

**Australian Parliament
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Submission No. 143**

Dear Chair,

What is meant by "the Government's social inclusion agenda"?

If a 'Community' is a 'group of people with a common background or shared interests'; and 'Culture' is the 'shared beliefs, customs, practices, social behaviour, and values of a group' (both Encarta Dictionary definitions), then obviously there cannot be a 'multicultural society/community' unless there are also overriding and agreed values/customs/laws.

Comparably if 'multiculturalism' is simply 'respect for other cultures' then much can be said in favour; but the result can be neither Nation or Community, unless there is bilateral tolerance of & respect for all other cultures. Those who believe in driving on the left side of the road can't exist long in the same community with those insisting on driving on the right side.

Those who claim a 'right' to broadcast a call to prayer in the early dawn have little in common with those who delight in church bells pealing in the mid-morning unless there is reciprocated tolerance. But 'tolerance' is not all. There are certain things that must not, certainly should not, be tolerated; drunken aircraft pilots or car drivers; corporate theft, incompetent surgeons, the burning of witches or widows and cannibalism are but a few.

There is no doubt Australia has benefited immensely from other cultures; certainly our cuisine has improved with the many variations brought by different migrants; and colourful saris about slim figures improve the scenery. But for the vast majority Australia was a refuge from the horrors and uncertainties of Europe; And such came with a complementary understanding of the way of life. Mostly they were happy to be law-abiding citizens as long as they could cook, meet and worship as accustomed. Most by the third generation were competent speakers of English even if their children were taught the 'mother' tongue in the home. Many were very successful in business. With the political discovery that all cultures are not equal and that ours is among the least 'desirable', there has been little incentive for newcomers to become Australian. So many haven't and don't; and so our Society progressively fragments.

If we are to remain a Nation all need to speak a common language; and to be free to leave if such is too onerous. Laws can be changed by common consent but there is no place for sectional laws for separate groups. I welcome all who wish to be Australians. I have no welcome for those who wish to maintain their traditional prejudices but have no tolerance of, or respect for mine.

It seems more than 'passing strange' that at a time governments seem committed to 'anti-discriminatory' legislation, they also seek to frame discriminatory legislation. Both discrimination and multiculturalism are based on, indeed depend upon, differences.