraser government the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), a government sponsored radio and television service who’s principle function is *‘to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society’* (SBS charter) has been a standout success.

In 1981, the Fraser government created the first federal Human Rights Commission to implement domestically the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other antidiscrimination measures. Of particular importance was ICCPR Article 27, which states: “*In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their religion, or to use their own language.”* Discrimination on the grounds of nationality was removed from the Federal and State legislation. Subsequently the State and Territory governments developed their own multicultural policy frameworks and programs and removed discriminatory provisions from the State legislation. As a result the new settlers were given more access to social welfare services and Australia’s immigration policies become implemented in non-discriminatory fashion.

**Mainstreaming Australian Multiculturalism under Hawke/Keating (1983-1996)**

When the Labor party was returned to government under the leadership of Bob Hawke in 1983 the bipartisanship approach to policy of multiculturalism continued, although the Hawke government reshaped multiculturalism in response to its political priorities.

First, he ordered the review of AIMA which was perceived to be too close to Liberals and the former Prime Minister Fraser. The Committee of Review reported to the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs November 1983. (AMIA, 1983)[[14]](#footnote-14) The Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs was closed in 1986 and in its place a new Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research was established.

Then, in December 1986 a Committee of Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services (ROMAMPAS) was created under the chairmanship of Dr James Jupp to advise on the Federal Government’s role in assisting overseas born residents to achieve their equitable participation in Australian society.

The Committee reported in August 1986 expanding a range of principles underlying the concept of multiculturalism, such as principles of equitable access by all to government resources, of rights to political participation, rights to practice own culture, language and religion and recommended the establishment of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. (ROMAMPAS, 1986)[[15]](#footnote-15)

The establishment of OMA, as a central coordinating agency for multicultural policy and programs created a ‘golden era’ in Australian multiculturalism and ensured that the years of Hawke/Keating governments were characterised by the expansion of multicultural narrative and linking it to the mainstream.

The focus on service delivery through ethno specific services was replaced by principles of ‘access and equity (A&E)’ applying to delivery through mainstream agencies.

Throughout the Australian Bicentenary in 1988 and afterwards constant efforts were made to link multiculturalism to Australian values and the Australian way of life. According to Gwenda Twan strong efforts were made *to ‘place multiculturalism within a national narrative where cultural diversity and tolerance were part of Australian national identity’*. (Koleth, 2010-11;3-41)[[16]](#footnote-16)

The Federal Government sponsored development by Dr James Jupp of a publication to celebrate the bicentenary called the Encyclopaedia of Australian People, which documents the dramatic history of Australian Settlement and describes the rich ethnic and cultural inheritance of the nation through the contributions of its people. (Jupp, 1988)[[17]](#footnote-17)

Perhaps the biggest achievement of Hawke government was the creation in 1989 *‘National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia. Sharing Our Future’*. The Agenda was created after comprehensive consultations with Australian society, massive research and comprehensive public debate could be characterised as a first national compact about how to manage religious and cultural differences in our society. *A National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* document further defined multiculturalism by expressing its limits.

It said that effective multiculturalism requires an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, an acceptance of the rule of law freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language and the equality of the sexes.

It also stated that the right to express your own culture carried the responsibly to afford others the same right to express theirs. In addition to the social justice and cultural identity aspects a third tear of economic efficiency was also added. (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997)[[18]](#footnote-18)

Hawke’s era was also characterised by the enhancement of consultations with ethnic communities and by the establishment of strong links between ethnic leadership and the Commonwealth and State Labor governments. Teaching of non-English languages was enhanced (Lo Bianco, 1987)[[19]](#footnote-19) and interpreting and translating services created.

When Paul Keating replaced Bob Hawke as Prime Minister at the end of 1991 he continued in this vein. Paul Keating described Multiculturalism as “*a policy which guarantees rights and imposes responsibilities.” “The essential balance, I think, in the multicultural equation: the promotion of individual and collective cultural rights and expression on the one hand, and on the other the promotion of common national interests and values. And success depends on demonstrating that each side of the equation serves the other.*” (Keating, 2002)[[20]](#footnote-20) But perhaps Paul Keating put it most eloquently when he said multiculturalism imposes responsibilities. He said, “These are that the first loyalty of all Australians must be to Australia, that they must accept the basic principles of Australian society. These include the Constitution and the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as a national language, equality of the sexes and tolerance.”

The cross-portfolio evaluation of the 1986 Access and Equity Strategy was evaluated under the Keating government (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992)[[21]](#footnote-21) to ensure that the Australian Public Service had to incorporate A&E objectives into corporate planning, data collection, evaluation, audit and staff training and to adopt procedures able to deal with language and culture barriers in service provision. The evaluation report also strongly stressed the need for consultation with and participation in policy development by client groups. Part of the outcome was that almost all ‘ethno-specific’ welfare and other services were replaced by mainstream services.

In 1994 a National Multicultural Advisory Council was established to review and update the national agenda. Its report, launched in June 1995, found that much had been achieved and recommended further initiatives.

Towards the end of Keating prime ministership there was however a growing disquiet about what it meant for Australia to be a multicultural society or indeed whether being a multicultural society was desirable. The first warning light came in the process of developing the National Agenda when the OMA had commissioned a massive AGB: McNair survey of ‘Issues *in Multicultural Australia’*. The results of the (unpublished) survey indicated that there was a significant disquiet in Australia about government multicultural policies and that a significant proportion held negative attitudes towards multiculturalism. By the late 1980s the number of migrants arriving from Asian and Middle-Eastern countries increased significantly and caused initial settlement problems.

In this context the government created ad-hoc 1988 Committee to Advise on Australia’s Immigration Policies, chaired by Dr Stephen FitzGerald, warned of a *‘clear and present need immigration reform’*  and found that the philosophy of multiculturalism was not widely understood and the ‘*ensuing uninformed debate’* was ‘*damaging the cause it seeks to serve*’. (FitzGerald, 1988)[[22]](#footnote-22) Many Australians were particularly and in correctly concerned that multicultural policies were driving the immigration policies of the day and resented that linkage.

The happy days of bipartisan support for Australia’s immigration policy and on multiculturalism appeared to be over.

**Multiculturalism under John Howard (1996-2007) – handling the backlash**

In 1996 the Coalition leader John Howard was swept into power with a significant majority. He has been for many years a vocal critic of certain elements of multiculturalism and soon after the election, John Howard introduced significant changes in this area. He had dropped the multicultural portfolio by closing down the Office of Multicultural Affairs and transferring the responsibility for multicultural issues to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. He has also closed the BIMPR, restricted access to the Adult Migrant Education Program to new migrants and reduced funding and consultation of ethnic organisations.

His initial reaction was very much in response to populist policies of a dis-endorsed Liberal candidate and a Queensland fish and chips shop owner named Pauline Hansen who was elected 1996 and started to voice her strong criticism of multiculturalism, foreign aid and the then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. Her criticism has won her significant popular support and political following. In her maiden speech to parliament Hansen said “*I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians.”*

Initially Howard, as well as Beazley led Labor opposition, were reluctant to criticize Hansen, claiming free speech as her right. However after she has formed One Australia Party, which has split the conservative and blue-collar vote and her tirades, began to affect our relationships with our neighbours Howard decided to act.

In December of 1996, just 2 months after Hansen’s maiden speech Howard said: “*that there is no place in the Australia that we love for any semblance of racial or ethnic intolerance. There is no place within our community for those who would traffic, for whatever purpose and whatever goal, in the business of trying to cause division based on a person's religion, a person's place of birth, the colour of the person's skin, the person's values, ethnic make-up or beliefs”.* (Howard, 1996) and parliament endorsed the Parliamentary Statement on Racial Tolerance. [[23]](#footnote-23)

In 1997 the Government announced a new National Multicultural Advisory Council (NMAC).Then, under the pressure from the National Multicultural Advisory Council calling upon the Howard Government to do more to defend multiculturalism, in December 1999 the government launched a new policy statement called **‘*A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia.’*** and NMAC was wound up.

The defeat of One Australia Party and return of public trust in government handling of immigration and multicultural policies allowed since 2000 significant increase in immigrant intake and in overall funding for multicultural, citizenship and settlement programs.

The terrorist attack on Trade Towers in New York on 11 September 2001 also gave Australian Multiculturalism a new lease of life.

In 2003 the government issued a new policy statement ‘*Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity.’* that updated the 1999 New Agenda, set strategic directions for 2003–06, and included a commitment to establish the Council for Multicultural Australia.[[24]](#footnote-24)

A key task of the new Council for Multicultural Australia (CMA) was to promote community harmony, through the Living in Harmony grants and promotion of Harmony Day. That shifted the focus of multiculturalism to unity and social cohesion. It also meant the return to old practices of community consultation and of opening government access to the community leaders. To deal with the threat of home-grown Islamist terrorism the government created in 2005 a Muslim Community Reference Group with focus on Australian Muslims to become more integrated with the rest of the community.

The government took also measures to advance the value of Australian citizenship. Now those applying for citizenship need to undertake an Australian history and culture test in English and pledge: 'loyalty to Australia and its people … whose democratic beliefs I share … whose rights and liberties I respect … and whose laws I will uphold and obey.'

This policy shift was reflected in the name change from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs to Department of Immigration and Citizenship January 2007.

**Multiculturalism reasserting itself under Rudd/Gillard governments (2007- 13)**

The Labor government was returned in 2007 with Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister. Upon the election, the Labor was slow in returning to the past Labor policies of active support for multiculturalism but displayed distrust of the concept. The electoral platform promise to re-establish OMA in PM&C was not implemented after the 2007 election.

Only in December 2008 the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC) was officially launched by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship. In April 2010 AMAC presented its advice and recommendations on cultural diversity policy to government in a statement titled The People of Australia.[[25]](#footnote-25) I**n** August 2010 election for the first time since Whitlam government, Labor Party did not put forward a multicultural policy proposal.

However, after Julia Gillard took over the Prime Ministership, the government attitude to multiculturalism has changed. After the 2010 election the Australian Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Chris Bowen dropped a bombshell when he announced the restoration of the portfolio and full-on multiculturalism, including anti-racism strategies and other mechanisms that will require taxpayer dollars. In February 2011 Australia's new multicultural policy The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy was launched by the government.[[26]](#footnote-26)

The Australian Multicultural Council was officially launched by the Prime Minister on 22 August 2011 at Parliament House in Canberra and the most current version of Australia’s Multicultural Policy could be found at in ‘The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy’ (AMAC, 2011)[[27]](#footnote-27).

The long established multicultural compact was endorsed by the Prime Minister Gillard who said that multiculturalism was not just the ability to maintain diverse backgrounds and cultures but that *“It is the meeting place of rights and responsibilities where the right to maintain one's customs, language and religion is balanced by an equal responsibility to learn English, find work, respect our culture and heritage, and accept women as full equals*. …/ *''Where there is non-negotiable respect for our foundational values of democracy and the rule of law, and any differences we hold are expressed peacefully. /…/ ''Where old hatreds are left behind, and we find shared identity on the common ground of mateship and the Aussie spirit of a fair go”.*

*“True multiculturalism”,* the Prime Minister continued was the face of *''a new migrant studying hard in an English language class, working two jobs to put their kids through school or lining up to vote for the very first time. “True multiculturalism includes, not divides, it adds more than it takes. In the end, multiculturalism amounts to a civic virtue since it provides us with a way to share the public space, a common ground of inclusion and belonging for all who are willing to 'toil with hearts and hands /…/ ''And because it always summons us toward a better future, multiculturalism is an expression of progressive patriotism in which all Australians, old and new, can find meaning.''*

Minister Bowen, went further in his address entitled *The Genius of Multiculturalism* to the Sydney Institute, given just after the British PM Cameron’s Munich speech, Bowen has quoted Grassby, Keating and even Fraser as examples of how multiculturalism, if done properly can be cure for racial tensions rather than the cause of them. He expressed the view that, “*If Australia is to be free and equal, then it will be multicultural. But, if it is to be multicultural, Australia must remain free and equal.”*

Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott agreed saying the “*Newcomers to this country are not expected to surrender their heritage but they are expected to surrender their hatreds.”* He further acknowledged that although in the past he worried about multiculturalism, now he embraces it because of his believe *“in the gravitational pull of the Australian way of life”* (Abbott, 2012) [[28]](#footnote-28) His shadow Minister Scott Morrison agrees and does not *“see the experience of Europe on immigration as prophecy for our own future in Australia”*. He links Australia’s success to its selective migration intake. (Morrison, 2011) [[29]](#footnote-29)

**5. MULTICULTURALISM AS A GUARDIAN OF AUSTRALIA’S DEMOCRACY**

Although there were some important differences between multicultural policies of Whitlam, Fraser, Hawke/Keating, Howard and Rudd/Gillard governments, the policy of multiculturalism was built cumulatively by these governments often in the context of political contest for electoral advantage. Multiculturalism must be seen as an important extension of the Australian principle of *‘fair go’* to ethnic minorities.

By now multiculturalism hasd the support of the majority of Australians. What is also important is that it is supported both by the established communities and by recent arrivals (Marcus, 2011; 89-100)[[30]](#footnote-30). For example, recent Mind & Mood (Megalogenis, 2012)[[31]](#footnote-31) report on New Australians, based on extensive interviews with Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese and Somali migrants indicated that they see Australia as peaceful and a fair nation and were more optimistic about their future in the ‘*lucky country’* than the local-born middle class.[[32]](#footnote-32),[[33]](#footnote-33)

In fact, both the political parties and the majority of the Australian public declare support for multiculturalism understood as a social compact that involves:

* power and wealth sharing between different ethno-cultural groups,
* tolerance of difference and
* acceptance of agreed national values and goals such as equality of the sexes and the rule of law.

This multicultural compact is generally regarded as clearly contributing the well-being of Australian society because it supports integration and keeps the society open to the newcomers.

It is a two-way street based on a complex set of normative and structural systems as well as policy, budgetary and program responses put in place to manage diversity. A commitment to Australia and equality of status and opportunity of different ethno-cultural grouping are the two main pillars of this compact. On the other hand, there is an understanding that newcomers upon arrival in Australia will give up their foreign loyalties and in particular involvement with the country of origin conflicts and ethnic or religious hatreds.

Inclusion of CALD Australians into the mainstream results in them having a stake in the common good. It empowers them, makes non-British Australians an integral part of a national dialogue and removes a need for ethnic ghettos or separateness from the community at large to assert individual and group political and economic objectives.

The Australian multiculturalism must be seen as an important institution significantly contributing to the well-being of our democracy. From the point of view of Chris Bowen *multiculturalism has, without a doubt, strengthened Australian society”.*

The existing legislative, policy and program network supports multicultural compact. In fact, each government since the 1970s produced its own government manifestos like the Prime Minister Hawke’s *‘National Policy for a Multicultural Australia’* or the Prime Minister’s Howard’s *‘New National Policy for a Multicultural Australia’* and practical implementation measures like the establishment of Special Broadcasting Service by the Fraser government.

Australian multiculturalism also informs a range of many legislative and educational measures, the most prominent being measures to combat race discrimination and prejudice. Starting with Federal *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* and appointment of Al Grassby as the first federal Commissioner for Community Relations, Australia developed an effective tolerance infrastructure able to welcome and empower the new comers including those from minority racial, cultural or religious backgrounds. These measures empowered migrant communities and the acceptance of the benefits of diversity and have survived attacks from the right and from the left.

Furthermore, respect for cultural difference allows migrants to join the broader Australian society and its political and cultural institutions at their own pace. This policy aims at integration with *‘human face’* and dignity. It allows for preservation and transfer to the next generation of minority cultural and linguistic heritage that did not conflict with the Australian core values. Such cultural preservation adds to migrant family stability and removes stigma associated with minority status.

It is also important to note that each government has also established of a range consultative bodies and liaison mechanism with ethnic community leaders. These play especially important role in handling of social conflicts associated with the nature of diversity. Community leaders are expected to assist the government in particular with management of impact on foreign loyalties and religious hatreds.

The occasional difficulties shown more recently by some radicalised elements of Muslim community in adapting their ways to secular Australia, are in my view temporary and do not reflect the views held by the vast majority of Muslim Australians or their leadership.[[34]](#footnote-34) To link such events with multiculturalism is plainly wrong and as Geoffrey Braham Levy (2012) pointed, the alternative is much worse: “*Abolish Australian Multiculturalism and the strong cultural nationalist impulse in this country would go unchecked. Liberty and equality in ‘Australia would be the first casualties”.*

Multiculturalism must be also seen as an important extension of the Australian principle of *‘fair go’* to ethnic minorities.According to (Koleth, 2010-11;3-41): ‘*Multiculturalism has served a variety of goals over the years, including, the pursuit of social justice, the recognition of identities and appreciation of diversity, the integration of migrants, nation building, and attempts to achieve and maintain social cohesion’.*

The grounding of Australian multiculturalism in values of equality and liberty makes it relevant internationally. These values are at the core of any democratic society. Only societies where citizens are free and have equal in opportunities can have a common sense of belonging. Only such societies could remain cohesive and engaged in nation building projects.

**6. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE - SUPPORTING PROACTIVE INITIATIVES AND AVOIDING LIP SERVICE**

Now, going back to the initial question *Weather true awareness of diversity is enough for its acceptance?*

The short answer is “*Certainly not”.* Awareness of diversity is an important condition to achieve its acceptance, but it is not sufficient if it is not supported by a range of other measures.

The Australian multiculturalism certainly provides necessary structures and mechanisms both to strengthen the awareness of diversity and to promote its acceptance. However, the genuine acceptance of diversity is always a work in progress and much more is yet to be done to in Australia to strengthen principles and practices of our multicultural compact.

A good example of what could be done is provided in the 32 recommendations of the report by the Joint Standing Parliamentary Committee on Migration Inquiry into Migration and Multiculturalism in Australia. A longer list could be found in the FECCA submission entitled ‘*Here to Stay: Australia’s Multicultural Reality’* provided to this Inquiry.

I personally would like to see three improvements:

* Better linkage of Australian multiculturalism to individual freedoms and liberties.
* More education about human rights in our schools. And
* Continuing focus on anti-racism education.

**Strengthen individual freedoms and liberties**.

Civil freedoms and liberties are a cornerstone of any modern democracy and facilitate economic growth. In diverse societies like Australia it is especially important that different ideas and believes are tested in a market place and that a consensus is reached only after informed discussion.

At present I am concerned about the Australian government giving high priority to equity issues and political correctness at the expense of freedom of expression and public debate. In other words, we are strong on the protection of a “fair go” and equality but neglects our civil liberties.

Both need to go in tandem if we are to avoid another Pauline Hanson type of debacle.

In particular I am concerned about the neglect of the Australian Human Rights Commission with regard to individual freedoms and liberties.

Just to give you few examples:

* The position of Human Rights Commissioner responsible for the implementation of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights has been effectively abolished.
* The newly appointed Children Rights Commissioner declared that welfare rights of children will be the priority of her office. As we well know, children welfare is a subject matter of many Federal and State/Territory agencies.

I regret to note that at the moment Australia imprisons some 1,200 asylum seeking children in sub-standard conditions of Manus, Curtain, Christmas Island detention centres and little attention is paid by HRC to their right to freedom - under the Convention of the Rights of the Child, child could be detained only as a matter of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time.

The most recent statistics on immigration detention available on the website of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) show that the number of children held in closed immigration detention facilities in Australia has reached an all-time high. As at 31 December 2012, 1221 children were held in closed immigration detention facilities. In addition, seven babies and children live in locked detention with their parents who were recognised as refugees but obtained adverse security clearance. Many of these refugees have now entered their fourth year of detention.

The Opposition Legal Affairs Spokesman George Brandis has also recently raised his voice against *“a multi-front war against traditional freedom of opinion and freedom of expression”* and expressed a concern that the spread of officially sanctioned intolerance of views which challenge established social dogmas.

**Provide More Human Rights Education at Schools**

The human rights provide a secular set of standards to guide human behaviour in diverse societies.

The human rights education is a key mechanism assisting with the advancement of equality and liberty within the limits of modern liberal democracy. Therefore, we need our educational systems teaching human rights.

Australia does not have a strong civil rights culture.

This is despite the fact that Australia is one of the oldest continuous democracies in the world where citizens exercise their political rights through their elected representatives acting within a constitutional framework and the rule of law. For example, women’s suffrage was introduced as early as in 1894 and gave women the right to vote and stand for South Australian parliament. Australia was also the forefront of “social democracy” and economic rights. In fact, Australia had these economic rights well before the Bolshevik revolution and long before we ratified the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1975.

A weak civil rights culture can be explained by our historical experience and in particular by the lack of an Australian Bill of Rights. In fact, currently Australia is the only western style democracy without such a bill of rights.

Furthermore, Australia’s Constitution does not offer much protection for individual rights – there are only four sections protecting such rights (the right to vote, the right to trial by jury, the denial of federal legislative power with respect to religion and the prohibition against discrimination on the basis of State of residency).

What is of particular concern is that, the Constitution is silent in relation to numerous other rights that are well recognised in the constitutions of other Western democracies.   For example, the Constitution does not guarantee:

* fundamental freedoms such as the freedom of association, freedom of movement, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of thought, belief and opinion, and freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention;
* the right to a fair trial or due process;
* equality of all persons in Australia before the law.

Furthermore, the development of a human rights culture is considered a low priority by governments and most of the education authorities in Australia. The UN accredited Australian Council for Human Rights Education receives almost no government funding and depends on private sponsors.

As a result, the knowledge of human rights in Australia is very poor.

This was well illustrated in a yearlong project “Rights of Passage – A Dialogue with Young Australians about Human Rights” I completed in 2005 when I talked to young people in Australia about their knowledge of human rights.

It was interesting to find that many young Australians regarded human rights very highly and aspired to high human rights ideals. It was also interesting to find that they had almost no formal knowledge of human rights and were often quoting various rights from the US Bill of Rights assuming that they were referring to Australian laws.

As Cherie Blair QC, civil rights campaigner and wife of the former British Prime Minister noted when in Australia: “*The most significant impact of the Human Rights Act has been the way in which the language of human* *rights has begun to permeate the consciousness of individuals and organisations, and thereby to inform the policies and practices of governmental and non-governmental bodies alike”.*

**Continuing focus on anti-racism education.**

The path breaking 1966 *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1966* was ratified by Australia on 30 September, 1975. The convention implemented an important idea, once simply expressed by Muhammad Ali, that ‘*Hating people because of their colour is wrong. And it doesn't matter which colour does the hating. It's just plain wrong’.*

The convention committed Australia in international law to the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and to promoting understanding among all races. Australia was also required to criminalise the incitement of racial hatred, to ensure judicial remedies for acts of racial discrimination, and to engage in public education to promote understanding and tolerance.

The Australian Parliament passed soon after the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (RDA) to implement the convention domestically.

The Article 1 of the Convention defines ‘*racial discrimination*’ as: *...any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.*

A very similar definition of racial discrimination could be found in RDA. According to RDA, discrimination occurs when someone is treated less fairly than someone else in a similar situation because of their race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin. Racial discrimination can also occur when a policy or rule appears to treat everyone in the same way but actually has an unfair effect on more people of a particular race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin than others. RDA outlawed racial discrimination in the public sphere and in particular in areas such as employment, housing or accommodation, provision of goods and services, access to places and facilities for use by the public, advertising and joining a trade union. In addition, in October 1995, Australia introduced the *Racial Hatred Act* to prohibit offensive behaviour based on racial vilification.

Today Australia today is a vibrant, multiethnic society with a high degree of cohesion and a high level of inter-ethnic marriage. For example, according to the 2006 Australian Census, a majority of Indigenous Australians partnered with non-indigenous Australians, and a majority of third generation Australians of non-English-speaking background had partnered with persons of different ethnic origin (the majority partnered with persons of Australian or Anglo-Celtic background). Most of us believe into prosperous and tolerant Australia where, as Abraham Lincoln said, ‘*Achievement has no colour’.*

Nevertheless, there have been contemporary incidents of racism in Australia that took many different forms—from abusive language or discriminatory treatment to violence, simply on the basis of someone's 'race' or colour. For example, Pauline Hanson was widely accused of racism after she stated that Australia was in danger of being *‘swamped by Asians’,* and that these immigrants *‘have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate’.* In 2005 there were a series of racially motivated confrontations between White and Lebanese youth that started around a beachfront suburb Cronulla and continued in the following nights as retaliatory violent assaults and large gathering of protesters in several other Sydney suburbs, and an unprecedented police lock-down of Sydney beaches. In 2009 protests were conducted in Melbourne by Indian students and wide scale media coverage in India alleged that a series of robberies and assaults against Indian students should be ascribed to racism in Australia. In the aftermath of these attacks, other investigations alleged racist elements in the Victorian police force.

So, what is the level of racism in contemporary Australia? Is our anti-discrimination legislation sufficient to deal with instances of racial discrimination? How do we compare with other countries?

The public opinion research suggests that only 11 per cent of Australians are racists or think that not all races of people are equal. This is recognised by a vast majority of us (87 per cent) who agree that there is racial prejudice in Australia. The response to these questions also depends upon who you are. People who belong to majority groupings and hold positions of wealth and power would more often argue that there is no racism in contemporary Australia. For example, the former Prime Ministers of Australia stated that *‘I do not accept that there is underlying racism in this country’* (John Howard) and that ‘*I do not believe that racism is at work in Australia’ (*Kevin Rudd). On the other hand, those Australians who belong to visible minorities or represent powerless communities are more likely to claim that Australia is a racist society indeed. For example, Aboriginal Reverend Aunty Alex Gater is of the view that, ‘*We all know that racism is alive and well*.’ The same view was expressed by Colin Markham, former NSW parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous affairs who also said, ‘*We all know that racism is alive and well*.’

To me, 11 per cent being racists in Australia is much too much, although I would agree with those suggesting that there could be more racists in some other societies and that Australia has good legislation in place and plenty of good will to oppose any form of racism. Having said that, we need also to acknowledge that is the existing pockets of racist behaviour and attitudes.

Looking towards the future, the educational work to combat racism must continue with vigour in Australia. It must continue to mitigate the existing pockets racism and prejudice and it must continue to develop non-racism amongst new generations of Australians. It is necessary to emphasise in our education and role modelling the supremacy of the egalitarian dream, a dream of society where racism has no place. In fact, the future of multicultural Australia, which is so important to many of us, will be undermined if racial discrimination is allowed to survive. Multiculturalism is about respect, inclusion and above all about equality for all of us. This simple truth needs to be transferred to new generations of Australians.

Allow me to finish with a quotation from Nelson Mandela: ‘*No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than it's opposite.*

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1. Grey, J. (2008). A Military History of Australia 2008. Port Melbourne. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John Knott (2001) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In a voyage of 252 days Captain Arthur Philip guided 11 ships carrying nearly 1,500 people over 24,000 kilometres without the loss of a single ship and with a death rate of only 3% (45 people). ‘Given the rigours of the voyage, the navigational problems, the poor condition and seafaring inexperience of the convicts, the primitive medical knowledge, the lack of precautions against scurvy, the crammed and foul conditions of the ships, poor planning and inadequate equipment, this was a remarkable achievement.’ (Wikipedia, 2012) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Although this decision lead the world in setting up progressive labour standards and was made long before the Bolshevik Revolution or establishment of the International Labour Organisation, it is important to note, that the Harvester decision did not guarantee the same conditions of employment to women and Aboriginal Australians. In other words, Harvester decision could be also described as both racist and sexist with neither women nor Aboriginal Australians enjoying the benefits of the basic wage. In fact, the early Australian concept of the ‘fair go’ was a bit like Athenian concept of democracy in around 500 BC which formally applied to all Athenian citizens, but excluded Athenian women, most likely Athenians with disabilities, ‘barbarians’ – which often meant other Greeks who spoke in a different dialect or with a different accent and slaves. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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7. Lynch, 1971;2) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Martin, 2001 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [Arthur Calwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Calwell), 1945 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See: The People of Australia. Statistics from the 2006 Census <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/_pdf/poa-2008.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Lynch, 1971 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Grassby, 1973 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. However, Mark Lopez (2000) argued that multiculturalism under Labor had a precarious status as ministerial policy because Grassby had not attempted to change the Labor party’s immigration policy, and the policy direction outlined in his speech was not officially confirmed by the Whitlam Government [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. AMIA, 1983 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. ROMAMPAS, 1986 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Koleth, 2010-11;3-41 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Jupp, 1988 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Cope & Kalantzis, 1997 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Lo Bianco, 1987 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Keating, 2002 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Commonwealth of Australia, 1992 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. FitzGerald, 1988 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. **See:** [Parliamentary Statement on Racial Tolerance](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/06australias-multicultural-policy.htm#a) [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. **See:** [Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/_pdf/united_diversity.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. **See:** [The People of Australia](http://www.immi.gov.au/about/stakeholder-engagement/_pdf/people-of-australia.pdf) (1.0MB PDF file) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. **See:** [The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/pdf_doc/people-of-australia-multicultural-policy-booklet.pdf) (1.1MB PDF file) [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
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30. Marcus, 2011; 89-100 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Megalogenis, 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. C Bowen ‘The Genius of Australian Multiculturalism’ speech [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Reported in The Australian, on 15 September 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Although some concerns are being expressed from time to time about radicalisation of some parts of Muslim communities and in particular about brain washing of Muslim youth. For example Professor Clive Williams, a leading anti-terrorism expert has warned that ‘Australian Muslim children are at risk of being groomed in extremist anti-Western ideology by radicalised parents, posing a new challenge to national security agencies’ [↑](#footnote-ref-34)