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Multiculturalism

by

Lenny Roth

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cultural diversity in Australia

According to the 2006 Census, over 22 percent of the Australian population were born overseas; and almost 14 percent of the population were born in a non-English speaking country. According to the 2001 census, 18 per cent of the population were born in Australia but had at least one parent who was born overseas. In 2006, almost 16 percent of the population spoke a language other than English at home. About 5 percent of the population were affiliated with the main four non-Christian religions: Buddhism (over 418,000), Islam (over 340,000), Hinduism (over 148,000) and Judaism (over 88,000).

Brief history of federal multiculturalism policy

Until the mid 1960s, the Federal Government adopted a policy of *assimilation,* which required migrants to shed their cultures and languages and to become indistinguishable from the Anglo-Australian population. In the mid 1960s, the Government adopted a policy known as *integration*, which did not expect minority cultures to give way totally to the dominant culture but nor did it encourage ongoing cultural diversity. Following the 1978 Galbally report on migrant services, the Government adopted multiculturalism, which recognised the right of migrants to maintain their cultural identities, encouraged and assisted migrants to do so, and promoted equal opportunity and access to services.

Since then, multiculturalism has been official Government policy, as outlined in the 1989 Agenda for Multicultural Australia and the 1999 New Agenda for a Multicultural Australia. In late 2006, the Government decided to abandon the term 'multiculturalism' and in January 2007 it changed the name of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. The Government has indicated that the policy fundamentals of multiculturalism will remain but that there will be change of emphasis towards a shared national identity based on a core set of values.

Brief history of ethnic affairs policy in NSW

A 1978 report on ethnic affairs by a temporary Ethnic Affairs Commission made over 280 recommendations to advance the full participation of people from ethnic groups in society. The Government endorsed this report and in 1979 it established the Commission as a permanent body with the objectives of encouraging full participation of ethnic groups and promoting "the unity of all ethnic groups in the community as a single society consistently with the recognition of their cultural identities". In 1983, the Government introduced the Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements (EAPS) program, which required all government agencies to prepare detailed plans aimed at improving their ability to deliver services to a culturally diverse society. According to the Government, NSW was the first State to adopt multiculturalism as participation and equality of opportunity.

In 1993, the Fahey Government introduced the NSW Charter of Principles for a Culturally Diverse Society. After being elected in 1996, the Carr Government released the Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000, which outlined the key roles and result areas for Government and contained a new reporting and monitoring framework, including a requirement for the Commission to prepare an annual Ethnic Affairs Report. The *Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979* was amended to give effect to this reporting and monitoring framework and to

give legislative recognition to the principles of cultural diversity outlined in the Charter. In 1999, the Government changed the title of the Ethnic Affairs portfolio to the Citizenship portfolio and it replaced the Ethnic Affairs Commission with a new Community Relations Commission. The new Act restated the principles of cultural diversity as principles of multiculturalism. In 2004, the Government released its Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2012.

Main criticisms of multiculturalism

The main criticisms of multiculturalism are that:

- It is divisive and threatens social cohesion;
- It denies and denigrates Australian culture;
- It tolerates objectionable practices and behaviour; and
- It costs billions of dollars of public money.

Supporters of multiculturalism reject these criticisms. They argue that it:

- Creates social cohesion by allowing migrants to feel welcome and to participate;
- Does not deny or denigrate Australian culture, which is dynamic not static.
- Has always required migrants to support the law and basic principles of society;
- Does not cost billions of dollars and it yields significant economic dividends.

Recent debate about multiculturalism

There has been much debate about multiculturalism in the wake of terrorist attacks in recent years (in particular the London bombings in July 2005 involving perpetrators who were born in Britain) and in the wake of the December 2005 Cronulla riots. Some commentators called for the policy to be re-assessed or abandoned while others argued that multiculturalism has been a success and that we need more of it not less.

Public opinion on multiculturalism

Public opinion towards multiculturalism is not clear. Goot's examination of public opinion polls on the subject from 1988 to 1997 found that there was majority support for assimilationist views (i.e that migrants should try to forget their old national customs, adopt the Australian way of life and behave the way the majority of Australians do) but there was also majority support for multiculturalist views (i.e that ethnic groups should not be criticised if they want to mix mostly with themselves, that migrants should be able to become Australians without giving up their own culture, and that multiculturalism promotes fairness and is necessary for a harmonious society). The 1995 and 2003 Australian Surveys of Social Attitudes found majority support for some assimilationist views but did not necessarily indicate a rejection of multiculturalism. A public opinion poll after the Cronulla riots found that 81 per cent supported multiculturalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism was introduced in the late 1970s as a new government policy for managing the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity in Australian society. Since then, it has been official Federal Government policy and its principles have been the basis for "ethnic affairs" policy in NSW. While multiculturalism has always been fairly controversial, terrorism and the Cronulla riots have reignited debate about its merits and its future. Similar debates have been taking place in Britain and elsewhere.[1]

In late 2006, the Federal Government decided to abandon the term 'multiculturalism' and in January this year it changed the name of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.[2] The Government has also indicated that it wants to focus its policy on a shared national identity based on a set of core values. These recent developments prompted an editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* to ask, "Is this the end of an era? Should it be? Has multiculturalism failed us?"[3]

This paper begins with an overview of cultural diversity in Australia. It then provides a brief history of the Federal Government's multiculturalism policy, including the recent changes. Next, it presents a brief history of ethnic affairs policy in NSW. The following sections of this paper outline the main criticisms of multiculturalism in Australia, the recent debate about it, and public opinion towards the policy since the late 1980s.

2. CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA

Brief history of immigration

The White Australia policy

In 1901, the new Federal Government adopted an immigration policy that later became known as the 'White Australia' policy. This policy "embodied a complex set of legislative and administrative measures aimed at severely restricting non-European immigration".[4] It remained in place for a large part of the 20th century. In the 1960s, the Holt Government modified the policy and the Whitlam Government finally abandoned the policy in 1973.

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1 See for example Modood T et al, *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship: A European Approach,* Routledge, London and New York, 2006. For a recent statement on multiculturalism by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, see 'Nation's Future – Multiculturalism and Integration', speech at Downing Street, 8 December 2006.

2 Note that in 1999 the NSW Government changed the title of the Ethnic Affairs portfolio to the Citizenship portfolio: see Section 4 of this paper.

3 'Ssh! Let's give three quiet cheers for the M-word', *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 29/1/07.

4 Tavan G, *The Long and Slow Death of White Australia,* Scribe Publications, Melbourne, 2005, p7.

Dominance of British immigration

James Jupp has outlined the dominance of British immigration to Australia as follows:

> Britain had always been the source from which Australia sought to build its population. It contributed to the largest single national group of immigrants each year from 1788 to 1996, when it was replaced by New Zealand, still remaining second. Until the 1960s it normally supplied at least half of the intake. Between 1949 and 2001 it provided 32 per cent of all immigrants, although this moves from a majority to a small minority over that period.[5]

Post war immigration from Europe

After the Second World War, it was thought that Australia must "populate or perish" and the Government encouraged large-scale migration from Europe. Australia entered into an agreement to settle at least 12,000 displaced people a year from the camps in Europe; it entered into formal migration agreements, often involving the grant of assisted passage, with the United Kingdom, Malta, the Netherlands, Italy, West Germany, Turkey and Yugoslavia; and it also entered into informal migration agreements with Austria, Greece, Spain, Belgium and other countries.[6] To give some idea of the numbers, Jupp has reported that "the Netherlands-born increased from 2000 in 1947 to 102,000 in 1961, the Greece-born from 12,000 in 1947 to 140,000 in 1966, the Italy-born from 34,000 in 1947 to 267,000 in 1966 and the Germany-born from 14,000 in 1947 to 109,000 in 1961".[7]

Asian and other non-European immigration since 1970s

Since the abandonment of the White Australia policy in 1973, there have been large numbers of migrants coming from outside of Europe, particularly from Asia. Increased migration from Asia began when the Fraser Government decided to accept a large intake of Indochinese refugees after the end of the Vietnam war in 1975 (by 1982 almost 70,000 had settled in Australia).[8] Jupp has reported on the levels of Asian immigration as follows:

> In 1972 about 10 per cent of the settler intake was from Asia, excluding the Middle East. This temporarily passed 40 per cent in 1984 and touched 51 per cent in 1991 for one year only. For the thirteen years of the Labor government it averaged about 40,000 a year, or 39 per cent of settler intake, and this level has been sustained since the Coalition was returned in 1996.[9]

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5 Jupp J, *From White Australia to Woomera: The Story of Australian Immigration,* Cambridge University Press, 2nd edition, 2007, p12-13.

6 Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 'More than fifty years of post-war migration', in Healey J, *Multiculturalism In Australia*, The Spinney Press, 2005, p8-9.

7 Jupp J (2007), note 5, p13.

8 Tavan (2005), note 4, p214.

9 Jupp (2007), note 5, p31.

Cultural diversity in Australia today

As a result of immigration over the last 60 years, outlined in brief above, Australia has become a very culturally diverse society. Some of the following data on cultural diversity in Australia is taken from the 2006 census but in some categories data from the 2006 census was unavailable and data from the 2001 census is therefore reported instead.[10]

- ***Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders:*** [11] According to the 2006 census, over 2 percent of the Australian population (over 450,000 people) identified themselves as being of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

- ***People who were born overseas:*** [12] According to the 2006 census, over 22 percent of the Australian population (over 4.4 million people) were born overseas. In addition, almost 14 percent of the population (over 2.7 million people) were born in a non-English speaking country. The top 10 overseas countries of birth were:

	Birthplace	**Number of people**
1	United Kingdom	1,038,162
2	New Zealand	389,467
3	China	206,593
4	Italy	199,124
5	Viet Nam	159,848
6	India	147,111
7	Philippines	120,534
8	Greece	109,989
9	Germany	106,528
10	South Africa	104,132

- ***People with parent(s) born overseas:*** [13] According to the 2001 census, 8 percent of the population (over 1.5 million people) were born in Australia but had parents who were both born overseas; and another 10.3 percent of the population (almost 2 million people) were born in Australia but had one parent who was born overseas. Thus, overall, over 18 percent of the Australian population (almost 3.5 million people) were born in Australia but had at least one parent who was born overseas.

- ***Overseas ancestries:*** [14] In 2001, there were over 200 reported ancestries. The three

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10 Data from the 2006 Census has only recently been published and it can be accessed online at: Hhttp://www.abs.gov.auH.

11 This data was sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2006 Census Quickstats: Australia,* accessed online at Hhttp://www.abs.gov.auH.

12 This data was sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2006 Census of Population and Housing: 2006 Census Tables - Country of Birth of Person by Sex,* Cat 2068.0.

13 This data was sourced from Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, *The People of Australia: Statistics from the 2001 Census,* 2003.

14 This data was sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australians' Ancestries: 2001,* Commonwealth of Australia, 2004, p11. Note that the 2001 census form asked 'what is the

largest ancestries were Australian (6.7 million people), English (6.4 million) and Irish (1.9 million). There were four ancestries which had between 500,000 and 1 million people: Italian, German, Chinese and Scottish; and there were 10 ancestry groups with between 100,000 and 500,000 people: five of these were European (Greek, Dutch, Polish, Maltese, Croatian) four were Asian or Middle Eastern (Lebanese, Indian, Vietnamese, Filipino), and the other was New Zealander.

- ***People who speak a different language:***[15] According to the 2006 census, almost 16 percent of the population (over 3 million people) spoke a language other than English at home. The top ten languages spoken were:

	Language	**Number of people**
1	Italian	316,894
2	Greek	252,216
3	Cantonese	244,557
4	Arabic	243,672
5	Mandarin	220,597
6	Vietnamese	194,863
7	Spanish	97,996
8	Filipino and Tagalog	92,338
9	German	75,625
10	Hindi	70,005

- ***Religious affiliations:***[16] According to the 2006 census, over 25 percent of the population were Catholic, over 18 per cent were Anglican, and 19 percent were other Christian denominations. The top four non-Christian religions were Buddhism (418,749), Islam (340,394), Hinduism (148,130), and Judaism (88,832). In total, these four non-Christian religions represented 5 percent of the population. Over 18 percent of the population had no religion.

person's ancestry?'. It asked respondents to 'mark the ancestry with which you most closely identify'. The instructions also stated, "count your ancestry back as far as three generations, if known. For example, consider your parents, grandparents and great grandparents".

15 This data was sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2006 Census of Population and Housing: 2006 Census Tables – Language Spoken at Home by Sex,* Cat 2068.0.

16 This data was sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2006 Census of Population and Housing: 2006 Census Tables – Religious Affiliation by Sex,* Cat 2068.0.

3. BRIEF HISTORY OF FEDERAL MULTICULTURALISM POLICY

Before multiculturalism: assimilation and integration[17]

Up to the mid 1960s, the Federal Government adopted a policy of *assimilation*, which required European migrants to shed their cultures and languages and to become indistinguishable from the Anglo-Australian population. This policy of assimilation also dominated the treatment of the indigenous population. From the mid 1960s, the Government adopted a policy known as *integration.* This policy did not expect minority cultures to give way totally to the dominant Anglo-Australian culture but nor did it encourage ongoing cultural diversity. It allowed migrant cultures to influence Anglo-Australian culture but it then expected migrants to adopt this modified culture.

1970s: The introduction of multiculturalism[18]

In August 1973, the Immigration Minister, Al Grassby, gave a speech entitled 'A multi-cultural society for the future'.[19] According to Tavan, this was the first time that the term "multicultural society" was used in an official government statement and it was also the first time that the government "appeared to officially endorse the maintenance and development of ethnic diversity within Australian society".[20]

In October 1975, the Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, and Leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Fraser, "made speeches demonstrating for the first time that multiculturalism was becoming a major political priority on both sides of politics".[21] Also in 1975, the Federal Government enacted the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth), which prohibited discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, national and ethnic origin in a number of areas of life including employment and the provision of goods and services.

The 1978 Galbally report of review on post-arrival programs and services for migrants has been described as the "real foundation document of multiculturalism" in Australia.[22] The introduction to the report stated:

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17 This section is based on National Multicultural Cultural Advisory Council, *Australian Multiculturalism For a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness,* Commonwealth of Australia, April 1999, p28ff. For a full account of the assimilation and integration policy phases, see Lopez M, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945-1975,* Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2000, Part 1.

18 For a full account of the development of multiculturalism, see Lopez (2000), note 17.

19 This speech can be accessed at: Hhttp://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/library/libraryitemdetail.php?catalogID=249H

20 Tavan G, note 4, p201.

21 NMAC 1999 report, note 17, p31.

22 Jupp (2007), note 5, p83.

> We believe Australia is at a critical stage in the development of a cohesive, united, multicultural nation. This has come about because of a number of significant changes in recent years – changes in the pattern of migration and in the structure of our population, changes in attitudes to migration and to our responsibilities for international refugees, changes in the needs of the large and growing numbers of ethnic groups in our community, and changes in the roles of governments and the community generally in responding to those needs.[23]

The report concluded that it was now necessary for the Federal Government to:

> … change the direction of its involvement in the provision of programs and services for migrants and to take further steps to encourage multiculturalism. In taking these new directions, we stress at the outset that the closer involvement of ethnic communities themselves, and of other levels of government, is essential.[24]

The report commented on multiculturalism as follows:

> We are convinced that migrants have the right to maintain their cultural and racial identity and that it is clearly in the best interests of our nation that they should be encouraged and assisted to do so if they wish. Provided that ethnic identity is not expressed at the expense of society at large, but is interwoven into the fabric of our nationhood by the process of multicultural interaction, then the community as a whole will benefit substantially and its democratic nature will be reinforced. The knowledge that people are identified with their cultural background and ethnic group enables them to take their places in their new society with confidence and a sense of purpose if their ethnicity has been accepted by the community.
>
> We reject the argument that cultural diversity necessarily creates divisiveness. Rather, we believe that hostility and bitterness between groups are often the result of cultural repression. We were informed, and observed for ourselves, that some parents and their children had drifted apart because of what is referred to as the 'cultural gap'. In these cases the children at school or work observed that the way of life of their parents was quite foreign to their associates and was sometimes the object of ridicule. Rather than be seen as someone odd or different the children had rejected their parents' culture and attempted to take on another identity…
>
> We perceive many benefits arising from a multicultural society. Already our nation has been enriched by the artistic, intellectual and other attributes of migrant cultures. It seems clear to us that if our society develops multiculturalism through the broad concept of community education it will gain much which has been lost to other nations. It will avoid the social dangers inherent in any policy designed to repress cultural diversity and enforce assimilation.[25]

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23 Galbally F, *Migrants Services and Programs: Report of the Review of Post-arrival Programs and Services for Migrants,* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1978, p3.

24 Galbally 1978 report, note 23, p3-4.

25 Galbally 1978 report, note 23, p105.

The report adopted four guiding principles as the basis for its recommendations, which included (i) the right to maintain one's culture without prejudice (ii) equal opportunity and equal access to services (iii) meeting the needs of migrants through programs and services available to the whole community (iv) programs and services to be designed and operated in full consultation with clients and migrants to be helped to become self-reliant quickly.[26] The report recommended a range of reforms, to be implemented over three years. The Fraser Government supported the review's recommendations and:

> The initiatives that followed enhanced migrant settlement services, reinforced the notion of Australia's cultural pluralism, and sought – in direct contrast to the attitudes of the past – to present such pluralism as a source of social strength rather than a threat. These included the establishment of an ethnic affairs branch within the Department of Immigration, as well as ethnic affairs councils and migrant resource centres; the establishment of the research-orientated Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs; the founding of the Special Broadcasting Service; various grants to ethnic welfare and migrant associations; and greater representation of ethnic groups on immigration-related consultative committees.[27]

Early to mid 1980s: Policy developments

In November 1981, Prime Minister Fraser outlined the key elements of multiculturalism in an inaugural address to the Institute of Multicultural Affairs. He said:

> …[an] attempt to enforce conformity holds high costs both for the individual and the society. It denies people their identity and self-esteem. It drives a wedge between children and their parents. Ultimately it poses a real threat of alienation and division. We cannot demand of people that they renounce the heritage that they value, and yet expect them to feel welcome as full members of our society. Realism alone dictates that cultural differences must be responded to in a positive way.
>
> But multiculturalism is concerned with far more than the passive toleration of diversity. It sees diversity as a quality to be actively embraced, a source of social dynamism. It encourages groups to be open and to interact, so that all Australians may learn and benefit from each other's heritages. Multiculturalism is about diversity, not division – it is about interaction not isolation. It is about cultural and ethnic differences set within a framework of shared fundamental values which enables them to exist on a complementary rather than competitive basis. It involves respect for the law and for our democratic institutions and processes. Insisting upon a core area of common values is no threat to multiculturalism but its guarantee, for it provides the minimal conditions on which the well-being of all is secured…
>
> Not least, multiculturalism is about equality of opportunity for the members of all groups to participate in and benefit from Australia's social, economic and political

---

26 Galbally 1978 report, note 23, p4.

27 Tavan, note 4, p216-217.

> life. This concern with equality of opportunity is dictated by both morality and hard-nosed realism. I am talking here about basic human rights, not benevolence which the giver bestows or withdraws at will. No society can long retain the commitment and involvement of groups that are denied these rights…[28]

In 1985, the Hawke Government introduced the Access and Equity Plans Strategy. Ministers whose portfolios significantly impacted on immigrants were to provide an annual statement to the Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Minister on the measures taken to ensure 'access and equity' in services and measures planned for the coming year.[29] In 1986, the Government refined this strategy, requiring specific departments and agencies to develop plans by 30 September 1986 for the three years commencing 1 July 1987.

In 1986, the Government abolished the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs.[30] However, in 1987, the Government created the Office of Multicultural Affairs, which was located within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet; and in the same year, it established the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs, which was to report to the Prime Minister. [31] At the Council's first meeting, Prime Minister Hawke asked it to assist the Government to develop by 1989 a National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia.[32]

1988: Fitzgerald report on immigration

The 1988 Fitzgerald Committee's report on immigration referred to negative community attitudes towards multiculturalism. It stated that:

> Multiculturalism has come to be seen by many as something for immigrants and ethnic communities only, and not for the whole of Australia. Aboriginals, for example, have not wanted to identify with it. Many other older generation Australians believe it has nothing to do with them.[33]

The report also noted that a majority of submissions that expressed views on

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28 Fraser M, 'Multiculturalism: Australia's Unique Achievement', Inaugural address to the Institute of Multicultural Affairs, Melbourne, 30 November 1981, p3.

29 Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Don't Settle For Less: Report of the Committee for Stage 1 of the Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services,* Australian Government Publishing Service, 1986, p164.

30 *Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs Repeal Act 1986* (Cth).

31 Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No 1, *Inquiry into Multiculturalism: Interim Report,* NSW Parliament, Report 9, May 2000, pxvi.

32 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia…Sharing Our Future,* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, July 1989, p57.

33 Fitzgerald S, *Immigration: A Commitment to Australia - The Report of the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988, p10.

multiculturalism were "opposed to social policies which they saw as promoting community division and racial tension at the expense of 'our cultural heritage' and national security".[34] In addition, some critics had "read into the utterances of some exponents of multiculturalism an intention by government to use immigration as some form of social engineering to achieve racial diversification in Australia".[35] While the report considered that opposition to multiculturalism should be taken seriously it also stated that the original intent of multiculturalism "was an outgrowth of fine ideals of justice and equality and esteem", that these ideals were "an essential part of the commitment we offer to immigrants", and that, in the social dimension they "must be affirmed".[36]

1988-89: Opposition's criticism of multiculturalism[37]

Until 1988, the policy of multiculturalism enjoyed bipartisan consensus. In 1988, the then Opposition leader, John Howard, gave an address to the Canberra Press Club in which he stated that, "there are profound weaknesses in the policy of multiculturalism. I think it is a rather aimless, divisive policy and I think it ought to be changed". In a subsequent address at Esperance, he announced the ideal of One Australia, which "respects our cultural diversity and acknowledges that we are drawn from many parts of the world but requires of all of us loyalty to Australia at all times and to her institutions and her values and her traditions which transcends loyalty to any other set of values". In May 1989, the shadow Minister for immigration, stated that the Liberal party was "moving away from multiculturalism to something we think is more all-embracing". He also stated that under the Coalition, the term "multiculturalism" would not be used.

1989: National Agenda for Multicultural Australia

In 1989, the Federal Government published its *National Agenda for Multicultural Australia*, which defined the "government's multicultural policies and the goals that underlie them"; and it included "a series of policy initiatives designed to meet both short-term needs and long-term objectives".[38] Multiculturalism was defined as a government policy "for managing the consequences of cultural diversity in the interests of the individual and society as a whole".[39] The Government identified three dimensions of this policy:

(1) Cultural identity
The right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their

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34 Fitzgerald 1988 report, note 33, p30.

35 Fitzgerald 1988 report, note 33, p58.

36 Fitzgerald 1988 report, note 33, p59.

37 The information in this section is taken from Jupp (2007), note 5, p106-107.

38 1989 National Agenda, note 32, pix

39 1989 National Agenda, note 32, pvii.

individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion;

(2) Social justice
The right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth; and

(3) Economic efficiency
The need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background.[40]

It can be seen that the National Agenda was expressed to apply to all Australians and not only to people from other countries. It included Aboriginal Australians. The Agenda noted that "Aboriginal people have a unique status in Australia and in any multicultural context. They also remain the single, most disadvantaged group in the community".[41]

The limits to Australian multiculturalism were that multicultural policies:

- Are based upon the premise that all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, its interests and future first and foremost;
- Require all Australians to accept the basic structures and principles of Australian society – the Constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language and equality of the sexes;
- Impose obligations as well as conferring rights: the right to express one's own culture and beliefs involves a reciprocal responsibility to accept the right of others to express their views and values.[42]

Major policy initiatives contained in the National Agenda included a strategy to improve the process for recognising overseas qualifications, a community relations campaign to ensure ethnic diversity went together with social cohesion, strengthening the Access and Equity strategy, and a package of English language measures.[43] One of the measures to strengthen the Access and Equity strategy was to "widen the scope of the strategy from immigrants to *all* those who may face barriers of race, culture or language including Aboriginal people and Australian born children of non-English speaking background".[44]

The National Agenda also indicated that the Government would consider the desirability of enacting a Multiculturalism Act.[45] This proposal did not proceed because "multiculturalism

40 1989 National Agenda, note 32, pvii.

41 1989 National Agenda, note 32, p7.

42 1989 National Agenda, note 32, pvii.

43 1989 National Agenda, note 32, pix-x.

44 1989 National Agenda, note 32, p23.

45 1989 National Agenda, note 32, p48.

had become too controversial by 1990 to ensure unanimous parliamentary approval".[46]

1996-98: Developments following the Coalition's election

After the Coalition's election in March 1996, it changed the title of the Immigration and Ethnic Affairs portfolio to "Immigration and Multicultural Affairs" and it transferred the Office of Multicultural Affairs from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.[47]

In 1997, the Howard Government established a new National Multicultural Advisory Council and gave it terms of reference which included developing a "report to the Minister, which recommends on a policy and implementation framework for the next decade, that is aimed at ensuring that cultural diversity is a unifying force for Australia".[48]

In June 1998, the Government launched the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*, which represented a new approach to access and equity that was also endorsed by the State and Territory Governments. The Government stated:

> Too often access and equity have been an after-thought, an add on if service providers are aware of the difficulties people from different language and cultural backgrounds can face in accessing government services and getting results from them. The *Charter* places the emphasis on building these cultural diversity considerations into the strategic planning, policy development, budgeting and reporting processes of government service delivery…[49]

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs has reported annually on the progress of Government departments and agencies in implementing the Charter.[50]

1999: Advisory Council report and New Agenda

In April 1999, the National Multicultural Advisory Council published its 92-page report, *Australian Multiculturalism For a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness.* The Advisory Council affirmed the continuing importance of Australia's multiculturalism policy. It also considered that the term "multiculturalism" should be retained but it recommended that it

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46 Jupp (2007), note 5, p88.

47 Hon Philip Ruddock MP, 'Government Commitment to Multicultural Affairs', *Media Release,* 3/5/96.

48 Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, *Multicultural Australia: The Way Forward – An Issues Paper by the National Multicultural Advisory Council,* 1997, p2.

49 Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society,* 1998, p1.

50 Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 'Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society', information on website: HHttp://www.immi.gov.au/about/charters/culturally-diverse/index.htmH

be referred to as "Australian multiculturalism", in order to "recognise that our implementation of multiculturalism is unique and reflects Australia's diverse heritage, history, democracy, culture and identity".[51] The Advisory Council recommended that the following definition of Australian multiculturalism be adopted:

> Australian multiculturalism is a term which recognises and celebrates Australia's cultural diversity. It accepts and respects the right of all Australians to express and share their individual cultural heritage within an overriding commitment to Australia and the basic structures and values of Australian democracy. It also refers to the strategies and policies that are designed to:
>
> - make our administrative, social and economic infrastructure more responsive to the rights, obligations and needs of our culturally diverse population;
> - promote social harmony among the different cultural groups in our society;
> - optimise the benefits of our cultural diversity for all Australians.[52]

It also recommended the adoption of the following vision for Australian multiculturalism:

> A united and harmonious Australia, built on the foundations of our democracy, and developing its continually evolving nationhood by recognising, embracing, valuing and investing in its heritage and cultural diversity.[53]

The Advisory Council believed that Australia needed to pursue this vision "if we are to maximise the dividends of our diversity, while continuing to avoid the serious communal disharmony that has weakened many other pluralistic societies".[54] The Advisory Council also recommended that the following four principles of multiculturalism be adopted:

- **Civic duty**: all Australians are obliged to support the basic structures and principles of Australian society – our Constitution, democratic institutions and values – which guarantee us freedom and equality and enable diversity in our society to flourish.

- **Cultural respect:** subject to the law, the right to express one's own culture and beliefs involves a reciprocal obligation to accept the right of others to do the same.

- **Social equity:** all Australians are entitled to equality of treatment and opportunity enabling them to contribute to the political and economic life of Australia, free from discrimination on the grounds of race, culture, religion, language, location,

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51 National Multicultural Advisory Council, *Australian Multiculturalism For a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness,* Commonwealth of Australia, April 1999, p42

52 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p42.

53 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p43.

54 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p44.

gender or place of birth.

- **Productive diversity:** The significant cultural, social and economic dividends which arise from the diversity of our population should be maximised for the benefit of all Australians.[55]

The Advisory Council proposed "enhancing and refocussing" Australian multiculturalism in a number of ways including by highlighting that it "has been built on the evolving values of Australian democracy and citizenship"; and by "making it inclusive so that it seeks to embrace and be embraced by all sections of the Australian community".[56] It discussed the situation of indigenous Australians and commented that, "Australia's multiculturalism will remain fundamentally flawed until we have effected meaningful reconciliation between indigenous and other Australians based on mutual respect".[57] The Advisory Council made various other recommendations, including that the Government establish an independent agency to help formulate, implement and coordinate multicultural policies.[58]

In December 1999, the Federal Government issued a response to the Council's report, which was entitled *A New Agenda for a Multicultural Australia.* The Government expressed support for virtually all of the Council's recommendations.[59] However, according to Jupp, the Government did not subsequently implement many recommendations, including those that "urged greater funding for multicultural advocacy" and "increased cultural diversity on public boards and agencies".[60]

In July 2000, the Government established the Council for a Multicultural Australia for an initial period of three years to assist the Government to implement the *New Agenda* and to raise awareness and understanding of Australian multiculturalism.[61]

2003: Update to the New Agenda

In 2003, the Government released its strategic directions for multicultural Australia in 2003-2006.[62] It stated that, "some three years on, following an assessment of the progress

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55 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p62.

56 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p62.

57 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p55.

58 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p77-78.

59 Australian Government, *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia,* December 1999.

60 Jupp, note 5, p95.

61 Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 'Council for Multicultural Australia', information on website: Hhttp://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-diverse-australia/government-policy/CMA/index.htmH

62 Australian Government, *Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity: Updating the 1999 Agenda for Multicultural Australia – Strategic Directions for 2003-2006,* Commonwealth of Australia, 2003.

in implementing the *New Agenda*, it is appropriate to reaffirm our commitment to the policy and to articulate the strategic direction for multicultural policy for the next three years".[63] The Government reaffirmed the four principles of multiculturalism outlined in the 1999 Agenda. It also referred to the significant, negative impact of the terrorist attacks in the United States and the Bali bombings on community relations in Australia. It stated that community harmony and social cohesion were "pivotal elements in enabling Australia to contribute effectively to the international effort to combat terrorism, and in safeguarding Australians domestically".[64] The policy outlined general strategic directions in three areas: (i) community harmony; (ii) access and equity and (iii) productive diversity. These directions primarily focused on developing existing programs.

The Government also committed to extending the Council for Multicultural Australia for three years. On 30 June 2006, the Council's term expired and it has not been extended. The Government is planning to replace the Council with a new body in 2007.[65]

2006-07: Recent policy developments

Government abandons the term 'multiculturalism'

On 27 November 2006, Hon Andrew Robb MP, then Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, made a speech indicating that the Government wanted to move away from the word 'multiculturalism' and move towards a focus on a shared national identity based on a core set of values.[66] He stated that multiculturalism was a vague term that meant different things to different people. He added:

> …some Australians worry that progressively the term multicultural has been transformed by some interest groups into a philosophy…which puts allegiances to original culture ahead of national loyalty, a philosophy which fosters separate development, a federation of ethnic cultures, not one community.

Mr Robb referred to a submission by the Ethnic Communities Council (ECC) of Victoria that did not support the notion that Australia has "one overriding culture", based on a common set of values. According to Mr Robb, the ECC believed that "Australia is a multicultural society where people unite around democracy, the rule of law and our shared homeland". Mr Robb referred to this as an "essentially a separatist view" and stated:

> …new and emerging communities, who increasingly come from cultures far different to our Australian culture, are effectively being told that they have no obligation to do their best to become "Australian".

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63 Strategic Directions for 2003-2006, note 62, p5.

64 Strategic Directions 2003-2006, note 62, p6.

65 DIMA, note 61.

66 Hon Andrew Robb MP, 'The Importance of a Shared National Identity', Address to the Transformations Conference, Australian National University, Canberra, 27/11//06.

Mr Robb then commented, "the one point on which there must be universal agreement is that those who come here should unite behind a core set of values, a shared identity". In his view, this approach for effective integration was driven by recent trends including globalisation and an ageing population, which were creating labour and skills shortages and "prompting a continuing increase in the numbers of people coming to Australia from countries whose cultures are quite different from our own culture".

On 30 January 2007, the Government changed the title of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.[67] The Department's website does not now refer to the term "multiculturalism" but outlines the Government's policies in relation to 'A Diverse Australia'.

In a speech on 23 February 2007, Hon Teresa Gambaro MP, the new Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, explained the Government's new policy as "a change in language and a change in emphasis".[68] Ms Gambaro said that while the term "multiculturalism' had become redundant, "rumours of the 'death' of multiculturalism are greatly exaggerated". Ms Gambaro said that the "policy fundamentals" of multiculturalism were important and should remain. However, the Government's position was that "we have no option other than to unite behind a core set of common values; a shared Australian identity. We should all celebrate our individual backgrounds but we cannot afford to be confined by them". These shared values included:

- Respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual;
- Democracy;
- Our commitment to the rule of law;
- Freedom of speech and the press;
- The equality of men and women; and
- Egalitarianism, which embraces the uniquely Australian principle of the 'Fair go' which encompasses mutual respect, honesty, and compassion for those in need.

Government announces new citizenship test

On 11 December 2006, the Government announced that it intended to introduce a formal citizenship test.[69] People who wish to obtain Australian citizenship would "first need to have successfully completed a test designed to demonstrate their knowledge of the English language and their knowledge of Australia, including the responsibilities and privileges of

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67 Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 'New Arrangements for Department of Immigration', *Media Release,* 30/1/07. The Prime Minister had announced this change on 23 January 2007: see 'Ministerial Changes', *Media Release,* 23/1/07.

68 Hon Teresa Gambaro MP, 'How Muslim Communities Have Integrated Into the Wider Australian Community', Address to Islamic Council of Victoria/Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Symposium, Melbourne, 23/2/07.

69 Australian Government, 'Citizenship', accessed on the citizenship website: Hhttp://www.citizenship.gov.au/news/citizenship-test/index.htmH

Australian citizenship".[70] The Government has explained that:

> A formal citizenship test could be an important part of ensuring that migrants are fully ready to participate in the Australian community as it could provide a real incentive to learn English and to understand the Australian way of life. This is also important from a broader perspective as it will support social cohesion and successful integration into the community.[71]

The Government is also proposing to require persons who pass the test to sign a commitment to Australia's values, its laws and its way of life.[72] In addition, the Government plans to introduce a requirement for people applying for permanent residency to "sign a statement indicating that they have read, or had explained to them, material made available by the department on life in Australia and that they acknowledge and respect Australian values and agree to abide by Australian laws".[73]

Federal Opposition's policy statements

On 29 November 2006, Labor announced that, if elected, it would create an office of citizenship and an office of integration and multicultural affairs, which would be set up in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.[74] In the new Shadow Ministry announced in December 2006, Hon Tony Burke MP became the Shadow Minister for Immigration, Integration and Citizenship and Hon Laurie Ferguson MP became the Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs. In a speech on 22 December 2006, Hon Tony Burke MP, said that Labor would be focusing on integration. He said:

> I think it is fundamental for us that we do not allow the original vision of a multicultural society to be redrawn as though it was about people living in cocoons.
>
> It never was. It was never meant to be. But when we started to drop the concept of integration from our own speeches, when we started to talk about diversity as a strength in itself without saying that diversity also strengthens the community as a whole, then we ourselves were complicit in it becoming the missing ingredient.
>
> It has allowed the Government to have been talking about integration as though integration and multiculturalism are mutually exclusive. This is wrong.

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70 Australian Government, 'Questions and Answers on Citizenship Test', accessed on the citizenship website: Hhttp://www.citizenship.gov.au/news/citizenship-test/Q_As.htmH

71 Australian Government, 'Questions and Answers on Citizenship Test', note 70.

72 Hon Andrew Robb MP, 'Joint Press Conference with Mr Andrew Robb Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs', Interview Transcript, 11/12/06.

73 Australian Government, 'Questions and Answers on Citizenship Test', note 70.

74 'Labor PM to take on cultures gig', *The Age,* 30/11/06.

> Integration is the way to make a multicultural society work.[75]

Mr Burke outlined three policy areas that he believed were "critical to using integration to make a multicultural society work". These were settlement programs, temporary protection visas, and the skilled migration program and temporary work visas.

4. BRIEF HISTORY OF ETHNIC AFFAIRS POLICY IN NSW

Mid 1970s: Introduction of ethnic affairs policy

In 1975, Ethnic Affairs was added to the portfolio of the Minister for Youth and Community Services and it was also added to the title of the Department of Youth and Community Affairs.[76] Also in 1975, the Consultative Council on Ethnic Affairs was established as an advisory body to the Minister. It was made up of 15 members, drawn from the various ethnic groups and appointed from government departments. Cabinet also appointed an Advisory Committee on Ethnic Affairs for each of the 10 country regions.

1977: Anti-discrimination laws

In 1977, two years after the enactment of the federal *Racial Discrimination Act*, NSW enacted laws that prohibited discrimination on a number of grounds, including race.[77]

Late 1970s: Ethnic Affairs Commission and report on ethnic affairs

In 1977, the NSW Government set up a temporary Ethnic Affairs Commission to investigate and report on ethnic affairs.[78] The Chairman and all members of the Commission but one were of non-English speaking background. In June 1978, the Commission presented its report, which was entitled "Participation".[79] The philosophy underpinning the report was one that Premier Wran had previously expressed:

> …it is a basic human right that no individual or group in the community should be discriminated against or excluded from the fullest participation in the social,

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75 Hon Tony Burke MP, 'Tony Burke's Speech to the Fabian Society (Vic): Integration', 22 December 2006. Accessed on website: Hhttp://www.tonyburke.com.au/file.php?file=/integrate_policyH

76 The information in this paragraph is taken from Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 1, *Inquiry into Multiculturalism: Interim Report,* NSW Parliament Report 9, May 2000, pxiii.

77 *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW).

78 The Commission was established in accordance with legislation passed in 1976: *Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1976* (NSW).

79 The Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales, *Participation: Report to the Premier,* June 1978.

> economic and cultural life of the community or from the fullest share of all the opportunities the community offers.[80]

The Commission's report recommended that it be confirmed as a permanent statutory body and it made over 280 other recommendations across a wide range of areas including employment, access to government services, education, welfare and health services, the legal system, women's issues and the teaching of English. The NSW Government endorsed the report and most of its recommendations.[81]

In 1979, the Government enacted the *Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979,* which established the Commission as a permanent statutory body. Premier Wran stated:

> Australia is populated by people of many different cultures. In order to transform this composite reality into a truly multicultural society the Government…is taking positive action to move towards developing a society where all national groups and minorities will be encouraged to share and participate in all opportunities. We want to eliminate defects in the participation of minorities in the political, social and economic structures of the nation and to pursue actively programmes to rectify existing imbalances. The creation of the new Ethnic Affairs Commission is a basic step towards responding in a consistent, coordinated way to the growing migrant-ethnic pressures at all levels of the community's life.[82]

The Commission's objectives were to:

> (a) Encourage the full participation of persons comprising ethnic groups in the community in the social, economic and cultural life of the community;
>
> (b) Promote the unity of all ethnic groups in the community as a single society consistently with the recognition of their different cultural identities; and
>
> (c) Promote liaison and cooperation between bodies concerned with ethnic affairs.[83]

The Commission was given several functions including reporting to the Minister on aspects of ethnic affairs, advising the Minister on the most effective use of funds allocated to ethnic affairs, providing approved services to ethnic groups, and consulting with governmental, business, industrial, educational, and community bodies or groups for the purpose of ascertaining a means of improving conditions affecting ethnic affairs.[84]

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80 1978 *Participation* report, note 79, p1.

81 The Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW, *NSW Government: "A Decade of Achievement in Ethnic Affairs": 1976-1985,* September 1985, p2.

82 *NSW Parliamentary Debates,* 22/3/79, p3101.

83 Section 15, *Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979* (NSW).

84 Section 16, *Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979* (NSW).

1983: Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements program

Following advice in a July 1983 report by the Commission, in September 1983, Premier Wran announced that all areas of the Government's administration would be required to prepare Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements (EAPS) "as a means of confirming the Government's commitment to the incorporation of ethnic policies in the delivery of mainstream services".[85] The EAPS program required:

> …all government agencies to prepare detailed plans aimed at improving their ability to manage and deliver services to a culturally diverse society. EAPS plans were to be approved by the Ethnic Affairs Commission and agencies were expected to report annually to the Commission on progress with their plans.[86]

In 1985, Premier Wran stated that the success of this major mainstreaming effort was "the key to the future of multiculturalism as a real guiding light for Government".[87] By 1986, most agencies had submitted an EAPS plan.[88]

1988: Achievements in ethnic affairs

A 1988 policy document reported on achievements in ethnic affairs as follows:

> Since 1976 the NSW Government has established an outstanding record of achievement in the field of ethnic affairs…
>
> The NSW Government was the first State Government to adopt multiculturalism as participation and equality of opportunity.
>
> Our initiatives are without precedent. In twelve years we have diversified the full spectrum of Government services to ensure equity to ethnic communities.[89]

In 1988, NSW had extensive interpreting and translation services, a $1.2 million grants program providing financial assistance to hundreds of community organisations, the EAPS program, English as a Second Language and Community Language Teaching in schools, the English-on-the-Job Program and Migrant employment initiatives.[90]

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85 NSW Government, *Building on Our Cultural Diversity: Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000,* White Paper, 1996, p68.

86 NSW Government and Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW, *Ethnic Affairs in the New South Wales Public Sector: Resource Handbook for Chief Executive Officers and Senior Managers,* May 1997, p59.

87 Achievements: 1976-1985, note 81, p2.

88 Resource Handbook, note 86, p59.

89 NSW Government, *The 1988 Ethnic Affairs Policy,* 1988. p2. See also Achievements: 1975-1986, note 81.

90 1988 Ethnic Affairs Policy, note 89, p2.

1993: New directions and Charter of Principles

In 1993, the Fahey Government introduced a change in emphasis in ethnic affairs policy. This was explained as follows:

> The ethnic affairs policies of the late 70's and early 1980's had a very strong equity and welfare focus. While the government has no wish to relax its commitment to the basic principles of fairness, access, participation and equity as planks in its ethnic affairs policy, it has identified a need for certain other principles to be articulated more strongly. In particular, the value of cultural diversity as an economic and social resource – a sharp move away from the old "deficit model" of ethnic affairs policy making.[91]

In February 1993, the Fahey Government introduced the NSW Charter of Principles for a Culturally Diverse Society, which was to be reflected in all Government policies and which was to be implemented by NSW Government agencies instead of the EAPS program. The Charter contained the following four principles:

1. All individuals in NSW should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all levels of public life.

2. All individuals and public institutions should respect and accommodate the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the primary language.

3. All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programs provided and/or administered by NSW Government institutions.

4. All NSW public institutions should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the NSW population as a valuable resource and utilise and promote this resource to maximise the development of this state.[92]

The Charter program required all NSW Government agencies to develop Statements of Intent and Charter Implementation Plans.[93] A number of agencies were designated as Key Agencies.[94] The Commission was to give priority assistance to these Key Agencies in the development of Charter Implementation Plans. In addition, the Key Agencies were required to lodge their plans with the Commission by 31 July each year.

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91 NSW Government, *New South Wales Government Achievements & Strategies in Ethnic Affairs: Volume 1, Achievements 1988-1994*, January 1995, p5.

92 NSW Government and Ethnic Affairs Commission, *Charter of Principles For a Culturally Diverse Society: Handbook for Chief Executives & Senior Managers,* 1995.

93 Charter of Principles for a Culturally Diverse Society: Handbook, note 92, p7-8.

94 Charter of Principles for a Culturally Diverse Society: Handbook, note 92, p8.

It is also worth noting that in 1993, the Government established Ethnic Affairs as a stand-alone portfolio, said to be the first portfolio of its kind in Australia.[95] This recognised "the importance of cultural diversity as a constructive force in [the] community".[96]

1996: Review of Act and new Ethnic Affairs Action Plan

Review of the 1979 Act

In September 1995, in accordance with a pre-election commitment, the new Labor Government initiated a review of the *Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979* and the development of an Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000. In May 1996 the Government released a Green Paper (draft report), which invited public comment.[97] In October 1996, the Government released a White Paper (final report), entitled *Building on Our Cultural Diversity: Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000* which contained an Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 and also outlined legislative changes. The White Paper stated:

> Whilst significant progress has been made over the last two decades, the NSW Government has recognised that new priorities and outcomes are necessary if members of ethnic communities are to participate fully in the life of the State and the potential economic value of cultural diversity is to be realised.[98]

Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000

The Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 identified four key roles for the NSW Government in ethnic affairs. These were:

(1) To provide leadership in encouraging and valuing a culturally diverse society and in promoting social cohesion.

(2) To ensure that State Government policy, legal and planning frameworks support our culturally diverse society.

(3) To ensure access to quality goods and services, and an equitable distribution of those goods and services.

(4) To encourage community development so that over time, ethnic communities can meet their own needs and priorities.[99]

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95 Achievements 1988-1994, note 91, p2.

96 Achievements 1988-1994, note 91, p2.

97 NSW Government, *Building on our Cultural Diversity – Draft Report – Review of the Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979 and the development of an Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000,* NSW Government, Green Paper, May 1996.

98 1996 White Paper, note 85, p4.

99 1996 White Paper, note 85, pvi.

The Action Plan 2000 also identified three key result areas where Government activity was needed and outcomes were expected:

> **(1) Social justice**
> The Government will ensure that resources are fairly distributed, that ethnic communities are consulted about decisions relating to Government program and development and service delivery, that the rights and responsibilities of all people are recognised and that services are effectively targeted to meet the needs and members of ethnic communities.
>
> **(2) Community harmony**
> The Government will foster a climate of mutual respect by highlighting the benefits of cultural diversity to the community, by supporting anti-discrimination measures and by promoting and maintaining community harmony. As Australia moves into the next century, major issues will include those of cultural identity and shared values. The challenge is to develop a common understanding that cultural diversity is one of the defining characteristics of a united, modern Australia.
>
> **(3) Economic and cultural opportunities**
> The Government will promote the benefits of multiculturalism in the economic and cultural life of the State. The Government will recognise cultural diversity as a positive force in the development of the State's economic opportunities and in enriching our community through social and cultural activities.[100]

Reporting and monitoring arrangements were incorporated into the plan to ensure its "timely and efficient implementation".[101] These arrangements included:

- *Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements (EAPS):* All NSW Government agencies would be required to prepare an EAPS, documenting its strategies to achieve outcomes in the three Key Result Areas, together with performance measures and plans for future actions. Each agency would also be required to publish in its annual report a report on EAPS progress and future strategies. Agencies would also have to supply the EAPS to the Ethnic Affairs Commission. EAPS would replace the Charter Implementation Plans.

- *Ethnic Affairs Agreements (EEAs):* EEAs are agreements between one or more Government agencies and the Commission, to address specific issues affecting members of ethnic communities that can be remedied by joint activity and cooperation. Each year a select number of agencies would be approached to enter into an EEA with the Commission to address specific issues. The outcomes of EEAs would be reported in each Agency's annual report.

- *Ethnic Affairs Report:* The Ethnic Affairs Commission would be required to

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100 1996 White Paper, note 85, pvii

101 1996 White Paper, note 85, p52.

> prepare, and submit to the Minister, an annual Ethnic Affairs Report. The report would include an overview of progress made in implementing the Action Plan 2000 and would report on achievements and outcomes made through agencies' EAPS and EEAs. The Minister would table the report in Parliament.[102]

Changes to Ethnic Affairs Commission Act

In November 1996, the Government enacted amendments to the *Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979* to create legal requirements in relation to aspects of the reporting and monitoring framework outlined above.[103] The 1996 Act also gave legislative recognition to the four principles of cultural diversity that were contained in the 1993 Charter; and it created a statutory requirement for all public authorities to observe these principles. The 1996 Act also inserted a new object for the Ethnic Affairs Commission, namely to "to promote the social, cultural, and economic benefits of a culturally diverse society".

1999: Ethnic Affairs changed to Citizenship

On 8 April 1999, Premier Carr announced that the title of the Ethnic Affairs portfolio would be changed to the Citizenship portfolio.[104] From that date, Premier Carr became the Minister for Citizenship and Hon Morris Iemma MP was appointed as the Minister assisting the Premier on Citizenship. It has been explained that:

> The title of Minister for Citizenship goes beyond the legal definition of naturalisation. The NSW Government uses the term citizenship in a broader context. Citizenship means membership of a harmonious linguistically, ethnically, religiously and racially diverse and inclusive society, which celebrates cultural diversity; and at the same time emphasises shared civic values and adherence to the principles of democracy and the rule of law.[105]

2000: New Community Relations Commission

On 8 April 1999, the Premier also announced that the Ethnic Affairs Commission would be restructured as a new "Community Relations Commission".[106] In June 1999, the Government published a public consultation document outlining this change[107] and in September 1999 it introduced into Parliament the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Bill 1999.* Hon Morris Iemma MP stated (in part):

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102 1996 White Paper, note 85, p52-53.

103 *Ethnic Affairs Commission Amendment Act 1996* (NSW).

104 General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 report, note 76, pxvii.

105 Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW, *The Way Forward: A Consultation Document leading to a Community Relations Commission,* June 1999, p3.

106 1999 Consultation Document, note 105, p2.

107 1999 Consultation Document, note 105.

> In 1999, NSW is a successful multicultural society. The Government is proud of the diversity, cultures, traditions, beliefs, languages and races contributing to the richness of a cooperative and stable community. It believes, however, that the term "ethnic" is no longer an adequate way of describing our fellow Australians who were not born here or whose parents were not born here, nor is an adequate expression of their aspirations for themselves, as full citizens of Australia. The bill clearly spells out the Government's commitment to multiculturalism and outlines enhanced objectives and functions for a new Community Relations Commission.[108]

There was much debate about the new name for the Commission. A General Purpose Standing Committee report on the bill published in May 2000 noted that the name change was the "most contentious issue arising from the bill".[109] A majority report stated that, "the great majority of the evidence…supported a view that the name 'Community Relations Commission' would be enhanced by a reference to multiculturalism".[110] The majority report recommended that the bill be amended to allow the Commission to adopt the phrase "For a multicultural NSW" for use in conjunction with its name.[111] Dissenting reports from the Liberal and National Party members and the Unity Party member considered that the word multicultural should be incorporated in the Commission's title: for example, by adopting the title, 'Community Relations and Multicultural Affairs Commission'.[112]The bill was ultimately amended to require the Community Relations Commission to adopt the phrase "For a multicultural NSW", in conjunction with its name.[113]

Despite some opposition from minor parties, the bill was passed in October 2000 – thereby enacting the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*.[114] The Act restated the four principles of cultural diversity, as "principles of multiculturalism".[115] In addition, the Act stated that these principles were based on citizenship and were to be construed accordingly. This was "not limited to formal Australian citizenship, but refers to the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society where there is: (a) a recognition of the importance of shared values within a democratic framework governed by the rule of law; and (b) a unifying

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108 *NSW Parliamentary Debates,* 23/9/99.

109 General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 report, note 76, p31. Note that this report was described as an interim report because the Committee's terms of reference also included reporting on multicultural arts in NSW, which the interim report did not cover.

110 General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 report, note 76, p31.

111 General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 report, note 76, p56.

112 General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 report, note 76, p57; p61

113 Section 6(4), *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000.*

114 See for example Hon Lee Rhiannon MLC, '"Ethnic" cleansed in the dead of night', *Media Release,* 11/10/00 and Hon Dr Peter Wong MLC, 'NSW Government abandoning "multiculturalism with Bill, says MP', *Media Release,* 12/10/00.

115 Section 3(2).

commitment to Australia, its interests and future".[116] Under the Act, public agencies must comply with the principles of multiculturalism when conducting their affairs.[117]

Three other features of the new Act are outlined below:

- *New objectives and functions:* The Act lists objectives and functions for the new Commission that differ in some respects from the previous Act. One new objective is "the promotion of the principles of multiculturalism and the advantages of a multicultural society".[118] The new Commission has the function of "assisting, and assessing the effectiveness of, public authorities in observing the principles of multiculturalism". It also has the function of facilitating "co-operative arrangements involving governmental, business, educational and community groups or bodies to promote its objectives".[119]

- *Community relations report:* Similarly to the previous requirement for the Ethnic Affairs Commission to prepare an Ethnic Affairs report, the new Commission is required to report annually to the Minister on "the state of community relations in NSW as affected by cultural diversity, including an assessment of the effectiveness of public authorities in observing the principles of multiculturalism".[120] The Minister must table the report in Parliament.

- *Regional Advisory Councils:* The Act required the Commission to establish regional advisory councils for regional areas of the State.[121] These councils are to comprise representatives of relevant local or regional agencies, community organisations or individuals and a commissioner of the Commission. The councils are to provide advice to the Commission.

The Act remains in force. In 2006, the Government appointed Ms Irene Moss AO to appointed to review the Act.[122] The report has not yet been made public.

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116 Section 3(2).

117 Section 3(4).

118 Section 12(e).

119 Section 13(e). Compare with *Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979,* section 16(f).

120 Section 14.

121 Section 10. Note that some regional advisory committees were already in existence.

122 Community Relations Commission, *Review of the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000: Discussion Paper,* March 2006.

2004: Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2012

In May 2002, the NSW Government released the Community Relations Commission's evaluation of the Action Plan 2000 together with a Green Paper entitled *Cultural Harmony: The Next Decade 2002-2012*, which invited public comment. In June 2004, the Government published a white paper (with the same title), which summarised the issues raised in the public consultations, referred to government initiatives, and outlined the Community Relations Plan of Action 2012.[123] The Action Plan is based on four key objectives:

(i) Leadership
(ii) Community harmony
(iii) Access and equity within a framework of social justice obligations
(iv) Economic and cultural opportunities.

The White paper states that these key objectives:

> …flow from the principles of multiculturalism and articulate the Government's aims and the results expected from NSW Government agencies.
>
> It is expected that the Key Objectives and provisions of the Act will be addressed by agencies through the development of their corporate plan, and the linking of each agency's corporate plan with its EAPS plan and business plan.
>
> The EAPS program will remain the cornerstone for service provision by public sector agencies… and the main mechanism for the Community Relations Commission to assess and report on the effectiveness of public authorities in observing the principles of multiculturalism....[124]

The plan states that, a "review of agencies' progress against the principles of multiculturalism and the Key Objectives…will be carried out in 2008".[125]

2006: Opposition's recent policy on multiculturalism

In the lead up to the 2006 election, the Opposition released a policy entitled *Practical Multiculturalism: Celebrating Australian Values*, which places a greater emphasis on Australian values. The reasoning behind the policy was explained as follows*:*

> While all Australians have the right to express their culture and beliefs, first and foremost, all Australians have the civic responsibility to support the basic institutions and values of the Australian community…

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123 NSW Government, *Cultural Harmony: The Next Decade: 2002-2012: Report on the responses to the Green Paper and development of the Community Relations Plan of Action 2012,* White Paper, June 2004.

124 2004 White Paper, note 123, p7.

125 2004 White Paper, note 123, p10.

> However, in recent times we have been witness to multiculturalism being used as a licence to import old nationalistic rivalries, rather than valuing the timeless and positive benefits of the many cultures that Australians have come from.
>
> No longer can we allow multiculturalism to justify the barriers it has placed between Australians of different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs. Australians are fed up with seeing the problems of other nations played out on our own streets.[126]

Initiatives outlined in the policy included a new Australian Values and Civics Test for year 6 students, free English courses at NSW Community Colleges, 200 new teachers for the English as a Second Language program in schools, a free Civics and Citizenship course at NSW Community Colleges, and a program to provide financial assistance for schools and community organisations to undertake projects that involve young people from different cultural backgrounds working together on charitable and other community initiatives.

5. MAIN CRITICISMS OF MULTICULTURALISM

Overview

Some of the main criticisms of multiculturalism are that:

- It is divisive and threatens social cohesion;
- It denies and denigrates Anglo-Australian culture;
- It tolerates objectionable practices and behaviour from other cultures;
- It costs billions of dollars of public money.[127]

These criticisms, and some responses, are outlined below.

The claim that it is divisive and threatens social cohesion

The criticism: The argument that multiculturalism is divisive and threatens social cohesion has been put in various forms. A 1982 discussion paper by the Australian Council of Population and Ethnic Affairs referred to critics' views that:

> …the multicultural model does not take into account the undefined but essential way in which social arrangements are held together by members of society sharing a common set of assumptions about life and desirable modes of behaviour. They say that if society is divided into many and varied groups defined by their ethnicity, then it loses the unifying force required to maintain social cohesion.[128]

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126 NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition, *Practical Multiculturalism: Celebrating Australian Values,* 2006, p2. [Consider referring to NSW Government State Plan – p35].

127 See generally Jupp (2007), note 5, Ch 6; and Moran A, *Australia: Nation, Belonging and Globalization,* Routledge, New York and London, 2005, p112ff.

128 Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, *Multiculturalism for all Australians: Our Developing Nationhood,* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, May 1982,

In 1984, historian Geoffrey Blainey argued that:

> The multicultural policy has, at times, tended to emphasize the rights of ethnic minorities at the expense of the majority of Australians, thus unnecessarily encouraging divisions and weakening social cohesion.[129]

Blainey noted that many multicultural societies around the world had failed and that the human cost of this failure had been high.[130] In an Australia Day address in 1986, Blainey said that the current emphasis on granting special rights to ethnic minorities was "threatening to disperse this nation into many tribes".[131]

In a 1996 publication, Ellie Vasta summarised critics' views as follows:

> The argument that multiculturalism separates and differentiates is becoming increasingly common. This includes two related themes. The first is that multiculturalism concentrates too much on cultural diversity and not on what people have in common. Difference and ultimately chaos and violence are seen to be the likely results. An associated problem is that multiculturalism is thought to separate migrants from the mainstream, thus blocking [integration]. Secondly, multiculturalism is thought to celebrate tradition, identity and community for immigrants, but for some Anglo-Australians it means a loss of these.[132]

The National Multicultural Advisory Council's 1999 report on multiculturalism referred to a strongly expressed view in some submissions that:

> …multiculturalism is a negative and divisive feature of Australian society, creating disdain for people of Anglo-Celtic origins and denigrating Australian culture by promoting other cultures as more worthy. They argue that this contributes to a general sense of unease and causes unacceptable levels of separateness in society. While acknowledging that the assimilationist policies of the past asked too much of migrants, these respondents criticised multiculturalism for asking too much of Australian born people and not enough of migrants.[133]

As outlined in Section 6 of this paper, some critics claim that multiculturalism has, in fact,

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p14-15.

129 Blainey G, *All for Australia,* Methuen Haynes, Sydney, 1984, p171.

130 Blainey (1984), note 129, p171.

131 Blainey G, *Blainey: Eye on Australia: Speeches and Essays of Geoffrey Blainey,* Schwartz Books, Melbourne, 1991, p60.

132 Vasta E, 'Dialetics of domination: Racism and multiculturalism', in Vasta E and Castles S (eds), *The Teeth Are Smiling: The Persistence of Racism in Multicultural Australia,* Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1996, p52.

133 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p51.

been divisive and weakened social cohesion.

Reponses to this criticism: As outlined in Section 3**,** multiculturalism was introduced in the 1970s on the basis that cultural repression causes alienation and division, whereas the encouragement of cultural diversity, and the promotion of equal opportunity, creates social cohesion by allowing migrants to feel welcome and to fully participate in society.

The 1982 discussion paper on multiculturalism (referred to above) rejected the argument that multiculturalism would lose its unifying force, pointing out that, "the openness of our society allows Australians to hold many different and subsidiary identities without detracting from our national unity". The discussion paper also stated:

> One of the principles of multiculturalism is equal responsibility for, commitment to and participation in society. Differences in cultural identity can then be better understood and appreciated, because it can be seen that all people, irrespective of their cultural background, are loyal to the nation as a whole, recognise a common national identity and contribute to the general good.[134]

A 1988 discussion paper by the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs also rejected this criticism of multiculturalism, stating, "the aim of multicultural policy is not to perpetuate division, to isolate newcomers or to create ethnic enclaves. Still less does it seek to create a national of 'warring tribes'. Nor will it".[135] It noted that, "the purpose and effect of multicultural policy is to promote unity and cohesion. It is the basis of a society in which newcomers can find understanding and acceptance of their background".[136] The discussion paper also rejected the suggestion that multiculturalism places loyalty to one's ethnic origin above commitment to Australia, stating that the policy "has always affirmed the importance of an overriding and unifying loyalty to Australia's interests and future".[137]

The response to the claim in the 1999 report that multiculturalism is divisive because it denies and denigrates Anglo-Australian culture is outlined below.

As outlined in Section 6 of this paper, supporters of multiculturalism argue that it has helped Australia to become the most successful culturally diverse nation in the world.

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134 ACPEA 1982 discussion paper, note 128, p15.

135 Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs, *Towards a National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia: A Discussion Paper,* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, September 1988, p2-3.

136 ACMA 1988 discussion paper, note 135, p2-3.

137 ACMA 1988 discussion paper, note 135, p3.

The claim that it denies and denigrates Anglo-Australian culture

The criticism: Critics have argued that multiculturalism denies and denigrates Anglo-Australian culture. In 1984, Blainey commented that multiculturalism was "anti-British" and that "in the vision of the multiculturalists, the long phase of British Australia, running from 1788 to perhaps the Second World War, is not a very significant phase of Australian history".[138] Similarly, a 1989 *Quadrant* editorial stated that multiculturalism was "extremely insensitive to the culture and values of old Australians, treating Australia before the coming of the post-war migrants as a racist hell and cultural desert".[139] In the 1990s, historian John Hirst, argued that multiculturalism "became an indictment of Australian society and ultimately a denial of its very existence".[140] Another way of stating this criticism is that multiculturalism weakens Australia's national identity.[141]

The response to this criticism: The 1999 National Multicultural Advisory Council report on multiculturalism rejected this argument, stating:

> Australian culture is dynamic. It starts with and retains its links to our total heritage, but is not a fossilised entity which remains static from the time a particular group sets foot on Australian soil. Rather, it is a living, changing and interacting set of life patterns. It has been modified and enhanced by the arrival of many migrant groups. It continues to be developed by the evolution of ideas and customs within Australia and by global influences. While Australians of the 1890s would scarcely recognise many aspects of our society today, there is no doubt that they would still recognise the Australianness that has endured.[142]

It also rejected the suggestion that multiculturalism had weakened our national identity:

> …it is the core values and principles of our democratic society that define the characteristic Australian identity of our society. While Australian multiculturalism…supports policies allowing people the freedom to maintain ethnic identities, values and lifestyles, it insists that this must be done within an overarching framework of common laws and shared values and institutions. [143]

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138 Blainey (1984), note 129, p156.

139 'The Perils of Multiculturalism' (June 1989) 34(6) *Quadrant* 9 at 10.

140 Quoted in Georgiou P, 'Scapegoating Multiculturalism: The Complexities of the Idenitity Debate', (1999) 11(2) *The Sydney Papers* 21 at 26.

141 See Georgiou, note 140, p25-26.

142 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p51.

143 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p53.

The claim that it tolerates objectionable practices and behaviour

The criticism: Some critics have argued that multiculturalism treats all other cultures as equal and that it "opens the door for culture to provide an excuse for all sorts of behaviour that violate our norms and values – not to mention our laws".[144]

Response to this criticism: The response given to this argument is that it fundamentally misunderstands multiculturalism in Australia, which has always required migrants to support the laws and the basic structures and principles of Australian society.[145]

The claim that it costs billions of dollars of public money

The criticism: Multiculturalism has also been criticised for costing billions of dollars of public money. In 1991, Stephen Rimmer estimated that the direct fiscal cost of multiculturalism in 1990/91 was $2 billion ($1.8 billion in Federal government expenditure and $200 million in State and local government expenditure).[146] He also estimated that there was $5 billion in costs associated with migrants having poor English skills (resulting in reduced productivity and an increase in social security); and several billion dollars in indirect costs from increased crime and declining community health standards.[147] He criticised governments for not informing the public " why or how tens of billions of dollars of public monies have dissipated or disappeared".[148]

Responses to this criticism: The National Multicultural Advisory Council's 1999 report analysed the Department of Immigration's 1998/99 budget and concluded that, "allegations of excessive costs incurred by proactive multicultural programs are not factually based and arise out of fundamental misconceptions".[149] It noted that estimates of the cost of multiculturalism were greatly exaggerated by "lumping all immigration, settlement and multicultural programs together and attributing the total cost to multiculturalism".[150] The report found that of the Department's total budget of $546 million in 1998/99, only $10 million was attributable to multicultural affairs.[151] It should also be noted here that

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144 This criticism was referred to in Soutphommasane T, 'After Cronulla: debating Australian multiculturalism and national identity', (2006)13(1) *Australian Mosaic* 6 at 8.

145 See Southphommasane, note 144, p8. See also Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, 'Australia as a Multicultural Society: Submission to Australian Population and Immigration Council on the Green Paper – "Immigration Policies and Australia's Population"', 15 September 1977, p14. See also ACMA 1988 discussion paper, note 135, p3-4.

146 Rimmer S, *The Cost of Multiculturalism,* 1991, p57.

147 Rimmer, note 146, p57.

148 Rimmer, note 146, p56.

149 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p66.

150 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p66.

151 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p66-67.

supporters of multiculturalism argue that it creates significant economic dividends.[152]

6. RECENT DEBATE ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM

As noted in the introduction, terrorist attacks in recent years and the December 2005 Cronulla riots have reignited debate about multiculturalism. The Federal Government's recent policy announcements on multiculturalism have led to further debate. This section refers to a number of recently expressed views on multiculturalism.

Questioning and criticism of multiculturalism

An article in *The Australian* in the aftermath of the July 2005 London bombings stated that home-grown terrorism challenged the assumption – and the experience in Australia so far - that "whatever passions and hates migrants bring with them, they are soon overwhelmed and diffused by the values of their new country". [153] The article also stated that, "the bombings will also raise new questions about multiculturalism, particularly the perception that it promotes separate development of ethnic minorities rather than integration".[154] Another article in *The Age* in July 2005 stated:

> It was not supposed to be like this. The idea was that tolerance and liberalism towards migrants would in turn make migrants tolerant and good citizens. Instead, Britain became a haven for terrorists. Did the bomb blasts in the London Underground mark the death of multiculturalism?[155]

Mark Lopez, author of *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics*, has suggested that terrorism raises issues for multiculturalism that are "complex and politically challenging".[156] While noting that multiculturalism has had "some much celebrated success", he states, "the existence of bitter alienated Islamic fundamentalists in the community suggests that there has been a failure regarding at least some of the Islamic minority that should concern both the advocates of multiculturalism along with its critics".[157] He asks, "Is this problem merely one of finding an appropriate multicultural policy to rectify this perplexing anomaly, or does it suggest that there may have been something amiss with the fundamental theorisation of multiculturalism, and consequently with multiculturalism itself?"[158] He suggests that "neither of these questions is easy for

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152 NMAC 1999 report, note 51, p69ff.

153 'Risks of abundant tolerance', *The Australian,* 16/7/05.

154 'Risks of abundant tolerance', *The Australian,* 16/7/05.

155 'Time to set some limits', *The Age,* 18/7/05.

156 Lopez M, 'Reflections on the State of Australian Multiculturalism and the Emerging Multicultural Debate in Australia 2005', (2005) 13(3) *People and Place* 33 at 38.

157 Lopez (2005), note 156, p38

158 Lopez (2005), note 156, p38

this nation to face", especially since debates about multiculturalism "traditionally degenerate" into accusations of racism and counter-accusations of political correctness.[159]

In 2006, Greg Clancy published a very wide-ranging attack on multiculturalism. According to Clancy, the introduction of multiculturalism in Australia was not necessary and it has been a complete failure.[160] Clancy argues that multiculturalism has created division and undermined national unity, it has led to large increase in crime and corruption and it has exacerbated Australia's national security problems. He states:

> The greatest harm to Australia from the multicultural system has been the creation and reinforcement of ethnic divisions that have resulted in the reduction of social cohesion. These divisions have been the predominant force in separating ethnic groups from both the majority population and each other. [161]

A recent editorial in the *National Observer* states:

> Multiculturalism turned out to be a disastrous policy, spawning a veritable industry of professionals who made a good living off the idea and still do. Multiculturalism militated against a cohesive nation and encouraged ethnic tensions and Islamic extremism in this peaceful country. But unfortunately it will take more than a departmental name-change to bury it. Still, the name-change is a sign of how the climate of opinion has changed…[162]

In February 2006, three Labor Party Members of the Queensland Parliament, Rachel Nolan, Andrew McNamara and Craig Wallace, published a joint article, which suggested that, "in the wake of the Cronulla riots, terrorism-related arrests in Sydney and Melbourne [in 2005], and a spate of recent international terrorist atrocities, Australia finds itself in the greatest culture war of a generation".[163] They argued that multiculturalism was no longer an appropriate policy and they submitted, "now is the time for Australian governments at the state and federal level to move beyond the tired and limited language of multiculturalism and adopt in its place a clear statement of national values. The three Members of Parliament explained that this approach was "not an attempt to assimilate migrants into a monoculture" but it was "essential if we are to break down the increasing isolation of some ethnic communities by offering a framework for a single cohesive community that welcomes diversity within those common values".

A recent editorial in the *Quadrant* journal asked whether we need the term

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159 Lopez (2005), note 156, p38

160 Clancy G, *The Conspiracies of Multiculturalism: The Betrayal That Divided Australia,* Sunda Publications, Sydney, 2006.

161 Clancy (2006), note 160, p41-42.

162 'RIP Australian Multiculturalism?' (2006-07) 71 *National Observer* 5.

163 'Foster national values, ditch multiculturalism', *The Australian,* 10/2/06.

'multiculturalism' and it answered in the negative, stating, "it is overloaded with baggage, quangos and bureaucrats. And no two people can agree on what it means".[164] The editorial argued for a pragmatic approach to multiculturalism based on the rule of law.[165] John Hirst, reader in history at La Trobe University, has said that the difficulty with the term "multiculturalism" is that "it speaks only of diversity and not of the commonalities".[166] He thinks that it would be better if "the term were abandoned in favour of, say, a diverse Australia or a cosmopolitan Australia, formulations which put Australia at the core but are not insisting on homogeneity". In his view, however, the main determinant of the outcomes of our migration program is Australia's deep-seated attachment to social peace rather than official policy –whether it is multiculturalism, assimilation or integration.

Support for multiculturalism

Petro Georgiou MP, a member of the Liberal Party, has defended multiculturalism in the wake of criticism after the London bombings.[167] He argues that terrorism presents a challenge to all liberal democracies whether they pursue assimilationist or multicultural policies.[168] He explains that the environment in which a small number of religious extremists incite terrorism "is inherent in the very character and freedoms that define Western democracy, such as freedom of speech, freedom of movement and freedom of religion".[169] He also claims that critics are wrong to characterise multiculturalism "as solely concerned with promoting or emphasising difference, [and] as offering no central core of values to provide a shared identity".[170] He submits that "abolishing SBS, stopping the teaching languages other than English and banning burkas is not going to make us safer"; and he concludes, "on the contrary…our response to the threat of terrorism demands a strong commitment to multiculturalism in principle and practice".[171]

Hurriyet Babacan, Associate Director of the Centre for Multicultural and Community Development, University of the Sunshine Coast, has commented:

> … over the last decade we have moved away from multiculturalism, citizenship and

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164 'Pragmatism versus Multiculturalism', (2006) L(12) *Quadrant* 2 at 3.

165 'Pragmatism versus Multiculturalism', (2006) L(12) *Quadrant* 2 at 3.

166 Hirst J, interview in SBS Radio forum on multiculturalism, 10 April 2006. Transcript available online at Hhttp://www.radio.sbs.com.au/index.php?page=wv&newsID=131884H

167 See 'A misguided assault on multiculturalism', *The Age,* 26/7/05; and Hon Petro Georgiou MP, 'Multiculturalism and the war on terror', address to the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law at Monash University, 18 October 2005.

168 Georgiou (2005), note 167, p5.

169 Georgiou (2005), note 167, p6.

170 Georgiou (2005), note 167, p6.

171 Georgiou (2005), note 167, p7.

> acceptance and hence diluted the commitment to valuing acceptance of our cultural diversity. This has weakened the very fabric of our society and has led to division, perpetuation of racial and ethnic intolerance and violence. I argue that we have no alternative but to recognise that multiculturalism is the glue that binds society and makes the nation strong and resilient. Strengthening multiculturalism is our only weapon against racial violence, terrorism or any other challenges we may face...[172]

An editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 January 2007 expressed the view that multiculturalism "has been a stunning success, strengthening Australia's economy and enriching its culture while reinforcing its social cohesion". The article notes that multiculturalism has come under strain in Australia but it comments that we still need multiculturalism to allow migrants "to live in harmony and gradually, peacefully, to form themselves into one Australian community".[173] The article suggests that Prime Minister Howard knows the importance of multiculturalism and that the change in Federal Government policy is one of form rather than substance.

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) "expressed its dismay" at the Government's move to abandon the term multiculturalism. FECCA argues that multiculturalism had been "unfairly demonised" and that it has helped Australia to become the world's most successful culturally diverse nation.[174]

Colin Rubinstein, a former member of the Council for a Multicultural Australia, states:

> …it is not multiculturalism that is causing ethnic and social problems critics identity. Extremists and racists have been assailing the core values that are integral to the Australian concept of multiculturalism, compounded over the years by failures to always apply the policy consistently and effectively.[175]

In his view, Australian multiculturalism provides the framework for addressing problems of intolerance and extremism. He believes that neither the term nor the overall policy of multiculturalism needs to be changed. Instead, "while always trying to make it even more effective in matching our rights with our responsibilities, the main thrust should always be on more consistent, rigorous adaptation to changing challenges".

Dr Geoffrey Brahm-Levey, an academic at the University of New South Wales, argues that framing our policy options in terms of a choice between multiculturalism and integration is "problematic and misinformed" because, "multiculturalism is and always has been a strategy aimed at successfully integrating a culturally diverse society. Indeed, all the

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172 Babacan H, 'Has Multiculturalism Failed Us? Rethinking Multicultural Policies in Post-Cronulla Australia', in *Responding to Cronulla: Rethinking Multiculturalism- National Symposium*, Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, Nathan, 21 February 2006, p60.

173 'Ssh! Let's give three quiet cheers for the M-word', *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 29/1/07.

174 'Dropping a word does not disguise the facts', *Media Release,* 24/1/07.

175 'Multiculturalism is still the way to go', *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 23/11/06.

evidence suggests that it is be the best form of integration available".[176] He states:

> If integration is the concern, then the spotlight belongs not on our multicultural policies and programs, but rather on the *failure to observe* the spirit and terms of our liberal democratic form of multicultural inclusion. And here, unfortunately, our public leaders are among the worst transgressors.[177]

Dr James Jupp, the director of the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies at the Australian National University, has expressed support for the policy of multiculturalism but has identified some problems that need to be addressed:

> The central problem of Australian multiculturalism is that it has been preached to the converted and especially targeted at ethnic communities, which already know that Australian is a multicultural society. It has focused on individual goodwill and tolerance within a liberal framework of ideas and institutions. But the hoon culture of many young men of all ethnicities is outside these frameworks.
>
> Official multiculturalism has been too self-congratulatory. Public figures interminably preach the wonders of people of different origins living together in harmony. But they do not go too deeply into the evidence that there is widespread prejudice, considerable social disadvantage and exclusion from many positions of influence and affluence in politics, the public service, commerce and industry. There is inadequate research into real life in the western suburbs of Sydney…
>
> There will not be social harmony as long as many Australians go on thinking that only those of a particular descent or culture are real Australians. Multiculturalism will not work until it is placed back in the centre of national policy rather than being left to the states and territories, as it largely has been since 1996. [178]

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176 Brahm Levey G, 'Multiculturalism *is* integration', (2007) 15 *Australian Mosaic* 28, p29.

177 Brahm Levey (2007), note 176, p29.

178 'A place under the sun for all Australians', *The Australian,* 14/12/05.

7. PUBLIC OPINION ON MULTICULTURALISM

Public opinion poll in 1988/89

In 1988/89, the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), as part of its development of a national agenda, commissioned AGB: McNair to conduct a national survey of Australian attitudes to multiculturalism.[179] There were three different interpretations of the survey data according to Murray Goot, an academic at the school of history, philosophy and politics at Macquarie University. Goot summarised these views as follows:

> According to McAllister, one of the original consultants to the project, the results of the survey show that multiculturalism enjoys a high level of support…
>
> A prominent academic critic of the Government's policies on multiculturalism reaches precisely the opposite conclusion. While Katherine Betts concedes that the OMA survey showed 'widespread support for access and equity programs', there was 'little support for continuing cultural pluralism'…
>
> The third paper comes down somewhere in between, but is distinctly more sympathetic to Betts's position on multiculturalism than McAllister's...[180]

Goot reanalysed the 1988/89 survey data and came to a different conclusion to those outlined above, namely that "Australians as a whole are neither pro-multicultural or anti-multicultural. Many, even most, see multiculturalism as something of a mixed bag".[181]

Public opinion polls from 1988 to 1997

In 1999, Goot analysed public opinion poll data on multiculturalism from 1988 to 1997 (including the 1988/89 poll referred to above) for the National Multicultural Advisory Council's 1999 report on multiculturalism.[182] According to Goot, the polls indicated majority support for the assimilationist views that "migrants should try to 'forget their old national customs', adopt 'the Australian way of life' and 'behave the way the majority of Australians do'. However, the polls also suggested majority support for the multiculturalist views that "'ethnic' groups should not be criticised if they 'want to mix mostly with themselves'; that migrants should be able to 'become Australians without giving up their own culture' and that multiculturalism promotes fairness, is necessary for a harmonious

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179 1989 National Agenda, note 32, p59.

180 Goot M, 'Multiculturalists, Monoculturalists and the many in between: Attitudes to Cultural Diversity and their Correlates, (1993) 29(2) *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 226 at 227.

181 Goot M (1993), note 180, p251.

182 Goot M, 'Migrant Numbers, Asian Immigration and Multiculturalism: Trends in the Polls, 1943-1998', in National Multicultural Advisory Council, *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness: Statistical Appendix,* April 1999, p36-37 and p61.

society and should not be abolished". Goot noted that, "what is most striking about the two sets of responses is that majority support for assimilationist and multiculturalist views coexist not only in the same period but the in the same surveys".

The 2002 Living Diversity survey commissioned by SBS

In 2002 a survey was conducted for SBS by a group of academics, including Ien Ang, Professor of Cultural Studies and Director of the Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney. The results of this survey were reported as follows:

> An important point of debate…has been the extent to which cultural maintenance among migrants – a key principle of the policy of multiculturalism – is a good thing for Australia. Hence, we asked our samples: "How much should migrants be encouraged to keep their cultural identity?"…When asked about this, 52% of the national sample responded in the positive, indicating in principle support for multiculturalism. Nineteen per cent responded in the negative. Presumably, these are the people who believe that there should be more emphasis on the need for migrants to integrate or assimilate into the mainstream Australian culture. A relatively large number, 29% were equivocal on this issue.[183]

Australian Survey of Social Attitudes in 1995 and 2003

In 2005, Goot and Watson commented on the results of the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes, which were conducted in 1995 and 2003: [184]

> …The idea that 'ethnic minorities should be given government assistance to preserve their customs and traditions' was widely rejected in 1995 and again in 2003. Support for ethnic distinctiveness - as against 'blending in'- is equally low. And in both 1995 and 2003, almost three in four respondents preferred the statement 'it is better if these groups adapt and blend into the larger society' to the view that 'it is better for a country if different racial and ethnic groups maintain their distinct customs and traditions'.
>
> At face value, these findings represent a rejection not just of 'hard' multiculturalism – …'government support for migrant cultures' - but also of 'soft' multiculturalism - those attitudes of 'tolerance' and 'satisfaction' that Australians have 'long displayed' in 'seeing migrants participate in Australian life'. But since there may be no contradiction between maintaining 'distinct customs and traditions' and 'adapt[ing] and blending into the larger society', the opposition of ethnic distinction versus 'blending in' may be overdrawn. Certainly, most…2003 respondents do not

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183 Ang I et al, *Living Diversity: Australia's Multicultural Future,* Special Broadcasting Corporation, 2002, p17.

184 Note that the 1995 survey was included in Goot's analysis of surveys from 1988 to 1997, which was outlined above.

regard 'blending in' as a pre-condition for being 'fully Australian'…[185]

Public opinion poll after Cronulla riots in 2005

Following the Cronulla riots in December 2005, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published the results of a poll showing that 81 per cent of those surveyed supported multiculturalism.[186] This figure included 37% who strongly supported multiculturalism.

9. CONCLUSION

In the last 50 years Australia has received large numbers of migrants from overseas and as a result it has become a very culturally diverse society. In the last 30 years multiculturalism has been official Federal Government policy for managing this diversity. Ethnic affairs policy in NSW has also been based on the principles of multiculturalism and since 1996 these principles have been given legislative recognition. There has been much debate about multiculturalism in the wake of terrorism and the 2005 Cronulla riots. The main argument against multiculturalism – that it is divisive – is at the centre of this debate. The Federal Government has recently abandoned the term "multiculturalism". It has also indicated that it will focus on forming a shared national identity based on a core set of values but that it will not abandon the policy fundamentals of multiculturalism. For some this is a welcome shift in policy but others argue that we need more multiculturalism not less.

185 Goot M and Watson I, 'Immigration, Multiculturalism and National Identity', in Wilson S et al, *Australian Social Attitudes: The First Report,* The Australian National University, University of New South Wales Press, 2005, p185-186.

186 'Voters disagree with Howard over racism', *Sydney Morning Herald,* 20/12/05.

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