

Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

House of Representatives

Standing Committee on Community Affairs

A FAIR GO FOR ALL
REPORT ON MIGRANT ACCESS AND EQUITY

January 1996

Australian Government Publishing Service

Canberra

© Commonwealth of Australia 1996

ISBN 0 644 43529 1

Front cover photograph entitled "Migrants arriving in Sydney - 1966"
by David Moore

Produced by the Australian Government Publishing Service

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP	vii
TERMS OF REFERENCE	viii
ABBREVIATIONS	ix
RECOMMENDATIONS	xii
 CHAPTER 1	
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INQUIRY	1
INTRODUCTION	1
CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY	2
PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS	2
 CHAPTER 2	
HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT POLICIES	6
OVERVIEW	6
ASSIMILATION	7
INTEGRATION	8
MULTICULTURALISM	9
The National Integrated Settlement Strategy	10
 CHAPTER 3	
GOVERNMENT FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS	13
FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE STATES AND TERRITORIES	13
General Purpose Assistance to the States	15
Specific Purpose Assistance to the States	16

General Revenue Assistance to Local Government	18
Specific Purpose Assistance to Local Government	19

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESS AND EQUITY	20
THE PRINCIPLES OF ACCESS AND EQUITY	20
LINKS WITH OTHER SOCIAL POLICIES	24
National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia	24
Social Justice Strategies	25
Equal Employment Opportunity	26
Productive Diversity	26
RESPONSIVENESS TO CLIENTS	28
Performance Measures	28
Commonwealth	28
States and Territories	29
Local Government	32
Access to Parliament	35
Access in Rural and Remote Areas	37

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCESS AND EQUITY STRATEGY	40
<i>Requirements of Access and Equity</i>	40
Approaches Adopted at Other Levels of Government	41
Cost of Implementing Access and Equity	44
Access and Equity Training Programs	46
Balance Between Mainstream and Ethnospecific Services	48

CHAPTER 6

RECOGNITION OF OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS	51
BACKGROUND	51
Institutional Barriers to Recognition	59
Overseas Trained Doctors	59
AMC Examinations	62
Quotas	62
Standards	65
Coordinating Body	70
Other Professions	70
Engineers	71
Architects	73
Certified Practising Accountants	74
Bridging Courses	75
On-the-Job Training	77
Reciprocal Recognition	79
Provision of Information at Overseas Posts	82
Access to Employment	84

CHAPTER 7

INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING SERVICES	86
Background	86
Translating and Interpreting Services	87
Initiatives at Other Levels of Government	88
New Technology	89
Rural and Remote Areas	90
Centralisation versus Decentralisation	91

User Pays System	92
Training	94
Bilingual/Bicultural Staff and Volunteers	97
 CHAPTER 8	
ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING	99
Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs	99
The Department of Employment, Education and Training	101
Uniform Assessment Scale	102
Project Audit	105
 CHAPTER 9	
DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING MECHANISMS	106
Introduction	106
Definition of Target Group	106
Ethnicity Data	110
Monitoring and Evaluating Mechanisms	113
 APPENDIX 1	116
APPENDIX 2	119
APPENDIX 3	133

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

37th Parliament

Members

Mr Allan Morris, MP	(Chairman)
Mr Don Dobie, MP	(Deputy Chairman to 29/3/95)
Ms Trish Worth, MP	(Deputy Chairman from 30/3/95)
Mr Eion Cameron, MP	(from 29/3/95)
Ms Maggie Deahm, MP	
Mr Richard Evans, MP	
Hon Wendy Fatin, MP	
Mr Chris Haviland, MP	
Mr Neville Newell, MP	
Mr Harry Quick, MP	
Mr Philip Ruddock, MP	
Mr Bruce Scott, MP	
Mrs Silvia Smith, MP	

Secretariat

Mr Bjarne Nordin	(Secretary)
Ms Marie Kawaja	
Ms Lynette Sebo	
Ms Jodie Williams	

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To Inquire into and report to the Parliament on the extent to which Access and Equity principles are applied in the delivery of services, funded in part or solely by the Commonwealth and provided by State or local governments, to those in the community who are of non-English speaking backgrounds excluding people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent.

Particular reference will be given to:

- . the effectiveness of accreditation of overseas qualifications and the impact of overseas qualifications on access to education, training and labour market programs, and employment;
- . an assessment (or analysis) of barriers faced at entry points to services and/or at any other point in accessing a full service, including availability and suitability of interpreter services;
- . the level of cultural sensitivity of organisations and institutions providing such services and the existence of suitable cross-cultural training programs for staff;
- . the impact of Access and Equity principles on service delivery; and
- . the existence and adequacy of mechanisms to monitor such services in order to guarantee Access and Equity principles.

ABBREVIATIONS

A&E	Access and Equity
AACA	Architects Accreditation Council of Australia
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AGPS	Australian Government Publishing Service
AHMAC	Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council
AHMC	Australian Health Ministers' Conference
AIMA	Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
AMA	Australian Medical Association
AMC	Australian Medical Council
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
AMES	Adult Migrant English Services
AMWAC	Australian Medical Workforce Advisory Committee
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
APS	Australian Public Service
ASCPA	Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASLPR	Australian as a Second Language Proficiency Rating
BIPR	Bureau of Immigration and Population Research

CAAIP	Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies
CER	Closer Economic Relations
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
COPQ	Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIEA	Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
DIR	Department of Industrial Relations
DSS	Department of Social Security
ECC	Ethnic Communities' Council
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ENT	Ear, Nose and Throat
ESL	English as a Second Language
FAGS	Financial Assistance Grants
FECCA	Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
HACC	Home and Community Care
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
HS&H	Department of Human Services and Health
IDWG	Interdepartmental Working Group
ILAP	Integrated Local Area Planning
LAPA	Linguistic Availability/Performance Allowance

LGSA	Local Government and Shires Association
MCQ	Multiple Choice Question
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAATI	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NESC	Non-English Speaking Cultures
NISS	National Integrated Settlement Strategy
NOOSR	National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition
NPC	National Population Council
OMA	Office of Multicultural Affairs
OTD	Overseas Trained Doctor
RACGP	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
RAIA	Royal Australian Institute of Architects
ROMAMPAS	Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services
SIP	Special Intervention Program
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TIS	Translating and Interpreting Service
TISIS	Translating and Interpreting Service Information System
TRRA	<i>Tradesman's Rights Regulation Act 1946</i>

RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 2

History of Settlement Policies

1. The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs report immediately to the Parliament regarding progress on the evaluation of the National Integrated Settlement Strategy, including preliminary results of the evaluation. **(para 2.26)**

CHAPTER 4

Development of Access and Equity

2. The Committee recommends that the Office of Multicultural Affairs should:

- a) standardise its definition of Access and Equity and simplify associated language used in all government literature;
- b) review and revise accordingly the various information and training booklets it has produced on the subject; and
- c) develop standardised benchmarking and outcome measures of performance. **(para 4.15)**

3. The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government introduce standardised benchmarking for its own programs and in all agreements relating to the delivery of Commonwealth funded programs by State and Territory governments. **(para 4.47)**

4. The Committee recommends that the Australian Local Government Association, through its involvement in the National Integrated Settlement Strategy, integrate the specific needs of migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds into Integrated

Local Area Planning strategic planning to ensure that Access and Equity principles are met in providing services for local communities.(para 4.58)

5. The Committee recommends that all Parliamentary committees continue to explore the use of a variety of more sensitive methods to ensure wider public participation, particularly from non-English speaking people in the community.(para 4.68)

6. The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government:

- a) investigate the capacity of modern technology to deliver services such as language training and the provision of information in major community languages; and
- b) strengthen the system of Migrant Liaison Officers to report on and make recommendations about the relevance and accessibility of services for non-English speaking people.(para 4.75)

CHAPTER 5

Implementation of Access and Equity Strategy

7. The Committee commends the Local Government and Shires Association of New South Wales for producing the document *For One and All* and recommends consideration of the adoption of its style as an appropriate strategic plan for all governments and portfolio areas. (para 5.11)

8. The Committee recommends that cross-cultural communication training be incorporated as an essential element of staff development across all levels of government and that this be a requirement for the career development of staff in service delivery departments. (para 5.25)

CHAPTER 6

Recognition of Overseas Qualifications

9. The Committee recommends that all registered doctors, both Australian educated and overseas trained, be given training and incentives to practise in rural and remote areas for a minimum period of three years. Such incentive schemes should be developed through consultations between the Australian Medical Association, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health. **(para 6.50)**

10. The Committee recommends that the Australian Medical Workforce Advisory Committee ensure that the process of accreditation of overseas trained medical practitioners is fair, is seen to be fair and that this be reflected in the guidelines determining accreditation. **(Para 6.66)**

11. The Committee recommends more active dissemination of information regarding bridging courses. These courses should be easily accessible and affordable and coordinated between the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition and the specific professional organisation, to ensure that the overseas trained professionals can improve their qualifications to meet Australian standards. **(para 6.94)**

12. The Committee recommends that the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition negotiate, with professional associations, the development of a process similar to that being followed by the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants, in order to allow for the assessment of qualifications to be undertaken overseas and for access to bridging courses to be undertaken off-shore. **(para 6.95)**

13. The Committee recommends that the Government extend the national training wage system to accommodate overseas trained professionals. The rate for the training wage should be negotiated with the appropriate professional bodies. **(para 6.102)**

14. The Committee recommends that the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition become proactive in encouraging professional associations to negotiate reciprocal agreements either bilaterally or

multilaterally for the purpose of developing agreed standards. Such agreements must be based on objective criteria of professional competency. **(para 6.111)**

15. The Committee recommends that the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition undertake an examination of its procedures, including its coordination with the various professional associations and the provision of its information on skills assessment, to ensure that prospective migrants are accurately assessed and informed about the recognition system after arrival in Australia. **(para 6.115)**

16. The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs reviews its process of cross-cultural communication training for its interviewing officers proceeding overseas, to ensure its adequacy. **(para 6.116)**

17. Where Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Officers are used in certain posts to conduct immigration interviews, the Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs coordinate interview training with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, prior to the officer's posting. **(para 6.117)**

18. The Committee notes that in the Government's statements of Productive Diversity and Working Nation, the benefits of a multicultural workforce are appreciated and valued. The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government mount a campaign aimed specifically at promoting the value of overseas skills and qualifications. **(para 6.123)**

CHAPTER 7

Interpreting and Translating Services

19. The Committee recommends that the practice of supplementing interpreting and translating services by the employment of bilingual/bicultural staff be adopted across all levels of government departments and agencies which are required to deliver services. **(para 7.9)**

20. The Committee recommends that the Office of Multicultural Affairs monitor the introduction of the interpreter card in Victoria in order to determine whether its implementation could be recommended to other States. **(para 7.14)**

21. The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs discuss with the relevant authorities in the States and Territories, the question of a centralised interpreting and translating service, with a view to merging the services within a central government agency. **(para 7.31)**

22. In the interests of ensuring equitable access to interpreting and translating services, the Committee also recommends that Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments explore avenues for cost-sharing. **(para 7.32)**

23. The Committee recommends that:

- a) the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters should develop specialist training for accredited interpreters and translators in legal and health settings;
- b) the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters should, as far as possible, ensure that regional and dialectic variations are catered for to allow adequate interpretation in all situations; and
- c) quality assurance programs be implemented to ensure that proper professional standards are maintained. **(para 7.42)**

CHAPTER 8

Adult Education and Training

24. The Committee recommends that:

- a) in all future negotiations with States and Territories, the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs should build Access and Equity principles into the terms of any Memorandum of Understanding or in measures contained in any Operational Plan, to

include the availability of home tutors for carers who are unable to access outside courses and distance learning for people in rural and remote areas;

- b) outcomes proposed in the Operational Plan should be based on the level of language skills achieved by migrants rather than participation rates and these should seek to have migrants reach Australian as a Second Language Proficiency Rating 2 before exiting the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs program; and
- c) in all its tendering arrangements, the Department of Employment, Education and Training should also seek to have documents which stipulate that participants in the Special Intervention Program English as a Second Language should reach Australian as a Second Language Proficiency Rating 3 or higher, before exiting the Program.(para 8.20)

25. The Committee recommends that the Auditor-General conduct a further audit check of the Adult Migrant English Program and the Special Intervention Program English as a Second Language along the lines of the 1992 audit, with particular emphasis on the effectiveness of the current management controls designed to evaluate the State education authorities and other organisations who deliver the programs.(para 8.24)

CHAPTER 9

Data Collection and Monitoring Mechanisms

26. The Committee recommends that, for the purpose of planning programs, the Australian Bureau of Statistics should seek objective data through an alternative identifier to 'NESB'. The Committee further recommends that the Australian Bureau of Statistics conduct community consultations to focus test the use of alternative identifying terms. (para 9.23)

27. The Committee recommends that the Office of Multicultural Affairs publication *Diversity Counts: A Handbook on Ethnicity Data*, be revised to include measures of disadvantage within the migrant population. **(para 9.25)**

28. The Committee recommends that in all Commonwealth-State funding arrangements, Access and Equity requirements constitute part of the contractual and compliance obligations for all service providers. These include:

- a) the identification of disadvantaged clients at risk of permanent disadvantage due to linguistic and cultural barriers;
- b) the maintenance and extension of interpreting and translating services;
- c) improved access to English language training;
- d) streamlining of the recognition process;
- e) cross-cultural communication training for staff who are at the client interface;
- f) the collection and maintenance of client data to enable effective evaluation and monitoring of the program; and
- g) an internal complaints mechanism to be administered and monitored by the service provider. **(para 9.30)**

CHAPTER 1

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INQUIRY

INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 10 November 1994, the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon Nick Bolkus, wrote to the Chairman, Mr Allan Morris, MP referring an inquiry to the Committee. The specific terms of reference were for the Committee to inquire into and report to the Parliament on the extent to which Access and Equity principles are applied in the delivery of services, funded in part or solely by the Commonwealth and provided by State or Local Governments, to those in the community who are of non-English speaking backgrounds excluding people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent.

Particular reference will be given to:

- the effectiveness of accreditation of overseas qualifications and the impact of overseas qualifications on access to education, training and labour market programs, and employment;
- an assessment (or analysis) of barriers faced at entry points to services and/or at any other point in accessing a full service, including availability and suitability of interpreter services;
- the level of cultural sensitivity of organisations and institutions providing such services and the existence of suitable cross-cultural training programs for staff;
- the impact of Access and Equity principles on service delivery; and
- the existence and adequacy of mechanisms to monitor such services in order to guarantee Access and Equity principles.

CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

1.2 The Inquiry was advertised in the major metropolitan newspapers in December 1994. At the same time, advertisements were placed in the ethnic press in 21 newspapers in 16 community languages. In addition, letters inviting submissions were sent to State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers, and individuals and organisations likely to have an interest in the Inquiry.

1.3 The Inquiry generated 91 submissions and a substantial amount of supplementary information from individuals, non government organisations and community groups. All States and the Northern Territory government, as well as relevant Commonwealth government departments, provided submissions. Despite repeated requests, the Australian Capital Territory government declined to provide a submission to the Inquiry. A list of all submissions received is at Appendix 1.

1.4 The Committee took evidence at public hearings in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Newcastle. In addition, three days of hearings were held in Sydney and four in Canberra. In Darwin, the public hearing was followed by a public forum attended by individuals and representatives of local migrant communities.

1.5 The Committee also took evidence from a number of academics whose research has influenced the direction of multicultural policies in Australia over the past two decades. The academics comprised: Professor Judith Sloan, Director of the National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University, Professor Stephen Castles and Dr Robyn Iredale of the Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong, Dr James Jupp, Director of the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Australian National University and Dr Robert Holten, Director of the Centre for Multicultural Studies at Flinders University.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

1.6 Since the *Migrant Services and Programs Report of 1978* (Galbally Report)¹ examined post arrival services and programs and

¹ Committee of Review of Post-arrival Programs and Services for Migrants, *Migrant Services and Programs* (Galbally report), AGPS, Canberra, 1978.

set a benchmark for future settlement policy objectives, a number of subsequent Commonwealth Government funded committees were established to examine and review progress on immigration and settlement policy directions. The most significant were the *Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services, 1986* (ROMAMPAS)² and the *Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies, 1988*, (CAAIP) .

1.7 In addition to the major reviews of post-migration and multicultural needs, a number of case studies have been undertaken for the Bureau of Immigration and Population Research (BIPR) by academic consultants. These include a review of the settlement needs of small newly arrived ethnic groups conducted at the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Australian National University.⁴

1.8 A comprehensive two-volume report handed down in 1982, on the recognition of overseas qualifications in Australia⁵, resulted in a number of major recommendations which included English language training, counselling and reorientation and retraining.⁶ Some ten years later, a closer examination of the recognition process was undertaken by the Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong. This resulted in the publication of separate studies on the recognition of overseas trade qualifications and the recognition of overseas professional qualifications.⁷

1.9 These reports were a response to community concerns about previous settlement policies, particularly assimilation, which some viewed as "coercive and unacceptable".⁸ Their findings have

2 Committee of Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services (ROMAMPAS). *Don't Settle for Less*, (Jupp report), AGPS, Canberra, 1986.

3 Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies (CAAIP). *Immigration: A Commitment to Australia*, (FitzGerald report), AGPS, Canberra, 1988.

4 Jupp, James et al, *Settlement Needs of Small Newly Arrived Ethnic Groups*, AGPS, Canberra, 1991.

5 Committee of Inquiry into Recognition of Overseas Qualifications. *The Recognition of Overseas Qualifications in Australia* (Fry report), 2 vols. AGPS, Canberra, 1983.

6 A full list of the recommendations are at Chapter 1, *ibid*.

7 Castles, Stephen, et al, *The Recognition of Overseas Trade Qualifications*, AGPS, Canberra, 1989. Mitchell, Colleen, et al. *Recognition of Overseas Professional Qualifications*, AGPS, Canberra, 1990.

8 Jupp, James, et al, *op cit*, p.1.

influenced present government policies and directions in addressing post-migration needs, culminating in the multicultural policy initiatives introduced in the 1989 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*. This reaffirmed and strengthened the 1986 Access and Equity Strategy.

1.10 A large body of literature exists which has examined post-migration needs and policies, as well as the terminology used to identify the target group. The Bureau of Immigration and Population Research commissioned a review of the literature, published in 1994 under the title *Australian Immigration: A Survey of the Issues*.⁹

1.11 This is the first time a Federal Parliamentary inquiry has been conducted into the extent of the application of the principles of Access and Equity in the delivery of services to migrants and Australians of non-English speaking backgrounds. Significantly, this is the first Inquiry into programs funded wholly or in part by the Commonwealth and delivered by State, Territory and local governments and follows a review undertaken by the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), in 1992, of Commonwealth funded and provided services and a recent report by the National Multicultural Advisory Council on future trends in multicultural policies.¹⁰

1.12 It became apparent, during the course of the Inquiry, that a review of the implementation of Access and Equity by some Commonwealth departments would be necessary, to allow the Committee to compare the effectiveness of arrangements at State and local government level. The Committee has, therefore, looked into the operating methods of some of the funding Departments and has made a number of recommendations which will link funding to a system of monitoring and evaluation as indicated in Chapters 4 and 9 of the Report.

1.13 A shortage of data and the lack of an agreed definition of the target group has made the drafting of constructive recommendations difficult to achieve. As a first step, the Committee believes that an agreed definition of the target group is essential and,

9 Wooden, Mark, et al, *Australian Immigration: A Survey of the Issues*, AGPS, Canberra, 1994.

10 A Report of the National Multicultural Advisory Council, *Multicultural Australia The Next Steps Towards and Beyond 2000*, Vols 1 and 2, AGPS, Canberra, 1995.

if appropriate, one description given to that group. At the present time, labels such as 'migrant', 'ethnic' and NESB (non-English speaking background) and NESC (defined as non-English speaking culture) proliferate.

1.14 Another area of concern is confusion in the definition of Access and Equity. Questions of how and to whom it should be applied; what it is meant to deliver; what changes should be made to a program or at the corporate level to accommodate it and make it more understood; and which appropriate monitoring mechanisms should be employed, must be resolved.

1.15 The Committee is conscious of the debate concerning equitable distribution of resources and the difficulties with implementing and monitoring of the A&E Strategy across the three levels of governments. These tensions have been explored in subsequent chapters of the Report and linked to recommendations which attempt to reconcile Access and Equity principles with better accountability and with recognition of the added value that a culturally diverse workforce brings to the Australian community.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT POLICIES

OVERVIEW

2.1 During the two hundred years of white settlement, Australia has relied on immigration to increase its population and industrial base. A surge of immigrant settlers came with the gold-rushes in the 1850s adding half a million people to the population. A prolonged wave of immigration occurred from about 1870 and lasted for some 20 years.

2.2 From 1906 until the outbreak of the First World War, 200 000 immigrants came to settle in Australia. With the help of the *British Empire Settlement Act* of 1922 and until the depression of the 1930s, immigration netted another 300 000 new settlers. In the decade preceding the outbreak of the Second World War, immigration was a negligible factor in growth, but was set to revive as the War broke out.¹

2.3 The most significant social and economic development in post-Second World War Australia was the immigration program. It had become obvious during the War that a massive increase in Australia's population was vital to Australia's future. To the catchcry 'populate or perish', Australia looked both to England and Europe to boost the population.²

2.4 From 1947 to 1973, 63.5% of all immigrants arriving in Australia were assisted. The majority of assisted immigrant settlers came from the British Isles, who were given free passage and placed in subsidised accommodation 'at a higher standard than is necessary

1 Journal of the Australian Population Association, Vol.5, *Rebuilding Post-War Australia*, 1988, p.215.

2 Crowley, Frank, Ed., *A New History of Australia*, William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1974, pp.481-482.

for foreign migrants.³ "They were provided with free professional advice on social services, employment, health insurance, housing and education, as well as assistance with their personal problems".⁴

2.5 Settlement policies for non-British migrants have made three significant shifts. Commencing with assimilation, in the immediate post War years, there was a change in the mid-1960s to integration and, in the early 1970s, to multiculturalism.

ASSIMILATION

2.6 The policy of assimilation set 'minimal' settlement objectives. Typical programs included hostel accommodation, counselling and limited provision of tuition in English. With a strong labour market, employment was guaranteed and 'economic assimilation' was assumed to bring about social and cultural assimilation⁵.

2.7 There was a lack of comprehensive planning behind the assimilation policy. It was accepted that assimilation would be achieved with minimum public costs through established non-government organisations and with instructions to migrants published in English.⁶ Settlers with young families were preferred to the "single and middle-aged", as children could pass their school days with Australians and therefore become "thoroughly assimilated" before they went out to work.⁷

3 Notes on the Immigration Works Program prepared by the Department of Immigration, 1951, p.2, cited in Jordens, Ann-Mari, *Redefining Australians*, Working papers in Australian Studies, Working paper No.79, Australian National University, 1992, p.3.

4 *ibid.*

5 Wooden, Mark, et al, *op. cit.*, p.317.

6 Jordens, Ann-Mari, *op. cit.*, p.3.

7 Journal of the Australian Population Association, *op. cit.*, p.219.

2.8 The semi-skilled "son of toil"⁸ was preferred to the overseas educated professional or skilled worker. Reciprocal arrangements were not always sought with overseas universities other than major English and American institutions, as these were considered inferior to Australian institutions. The Government's view at the time was that the qualifications of displaced migrant professionals would not be recognised by Australian professional bodies, nor would the Government force change.⁹

2.9 Between 1948 and 1952 many qualified refugees undertook labouring work on the Snowy Mountains project and other public works. After a two-year indenture period, they faced difficulties in returning to their professions.¹⁰

2.10 Official measures discouraged skilled workers from leaving their jobs to move into skilled jobs intended for British migrants under the new Commonwealth Nomination Scheme. However, in 1952, the *Tradesmen's Right Regulation Act 1946*, originally enacted for the protection of employment rights of apprentice-trained tradespersons in the metal, electrical and boot trades, became a vehicle for the recognition of the overseas trades qualifications of migrants.¹¹

INTEGRATION

2.11 In the mid-1960s, settlement policy shifted to 'integration'. The shift in policy recognised the failure of older migrants from eastern and southern Europe to assimilate and that the insistence on conformity was seen to be "coercive and unacceptable".¹²

8 Expression used by Arthur Calwell, then Minister for Immigration, cited in Moore, Ron, *An Administrative History of the Assessment of Skills and Qualifications of Migrants of Non-English Speaking Background and Equal Opportunity - from the Second World War until 1990*, Working Paper No.111, Department of Economics, Murdoch University, 1994, p.15.

9 *ibid.*, p.15.

10 Iredale, Robyn, *op. cit.*, p.3.

11 Castles, Stephen, et al, *op. cit.*, p.16.

12 Jupp, J., et al, *op. cit.*, p.1.

2.12 With the establishment of a professional migrant program in 1963 and acceptance that European and American graduates had comparable degrees to those in Australia, State Ministers agreed, in principle, in 1968, to uniform standards and the setting up of an authority to investigate the recognition of overseas qualifications. On 27 March 1969, the then Minister for Immigration, announced the formation of the Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications (COPQ)¹³

2.13 However, COPQ was not well resourced, resulting in piecemeal reform of the recognition process. This approach was consistent with the integration policy approach to the settlement of non-British migrants. While the policy recognised the contribution made by migrants of non-British cultures, they were, nevertheless, expected to become absorbed into the British/Australian culture.¹⁴

2.14 Up to the end of the 1960s, the level of awareness of the problems experienced by migrants in establishing themselves economically or socially was low. In 1972, nationwide unemployment data revealed that rates of unemployment for migrants were higher than for those born in Australia, with the highest rates amongst the most recent arrivals.¹⁵

2.15 In the same year, a Department of Immigration survey of discriminatory legislation showed that immigrants were debarred by various State and Federal laws from becoming public servants, lawyers, teachers in government schools, or able to join the Navy or the Air Force. In some States and Territories, they could not become pharmacists, surveyors, marine officers, or hold mining or liquor licences.¹⁶

MULTICULTURALISM

2.16 The concept of multiculturalism was taken up in the early 1970s when Australia as well as other immigrant countries, such as the United States of America and Canada, witnessed the development

13 cited in Moore, Ron, *op. cit.*, p.23

14 *ibid.*, p.24

15 cited in Iredale, Robyn, *op. cit.*, p.3.

16 Jordens, Ann-Mari, *op. cit.*, p.7.

of the concept 'new ethnicity', which rejected the "melting pot" theory. "Advocates of the 'new ethnicity' see it as a long-overdue societal and political recognition of the distinctiveness and value of the contribution to Australian society made by groups with different backgrounds from those of the majority's Anglo-celtic heritage."¹⁷

2.17 At the same time, the Department of Immigration's Integration Section was reconstituted as the Post Arrival Service Branch. The Branch was established to offer a range of services which included welfare, English language training and telephone interpreter services. Suggestions were made at the time that insufficient data justified the setting up of the program and the Department was criticised for favouring large migrant intakes while being slow to develop settlement services.¹⁸

2.18 Following the abolition of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA) in 1986, the Government established the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), as part of a number of government initiatives which reflected the adoption of multicultural policies. The role of OMA is to provide policy advice to the Prime Minister and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Multicultural Affairs on multicultural issues. The Office also provides advice to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister on Access and Equity issues."¹⁹

The National Integrated Settlement Strategy

2.19 In November 1991, the Commonwealth Government established the National Integrated Settlement Strategy (NISS) supported by State and Territory governments and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). The NISS was a Commonwealth Government initiative designed to provide a mechanism for improving planning and coordination for migrant

17 Wooden, Mark, et al, *op cit*, pp.82-83.

18 Moore, Ron, *op. cit.*, p.27.

19 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Annual Report 1993-1994*, AGPS, Canberra, 1994, p.46.

settlement services, and to ensure that Access and Equity had been achieved across portfolios at all levels of government.²⁰

2.20 A multi-level management structure supports the NISS. The structure involves a Commonwealth Ministerial Group; the annual Council of Ministers for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, which includes Commonwealth and State/Territory Ministers and attended by a representative of ALGA. The Council is supported by the Standing Committee for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs made up of officials of the Council. Together, these two bodies provide the forum for monitoring progress of the NISS on an intergovernmental basis. This process is augmented by Settlement Planning Committees, representing all levels of government and some community groups, reporting annually to the Commonwealth/State Ministerial Council.

2.21 Another level of the structure is an Interdepartmental Working Group (IDWG) on Migrant Settlement and Other Planning Issues. The IDWG is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA), with agency representation in line with membership of the Commonwealth Ministerial Group. A Settlement Advisory Council, chaired by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs was also established as a peak community advisory body to the Minister.

2.22 DIEA informed the Committee that the NISS largely grew out of a 1991 ministerial inquiry into Access and Equity. Consultations were undertaken in some 23 centres around Australia and about 4 000 people gave their views which were summarised by DIEA as follows:

...state and local governments were not providing accessible services in the first place. They certainly were not providing the resources to make these services accessible for things such as interpreting and translation requirements and for other particular services in hospitals, the education system and so on.²¹

20 Draft National Integrated Settlement Strategy, p.2.

21 Transcript of evidence, p.34.

2.23 State planning committees, which are committees of Commonwealth, State and local governments that operate in each State and Territory, have a built in biannual reporting requirement to the overarching Council of Ministers for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and their officials.

2.24 The NISS was scheduled for evaluation as part of DIEA's 1994/95 Portfolio Evaluation Plan. However, in its *Annual Report 1994-95*, DIEA notes that it "has started an evaluation of the NISS, to seek the views of participants and community groups on its effectiveness, and to look at ways of further improving the benefits delivered to migrants".²²

2.25 In Sydney, the Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales, while welcoming its participation in an advisory role on the NISS, highlighted the lack of evaluation of its effectiveness some four years after its introduction.²³ The NISS attempts to serve as an integrated settlement initiative addressing the needs of newly arrived migrants. It also aims to overcome longer term disadvantage by employing A&E principles as a means of redressing the lack of opportunities for earlier settlers and their families.

2.26 The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs report immediately to the Parliament regarding progress on the evaluation of the National Integrated Settlement Strategy, including preliminary results of the evaluation.

22 Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Annual Report 1994-95*, op. cit., pp.3-4.

23 Transcript of evidence, p.314.

CHAPTER 3

GOVERNMENT FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE STATES AND TERRITORIES

3.1 The terms of reference for this Inquiry require the Committee to examine the delivery of services funded in part or solely by the Commonwealth and provided by State or local governments.¹

3.2 The Australian Federal system is characterised by a very high degree of vertical fiscal imbalance. That is to say, the degree of revenue raised and expended by the Commonwealth Government relative to the other tiers of government. The Commonwealth raises around 75 % of all public revenue, yet its own-purpose outlays account for approximately only 55 % of total Commonwealth, State and local government expenditures. This situation is often summarised in the adage that the Commonwealth does the taxing, while the States and local government do the spending.

3.3 The functioning of our Federal system, therefore, requires substantial financial transfers from the Commonwealth to the other tiers of government. In 1995-96, for example, the Commonwealth will provide net financial assistance to the States and local government of around \$32 billion. It might be noted that the degree of vertical fiscal imbalance observed in Australia is higher than that found in any other Federal system in the western world.

3.4 Numerous factors have contributed to the development of vertical fiscal imbalance in Australia. A major factor is our Constitution. Section 51 of the Constitution defines the functions for which the Commonwealth has powers to make laws. Except for a small number of functions over which the Commonwealth has exclusive jurisdiction, Commonwealth powers are concurrent with those of the States, although section 109 of the Constitution gives the

1 The description which follows in this Chapter was provided by Mr Denis James of the Economics Commerce and Industrial Relations Group, Parliamentary Research Service.

Commonwealth paramountcy to the extent of any conflict between Commonwealth and State laws in areas of shared responsibility. All other functions reside with the States which, in turn, may delegate activities to their local authorities.

3.5 While the Constitution gives the Commonwealth powers in relation to certain fields involving significant expenditure, such as defence and social welfare, other high outlay functions such as health, education, law and order and roads, are the principal preserves of the States.

3.6 On the other hand, the States have been excluded from major revenue sources. Section 90 of the Constitution, which grants the Commonwealth exclusive power to impose duties of customs and excise, has been interpreted by the High Court in such a fashion that the States have been virtually excluded from imposing any form of sales tax on goods.

3.7 In 1942, the States also withdrew from the field of income taxation. This was initially designed to be a temporary measure to assist the Commonwealth to meet its revenue needs during World War II, but in 1946 the Commonwealth informed the States that it would continue to exclusively levy income tax and, for a period of time, explicitly made the provision of general revenue grants to the States conditional upon them acceding to this demand.

3.8 Commonwealth financial assistance to the States and local government takes two forms: general purpose assistance, which simply augments State and local budget revenues; and specific purpose assistance, which must be used as specified by the Commonwealth. This latter form of assistance is also frequently referred to as tied grants or section 96 grants. Section 96 of the Constitution empowers the Commonwealth to provide financial assistance to any State on whatever terms and conditions the Commonwealth Parliament thinks fit.

3.9 This power to grant conditional assistance has enabled the Commonwealth to exercise its influence in many areas, such as health and education, even though it has no explicit Constitutional responsibility for these functions. The proportion of assistance provided to the States in the form of tied grants has increased over the past decade, from 38% in 1985-86 to 53% in 1995-96. The States

have frequently expressed the concern that this large proportion of tied assistance has had the effect of reducing their budget flexibility.

General Purpose Assistance to the States

3.10 General purpose assistance may be used by the States as they see fit. This assistance currently takes three forms: financial assistance grants (FAGs); special revenue assistance; and identified roads grants. The size of the pool of financial assistance grants is determined by a Premiers Conference each year, at which the Commonwealth plays a dominant role. Generally, the size of the FAGs pool is determined simply by escalating the previous years grants by an agreed factor.

3.11 Since 1985, the pool has frequently been escalated by the rate of inflation, but under current arrangements, the pool is being escalated by the rate of inflation and the rate of population increase. This arrangement is guaranteed until at least 1997-98.

3.12 The distribution of the FAGs pool amongst the States is also determined at the Premiers Conference, based on the recommendations of the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Australias Federal system is characterised by a highly developed system of horizontal fiscal equalisation, with the Grants Commission assessing a distribution of grants which will provide each State or Territory with the capacity to provide the same standard of service without having to impose a higher revenue raising burden on its citizens.

3.13 The Commission assesses relative State needs, both in terms of the revenue bases available to each State and the relative cost advantages or disabilities faced by each State in the provision of recurrent government services. These relative needs are reduced to a set of per capita weights which, when applied to the populations of each of the States, yields the final proportions on which the pool of financial assistance grants are allocated amongst the States.

3.14 From time to time, the Premiers Conference may recognise that certain States might be suffering from unusual budgetary distress from various causes. In this event, the Conference might agree to the payment of special revenue assistance to the State or States concerned. While the Commonwealth has occasionally

subscribed its own funds to the provision of such assistance, it has become more common for special revenue assistance to be paid out of the existing pool of financial assistance grants.

3.15 At the 1990 Special Premiers Conference, called by Prime Minister Hawke, the Commonwealth committed itself to a review of the roles and responsibilities of the various tiers of government and to an examination of the possibility of untying some Commonwealth assistance. It was agreed that, from 1990-91, Commonwealth specific purpose funding for local roads would be untied and replaced with comparable general revenue assistance grants, mainly to local government.

3.16 In 1992, Prime Minister Keating announced that a similar approach would be taken to Commonwealth funding for arterial roads in the States. As from 1 January 1994, the Commonwealth has provided general revenue assistance to the States in lieu of such road funding. These funds, which may be used by the States as they see fit, are termed identified roads grants.² The allocation of these grants amongst the States is being phased, over the three years to 1997-98, from their actual distribution as road funds in 1994-95, to the same Grants Commissions relativities used for the distribution of FAGs.

3.17 In 1995-96, financial assistance grants are estimated to total \$14 858 million. Special revenue assistance will be \$486 million, of which \$378.3 million will be funded from the existing FAGs pool and the remainder contributed by the Commonwealth. Identified roads grants are estimated to be \$369 million.

Specific Purpose Assistance to the States

3.18 In 1995-96, the Commonwealth will provide approximately \$18 billion in specific purpose funding to the States for both recurrent and capital purposes.³ In some instances, the States

2 The Commonwealth still continues to provide specific purpose grants to the States for construction and maintenance of the National Highway System, for which the Commonwealth has assumed full financial responsibility since 1974.

3 Whereas in the past, a certain amount of specific purpose assistance was provided in the form of interest bearing, repayable advances from the Commonwealth, virtually all specific purpose assistance currently provided takes the form of non-repayable grants.

simply act as mail drops or agents for the Commonwealth and on-pass grants directly to other target groups. This is especially the case for Commonwealth assistance to tertiary education institutions and financial assistance grants to local government. Such payments are referred to as payments made through the States. However, around 60% of specific purpose assistance takes the form of funding provided to the States, which they are required to use in a specified manner.

3.19 Specific purpose assistance began to be provided for roads in 1923. In the 1940s and 1950s, tied assistance began to be provided for certain education, health and housing programs and a range of transport improvement programs. However, during the Whitlam period in the 1970s there was a significant escalation in such assistance, with funding being provided for pre-schools, child care, hospitals, community health, urban and regional development, urban public transport and local government. In this period, the Commonwealth also began to fully fund higher education.

3.20 The Commonwealth continues to provide specific purpose assistance for a large number of programs in such areas as legal aid, education, hospitals, health services, disability services, home care, accommodation assistance, housing, landcare, rural adjustment, roads and natural disaster relief.

3.21 Specific purpose assistance to the States is provided in a variety of ways and can have various degrees of conditionality attached. Some grants may be extremely prescriptive, while others may allow the States a reasonable degree of discretion in their use. Section 83 of the Constitution requires that any moneys expended by the Commonwealth must be authorised by a lawful appropriation. A small number of specific purpose payments to the States, such as that for natural disaster relief, are authorised by Appropriation Bill No. 2, which is passed annually, but the majority of the assistance is authorised by explicit Acts of Parliament.

3.22 In some instances, such as roads, the conditions applying to the grants are substantially set out in the authorising legislation. In others, they are defined in quite detailed agreements which form Schedules to the authorising legislation, as in the case of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. Some legislation may require the assistance to be applied on the basis of principles agreed between the relevant Commonwealth Minister and the States, as in

the case of local government funding, while other assistance may simply be provided on the basis of guidelines issued by the relevant Minister, as occurs with natural disaster relief.⁴

General Revenue Assistance to Local Government

3.23 Except for those functions over which the Constitution provides the Commonwealth with explicit powers to make laws, the Commonwealth has no Constitutional power to provide assistance directly to local government. As a result, the great majority of Commonwealth assistance to local government must be on-passed through the States. Thus most Commonwealth assistance to local government, including the provision of general revenue assistance, appears in the first instance as specific purpose payments to or through the States.

3.24 Prior to 1974, no general revenue assistance was provided by the Commonwealth to local government. Such assistance began as an initiative of the then Government. In 1995-96, local government is estimated to receive \$807 million in the form of financial assistance grants. The pool of grants is determined by escalating the previous years grants by the same factor as the change in State financial assistance grants. Thus local government also currently benefits from the real per capita guarantee arrangements applying to the States.

3.25 The pool of local government FAGs is currently allocated amongst the States on a purely per capita basis. The Commonwealth Grants Commission has stated that, in principle, it would prefer to see the pool allocated on the basis of relative fiscal needs, and preliminary calculations by the Commission indicate that such an approach would see a significant variation compared to the per capita distribution method. However, the per capita approach is certainly a simpler, less administratively costly method.

4 A detailed list of all specific purpose payments, outlining their purpose, the responsible Minister, conditions, reporting requirements and cost may be found in the *Catalogue of Specific Purpose Payments to the States and Territories*, Commonwealth-State Relations Secretariat, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

3.26 Once a State receives its allocation, this is distributed amongst its local authorities on the basis of recommendations by each States Local Government Grants Commission which operates according to nationally uniform principles agreed with the relevant Commonwealth Minister. The recommended distribution is based upon a fiscal equalisation methodology, although the Federal legislation ensures that each local authority receives a minimum, per capita payment.

3.27 In addition to financial assistance grants, local government also receives general revenue assistance from the Commonwealth, via the States, in the form of identified roads grants. As stated previously, funding for local roads was untied as from 1990-91, with local government receiving general revenue funding in lieu. In 1995-95, such funding is estimated to be \$358 million. Identified road funds are also increase at the same rate as movements in State FAGs, but are distributed amongst the States on the historical proportions applying to the former local roads grants.

Specific Purpose Assistance to Local Government

3.28 Some specific purpose assistance to local government is provided directly by the Commonwealth in areas where the Commonwealth has Constitutional authority. Currently, the only significant direct funding relates to the provision of childrens services, but some funding is also provided directly for home and community care and aged and disabled persons homes and hostels. Such direct assistance is estimated to be \$272 million in 1995-96. In addition, however, a small amount of specific purpose assistance provided to the States for certain programs is on-passed to local government.

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESS AND EQUITY

THE PRINCIPLES OF ACCESS AND EQUITY

4.1 As already detailed, the Federal Government's current Access and Equity (A & E) policy has flowed from previous responses to migrant settlement, namely: assimilation, integration, and finally, multiculturalism. Access and Equity was introduced in 1985 and was, initially, "restricted to the overseas born, with a particular focus on women."¹

4.2 When the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* was launched in 1989, the scope of the A&E Strategy was extended "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 backgrounds, with a continuing emphasis on the double disadvantage which may be faced by women".² The objective of the Strategy was "to shift the perception of people of non-English speaking background from being migrants with difficulties to being more properly perceived as residents of Australia who may face barriers to access to services"³ and to ensure the recognition of their needs across other portfolios, not only the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.⁴

4.3 The evolution of Access and Equity as part of the Government's social justice agenda occurred together with the increasing variety of Australia's migrant intake. After adopting the Galbally Report's principle that the needs of migrants should, in general, be met by programs and services available to the whole community, the issue of mainstream sensitivity to migrant needs was recognised.

1 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia: Sharing Our Future*, AGPS, Canberra, 1989, p.23.

2 *ibid.*

3 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, *Access and Equity Evaluation Report*, AGPS, Canberra, 1992, p.16.

4 *ibid.*

4.4 In its 1992 *Access and Equity Evaluation Report*, the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) described Access and Equity as a "concept, a principle and a policy given practical management content by a Strategy, but a Strategy which has evolved significantly in its application in its lifetime".⁵

4.5 Three core terms relating to the concept of Access and Equity are identified as follows:

- *Barriers* comprising incidental, structural or policy limitations within government departments or agencies.
- *Access* implying that all who are entitled to a public service should face no barriers which render their situation inequitable to others so entitled.
- *Equity* indicating that all who are entitled to government provision should be equally likely to receive it if eligible.⁶

4.6 As a policy, OMA observes that A&E "faces head on the tension between the often, or apparently, contradictory goals of cost-efficiency and equity."⁷ As a Strategy, A&E is designed to provide "an implementation mechanism for the concept of Access and Equity in the Australian Public Service."⁸

4.7 During the course of the Inquiry, it became apparent from the nature of the submissions and the evidence given at public hearings that confusion exists amongst various groups and individuals about the definition of A&E. That is to say confusion about how and to whom it should be applied; what it is meant to deliver; what changes ought to be made at the corporate level to accommodate it; and how it should be monitored and measured. The Asian Women's Consultative Council gave the following illustrations to demonstrate the extent of the problem:

...this whole business about access and equity is really quite abstract. It is a concept and most

5 *ibid.*, p.11.

6 *ibid.*, p.18.

7 *ibid.*

8 *ibid.*, p.19.

people find it very difficult to understand the concept not only the migrant community but also ordinary people running bureaucratic institutions or whatever.⁹

4.8 In addition:

...migrant access and equity has so far been generally a tagged-on issue and has not been really equitable for the minority communities.¹⁰

4.9 These perceptions were reaffirmed by the New South Wales Migrant Resource Centre Forum at a subsequent public hearing in Sydney:

Access and equity is based on goodwill and is voluntary. Basically, at the end of the day, if you have resources left or if you are aware, then you go and implement access and equity. It is like an afterthought and that is how we experience it on an everyday basis.¹¹

4.10 FECCA summed up the prevailing view amongst community groups as follows:

We are of the view that the current access and equity framework needs some adjustment. It is very much an add-on regime not unlike the equal employment opportunity, occupational health and safety, and industrial democracy regimes.¹²

4.11 Further still, FECCA suggested that as a result of the ad hoc approach to planning A&E strategies, discrepancies exist across governments:

...in comparison to the Commonwealth, the state territory and local governments have a long way to go in devising access and equity policies, and

9 Transcript of evidence, p.894.

10 Transcript of evidence, p.893.

11 Transcript of evidence, p.1081.

12 Transcript of evidence, p.228.

*implementing appropriate access and equity strategies...*¹³

4.12 The Committee believes that the prevailing confusion across governments and amongst community organisations is due in part to the inability of OMA to clearly define and articulate what Access and Equity should achieve.

4.13 OMA has admitted as much in its Access and Equity Annual Report 1995. It stated that an attempt was made to define the meaning of Access and Equity in its 1992 evaluation report by recognising the prime need to define the concept of "barriers". It continued to "further clarify the concept of equity" in its 1993 Access and Equity Annual Report through commissioned research. The current emphasis is on the "attainment of equitable *outcomes* as distinct from merely equitable access. *Access* has come to mean the receiving of a service by all eligible people; *equity* implies that all people receive an equitable, or appropriate, outcome from that service."¹⁴

4.14 Despite OMA's attempts to further clarify the various definitions and concepts of Access and Equity, it is still unclear what the achievable outcomes are. Nor has OMA suggested any benchmarking to steer government agencies in the appropriate direction. As the 1995 Annual Report indicates, "many agencies are still thinking of A&E as an 'add-on', not as an integral part of all their mainstream activities."¹⁵

4.15 The Committee is of the view that OMA has not yet resolved the problem of defining Access and Equity, nor the ability to monitor the outcomes required. **To this end, the Committee recommends that OMA should:**

- a) standardise its definition of Access and Equity and simplify associated language used in all government literature;**

13 Transcript of evidence, p.228.

14 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, *Access & Equity Annual Report 1995*, AGPS, Canberra, 1995, p.9.

15 *ibid.*, p.11.

- b) review and revise accordingly the various information and training booklets it has produced on the subject; and
- c) develop standardised benchmarking and outcome measures of performance.

LINKS WITH OTHER SOCIAL POLICIES

National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia

4.16 The 1989 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* defined multiculturalism, set its limits and initiated a number of major multicultural policy strategies which strengthened and extended the Access and Equity Strategy by giving priority to health and community services, local government and consumer education.

4.17 Relevant to this Inquiry are the following major policy initiatives introduced by the National Agenda:

- improving processes for the recognition of overseas acquired qualifications through the establishment of a National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition, an expansion of bridging courses and improved access to education and training;
- significant strengthening of the Government's Access and Equity Strategy, designed to improve access to government services, and to overcome barriers of language, culture and prejudice;
- Access and Equity initiatives in the areas of community services and health, local government, consumer education and immigrant women's issues; and
- extension of the English as a Second Language Program in schools to students and English language courses for adult migrants.¹⁶

16 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, op. cit., p.ix.

Social Justice Strategies

4.18 The Government describes A&E as a key component of its broader social justice strategy, defined by four principles:

- equitable distribution of economic resources;
- equal access to essential services such as housing, health care and education;
- equal rights in civil, legal and industrial affairs; and
- equality of opportunity for participation in personal development, community life and decision-making.¹⁷

4.19 OMA has reported on the confusion which exists in the community and within government departments about the difference between the Government's Social Justice Strategy and its Access and Equity Strategy.¹⁸ The Committee did not receive specific evidence to that effect, but, as discussed earlier, found that perceptions of what constitutes Access and Equity differed. This is an understandable reaction to a maze of descriptions and definitions of concepts, principles, policies, strategies, definitions of target groups and so on.

4.20 While such confusion may have inhibited action across governments and portfolios and prevented service delivery providers from benefiting from the OMA literature, this has not prevented some departments from being proactive. The 1991-1994 Access and Equity Plan of the former Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs (the current plan of DIEA) identified the use of "Jargon instead of plain English" in publications and information material as a barrier to access and equity.¹⁹

17 *Access and Equity Evaluation Report, op. cit.*, pp.21-22.

18 *ibid.*, p.21.

19 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, *Access and Equity Plan 1991-1994*, Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs Portfolio, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, p.38.

Equal Employment Opportunity

4.21 The Government's stated aim of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is to eliminate unjustified discrimination against people from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The OMA Evaluation Report states "EEO programs have similar goals to the Access and Equity Strategy but these are one-dimensional since they are limited to the workplace."²⁰

4.22 The Committee received substantial correspondence concerned with EEO matters. This indicates that a degree of confusion exists within the community about the relationship between EEO and Access and Equity.

4.23 More importantly, the EEO response to the Committee's Inquiry suggests that barriers do exist to prevent full participation in the labour market by people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Although wishing to keep within its terms of reference, the Committee is nevertheless concerned that some people seeking employment in their area of expertise felt strongly enough to make submissions to a Parliamentary inquiry.

Productive Diversity

4.24 The Productive Diversity in the Australian Public Service (APS) publication was launched in July 1995. The Public Service Commissioner stated in his speech at the launch, that productive diversity recognised the contributions which people from culturally diverse backgrounds can make in promoting and facilitating, for example, Australia's trade and export policies and marketing overseas.²¹

4.25 The pursuit of productive diversity takes advantage of the language skills and cultural diversity of Australia's population. For example, 42% of people living in Australia were either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas, and the Commonwealth Government is acknowledging the resources of new skills and talents,

20 *Access and Equity Evaluation Report, 1992, op. cit., p.22.*

21 Launch of the Productive Diversity in the APS, Public Service Commissioner, Denis Ives, Canberra, 13 July 1995, pp.1-2.

in particular fluency in languages and knowledge of other cultures and consumer preferences.²²

4.26 Placed in the broader context of the Commonwealth Government's economic efficiency and social justice strategies, productive diversity aims to address two main problems regarding the benefits of the non-English speaking labour force. One is underutilisation and the other the persistence of disproportionately high levels of unemployment, particularly in the long-term category, as well as low levels of labour force participation.²³

4.27 The lack of recognition and underutilisation of the skills and qualifications brought by migrants of non-English speaking backgrounds to Australia, emerged, during the Inquiry, as a major concern of the non-English speaking background community. The views put to the Committee were that institutional barriers are preventing qualified non-English speaking background people from reaching high status positions and that, despite long years in educational institutions acquiring qualifications, the majority can be found occupying the lower echelons of an organisation.

4.28 These views are reinforced in the productive diversity report and articulated by the Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet during his speech at the launch. The Secretary observed that a higher proportion of 'NESB workers' "are employed in jobs below their education and skill level" and large numbers of professionals and trades persons experience "long spells of unemployment, leading to deskilling over time"²⁴

4.29 The Committee is encouraged by the introduction of this long overdue concept of productive diversity, an issue which is linked to the question of recognition and accreditation of overseas acquired skills and qualifications. This will be discussed more comprehensively in Chapter 6 of this Report.

22 *ibid.*, p.1.

23 *ibid.*, p.2.

24 *ibid.*, pp.2-3.

RESPONSIVENESS TO CLIENTS

4.30 As outlined in Chapter 1, the Committee's consultations comprised 91 written submissions and the transcripts of public hearings conducted around Australia.

4.31 The Committee is disappointed with the extent of participation in the Inquiry and is conscious that the evidence may not accord entirely with the views of all migrants or Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds. Moreover, due to the lack of adequate mechanisms to monitor the impact of Access and Equity principles on service delivery, the views put to the Committee may represent individual client perceptions.

4.32 Nevertheless, the same areas of concern articulated by participants have been identified in previous studies and reports. A recurring theme was the question of streamlining the process of recognition and accreditation of overseas acquired qualifications. Other related issues were access to education, training and employment and the availability and effectiveness of interpreting services, particularly in the health area.

Performance Measures

Commonwealth

4.33 The Office of Multicultural Affairs conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the A&E Strategy at the Commonwealth level in 1992. The evaluation sought to investigate the impact of the Strategy on clients and to assess its impact on relevant Commonwealth agencies.

4.34 The complexity and breadth of the evaluation resulted in the commissioning of 15 research projects. Two separate surveys were conducted amongst the Senior Executive Service and counter staff, to assess the extent of understanding, knowledge, views and practices of the officers who were directly responsible for policy development and service delivery.

4.35 Community consultations constituted an important part of the evaluation. Material from past consultations was reviewed and

a consultancy was established to conduct 20 Australia-wide regional community consultations with members of ethnic communities.²⁵

4.36 Despite the extensive nature of the evaluation, its findings were subject to a number of limitations. Primarily, no benchmark measurement was undertaken before the Strategy was introduced. Moreover, "the Strategy was only part of a total picture of change in the period 1985-91."²⁶ These limitations indicated the lack of rigorous evaluation in the 1992 *Access and Equity Evaluation Report*.

4.37 On the positive side, the evaluation found evidence that A&E values, objectives and performance monitoring were becoming increasingly visible in corporate reporting and literature. However, as the A&E Strategy was designed to be 'top down', it had not permeated the core of corporate cultures and practices. Moreover, the level of compliance with the review requirements was, with the exception of a small number of departments, "poor and patchy".²⁷

States and Territories

4.38 The lack of a coordinated response by State governments to the issues under consideration by the Committee highlights the underlying problem of the lack of integrated interdepartmental policies in the areas of settlement and multicultural services. This has resulted in a situation where State government representatives have highlighted the existence of a policy framework for dealing with multicultural issues but have not demonstrated how policies can be applied in practice and properly evaluated.

4.39 The very reasons which hampered any scientific evaluation of the Commonwealth funded and delivered programs, prevents the Committee from making any substantial comparisons of the impact of A&E on clients and service providers between and across other levels of government. However, judging from the level of concern expressed to the Committee, from a variety of community groups including the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA), perceptions are that:

25 *Access and Equity Evaluation Report, op. cit.*, p.3.

26 *ibid.*, p.4.

27 *ibid.*, pp.5-6.

*...by and large access and equity is still being treated as a Commonwealth initiative with very little relevance to any other sector of the economy. Currently our perception is that the Commonwealth is fighting the access and equity battle alone, with one hand tied behind its back.*²⁸

4.40 A view held by many community organisations is that A&E accountability requirements should be built into Commonwealth grants to the States. According to the Race Discrimination Commissioner:

*...it is the Race Discrimination Unit's view and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's view that one way of ensuring access and equity is complied with by state instrumentalities or organisations that are funded by the Commonwealth is to tie funding to a condition that would involve access and equity being mainstreamed within those organisations.*²⁹

4.41 The Committee is of the view that if Commonwealth funding arrangements with the States were to be made conditional on Access and Equity principles, it would be essential for the Commonwealth Government to clarify its own Access and Equity principles and aims, define the target group and introduce benchmarking, at the Commonwealth level, prior to its imposition on the States. Otherwise, it is unlikely that States would respect agreements which impose unsubstantiated conditions.

4.42 This was particularly evident in Melbourne as stated by a witness from the Victorian Department of the Premier and Cabinet:

The A and E evaluation in 1992 showed quite clearly that data collection was a very problematic area and that where data was collected it was not used and there did not seem to be any sort of standardised guidelines that departments felt were useful. So you were in a situation where you were

28 Transcript of evidence, p.229.

29 Transcript of evidence, p.252.

*having enormous amounts of data collected at great expense that were not then being used or translated into outcomes, or it is situations where departments simply were not collecting data at all.*³⁰

4.43 The Victorian government representatives continued:

*What we are not happy about is the routine collection of minutiae of data. That provides enormous cost to service providers which diverts costs from actual provision and which is often not used by anything other than a tabulation of arrangements by clerks in Canberra.*³¹

4.44 This situation is similar in Queensland, where the Government's preferred evaluation method for its ethnic affairs policy is conducted through consultations between the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs and relevant government departments. The results are tabled in the Parliament by the responsible Minister. Prior to developing their current method, the Queensland Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs said:

*...we looked at the model of the access and equity policy as one possible way to directly translate that model into the state. In our consultations with government departments we found that would not have been a good model for us, especially the requirement to produce reports and the very cumbersome bureaucratic process that went with it.*³²

4.45 In South Australia, rather than having a blanket approach to data collection, "which became a burden", the South

30 Transcript of evidence, pp.393-394.

31 Transcript of evidence, p.397.

32 Transcript of evidence, pp.587-588.

Australian Office of Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs is now working with departments on specific projects.³³

4.46 The Committee is concerned that the lack of Commonwealth benchmarking leads to the inconsistent application of evaluation procedures by the States. However, this does not absolve State governments from developing an internally consistent Access and Equity policy which can be implemented at the local level, as discussed in paragraphs 4.55 to 4.57.

4.47 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government introduce standardised benchmarking for its own programs and in all agreements relating to the delivery of Commonwealth funded programs by State and Territory governments.

Local Government

4.48 Various witnesses have expressed concern at the lack of recognition by some local government councils of their non-English speaking constituents. A lack of awareness by many migrants that they are entitled to access a service exacerbates the problem, or as one Grant-in-Aid Worker at the Nepean Migrant Access put it:

*They have never had the luxury of believing that they are entitled to specific government services so they do not even know to ask for them.*³⁴

4.49 The Coordinator of the Migrant Resource Centre of Newcastle and Hunter Region, suggested that in many local government areas

*...there is no knowledge of the non-English-speaking background community - 'no recognition' might be a better term.*³⁵

4.50 Evidence received by the Committee suggests that commitment by local government to non-English speaking background constituents is patchy. In the Hawkesbury, awareness of

33 Transcript of evidence, pp.911-912.

34 Transcript of evidence, p.1100.

35 Transcript of evidence, p.1468.

"NESB needs" is recent. The Grant-in-Aid worker at Nepean Migrant Access informed the Committee that recently the Council:

*...actually authorised a new committee of council, which is an ethnic affairs consultative committee. That committee is working on drawing up an ethnic affairs policy statement...At that level, we are very happy with Hawkesbury Council's response so far.*³⁶

4.51 In Queensland, the Ethnic Communities' Council (ECC) acknowledged that while the level of consultations with non-English speaking people varies between councils, some:

*...are becoming more sensitive to non-English speaking background issues, primarily in terms of language or information dissemination.*³⁷

4.52 Other councils have no ethnicity data and would probably see their constituents as part of the mass of rate payers. Yet in research undertaken by the Queensland ECC in Townsville in 1994:

*...local governments came out as the more NESB sensitive of the three tiers of government.*³⁸

4.53 In New South Wales, stark differences in commitment to migrants emerged between the two separate parts of one local area council, namely Canterbury-Bankstown. The Canterbury City Council cosponsored a migrant settlement plan, to which the Bankstown Council did not make any commitment.

4.54 One witness for the Canterbury-Bankstown Settlement Plan Coordinating committee observed that the Council was not representative of the local community and had chauvinistic attitudes about its links with the State government. The result is:

...that you have a settlement plan covering two local government areas: one local government having some sort of commitment and another local

36 Transcript of evidence, p.1110.

37 Transcript of evidence, p.624.

38 Transcript of evidence, p.624.

*government almost acting as if it does not exist and it is not its responsibility.*³⁹

4.55 The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) observed that local government around Australia has been going through major reform. Micro-economic reform "is very strongly" on their agenda. For example in Victoria, 212 councils have been reduced to 79 and in Tasmania, from 48 to 29.⁴⁰

4.56 In their current planning, local councils are increasingly consulting with community groups in order to bring customer service into strong focus. The ALGA believes that one way Access and Equity can be achieved is to work cooperatively at all levels of Government through the mechanism of Integrated Local Area Planning (ILAP).⁴¹ ALGA maintains that even if ILAP is still in its formative stage:

*the programs that have been conducted - certainly the philosophy and the principles of ILAP - provide enough evidence on the ground to suggest that that is the way to go. We feel confident about that.*⁴²

4.57 The Committee is attracted to the ILAP process, as a coordinated means of approaching community planning. According to an ALGA discussion paper, the major characteristics of the ILAP process reflect the principles of A&E, namely, the linking of strategic planning with service delivery and program management and a focus on issues which cut across the activities and responsibilities of individual departments and agencies at all levels of government, thus requiring a co-operative effort.⁴³ This method of planning is also consistent with the NISS, as detailed in paragraphs 2.19-2.26.

4.58 The Committee therefore recommends that ALGA, through its involvement in the NISS, integrate the specific needs of migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds

39 Transcript of evidence, p.1046.

40 Transcript of evidence, p.1319.

41 Transcript of evidence, p.1324.

42 Transcript of evidence, p.1324.

43 Australian Local Government Association, *A Discussion Paper Making the Connections: Towards Integrated Local Area Planning*, November, 1992, p.4.

into ILAP strategic planning to ensure that A&E principles are met in providing services for local communities.

Access to Parliament

4.59 The Committee was told that people from non-English speaking backgrounds are not always aware of public inquiries being conducted by Parliamentary committees. In Brisbane, the Ethnic Communities' Council (ECC) observed that some of its members were not aware of the Committee's Inquiry into migrant Access and Equity, even though the Committee had advertised extensively in the ethnic print media.⁴⁴

4.60 It was suggested by one witness from the Western Sydney Access and Equity Working Party that if the Committee wished to impact on and assist people in the community, it should seek information by choosing examples of representative communities, such as large established communities, and emerging communities. To do that effectively, the Committee would actually need to use interpreters and translated materials.⁴⁵

4.61 In order to disseminate information about the Inquiry as widely as possible, the Committee advertised the Inquiry in the ethnic print media in the major community languages, in addition to the major metropolitan newspapers around Australia, at a cost of \$25 000. The Committee received a substantial number of requests for a background paper which detailed the areas into which the Committee would inquire. The genesis of this Inquiry was the lack of participation by migrant groups and people from non-English speaking backgrounds in the Committee's previous inquiries, for example, *Aspects of Youth Homelessness*, *The Management and Treatment of Breast Cancer* and the *Home and Community Care Program*.

4.62 The Committee called the Assistant Secretary (Committees) of the Department of the House of Representatives to give evidence on possible procedures which could be adopted by the Parliament to enable non-English speaking people to become more involved in its inquiries. The witness indicated that:

44 Transcript of evidence, pp.613-617.

45 Transcript of evidence, pp.1133-1134.

*In attempting to seek the widest possible audience for committee work, it is not always the case that money spent on advertising is money well spent. It seems to be increasingly our experience that directly targeting community groups who have a stake in a committee's inquiry is much more effective.*⁴⁶

4.63 Increasingly, it has been put to the Committee that the current committee procedures are not getting to those people the Inquiry is designed to assist.⁴⁷

4.64 The Department's witness agreed that there:

*...are difficulties with the ethnic communities feeling comfortable in participating in the process. They find that they have to operate through community leaders who are fluent in a number of languages.*⁴⁸

4.65 At the same time, the experiences of a number of committees suggests that:

*...our communities, whether they are of non-English speaking background or not, feel comfortable with the process or feel that they can readily participate in it, anyway, and it tends to be community leaders who do that on their behalf.*⁴⁹

4.66 Some Parliamentary committees have trialled other processes. In inquiries dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, committees:

...have gone and sat down with them in their communities; have dispensed with the formalities of a Hansard transcript and have gone to gisted

46 Transcript of evidence, p. 1597.

47 Transcript of evidence, p. 1598.

48 Transcript of evidence, p. 1598.

49 Transcript of evidence, p. 1598.

*records of conversations to attempt to make people feel more comfortable about being involved in the process.*⁵⁰

4.67 This Committee, which attempts to consult directly with affected communities in the area of health and social policy, has an obligation to provide access to the Parliament through its elected Members. It is able to modify its procedures to ensure greater participation by employing other means of gathering information in a more sensitive way.

4.68 While there may be questions about the status of informal Committee meetings and the question of Parliamentary privilege, the Committee recommends that all committees continue to explore the use of a variety of more sensitive methods to ensure wider public participation, particularly from non-English speaking people in the community.

Access in Rural and Remote Areas

4.69 The Committee heard expressions of concern from a number of witnesses that non-English speaking background people who live in rural and remote areas face an added problem of isolation. For example, the area covered by the Migrant Resource Centre of Newcastle and Hunter region has been extended to the far north-west to include Ballina and Lismore, Walgett, Richmond and Tweed. This fairly wide geographic area is being resourced by approximately 18 staff members, only four of whom comprise core staff.

4.70 As with previous inquiries conducted by this Committee, the question of providing equitable access to services for people residing in rural and remote areas has not been easily resolved. As the Migrant Resource Centre for Newcastle and Hunter Region pointed out:

*I think we all probably, sadly, need to resign ourselves to the fact that reaching some of those pockets is humanly not possible.*⁵¹

50 Transcript of evidence, p. 1599.

51 Transcript of evidence, p. 1468.

4.71 It was suggested that mainstream service providers should use electronic communication methods to ensure, at least, the provision of basic information needs. However, isolation was not the only problem which afflicts some of those communities. Linguistic and cultural barriers will continue to prevent access to mainstream services.

4.72 The Committee acknowledges problems which exist for all communities who live in rural and isolated areas. For non-English speakers, the problem is compounded by a possible lack of awareness of services. The degree of added disadvantage for non-English speaking people is difficult to gauge.

4.73 However, as the Committee discovered during the course of the Inquiry, even if people from non-English speaking backgrounds are agreeable to identify as such, they may be reluctant to seek regional interpreting and translating services for fear of breaches of security and confidentiality.⁵² Moreover, in Darwin, perceived as a microcosm of the wider Australian community, the structure of the Ethnic Communities' Council membership includes people from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds.⁵³

4.74 Living in rural or remote areas in Australia today should not be as difficult as in previous decades, given the capacity of present day technology to meet many of the challenges that isolation poses. The Committee is of the view that for those migrants who choose to live outside the urban areas, their access to equitable service delivery is the responsibility of governments.

4.75 For the purpose of Access and Equity in rural and remote areas, the Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government:

- a) investigate the capacity of modern technology to deliver services such as language training and the provision of information in major community languages; and

52 Council on the Ageing Northern Territory: Transcript of evidence, p. 1580.

53 Transcript of evidence, p. 1560.

- b) strengthen the system of Migrant Liaison Officers to report on and make recommendations about the relevance and accessibility of services for non-English speaking people.**

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCESS AND EQUITY STRATEGY

Requirements of Access and Equity

5.1 The key to achieving Access and Equity is an organisational commitment to integrated planning. The recently adopted Commonwealth requirements have been evolving since the A&E Strategy was introduced in 1985 and are defined in a specific guide for use in the Australian Public Service entitled *Achieving Access & Equity* and are set out as follows:

- *Planning:* incorporate A&E objectives into corporate planning and all relevant program and service delivery planning;
- *Evaluation and audit:* incorporate A&E performance into all relevant internal and external evaluations and audits;
- *Performance indicators:* collect and use data relevant to A&E, including ethnicity and cost data, in program planning, implementation and evaluation;
- *Public accountability:* provide information on A&E performance in annual reports, program performance statements and to OMA for an annual A&E report to the Prime Minister for tabling in Parliament;
- *Language services:* implement measures to overcome communication barriers for clients and potential clients who do not speak, understand, read or write English well;
- *Staff Training:* ensure staff at all levels are sensitive to client diversity and its implications for policy formulation and program design and delivery;
- *Consultation:* consult with client groups, their advocates and intermediaries on program design, delivery and the effectiveness of A&E measures;

- *Participation:* ensure equitable participation of representatives of A&E target groups in government advisory and review bodies and processes;
- *Funded Programs:* address A&E accountabilities in programs funded by the Commonwealth and delivered by State or local Government and community or private organisations; and
- *Coordination:* ensure efficiencies are achieved through inter-departmental cooperation and coordination on A&E matters such as shared consultative mechanisms and information strategies.¹

5.2 Flexibility of approach in implementing A&E requirements is emphasised in the guide. It acknowledges that Government departments and agencies have diverse roles and functions and that the range of their activities varies. Therefore, not all A&E requirements apply uniformly to all departments nor to all programs within a department, though most would have some application.

5.3 The Committee welcomes the improved set of requirements and the simplification of the A&E lexicon. The guide is an essential document for all A&E strategic planners and should be used across government departments and between governments. With the stress given to 'flexibility of approach', service providers should be able to tailor plans and their implementation to meet the needs of all their clients.

Approaches Adopted at Other Levels of Government

5.4 All levels of government are represented on the National Integrated Settlement Strategy, thereby committing themselves to Access and Equity in all migrant service delivery programs. Those States which have been traditional recipients of large numbers of migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds (such as New

1 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, *Achieving Access & Equity: A Second Edition Guide for the Australian Public Service*, AGPS, Canberra, 1994, p.5.

South Wales and Victoria), demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements of A&E as principles which should underpin all government services and recognised the need for governments to plan strategically to ensure compliance.

5.5 The New South Wales government, for example, which has been evolving its ethnic affairs policies since the Ethnic Affairs Commission was established by legislation in 1977-78, introduced its ethnic affairs policy in 1983. This policy required all government agencies to prepare individual strategic plans on program delivery. New South Wales has gone a step further with the adoption, in 1993, of a charter of principles for a culturally diverse society. The Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Commission observed that the charter is seen as:

...going beyond simply the delivery of services, to the area where it enables all Australians, particularly those of non-English speaking background, to be able to not only receive the benefits of government policies and services, but also to be able to contribute.²

5.6 There appears, however, a disparity between the planning for A&E and its implementation due, in the main, to the lack of a centrally focussed State-wide approach. This is obvious in the approaches of the Queensland and West Australian governments.

5.7 In Queensland, an ethnic affairs policy, also referred to as the Access and Equity policy, was adopted in 1993. As its name suggests, the policy recognises and supports the cultural diversity existing in Queensland, but its funded programs lean heavily towards cultural, social and artistic activities. The Director of the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs in Queensland explained:

Before we developed the Queensland ethnic affairs policy, we looked at the model of the access and equity policy as one possible way to directly translate that model into the state. In our

2 Transcript of evidence, p.959.

consultations with government departments we found that would not have been a good model for us...³

5.8 In Western Australia, the office of Multicultural Interests stated that A&E was perceived mainly as a Commonwealth policy:

In relation to the kinds of work that we do, we will, for example, be producing some guidelines for government agencies which are access and equity guidelines.⁴

5.9 Witnesses on behalf of community groups are critical of A&E planning by all governments, but in particular at the State and local government level. The Director of the Northern Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre in Melbourne expressed the prevailing view this way:

It is important to stress the difference between policy commitment and actual performance. There is no shortage of examples that we could expand on in terms of local government. I saw local government bringing in new chief executive officers, new managers and directors at a senior level, all having a commitment to accessible services to all residents, saying that they will bring in a new broom approach to service delivery, but then at the next level and below the same barriers were there in terms of commitment to service changes. It was not penetrating service delivery.⁵

5.10 The multitude of locally crafted plans intended to reflect the interpretation and intentions and terminology at various government levels has added to the confusion about what Access and Equity should achieve. The possible exception is the plan of the Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA) of New South Wales

3 Transcript of evidence, pp.587-588.

4 Transcript of evidence, p.1385.

5 Transcript of evidence, p.427.

entitled *For One and All*.⁶ The Committee is impressed with the easy style of *For One and All*, which has been able to encompass the overall principles of A&E.

5.11 The Committee commends the LGSA of New South Wales for producing the document *For One and All* and recommends consideration of the adoption of its style as an appropriate strategic plan for all governments and portfolio areas.

Cost of Implementing Access and Equity

5.12 The added financial burden on already stretched resources has been identified at all levels of government as a prohibitive factor in implementing A&E. OMA admitted that "It is recognised that the administrative costs associated with implementing A&E may, in some cases, be significant and that these costs are often better accommodated in mainstream budget planning rather than marginalised as 'special' projects or 'optional' initiatives."⁷

5.13 Ethnic communities are concerned that because of added budgetary pressures on governments, A&E has become an "add on" or a peripheral issue. However, according to one witness from Ethnic Link Services, Port Adelaide, if organisations make provision for A&E they are "penalised":

*They have to pay interpreter fees and they have to pay translation fees for their documents, whereas other organisations who are not so sensitive require clients to bring their children to come as free interpreters or to bring their relatives. They are the ones who benefit. They are being rewarded, because they then do not pay interpreter fees. They can use the money for other purposes.*⁸

6 Australian Local Government and Shires Association of NSW, *For one and All - Access and equity in Local Government: a guide to customer service in a multicultural society*, Sydney, 1994.

7 *Achieving Access & Equity*, op. cit., p. 14.

8 Transcript of evidence, p.797.

5.14 On the other hand, the Department of Social Security (DSS), whose A&E strategies have been commended as a model to other government department's, agencies and organisations by the Minister assisting the Prime Minister on A&E issues, made the following observation about costs:

We do know it costs us additional moneys to provide specialist services. So if we employ migrant liaison officers or if we provide translation services or if we operate our multilingual telephone information service, it costs us money to run those services. If we pay our staff an allowance in respect of their language proficiency which they use to assist customers, all of that costs money.⁹

5.15 The provision of additional services, such as those articulated by DSS, will cost additional resources. However, the following comment by DSS is pertinent:

...we have not been able to do an analysis of what it would have cost us if we were not doing the things right the first time. So we know that it costs us so much each year to provide these specialist services which, in the scheme of things, is pretty low. At the same time, it would cost us a lot more money if we were not getting things right the first time. If we did not provide a language service, if we did not provide an interpreter, we might get the information wrong and then correcting it after the event may cost us a fair bit of time, resources and so on.¹⁰

5.16 While the Committee accepts that extra resources are required to implement A&E strategies, no Australian or permanent resident should be denied access to a service provided for all Australians, because a language or other barrier is preventing such access. For all these reasons, and consistent with promoting A&E as

9 Transcript of evidence, p.63.

10 Transcript of evidence, p.64.

an integral part of planning and service provision, the Committee strongly supports OMA's suggestion that: "costs associated with A&E obligations should be allowed for in the course of budget planning."¹¹

Access and Equity Training Programs

5.17 The aims of A&E training is to assist officers to understand the Strategy and to use its concepts and tools. An indication of an organisation's commitment to implementing A&E is the degree to which it trains its staff. At the Commonwealth level, OMA has introduced a number of publications to guide and train Australian public servants in order to "sensitise policy development and service delivery staff to cultural, linguistic and racial factors."¹²

5.18 Insensitivity to cultural, racial or religious differences has been identified as a significant barrier to A&E in the delivery of programs and services. Insensitive attitudes to differences could result in the clients being denied knowledge of entitlements and appropriate assistance.¹³

5.19 The Committee was told that training in cross-cultural communication should be mandatory at the 'coal face' and that an ethos of cultural sensitivity should be introduced from the top down at the corporate level. The Race Discrimination Commissioner considered cross-cultural training in terms of A&E as a first priority. Her views are shaped by the nature of complaints that are received at the Commission from people "who are bluntly (sic) discriminated against at the counter".¹⁴

5.20 Misunderstanding of the extent to which cross-cultural training should be provided has resulted in insufficient and ad hoc training. One witness from the St George Ethnic Services Interagency suggested that cross-cultural training should be ongoing and mandatory:

11 *Achieving Access & Equity, op. cit.*, p.14.

12 *Access and Equity Evaluation Report, op. cit.*, p.83.

13 *ibid.*, p.83.

14 Transcript of evidence, p.257.

Just as orientation training to a new job is mandatory, it should be included in the orientation or made an ongoing mandatory requirement...¹⁵

5.21 The lack of cultural sensitivity in the health area was singled out by a number of community groups for special mention. It was put to the Committee that if doctors were trained in recognising cultural and social differences as part of their university studies, they would be in a position to assess immediately if a patient requires an interpreter, or has other cultural needs to be addressed.¹⁶

5.22 Striking the balance in cross-cultural training between creating cultural awareness without fostering cultural stereotyping has been the subject of wide debate. Initially, training was premised on the belief that unacceptable, even racist attitudes, were prevalent in the community and that attitudinal change was a priority. Since the 1980s training methods have progressed from cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity to their incorporation within intercultural understanding. The current phase is that of cross-cultural communication and the most recent initiative is Access and Equity training. All such training methods have had to deal with the underlying presence of value systems.¹⁷

5.23 The Committee supports OMA's assessments that generalising from the experiences of individuals could reinforce negative stereotyping¹⁸ and agrees with the views expressed by the Chief Executive Officer of FECCA that to:

...argue that there should be one solution, either imposed by central government or by a state government, is not the complete answer. It has to be a combined effort tackling the culture of the

15 Transcript of evidence, p. 1239.

16 Transcript of evidence, p. 335.

17 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, *Upfront: An Access & Equity Guide for Trainers*, AGPS, Canberra, 1994, pp. 17-19.

18 *ibid.*

organisation and providing the resources and the encouragement...Basically, I am trying to propose that there is no simple answer or one solution.¹⁹

5.24 The Committee acknowledges the complexity of cross-cultural training, but is of the view that cross-cultural training is essential and underlies successful A&E implementation. However, such training should be undertaken professionally by a recognised institution or a recognised expert in the field. In view of the demonstrated expertise developed by OMA, government organisations at all levels should consult with OMA, prior to embarking on cross-cultural training strategies.

5.25 As cross-cultural training is not a current requirement of staff development in all government departments, the Committee recommends that cross-cultural communication training be incorporated as an essential element of staff development across all levels of government and that this be a requirement for the career development of staff in service delivery departments.

Balance Between Mainstream and Ethnospecific Services

5.26 Achieving the right balance between mainstream and ethnospecific services has been a source of disagreement since the Galbally Report. The Galbally Report concluded that those 'special services' directed exclusively at immigrants or ethnic groups should be regarded as interim arrangements until deficiencies in the mainstream system have been addressed. Those opposed to the idea of specialised services argue that these marginalise immigrants, or enable them to be treated as second class citizens. Moreover, it is claimed that such services are expensive and enable mainstream service providers to mount arguments related to costs of service provision in a competitive environment.

5.27 Those in favour of the specialised services argue that they should be seen as a legitimate means of meeting special needs. Decisions about the requirement for such services should be based on

19 Transcript of evidence, p.246.

effectiveness and efficiency rather than services being viewed as supplementary, ad hoc and temporary structures.²⁰

5.28 Generally, community groups favoured ethnospecific services for specific groups, such as those requiring frail and aged care. The Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' Federation were persuasive when discussing the special needs of frail, older people in nursing homes:

*It is hard enough to complain if you speak the language. If you do not, and there is nobody who does, it is impossible. So the ethnospecific service might be the way to go in this area, because if everybody spoke the language at least you would actually know whether or not your rights were being breached, and how to go about doing something about it.*²¹

5.29 The call for ethnospecific services stems from a widely held perception that A&E is a thing that is abstract, not fully understood by service providers and at the very best tacked on to a service. One witness from the Asian Women's Consultative Council described the problem this way:

*I was also involved with a carers association. They had this big and beautiful carer's kit all set up. Right at the end of it they said, 'Oh, we forgot the ethnic people. Let us get in a few ethnic people and get them to do a bit of consultation and add it on again'.*²²

5.30 The Committee acknowledges the general view put to it that A&E has come to be perceived as a thing loosely added on to services. However, this is not related to the principle of A&E but to the methods used by service providers. Ethnospecific services are a temporary solution to service provision with the ultimate goal being

20 ROMAMPAS, *op. cit.*, p.73.

21 Transcript of evidence, p.358.

22 Transcript of evidence, p.894.

the expansion of mainstream service provision to encompass the differences and specific needs of migrants in the Australian community.

5.31 According to the results of the Ethnic Older Persons Strategy, launched last year by the Minister for Human Services and Health, people from non-English speaking backgrounds represent 14% of people aged 70 years or more. The Federal Government is in the process of assessing the need for residential accommodation for this group in the community.

5.32 The Committee strongly supports the establishment of ethnospecific hostels and nursing homes and accepts the observations made by the Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' Federation that mainstream services would not be able to meet the needs of frail and older people if these people are unable to communicate their needs in English. This problem is especially relevant for many of the first wave post-Second World War immigrant women. Such women may not have learnt to speak English because they remained at home as primary carers or worked in low-skilled manufacturing positions where English language skills were not sought. The Committee also heard evidence, during the HACC inquiry, that often older migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds may revert to their first language, no matter how well they had learnt English.

CHAPTER 6

RECOGNITION OF OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS

BACKGROUND

6.1 After 1945, Australia's immigration settlement scheme included Commonwealth assisted passage, hostel accommodation and social service payments during the settlement period. Placement of migrants in industry, according to labour market demands, was undertaken by the Commonwealth Employment Service.

6.2 Regardless of their qualifications, Continental European migrants were needed to fill semi-skilled labour positions, "supervised by Australians and British" in public works and industry. The Immigration Advisory Committee set up by the Commonwealth Government recommended that publicity campaigns be undertaken to assure the public that the new migrants would not take their own jobs and to educate Australians out of their isolationist attitudes. However, mechanisms for assessing skills and qualifications for the new settlers were not part of the immigration arrangements.¹

6.3 Access barriers to professional employment by overseas qualified migrants have been in evidence since the 1930s, when numbers of European refugees settled in Australia. Their arrival in Australia coincided with the Depression when the consequential large scale unemployment situation gave rise to concerns among the professional associations. As a result, the number of regulatory registration bodies grew and many professional bodies and trade unions introduced controlling mechanisms, or "artificial barriers", which prohibited the operation of a competitive labour market, kept numbers small and increased the wages, prestige and status of the body members.²

1 Moore, Ron, *op. cit.*, p.9.

2 Iredale, Robyn, *op. cit.*, p.1.

6.4 In the 1950s, the economic and social landscape had been transformed from the years of the Depression and the Second World War. Pressure from migrant groups induced minor concessions from professional associations to admission procedures and resulted in some changes to State laws. The medical profession, however, continued to apply highly restrictive measures for entry by overseas trained doctors. This was aggravated by applying different standards on a State by State basis.³

6.5 Restrictions were placed on the entry of non-British overseas qualified professionals, with the aim that at least 50% of migrants should be British. These restrictions, together with a corresponding boom in the economies of Western European countries, took pressure off the need for recognition of non-British qualifications, but did not eliminate the problem. In 1960, the Department of Immigration made approaches to the professional organisations to reduce controls on admission into their ranks and, in 1963, began to encourage professional migration in view of the growing specialisation of the workplace.⁴

6.6 In 1967, the Prime Minister wrote to State Ministers for Health, exploring the possibility of uniform registration requirements for medicine, dentistry and nursing. Only New South Wales agreed to the proposal. Convinced that European and American universities produced graduates of comparable Australian standards, in 1968 the Minister for Immigration was able to gain in principle agreement from State Ministers of Immigration for uniform standards and the creation of a committee and panels to investigate the question of recognition.⁵

6.7 The Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications (COPQ) was established in March, 1969. COPQ had no executive functions, thus preventing it from deciding on individual cases. Its broad aims were to give prospective immigrants an accurate assessment of their professional qualifications in the Australian

3 Moore, Ron, *op. cit.*, pp.21.23

4 *ibid.*, p.23.

5 *ibid.*

context, thereby assisting them to make an informed decision about migration. For overseas qualified residents, COPQ was designed to assist them to obtain assessments of their qualifications, either directly or through professional or regulatory bodies and higher education institutions, such as universities and colleges.⁶ Despite these ambitious aims, COPQ's contribution to the recognition process was limited. This prompted various migrant community groups to call for its expansion in submissions to the 1983 Committee of Inquiry into the Recognition of Overseas Qualifications in Australia (Fry Inquiry).⁷

6.8 The Fry Inquiry made 86 recommendations and elevated COPQ from the status of committee to council. Some of these recommendations were addressed to the Commonwealth Government and were related to the provision of better information, through the preparation of publications and pamphlets on assessment and recognition procedures and a training program for migration officers proceeding on overseas postings. The Committee also recommended non-discriminatory procedures and fairer testing of English, as well as greater availability of bridging courses and retraining.⁸

6.9 However, overseas qualified migrants continued to be excluded from practising their professions, if their formal qualifications were deemed not to be equivalent to those acquired in Australia. Other requirements included mandatory Australian practical experience for accreditation. This could be achieved through membership, registration or licensing. Towards the end of the 1980s, COPQ was unable to meet the needs of a range of expert panels and advisory councils due to its limited resources.⁹

6.10 The first survey into the level of recognition of overseas qualifications was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for the Department of Immigration. The survey, *A Decade of Migrant Settlement*, was published in 1973. The ABS survey revealed

6 *The Recognition of Overseas Qualifications in Australia. op. cit.*, p.137.

7 *ibid.*, p.139.

8 *ibid.*, Chapter 1.

9 *ibid.*

that 46% of heads of migrant families had come to Australia with post-school qualifications obtained overseas. Of these, 50% gained immediate recognition on arrival and 7% received recognition later, some after further study.

6.11 Factors determining recognition were English language ability and the country where qualifications were obtained. Qualifications obtained in English speaking countries had a 60% success rate, compared with 35% for Southern Europe and the Middle East and 49% for other non-English speaking countries.¹⁰

6.12 Despite the establishment of COPQ and the recommendations of the Fry Report, the problem of recognition of overseas qualifications worsened over the 1980s with an increase in the number of overseas qualified migrants entering Australia. A 1987 ABS survey estimated that 37% of partners of principal applicants were managers, professionals or para-professionals, compared to 29% in the 1970s. Successful assessments in 1987-88 were 86% for English speaking countries and 58% for non-English speaking countries.¹¹

6.13 Comprehensive research into the economic and social effects of non-recognition of qualifications acquired overseas was conducted by Robyn Iredale and published in 1988. Iredale analysed four professions in detail: medicine; engineering; nursing; and the electrical trades. Iredale demonstrated that "in all but engineering, the Commonwealth and/or State governments have been involved in the development of mechanisms for controlling entry. In the case of engineering, the professional association, the Institution of Engineers, Australia has played a direct role in determining access to employment, even though there is no requirement for registration or licensing."¹² Gaining access to the highly controlled and regulated labour market was the "overall problem facing skilled immigrants."¹³

10 Iredale, Robyn. *op. cit.*, p.4.

11 Moore, Ron, *op. cit.*, p.31.

12 Iredale, Robyn, *op. cit.*, p.8.

13 *ibid.*

6.14 In the same year, the Report of the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies (CAAIP), a Commonwealth funded committee, highlighted similar areas of concern to those raised by Iredale. The major problems identified by CAAIP included the complexity of the highly fragmented recognition process and lack of accurate advice by migration officers stationed overseas. Finally, CAAIP noted that the system is discriminatory, at least in its outcomes, as it discriminates against immigrants who were not trained in a system developed from the British model.¹⁴

6.15 The Government's reaction to the CAAIP findings was to establish the National Population Council (NPC) Working Party. The NPC recommended reforms across professions and trades with the aim of simplifying and developing a more nationally consistent process. Retraining and bridging courses, which included English language training to facilitate accreditation, were emphasised. The establishment of a new national coordinating structure was recommended and responsibility for it was to be transferred from the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs to the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) and the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR). At the State level, 'one-stop shops' were to be established to coordinate activities associated with the recognition process and to provide an accessible service to immigrants.¹⁵

6.16 In 1989, the Commonwealth Government established the National Office of Skills Recognition (NOOSR) as a Branch within DEET. NOOSR subsumed the functions of COPQ. The articulated central role of NOOSR is to oversee the recognition process at the professional, para-professional and technical level. The broad areas of activity of NOOSR are to:

- ensure that there is an equitable system for the recognition of qualifications and skills gained overseas;

14 The Report of the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies, *op. cit.*, pp.53-54.

15 Mitchell, Colleen, et al, *op. cit.*, Chapter 1.

- facilitate the integration of people with overseas qualifications into the labour market by promoting the provision of education and training opportunities;
- provide information on the recognition of qualifications and skills and develop information resources;
- reduce the barriers to the utilisation of migrant skills by promoting occupational deregulation and the development of national labour markets; and
- promote international arrangements for skills recognition.¹⁶

6.17 The aims of NOOSR were designed to allow greater coordination of the recognition process between the various Commonwealth, State and Territory bodies and independent professions. In reality, however, NOOSR, like the COPQ before it, has no powers of enforcement.

6.18 In relation to trades recognition, entry was regulated, prior to 1945, mainly through the apprenticeship system and trade union membership. Shortages in the trades during the Second World War, led to the negotiation of "Dilution Regulations", an accord struck between the Commonwealth Government and the unions, which aimed at rapid training to meet the urgent need for tradesmen. After the War, new systems of regulation developed which resulted in many of the several hundred trades not covered by the *Tradesman's Rights Regulation Act 1946* (TRRA) developing their own accreditation arrangements.¹⁷

6.19 The administration of TRRA is a complex network of central and local trades committees at the State level. These committees are coordinated by Trades Recognition in Australia, a unit of DIR, which operates nationally with offices in each State and Territory. Through its responsibility for the administration of the TRRA, the Unit provides, amongst other things, trades skills assessments and a national recognition service for people with skills

16 Issues and Options Paper on the Overseas Skills Recognition Process and Related Labour Market Issues, Department of Employment, Education and Training, September 1994, p.8.

17 Castles, Stephen et al, *The Recognition of Overseas Trade Qualifications*, op. cit., p.16.

gained through formal training or informal on-the-job training overseas.

6.20 Under the TRRA, Australian Recognised Trade Certificates are issued and these are nationally recognised by unions and employers, as well as educational institutions. The Unit also coordinates the Technical Adviser Service, which assesses the qualifications of skilled applicants overseas prior to migration, in keeping with the basic idea of the TRRA.¹⁸

6.21 The various studies and inquiries commissioned by the Commonwealth and State governments over the past 30 years have highlighted the inequity of the system of recognition and accreditation of overseas obtained qualifications and skills, but they have not substantially reduced the inherent bias.

6.22 The most recent attempt by the Commonwealth Government to tackle the problem, was the publication in September 1994 of the *Issues and Options Paper on the Overseas Skills Recognition Process and Related Labour Market Issues*. The paper was drawn to the attention of the Committee by DEET and FECCA. The Paper is the result of a small working group comprising representatives of NOOSR, the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and FECCA. In the preparation of the paper, the Working Group was assisted by the findings of a number of recent studies, including one compiled by OMA, and based on interviews held in five States involving 72 participants from Asian, Arabic, Spanish speaking and European backgrounds who arrived in Australia in the last five years. These groups were selected to represent a cross section of migrant categories, occupations, English language proficiency and labour force status.¹⁹

6.23 The Paper restated the established view about the complexity of the recognition process and the continued concerns of the immigrant community in Australia. But the Paper also noted the significant difficulty in obtaining employment in a chosen professional or skills area. This was due to the emphasis in the current labour market on English language and Australian work experience.

18 Submissions Authorised for Publication, Submission No.63, p.159.

19 *Issues and Options Paper, op. cit.*, p.1.

Furthermore, participants in the study believed that the lack of success of migrants in finding employment resulted from the reluctance of employers to recruit overseas trained people and their bias against overseas qualifications.²⁰

6.24 The Paper recommended a number of options, such as: increased focus on strategies to improve the delivery of information to migrants at the pre-embarkation stage about the skills recognition process and the current state of the Australian labour market; and consideration of the feasibility of giving all prospective migrants the opportunity to undergo a recognition process prior to lodging a formal migration application.

6.25 Evidence presented to the Committee correlates with the major findings and options in the Paper. However, the Committee is concerned that the Working Group did not include representatives from all important players in the recognition process, such as the professional organisations, trade unions, and state registration bodies nor did it consult with them. As such, the Paper has a limited capacity to legitimately develop the process of recognition in any practical way.

6.26 In its Submission to the Inquiry, the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia argued the case for improved coordination and consistency across governments and their agencies. FECCA criticised the splitting of the Commonwealth's two recognition authorities, Trades Recognition Australia in DIR and NOOSR in DEET "which has had the effect of creating a barrier."²¹

6.27 The Committee supports FECCA's assessment and is of the view that the inherently complex and fragmented system of recognition of overseas qualifications has itself become an effective barrier against the group it is established to help. As the Director of the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs in Queensland suggested, the process for recognising overseas qualifications was:

20 *ibid.*, p.28.

21 Submissions Authorised for Publication, Submission No.44, p.75.

*...from the point of view of the implementation of multiculturalism as a policy, clearly one of the less successful parts of the policy.*²²

6.28 The opening lines of the overview and general conclusions of the Report of Committee of Inquiry into Recognition of Overseas Qualifications in Australia, summed up the problems associated with the recognition process. The Report noted: "It is important for all concerned with the recognition in Australia of qualifications obtained overseas to recognise the complexity of the subject".²³ The continued concerns raised by overseas qualified migrants during the course of this Parliamentary Inquiry into Migrant Access and Equity, suggest that little has changed since 1983.

Institutional Barriers to Recognition

6.29 As most of the detailed evidence relating to professional recognition gathered by the Committee relates to the medical profession, this group will be presented in the Report as a major case study, highlighting the principles involved.

Overseas Trained Doctors

6.30 In evidence to the Committee, the Race Discrimination Commissioner detailed two major areas of complaints currently being investigated concerning institutional barriers. Both related to overseas qualified and trained migrant doctors from non-English speaking countries. One concerned the lack of recognition of overseas qualifications by the Australian Medical Council (AMC). The other was the issue of the "queuing system", where those whose qualifications have been recognised and registered are not eligible to practise because of imposed quotas.²⁴

6.31 The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission stated that implicit discriminatory practices exist. These are characterised by the automatic devaluing of qualifications and skills acquired from non-English speaking background countries relative to

22 Transcript of evidence, p.594.

23 *The Recognition of Overseas Qualifications in Australia*, op. cit., p.33.

24 Transcript of evidence, p.269.

those from an English speaking background. The present complex administration and testing procedures, lack of information and knowledge about local regulations, as well as a lack of counselling and appeal procedures are further evidence of discriminatory practices.²⁵

6.32 In sum, HREOC found that the recognition process discriminated against overseas trained doctors through the following institutional practices:

- *the standards applied to the assessment of overseas trained doctors (OTDs) are too severe;*
- *the present examinations - Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) and clinicals - discriminate against OTDs with non-English speaking backgrounds;*
- *clinical examinations are not appropriate for assessing OTDs; and*
- *there are insufficient opportunities for exposure to the health care system in Australia or provisions for bridging courses and retraining.*²⁶

6.33 A research project conducted for the Bureau of Immigration and Population Research in 1992, highlighted institutional barriers as a major problem confronting overseas trained doctors pursuing recognition and accreditation. Most doctors reported that the Australian Medical Council (AMC) examinations posed a significant obstacle to their career plans, noted the lack of suitable retraining positions or courses to assist in examination preparation, as well as the difficulty of the examinations themselves and the lack of exposure to Australian-style medicine.²⁷

6.34 In a submission seeking to correct "misconceptions" and "inaccuracies in the information" in the evidence to the Committee, the AMC made the following points:

- Registration of doctors is a state responsibility and is legally binding.

25 Submissions Authorised for Publication, Submission No.42, p.56.

26 *ibid.*, p.57.

27 Kidd, Michael, and Braun, Felicity, *Problems Encountered by Overseas-Trained Doctors Migrating to Australia*, AGPS, Canberra, 1992, p.xi.

- Under current legislation, general or full registration is available only to:
 - Graduates of reviewed and accredited medical schools - currently 10 in Australia and 2 in New Zealand
 - Graduates of non-accredited medical schools, (including those in the UK, Ireland, South Africa and Canada) who successfully complete the AMC administered examination.²⁸

6.35 The recognition of New Zealand medical schools is based on the bilateral Closer Economic Relations Agreement (CER). The CER Agreement allows the AMC to undertake the accreditation of New Zealand medical schools on behalf of the Medical Council of New Zealand.²⁹ Under current legislation in all States, the only doctors who are eligible for registration are graduates of an AMC accredited medical school.³⁰

6.36 Unlike the AMA, which is purely a professional association, the AMC comprises representatives of all those involved in the accreditation of overseas trained doctors. These are:

- State and Territory Medical Boards;
- the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (on the advice of the Committee of Deans of Australian Medical Schools);
- the Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges;
- Commonwealth and State governments; and
- the AMA (nominated by the AMA Federal Council).³¹

28 Submission No. 90, Transcript of Evidence p.1762.

29 *ibid.*

30 Transcript of evidence, p.1813.

31 Submission No. 90, Transcript of Evidence, p.1762.

AMC Examinations

6.37 In 1986, the AMC assumed responsibility for the administration of the national examinations which assess the medical qualifications of overseas trained doctors. Since 1986, a total of 4 180 overseas trained doctors have presented for the multiple-choice questions examination, of which 2 744, or 65.64% have qualified to proceed to the clinical examinations. To date, of the total number of candidates who have commenced the process, 46.67% have completed all stages and have qualified for registration.³²

6.38 The AMC examinations are designed to screen and establish the competence of doctors trained in medical schools who have not been reviewed formally and accredited by the AMC. The examinations consist of two parts: multiple-choice questions in five major discipline groups, ie medicine, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, psychiatry and surgery, administered in two three-hour papers of 100 questions each; and, a three-hour clinical examination in the disciplines of medicine, surgery, and obstetrics and gynaecology. In addition, each candidate must pass the Occupational English Test, administered by the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia. The range of topics covered in the AMC examinations are drawn from the Australian medical schools' clinical curricula.³³

Quotas

6.39 In its opening remarks, the Australian Medical Association commented on the number of medical practitioners in Australia in the following terms:

*The AMA's point of view on your terms of reference is primarily that we consider that there are too many doctors in Australia.*³⁴

32 *ibid.*, p.1764.

33 *ibid.*, p.1763.

34 Transcript of evidence, p.1705.

6.40 The AMA later indicated that while there was an oversupply in the city, they are concerned about the shortage in country areas, despite special incentives from the government.³⁵

6.41 The AMA then observed that it:

*...has an absolutely minimal role in anything to do with accreditation. We do not put up any barriers, we are simply an organisation of doctors. We are not involved with the standards: that is for the universities and the colleges.*³⁶

6.42 In 1992, the Australian Health Ministers Conference (AHMC) announced a quota of 200 for progression to the AMC clinical examinations, based on an order of merit of performance at the AMC multiple-choice questions examination. The quota was implemented in October 1992 and has been applied in 1993, 1994 and 1995.

6.43 In evidence, the AMC said that contrary to what the Committee has been informed by a number of witness around Australia, New Zealand doctors have never been counted in the quota:

*In the budget the New Zealand doctors were discussed as being added into the quota, but that has not yet become a reality.*³⁷

6.44 The Department of Human Services and Health (HS&H) gave contrary evidence. HS&H stated that New Zealand doctors are included in the 200 quota and indicated that this year's budget decision was to ensure that the decision would be more rigorously enforced. However, recent adjustments to the system and the decision of the AMC not to proceed with the application of a quota has produced new circumstances:

...it is now a matter for the Commonwealth government and the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council to consider how to apply that continuing decision of a quota of 200. Certainly, it

35 Transcript of evidence, p.1713.

36 Transcript of evidence, p.1706.

37 Transcript of evidence, p.1815.

*has always been intended that the 200 includes New Zealanders. It would be fair to say that that was not strictly applied for several years. The decision this year was to make sure that that was applied.*³⁸

6.45 The Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (AHMAC) explained further that at its April 1992 meeting, the AHMC agreed to adopt a medical work force strategy, because of a trend which demonstrated an oversupply of overseas trained doctors entering the Australian medical work force with a corresponding decrease in the number of graduates from Australian medical schools:

*The aim was to achieve a work force supply target of 200 doctors per 100,000 population and a local to overseas graduate ratio of six to one.*³⁹

6.46 In order to achieve the target, three key features were introduced:

*...to reduce the intake of overseas trained doctors, both as settlers and on temporary bases, entering the work force; to set a quota on the number of overseas trained doctors already in Australia or new arrivals wishing to sit the Australian Medical Council examination, such that the total number of overseas trained doctors permanently entering the Australian medical work force from all sources - the Australian Medical Council exam, specialist recognition as well as New Zealand graduates - is kept at around 200 per annum; and from January 1993, the intention was to establish targets for a phased in national reduction of not less than 20% of temporary visa-holding overseas trained doctors currently occupying needs based service provisions.*⁴⁰

38 Transcript of evidence, pp. 1869-1870.

39 Transcript of evidence, p. 1878.

40 *ibid.*

6.47 Although AHMAC is currently working on how the quota might be implemented in the future, it confirmed that the quota of 200:

...has not, in effect, been applied to New Zealand graduates. With this in mind, the Australian Health Ministers' Conference in June of this year confirmed the quota of 200 per annum and made it clear that this number must include overseas trained doctors from all sources, including New Zealand.⁴¹

6.48 The decision to set a quota was referred to HREOC which handed down its Determination on 7 August 1995. HREOC found that while the AMC examination and the decision of the Health Ministers to set a quota was not unreasonable, the implementation of the quota between the multiple-choice questions and the clinical examinations was not lawful. The Determination is now subject to legal proceedings before the Federal Court.⁴²

6.49 While not preempting the Federal Court decision, but in view of the shortage of doctors in rural areas, as mentioned in paragraph 6.40, the Committee believes that this shortage in rural and remote areas prevents reasonable access to adequate medical treatment.

6.50 The Committee recommends that all registered doctors, both Australian educated and overseas trained, be given training and incentives to practise in rural and remote areas for a minimum period of three years. Such incentive schemes should be developed through consultations between the AMA, RACGP and the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health.

Standards

6.51 The AMC explained that its role is to advise and make recommendations to State and Territory Medical Boards on the

41 Transcript of evidence, p.1878.

42 Submission No. 90, Transcript of Evidence, p.1764.

accreditation of Australian and New Zealand medical schools, assessment for admission to practise of overseas trained medical practitioners and to enforce uniform approaches to registration. In addition, the AMC maintains a national network of medical registers and provides advice to the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council on the registration of doctors.

6.52 The AMC emphasised:

...where they train is the issue, not where they where born.⁴³

6.53 The following comment, by the Director of the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs in Queensland, indicates that the question of training is a vexed issue. During a discussion he had with the previous president of the AMA on the question of overseas trained doctors, the AMA expressed a narrow view about the quality of Australian training:

His contention was that there is nobody in the world better qualified than Australian doctors. Australian medical practitioners have the highest standard in the world.⁴⁴

6.54 It was even more curious, the Director observed, that a former professor and executive director of the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) teaching clinic at Frankfurt University, a renowned expert in his field, was "headhunted" overseas to come to Queensland to teach Australian medical students. The Professor, however, was not allowed to touch a patient because his academic qualifications, but not his medical qualifications, were recognised.⁴⁵

6.55 The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons was familiar with the case and agreed that the Professor in question was an eminent surgeon in hearing disorders. However the surgeon had limited experience in broader areas of ENT surgery. After being

43 Transcript of evidence, p.1817.

44 Transcript of evidence, p.595.

45 *ibid.*

offered and completing a program of appropriate training and experience to which he agreed, he was elected to the Fellowship of the College.⁴⁶

6.56 The AMC subsequently explained that significant differences exist in the format and content of primary medical training throughout the world, reflecting local health care patterns and priorities. The situation is more pronounced in the case of specialist medical practice. In Australia, standards are set by the relevant Specialist Medical Colleges. In 1993, a national system administered through the AMC and the Specialist Colleges, allowed overseas trained specialists, who were not recognised for general registration, to have their specialist qualifications assessed by the relevant Specialist College, without the need to pass the AMC examination.⁴⁷

6.57 The Committee is concerned that an established narrow view exists within the medical world which has the effect of closing the door to the profession to doctors from other countries. As the following incident indicates, ignorance of standards in other parts of the world has reinforced the rigidity of the medical profession's standard setting. A renowned international physician who is keen to work with Aboriginal communities is unable to do so because his qualifications are not recognised. The Doctor in question was the personal physician of the late President Sadat of Egypt. The Director of the Ethnic Affairs Bureau in Queensland noted in discussing this case that:

The poor man died from a bullet, but while he was alive he was pretty healthy. We would assume that he had a good doctor.⁴⁸

6.58 In another case, an Australian university hired a highly skilled pathologist as a lecturer. The Royal College of Pathologists, after reviewing his qualifications, assessed that the person should not be registered as a practising pathologist, because he could not fulfil a number of requirements. The President of the AMC continued:

46 Transcript of evidence, p.1707.

47 Submission No. 90, Transcript of Evidence, p.1764.

48 Transcript of evidence, p.596.

We have to be mindful that some medical curricula are very narrow and do not fit the broad based medical education.⁴⁹

6.59 The AMC rejected claims of elitism and based its rejection on different methods of medical training in other parts of the world. This was stated to be a consideration in Eastern European countries where medical schools specialise, rather than giving preference to broad based medical education. The President of the AMC gave the following examples:

I reviewed one of the Eastern bloc medical systems about four years ago at the request of the government. I think it had 15 or 16 medical schools, but some of the medical schools were totally focused on certain issues. There were two military medical schools that really dealt with trauma. The doctors coming out of there could do very little except excellent trauma work. If I were looking for a senior lecturer in traumatology, that would be a great place to get them from. They really could not practice anything else if they did not have any other skills base.⁵⁰

6.60 In Germany:

...undergraduates do not see patients nor do physical examinations. This is why German undergraduates travel so much: to get this information. We take lots of German students to build up their clinical ability. Part of their task is to go and get trained around the world. In Japan it is common for them not to be allowed to do physical examinations⁵¹.

49 Transcript of evidence, p. 1818.

50 Transcript of evidence, p. 1817.

51 Transcript of evidence, p. 1824.

6.61 The President of the AMC continued:

*In Saudi Arabia, where I have taught, it was commonly and widely debated as to whether or not a male doctor could examine a female patient. In North America it is common for them to specialise after four years, and they may well narrow their training enormously.*⁵²

6.62 In a further elaboration on standards, the Australian Council of Professions explained that the conduct of professional associations had a strong historical basis for the self-regulation and the autonomous setting of standards, dating back to the late Middle Ages:

*...public interest in maintaining the highest standards in the provision of professional services and in the behaviour of those professionals was given effect to by statutes empowering professional associations to set criteria for entry, to control the conduct of members and where appropriate to exclude from professional practice those whose standards fell below acceptable levels.*⁵³

6.63 The Committee accepts Australia's obligations under the Closer Economic Relations Agreement with New Zealand. However, there is concern about the integrity of the application of medical standards, which are being used increasingly to control the tap which restricts or admits overseas trained doctors into the profession.

6.64 The Committee supports the assertion of the Australian Council of Professions that "the professions in Australia are ranked among the best in the world".⁵⁴ The raising of Australian standards has been assisted by Australian professions inviting eminent academics from other parts of the world to train Australian students.

52 Transcript of evidence, pp.1824-1825.

53 Transcript of evidence, p.1664.

54 *ibid.*

Coordinating Body

6.65 AHMAC advised that they are conscious of the number of bodies representing vested interests established by statute and existing with their own mandate. The Medical Workforce Advisory Committee (AMWAC) has been established to address this problem. AMWAC includes representatives concerned with immigration, education, the royal colleges, the registration boards and the AMA. It also represents the States and Territories as employers as well as other groups who have a contribution to make in the area. AMWAC has been in existence less than 12 months, but it has a secretariat and there is optimism that it will give appropriate focus to some issues, such as maintaining a watching brief of international developments in the medical work force.⁵⁵

6.66 The Committee welcomes the establishment of AMWAC as it brings together the various interest groups. This will allow collective responsibility for decisions made in the recognition and accreditation process, and to facilitate change. **The Committee recommends that AMWAC ensure that the process of accreditation of overseas trained medical practitioners is fair, is seen to be fair and that this be reflected in the guidelines determining accreditation.**

6.67 In conclusion, the Committee believes that the current system of accreditation of overseas trained doctors is neither easy nor comprehensible; that its very complexity is deliberate and designed to protect various vested interests; that it is unfair and discriminatory and designed to exclude doctors, trained in non-English speaking countries. The Committee is in no doubt that the complexity of the accreditation process is applied not only to ensure the highest possible standards in medicine in Australia, but to maintain a "closed shop".

Other Professions

6.68 The Committee received no substantial evidence about the barriers which confront overseas trained migrants in other professional areas. However, witnesses representing a range of

55 Transcript of evidence, p.1884.

community groups expressed widely held perceptions that immigrants of non-English speaking backgrounds are confronted with barriers which prevent their qualifications being recognised and accredited.

6.69 However, in a number of studies into the issues affecting overseas trained professionals from non-English speaking backgrounds, problems with English, racial prejudice and ethnic stereotyping recur.⁵⁶

Engineers

6.70 The majority of immigrant engineers arrived in Australia in 1991 and were recruited under Australia's key skilled immigration categories (Independent and Concessional) between 1987 and 1992. Unemployment within the profession in 1991 was low at 1.1%, rising to 4.4% in the same year. The engineers, together with other non-English speaking background professionals, were targeted for priority language resourcing within Australia's Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). The curriculum included purpose-designed vocational-access courses aimed at facilitating their labour market entry.

6.71 However, by late 1991, mounting evidence suggested that immigrant engineers were experiencing labour market disadvantage.⁵⁷ Without exception, the study found that immigrant engineers from English speaking backgrounds secured offers of full-time professional work within five months of arrival, regardless of age, date of entry or demand by the engineering field.⁵⁸

6.72 The Institution of Engineers, Australia, explained that it does not have a monopoly on determining whether or not a person is entitled to practise as an engineer. Furthermore, there are no restrictions imposed in Australia on a person practising as an engineer, apart from in Queensland. This State is in the process of

56 Kidd, Michael and Braun, Felicity, *op. cit.*, p. xi and Hawthorne, Lesleyanne, *Labour Market Barriers for Immigrant Engineers in Australia*, Bureau of Immigration and Population Research, AGPS, Canberra, 1994, p.xvii.

57 Hawthorne, Lesleyanne, *ibid.*, p.xv.

58 *ibid.*, p.xvi.

dismantling its statutory system, and replacing it with an automatic recognition of the National Professional Engineers Register and combining this move with a right to appeal.

6.73 The National Professional Engineers Register is maintained by the Institution, although listing is not restricted to the membership of the Institution. However, those bodies who are responsible for recognising and employing people as engineers, will automatically accept people who are members of the Institution, but may exercise the right to subject non-members to examination.⁵⁹

6.74 The Institution observed that over the last three years, it has developed national competency standards to cover professional engineers, engineering technologists and engineering associates. Those standards are registered with the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). The standards operate at two levels. The first recognises competence expected of a newly graduated engineer and stage 2 indicates that the engineer has the competence expected of an independent practitioner who will typically have completed at least three years of practice following graduation.⁶⁰

6.75 The Institution indicated that for the most part, it does not apply individual competency standard assessment at stage 1 level, because it is a demanding activity. Those persons exempted from assessment under stage 1 comprise those who have completed an accredited course at an Australian university or any of the courses recognised either by multilateral agreement or by the assessment which is jointly conducted by the Institution's foreign qualifications assessment group and NOOSR. Competency standards are applied directly and individually at stage 2.⁶¹

6.76 Moreover, the Institution professed :

We are very much about encouraging freedom to practise by competent practitioners. We have never and will never set any limits on the number

59 Transcript of evidence, pp.1671-1672.

60 Transcript of evidence, p.1672.

61 *ibid.*

*of people who are recognised as competent or on their origins.*⁶²

Architects

6.77 The Royal Australian Institute of Architects, observed that the practice of architecture in Australia is not controlled:

*...anyone can practise architecture in Australia. The only thing that is controlled is the use of the title. So, anyone without qualifications can practise.*⁶³

6.78 The Chairman of the ACT Architects Board and Secretary of the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia, explained the procedure of registration of architects, which is:

*...a process of control of the use of the title of architect, and that does carry with it some regulatory controls and some requirements. Those requirements are being addressed through a national approach, through the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia, which is a body that represents all of the registration boards in the states, plus the RAIA. That body comes together to address issues of registration and qualification of architects to practise. It has a process of competency recognition in place and uses a list of approved courses which recognises provisionally approved courses in 50 countries around the world.*⁶⁴

6.79 Migrants coming to settle in Australia from countries which have provisional recognition from the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) have an initial understanding of whether the course that they have done is recognised. Automatic approval for

62 *ibid.*

63 Transcript of evidence, p. 1679.

64 *ibid.*

the use of the name architect is not provided at that stage. The AACA described the current system as follows:

*Subject to an assessment when they arrive, and some additional professional experience and the completion of the professional practice exam, they would either go directly to being able to practise and assume the title of architect or else go through the necessary top-up as assessed in that process.*⁶⁵

6.80 AACA further explained that all overseas qualified people:

*...regardless of their overseas experience, training or affiliations are still required to sit for an exam.*⁶⁶

6.81 The role of AACA is to ensure that the process is common across Australia and that access to that process is open and free.⁶⁷

Certified Practising Accountants

6.82 The Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants (ASCPA) is the largest professional body in Australia. It has divisions in every State, plus three overseas branches, in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. The ASCPA assesses overseas qualifications for the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs for overseas-trained accountants who wish to come to Australia, and for migrants resident in Australia who would like their qualifications assessed to join the ASCPA.

6.83 The ASCPA assesses overseas qualifications against the NOOSR compendium, using NOOSR guidelines. If an applicant has a degree that is accepted by NOOSR, ASCPA determines whether:

...it fits our minimum core of knowledge requirement, and then we will say that they have to take, for example, courses on Australian tax law

65 *ibid.*

66 Transcript of evidence, p.1680.

67 Transcript of evidence, p.1679.

*and Australian company law, and whatever else is missing that we require of all Australian people coming into our profession, as well.*⁶⁸

6.84 The benefits of the ASCPA process is that prior to migration, an overseas trained accountant from any country in the world will have the degree assessed by the ASCPA. DIEA provides the applicant with a form that is filled in and submitted to the ASCPA together with the required documentation at the interview stage.⁶⁹

6.85 The Committee canvassed with the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee and the professional associations, the feasibility of a nationally-based mutual recognition system for accrediting overseas qualifications in Australia. This would involve Australian universities acting as assessing bodies for new settlers with qualifications from overseas universities. An appropriate Australian university would examine the individual's qualifications and determine whether it met Australian standards and, if not, suggest appropriate training or tuition. However there was little support for this suggestion by the professional associations.

Bridging Courses

6.86 Lack of suitable training positions or courses was identified by the majority of overseas trained doctors as the single greatest barrier to recognition.⁷⁰

6.87 Bridging courses for overseas trained doctors have been provided through various agencies in all States with the exception of Tasmania. The major source of funding for bridging courses is DEET, through NOOSR. The AMC assists bridging course providers by providing input on the performance of overseas trained doctors in AMC examinations and by establishing contact between the course providers and candidates.⁷¹

68 Transcript of evidence, p.520.

69 Transcript of evidence, p.521.

70 Kidd, Michael and Braun, Felicity, *op. cit.*, p.20.

71 Submission No 90, Transcript of Evidence, pp.1765-1766.

6.88 As indicated earlier, one issue identified by respondents to a Bureau of Population and Immigration Survey was English proficiency.⁷² The AMC confirmed that candidates at both examination stages demonstrated English language difficulties, and that this may be a major contributing factor to poor performance. At the other end of the spectrum, communication difficulties between medical practitioners and their patients or other health workers represent the major source of complaints to hospital and registration authorities.⁷³

6.89 The Institution of Engineers also stressed the importance of English language competence. Its representatives said that good progress has been made through Commonwealth and State Government funded programs for the development of English language capabilities for overseas professionals, to allow them to communicate their skills.⁷⁴

6.90 The Institution of Engineers claims that they have negotiated "with a number of universities to provide suitable bridging courses"⁷⁵ for those migrants who have arrived under the family reunion and refugee status categories and seek recognition of their overseas gained qualifications. In cases where there are gaps in technical knowledge, the Institution has attempted to address the issue with NOOSR by developing specialist bridging programs, through a limited number of universities. These are also available by distance education and can be taken anywhere in Australia or, overseas, before arrival.⁷⁶

6.91 The process for architects varies from State to State. According to AACA, in some States, if after initial assessment, usually an interview process, 'topping up study' is considered necessary, that can be undertaken at a university. In other States candidates sit 'prescribed exams'.⁷⁷

72 Kidd, Michael and Braun, Felicity, *op. cit.*, pp.14-15.

73 Submission No.90, Transcript of Evidence, p.1766.

74 Transcript of evidence, p.1676.

75 Transcript of evidence, p.1674.

76 Transcript of evidence, p.1675.

77 Transcript of evidence, p.1680.

6.92 Before overseas qualified accountants are admitted by the ASCPA as Certified Practising Accountants, they are required to undertake courses on Australian tax law and Australian company law. They are able to access these courses by presenting a letter from the ASCPA saying they require these subjects at an Australian university or an off-shore university providing those courses.⁷⁸

6.93 The Committee is concerned that adequate and appropriate information is only trickling down to overseas trained professionals. Information about the range of bridging courses and where these may be accessed should be provided clearly to individuals who have been assessed as requiring these courses, in order to meet accreditation requirements.

6.94 The Committee recommends more active dissemination of information regarding bridging courses. These courses should be easily accessible and affordable and coordinated between NOOSR and the specific professional organisation, to ensure that the overseas trained professionals can improve their qualifications to meet Australian standards.

6.95 The Committee further recommends that NOOSR negotiate with professional associations, the development of a process (similar to that being followed by the ASCPA) in order to allow for the assessment of qualifications to be undertaken overseas and for access to bridging courses to be undertaken off-shore.

On-the-Job Training

6.96 A number of witnesses observed that the acquisition of Australian work experience is an essential prerequisite to employment and the question of on-the-job training was canvassed with the Committee. The Institution of Engineers holds the view that due to the relative success of their program of limited job placement with a company:

*...the best place to learn technical English is
somehow or other on the job in some kind of*

78 Transcript of evidence, p.520.

*secondment within industry or a consulting firm...where quite rapidly your skills in areas like computing, mathematics and technical skills will, as it were, extend and support your English language skills. That is possibly more effective in engineering than anywhere else.*⁷⁹

6.97 The Institution's strongly held views have resulted in DEET waiving its restrictive job placement rules to allow people to work for several months with a company:

*...this was not a matter of private firms seeking to take advantage of the individuals. It genuinely was not. That argument was accepted. Quite a few strings had to be pulled to enable these processes to work.*⁸⁰

6.98 The ECC in Queensland is keen to expose overseas professionals to the business community. One successful example was the case of a Polish architect, who, after accepting "a rather demeaning job in an architect's firm", was able to demonstrate superior conceptual abilities and "will succeed in that company's development".⁸¹

6.99 In a contrary situation, a German architect who was aggrieved because her qualifications were not recognised indicated that on-the-job training could lead to exploitation:

*Practising Australian architects take, I must say, unashamed advantage of the desperate situation of overseas trained architects. These people are employed without pay. They are generously offered Australian experience which is vital to them but they are not being paid for this.*⁸²

79 Transcript of evidence, p.1676.

80 *ibid.*

81 Transcript of evidence, p.636.

82 Transcript of evidence, p.718.

6.100 For its part, the Institution of Engineers was adamant that on-the-job training was not a matter of private firms seeking to take advantage of the individuals. The Chief Executive officer described the situation this way:

I believe that we have demonstrated that a placement system works. It has depended in large measure on state funding, backed by Commonwealth facilitation, so that in effect the people got enough money to keep body and soul together through the unemployment system while the state government funded the preparation work, the interviews, putting them in place, the follow-up, and so on.⁸³

6.101 Given the concerns expressed by various witnesses around Australia, that lack of Australian work experience leads to the unemployment queue, and in keeping with the Government's Productive Diversity initiative, the Committee supports the principle of on-the-job training. However, the Committee is concerned that such training could lead to exploitation, unless employers have a commitment to well developed and mutually agreed training plans.

6.102 The Committee recommends that the Government extend the national training wage system to accommodate overseas trained professionals. The rate for the training wage should be negotiated with the appropriate professional bodies.

Reciprocal Recognition

6.103 The AMC is not in favour of reciprocal accreditation with other institutions around the world. Such moves could be perceived as discriminatory, if preference was given to schools from which the Australian system derived, such as the British/Scottish system. For this reason, the AMC believes that its examinations provide a level playing field:

83 Transcript of evidence, p. 1676.

Everybody needs to sit for an assessment and we should not create situations that allow people to avoid that assessment.⁸⁴

6.104 Unlike the medical profession, the Institution of Engineers is keen on entering into mutual recognition agreements at stage 1 level and increasingly at stage 2. For the past six year, the Institution has been a signatory of the Washington Accord, for recognition at the stage 1 level. The Washington Accord :

...which originally linked the accrediting authorities of the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. That has now extended to cover Hong Kong and South Africa, and it is expected that it will extend to cover a number of non-English speaking countries when the Accord group meets again in 1997. Mexico and Chile, because of the North American Free Trade Association, have shown considerable interest in having their accreditation systems recognised as being equivalent in standing to the accreditation systems of the other countries...will apply for recognition and will almost certainly be granted provisional recognition under that heading at that time.⁸⁵

6.105 The Institution of Engineers emphasised that provisional recognition for those countries which have a "distinctive" engineering degree program is a good option for simplifying the international exchange of qualifications and experience. In addition, the Institution has "the network of understandings" based on whatever evidence can be gained of the standing of university degrees in a wide range of countries. The Institution states that it:

...maintains a substantial pool of expertise at considerable cost to the institution to try to make

84 Transcript of evidence, p.1821.

85 Transcript of evidence, pp.1672-1673.

*sure that those assessments are fair and current.
That includes visits to overseas institutions.⁸⁶*

6.106 In addition to its multilateral agreements, the Institution of Engineers, Australia has bilateral arrangements with the Indonesian institution of engineers. Direct assistance is provided to the Indonesian institution to develop a parallel system in Indonesia and thereby simplify Indonesian recognition of their own trained engineers and Australian recognition of Indonesian trained engineers. Further expansion of the network is mooted at stage 2 level, and a Memorandum of Understanding is likely to be completed with the European Federation of National Engineering Institutions, which would simplify exchanges with Europe.⁸⁷

6.107 Under NOOSR, the Institution of Engineers is extending its network in the neighbouring region, and is currently involved in extensive discussions with various countries associated with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)⁸⁸:

Some of them have systems which can, in part, be recognised already and some of them have systems which they themselves recognise fall short of international standards, and where they are taking direct and deliberate action to raise them to international standards for the very good reason that they, like us, are part of an international trading network and engineering is the most international of all professions.⁸⁹

6.108 The Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) is another association which has overseas networks to help in its accreditation process. The practical experience necessary for membership of the Institute requires that a qualified architect register as such or possesses an accredited pass in the architectural practice exam from: the US national registration authority NCARB;

86 Transcript of evidence, p. 1673.

87 *ibid.*

88 The ASEAN membership comprises: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and Vietnam.

89 Transcript of evidence, p. 1675.

the British Institute of Architects; the New Zealand Board of Architects; the Canadian Institute of Architects; the Hong Kong Institute of Architects; or the Malaysian Institute of Architects. With passes in architectural practice and an accredited course, a person is eligible to join the RAIA.

6.109 RAIA is represented on the International Union of Architects which covers in excess of 100 international architectural professional associations and is located in the Asia region. The Chief Executive of RAIA represents Australia on the International Union of Architects Practice Commission, which is currently looking at trade in services and reciprocity agreements that might be forged to facilitate trade in services following the Uruguay round of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade).⁹⁰

6.110 The Committee welcomes the development of reciprocal accreditation and urges all professional associations to seek to improve their trade in services by negotiating reciprocal agreements, either on a bilateral or multilateral basis, such as the Washington Accord, as described by the Institution of Engineers. Such agreements must not be used to undermine professional standards.

6.111 The Committee recommends that NOOSR become proactive in encouraging professional associations to negotiate reciprocal agreements either bilaterally or multilaterally for the purpose of developing agreed standards. Such agreements must be based on objective criteria of professional competency.

Provision of Information at Overseas Posts

6.112 Most witnesses complained about the lack of current information regarding the recognition process and the state of the labour market. The Committee has been told by professional associations that they provide 'information kits' outlining the requirements of their profession. NOOSR provides booklets and appropriate information. In addition, prospective migrants coming

⁹⁰ Transcript of evidence, pp.1678-1679.

under the skilled, independent or concessional family categories have a skills assessment and occupational assessment prior to their arrival.⁹¹

6.113 Substantial information may be provided to intending migrants about the status of their qualifications. Whereas some assessment of skills and occupational status may be made prior to their arrival, the Committee is not convinced that the process is sufficiently understood or accurately reflects the employment situation on the ground. The delivery of information could vary according to the interviewing and communication skills of the Australian official overseas and general availability of current information and labour force statistics.

6.114 In one case, a Masters Degree in Sociology from an Indian university was assessed by NOOSR under the professional designation of "rehabilitation counsellor". The applicant claimed that she received oral confirmation from the High Commission that she had been given the correct designation according to her qualifications and experience. However, when she came to Australia:

I was told that I was not qualified to work as a rehabilitation counsellor because a rehabilitation counsellor should have a degree either in occupational therapy or in psychology. At the same time, I cannot work as a social worker because I do not have a degree in social work, although I have worked for seven years as a social worker in India⁹².

6.115 The Committee recommends that NOOSR undertake an examination of its procedures, including its coordination with the various professional associations and the provision of its information on skills assessment, to ensure that prospective migrants are accurately assessed and informed about the recognition system after arrival in Australia.

91 Transcript of evidence, p.1799.

92 Transcript of Evidence, p.1444.

6.116 The Committee recommends that DIEA reviews its process of cross-cultural communication training for its interviewing officers proceeding overseas, to ensure its adequacy.

6.117 Where Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Officers are used in certain posts to conduct immigration interviews, the Committee recommends that DIEA coordinate interview training with DFAT, prior to the officer's posting.

Access to Employment

6.118 If Australia is to benefit from the availability of highly skilled and qualified professionals from other countries who choose to migrate here, the recognition process must be more flexible, less complex and better coordinated. Past reviews and findings have unintentionally created unwieldy bureaucratic layers which have consolidated the power of certain professional groups and provided an added hurdle for overseas trained professionals, particularly doctors, to surmount.

6.119 For most occupations, after the bridging courses have been completed and qualifications recognised and accredited, the ultimate test is to compete in the labour market. Under various legislation, employers cannot discriminate against gender, culture, race or disability and the merit principle should prevail.

6.120 However, there is sufficient evidence of negative cultural and racial stereotyping by employers to warrant an education campaign to be mounted by the Commonwealth Government on the benefits of employing people from a variety of cultures, who can contribute to an organisation's productivity because of the skills and attitudes which they may bring.

6.121 Australia's competitive edge in today's international market place will be enhanced if business diversifies its workforce by recruiting locally from Australia's cultural and linguistic mix, instead of headhunting internationally, as was reported in Queensland by the ECC.⁹³ The added advantage of employing bicultural and bilingual

93 Transcript of evidence, pp.635-636.

qualified Australians and permanent residents who would understand Australia's social and economic needs as well as those of the relevant international business partner, is an advantage that those recruited internationally may not be able to provide.

6.122 Moreover, as a result of negative stereotyping, the migrants' disadvantage rather than their value is the image that the wider community sees. As the principle of Access and Equity is to ensure that barriers are removed to ensure that no one is prevented from full participation in Australian life, the value of migrants and their contributions as productive citizens and residents should be recognised by all spheres of government in the framing of policies and action plans.

6.123 The Committee notes that in the Government's statements of Productive Diversity and Working Nation, the benefits of a multicultural workforce are appreciated and valued. The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government mount a campaign aimed specifically at promoting the value of overseas skills and qualifications.

CHAPTER 7

INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING SERVICES

Background

7.1 Throughout the Inquiry, the Committee was informed that lack of English competence was the principal obstacle preventing migrants from accessing services and information. This highlights the importance of an efficient interpreting and translating service, the need for which has been consistently expressed since the 1978 Galbally Report, *Migrant Services and Programs*¹.

7.2 The Jupp Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services (ROMAMPAS) noted that the "language barrier has been raised by 'consumers' of services in the Committee's consultations throughout Australia as the single most important reason for the inaccessibility of services."² Overcoming linguistic barriers through the provision of a variety of language services and information strategies, has been identified by the Commonwealth Government as a major focus of the Access and Equity Strategy.³

7.3 Some service providers had earlier held the view that translating and interpreting services would discourage non-English speaking immigrants from learning English. The description of language services as a 'bridging' service suggested the temporary nature with which they were perceived.⁴ Other perceptions were that language services are a 'welfare issue', that is helping the non-English speaker, rather than providing access - 'an equity issue'⁵

1 Committee of Review of Post-arrival Programs and Services for Migrants *Migrant Services and Programs*, AGPS, Canberra, 1978, para 4.15.

2 ROMAMPAS, *op. cit.*, p 229.

3 *Access and Equity Evaluation Report*, *op. cit.*, p.80.

4 ROMAMPAS, *op. cit.*, pp.229-230.

5 *ibid.*, p.230.

7.4 Gradually, a view began to develop which recognised that many immigrants who had no English language would probably not acquire the necessary level of English skills to deal with all situations as their life circumstances changed.⁶ ROMAMPAS observed that: "Although the provision of adequate language services is not a sufficient condition to provide access and equity, it is an essential one."⁷

7.5 The Committee does not view Access and Equity within the context of welfare provision. Non-English speakers are grossly disadvantaged if they are unable to communicate their needs and access information. Therefore, the provision of language services is essential to ensuring an equal share of resources and opportunities.

Translating and Interpreting Services

7.6 Since the 1970s, both Commonwealth and State governments have introduced and expanded the provision of interpreter services. The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) was introduced in 1973 by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA), which operates TIS on a 24-hour basis. TIS provides: a national telephone interpreting service; an on-site interpreting service where telephone interpreting is inappropriate; and a translation service. TIS operates on a budget of \$18.639 million in the current financial year⁸ and employs 40 full-time translating and interpreting staff and approximately 2 000 people on contracts.⁹

7.7 The Department of Social Security (DSS) has its own translating and interpreting service employing sessional and on-call interpreters in a large number of its offices to supplement its bilingual staff.¹⁰ As a general rule, DSS selects its staff according to Public Service practices. However, it also applies:

6 *ibid.*

7 *ibid.*, p. 231.

8 Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Fact Sheet 8, 27 April 1995.

9 Transcript of evidence, p. 43.

10 Transcript of evidence, p. 75.

*...secondary selection criteria to recognise language and cultural qualifications, skills if you like, as a secondary way of looking for which people might fit best in which office, according to the client profile, if you like, of that office. So we aim, in a loose sense, to have our regions staffed to match our clients so that, if a particular person comes into an office from a particular ethnic background, there is a chance that there is somebody from that ethnic background on the other side of the counter."*¹¹

7.8 The Committee commends DSS for its attempts to ensure that non-English speaking people can access information and services by the provision of translating and interpreting through a formal service as well as by the employment of bilingual and bicultural staff. The Committee notes the DSS model of counter service provision for its multicultural clients.

7.9 The Committee recommends that the practice of supplementing interpreting and translating services by the employment of bilingual/bicultural staff be adopted across all levels of government departments and agencies which are required to deliver services.

Initiatives at Other Levels of Government

7.10 Most States, with the exception of Western Australia and Queensland, have developed translating and interpreting services, including access to the DIEA operated TIS. In Victoria, an interpreter card has been introduced which provides the name and the language of the holder and the telephone numbers of the TIS, the relevant State interpreting and translating services as well as other private contractors which government departments and agencies can access.

7.11 However, the extent of the distribution of the interpreter card and the degree of access it provides to interpreters and translators was disputed by witnesses representing a variety of

11 Transcript of evidence, p.74.

community groups. The Grant-in-Aid Worker at the Victorian Association of Community Information Centres said he was not sure whether all the languages advertised were available.¹²

7.12 The Multicultural Consultant, Royal District Nursing Service in Melbourne, had recently undertaken a project to assess language use in district nursing. Part of the project was designed to determine the extent of use of the interpreter card. Although the project is in its early stages, a witness said that after 200 returns of a questionnaire by staff:

*We have not been presented with the interpreter card since it was introduced, even though our staff have been fully briefed on what to do as soon as they are presented with it. I hope that they have the opportunity fairly soon to carry out the training.*¹³

7.13 The Committee welcomes the introduction of an interpreter card, which appears, on the surface, to address the vexed question of facilitating access to an interpreter by a non-English speaker. The Committee is unable to make any judgment about the success or failure of this initiative since the interpreter card had been operating for only three months when evidence was taken in Victoria. There is some concern, however, that if the interpreter card fails to facilitate access to an interpreter or translator within the first few months of implementation, the use of the card could fall into abeyance.

7.14 The Committee recommends that the Office of Multicultural Affairs monitor the introduction of the interpreter card in Victoria in order to determine whether its implementation could be recommended to other States.

New Technology

7.15 DIEA notes in its Annual Report that a new computer system entitled the "Translating and Interpreting Service

12 Transcript of evidence, p.463.

13 Transcript of evidence, p.504.

Information System" (TISIS), which was scheduled for implementation by 1 July 1995, will now be fully implemented in 1996. The replacement of telephone switchboards in TIS offices was delayed pending the implementation of TISIS.¹⁴

7.16 The continued updating of technology for a telephone interpreting service is essential to its success and DIEA should maintain a watching brief over the service. This should alleviate the problems described by the ECC of Queensland that, according to Telstra, the technology used by the TIS is outdated and is unable to meet the current levels of demand in Queensland.¹⁵

Rural and Remote Areas

7.17 A widely held perception that people outside the metropolitan areas are experiencing a "real problem" was firmly expressed by the New South Wales Ethnic Communities Council (ECC).¹⁶ The Race Discrimination Commissioner outlined the prevailing view about the limited access to interpreters and translators in the following terms:

...the availability and the numbers simply cannot meet the demand, particularly when you are talking about after five, outside office hours...We also have to look, in the interpreting area, at the regional issue. We are better catered to in the larger urban areas. Once you get outside those urban areas, you tend to have more difficulty in face-to-face.¹⁷

7.18 In its 1994-95 Annual Report, DIEA observes that it has mounted a rural and remote awareness campaign. The aim of the campaign is to heighten awareness about TIS services and to promote and encourage its use by individuals and agencies in regional and

14 Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Annual Report 1994-1995*, op. cit., p.48.

15 Transcript of evidence, pp.627-628.

16 Transcript of evidence, p.321.

17 Transcript of evidence, p.267.

country Australia. The awareness campaign targeted 22 areas, specially selected because of their high migrant populations.¹⁸

7.19 The Committee is encouraged by the steps taken by DIEA to improve awareness in the rural and remote areas, but draws the attention of DIEA to the widespread criticism of interpreting and translating services in these areas. The Committee urges DIEA to take further steps to alleviate the problems of access to interpreting and translating services in rural and remote areas, and believes this could be achieved through the centralisation of current interpreting and translating services.

Centralisation versus Decentralisation

7.20 The TIS operates out of Melbourne. DIEA admitted that there have been "considerable complaints from people" asking how staff in a nationally operated service based in Melbourne would be aware of the geographic location of, for example, hospitals in another State. DIEA has stressed that the people in Melbourne have undergone training and know key locations in States and regions. DIEA further observed that:

*...there is an emotional attachment that the service must be provided immediately and that the locals really know the area. So it is a trade-off between that and the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of resources.*¹⁹

7.21 The arguments for centralisation and decentralisation were articulated in ROMAMPAS. Centralisation, it was suggested, allows for greater professionalism and availability of interpreting and translating in minor languages, provides for the development of a viable career structure and enhances staff morale. On the other hand, decentralisation allows for specialisation, greater commitment by agencies to interpreting and translating services and involvement by their administrative staff.²⁰

18 Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Annual Report 1994-95*, *op. cit.*, p.48.

19 Transcript of evidence, pp.48-49.

20 ROMAMPAS, *op. cit.*, p.237.

7.22 The Committee did not hear strong views from community groups about this issue. However, the Committee was concerned to hear widespread dissatisfaction with interpreting and translating services generally.

7.23 The widespread concern with interpreting and translating, whether in the health and legal areas, where training and updating in the relevant lexicon is a continuing requirement, or simply getting in contact with a telephone interpreter without experiencing long delays, leads the Committee to support a strong centralised interpreting and translating service. Moreover, a centralised service should be more efficient and accessible, provide a career path for the translators and interpreters, make training more systematic and allow public concerns to be more easily identified and addressed.

User Pays System

7.24 In 1991, TIS introduced cost recovery by Commonwealth and State/Territory government departments and agencies, as well as the private sector. The user pays system drew criticism when it was introduced, but figures show the use of the service has increased and the response time improved.²¹

7.25 The 'user-pays' clientele comprised 55% of business in the 1994-1995 period. The largest paying clients were the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments at 49.5% each. Private sector organisations and individuals represented 1%.²²

7.26 In Queensland, a government policy instructed all government departments to use interpreters where that was required. The Director of the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs observed, however, that because of the user-pays system introduced by the Commonwealth, some organisations "read this policy as meaning that they should not engage interpreters."²³

21 Report of the National Multicultural Advisory Council, *Towards and Beyond 2000*, A review of progress in implementing the 1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia, Vol.2, AGPS, Canberra, 1995, p.21.

22 Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Annual Report 1994-95*, *op. cit.*, p.48.

23 Transcript of evidence, p.593.

7.27 The Ethnic Communities Council (ECC) in Queensland agreed and said the situation with the provision of interpreters "is a dreadful problem in Queensland."²⁴ The ECC in New South Wales observed that the cost of interpreting and translating through TIS is "going through the roof".²⁵

7.28 The Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' Federation expressed a common concern with the user pays system in the following terms:

*...there is this other problem of having to pay and the problem of who should pay. That is a big problem within the health system, because quite literally the consumers do suffer because of it.*²⁶

7.29 There is a problem with the extent of confusion associated with the user pays system. If a non-English speaking consumer personally asks for an interpreter, that is provided free of charge. However, in acute health crises that is not always possible, and the institution is required to pay.

7.30 Where a consumer is unable to speak English and has difficulty presenting claims in a health or legal situation, the onus is on the government department or service provider to call for an interpreter, which may be done with some degree of reluctance. Given the delays that people experience in accessing telephone interpreters, it would suggest that the user pays system has not assisted in enhancing accessibility.

7.31 The Committee recommends that DIEA discuss with the relevant authorities in the States and Territories, the question of a centralised interpreting and translating service, with a view to merging the services within a central government agency.

24 Transcript of evidence, p.626.

25 Transcript of evidence, p.321.

26 Transcript of evidence, p.349.

7.32 In the interests of ensuring equitable access to interpreting and translating services, the Committee also recommends that Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments explore avenues for cost-sharing.

Training

7.33 The quality of interpreters was raised with the Committee and concern was expressed by the Race Discrimination Commissioner:

I have encountered, not infrequently, very poor translations of crucial matters of evidence in the administrative tribunal. I could pick that up with the Arabic but how was I to pick that up with Japanese or the other languages.²⁷

7.34 The Multicultural Child-Care Field Worker in Queensland made a number of observations critical of the formal training, particularly in the health field, of interpreters:

In Spanish the terms for miscarriage and abortion are the same - abortione. There was a case when a woman had a miscarriage and the translator translated to her husband that she had an abortion. It caused domestic conflict.²⁸

7.35 The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) admitted that translators:

...do make mistakes but it is also a profession whereby colleagues are extremely critical of others. For example, if you have a translation in front of two translators, each one will say that there are certain parts of it that should be done in a different way.²⁹

27 Transcript of evidence, p.265.

28 Transcript of evidence, p.665.

29 Transcript of evidence, pp.1622-1623.

7.36 NAATI advised the Committee that their accredited translators are not permitted to specialise until after they have qualified at the basic professional level as a generalist:

*It is somewhat akin to, say, having a general BA and then you go on and do a Dip. Ed. or something in your specialist area. That is really the heart of where the organisation's philosophy is coming from.*³⁰

7.37 DIEA indicated that they prefer their translators and interpreters to be accredited by NAATI "at a high enough level that they can be involved." In smaller language groups, however, that is not always possible and lower level interpreters and translators are used but are encouraged to undertake internal training.³¹ DIEA observed that they:

*...are working on trying to develop a national registration system for interpreters and translators, to stop any shonky deals and so on. That is currently being developed by the Commonwealth and states.*³²

7.38 However, the problem of 'paraprofessional' interpreters was identified by the Director of the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs in Queensland, who indicated that "in the regions" people are being used as interpreters who are not fully NAATI accredited:

*They are used by TIS. They have been identified by TIS as being suitable to act as translators in spite of the fact that they are not fully NAATI accredited. We do not consider that to be a satisfactory situation. It is one of those issues which we constantly discuss with the Commonwealth.*³³

30 Transcript of evidence, p.1616.

31 Transcript of evidence, p.43.

32 Transcript of evidence, pp.43-44.

33 Transcript of evidence, p.592.

7.39 Similar concerns were expressed in Newcastle, by a witness from the Tongan Community:

I have noted that some of the translations that come through here or have been printed are being disputed by academics of Tongan background who are saying that the meanings are not correct in the English version which is translated from Tongan.³⁴

7.40 The Executive Director of NAATI stated that there has been one instance, which was drawn to her attention, when a paraprofessional was operating in a court room who should not have been there.³⁵

7.41 The Committee is not convinced from the nature of the information it has received in evidence, that all is being done to ensure that health and legal interpretation is provided at the highest level. The utmost care must be taken to ensure that language services, particularly in health and legal areas, are provided at the highest level of specialisation and that NAATI should become more sensitised to the level of community concern with its current training of interpreters and translators.

7.42 Given the extent of community concern about translating and interpreting standards, the Committee recommends that:

- a) NAATI should develop specialist training for accredited interpreters and translators in legal and health settings;**
- b) NAATI should, as far as possible, ensure that regional and dialectic variations are catered for to allow adequate interpretation in all situations; and**

34 Transcript of evidence, p.1497.

35 Transcript of evidence, p.1623.

- c) quality assurance programs be implemented to ensure that proper professional standards are maintained.

Bilingual/Bicultural Staff and Volunteers

7.43 An OMA publication, *Achieving Access & Equity*, suggests ways to make the best use of bilingual staff. The publication indicates that staff may be attracted to using their bilingual skills if they are made aware of the special allowance their language skills attract. The Linguistic Availability/Performance Allowance (LAPA) is an annual allowance paid to linguistically qualified staff in the Australian Public Service who regularly communicate in other languages.³⁶

7.44 A review of LAPA in 1992 confirmed its Access and Equity value as an effective adjunct to other translating and interpreting services. The publication advised service departments and agencies to ensure that staff use LAPA, and emphasised the importance of the employment of staff with community language and cultural skills for public contact positions.³⁷

7.45 FECCA made the point that in the health area, for example, where a community service is being provided, it is incumbent on the service provider to establish a relationship with the cultural values and the beliefs of the community:

*...and that relationship is impossible to establish if we have a monolingual work force serving a multicultural community.*³⁸

7.46 However, the importance of the use of professionally trained interpreters in the courts was articulated in the 1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia. The National Agenda

36 *Achieving Access & Equity: A Second Edition Guide for the Australian Public Service, op. cit.*, pp.15-16.

37 *ibid.*, p.16.

38 Transcript of evidence, p.234.

notes: "One of the most obvious threats to equality is where evidence in court is inaccurately or incompletely communicated because a witness does not speak or understand English."³⁹

7.47 In 1992, the Law Reform Commission report *Multiculturalism and the Law*, emphasised that "Access to justice for those who do not speak English well or at all can depend on their access to competent interpreters."⁴⁰ The Guidelines for APS Managers, produced by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, *Consulting the Multicultural Way*, warns that caution needs to be exercised in choosing a qualified interpreter. The Guidelines indicate that "professional training of interpreters is essential so that bilingual proficiency is assured - the role of interpreters is to relay information accurately without adding personal interpretation, opinion or nuance. The use of willing bilingual community members on their own self-assessment may not generate accurate feedback."⁴¹

7.48 As recommended in paragraph 7.9 every use should be made of multilingual speakers to supplement translating and interpreting services. As noted in Chapter 4, this supports the notion of productive diversity which allows permanent residents and Australians with multilingual skills to become active participants in the community.

7.49 However, in the health and legal areas, only appropriately accredited NAATI interpreters and translators should be used.

39 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, 1989, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

40 The Law Reform Commission, *Multiculturalism and the Law*, Report No.57, 1992, p.35.

41 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, *Consulting the Multicultural Way: Guidelines for APS Managers Consulting and Negotiating with Non-English Speaking Background Groups*, AGPS, Canberra, 1994, p.43.

CHAPTER 8

ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

8.1 The importance of English proficiency in all aspects of life in Australia has been continually reaffirmed in the literature on migrant settlement and multicultural issues since the Galbally Report.¹ The report of the National Multicultural Advisory Council *Towards and Beyond 2000*, a review of progress in implementing the 1989 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, endorsed previous findings, noting: "There is virtual unanimity on the vital role of English language competence to the overcoming of settlement difficulties among immigrants."²

Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs

8.2 The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs funds the provision of English language training to newly arrived migrants through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). The Program accommodated 31 000 people in 1994.

8.3 Language training is delivered mainly by State and Territory government service providers, and some tertiary institutions. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiated between the Commonwealth and the State and Territory governments requires Access and Equity obligations to be met for AMEP funded services. Supported by an Operational Plan, these arrangements include "in more detail the operational and reporting requirements to which service providers must adhere, including performance information".³

8.4 While the mechanisms appear to monitor the directions of the AMEP, of concern to the Committee is that English as a Second Language (ESL) training delivered through TAFE's relies on

1 Wooden, Mark. et al, *Australian Immigration: A Survey of the Issues*, op. cit., p.326.

2 Report of the National Multicultural Advisory Council, op. cit., p.50.

3 Submissions Authorised for Publication, Submission No.66, p.172.

enrolments for its funding instead of individual student achievements. As was pointed out to the Committee in Melbourne by the Network of Women in Further Education:

That does not allow for the attrition rate, which is very large in some TAFE programs. And, again, anecdotal experience is that it particularly affects disadvantaged groups. So it is not collecting the information that is the problem, it is the problem that systems require information which does not give them what they want and that information is produced in a way that may look better than it is.⁴

8.5 However, if as DIEA intends, the MOU obliges AMEP providers to adhere to a number of other obligations, such as flexible service delivery to clients, home tutor and distance learning and intensity and scheduling of course times according to individual needs,⁵ there is already built in a requirement to ensure Access and Equity.

8.6 In 1991/92, the Government determined that English language training for each newly arrived migrant should comprise 510 hours tuition. DIEA explained to the Committee that the 510 hours was a compromise between the average length of attendance at Adult Migrant English Services (AMES), (370 hours in 1992) and a period which characterised the time spent by those who were extremely traumatised, semi-literate or illiterate in their own languages. Therefore, subject to various tests, newly arrived migrants were given an entitlement of 510 hours.⁶ As DIEA's Annual Report indicates, the result of these arrangements translated into the majority of migrants leaving the DIEA courses without the Australian as a Second Language Proficiency Rating 2 (ASLPR2), which is the target they themselves have set for a functional level of English.⁷

4 Transcript of evidence, p.477.

5 Submissions Authorised for Publication, Submission No.66, p. 172.

6 Transcript of evidence, pp.50-51.

7 Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Annual Report 1994-1995, *op. cit.*, p.49.

8.7 On 1 September 1995, revised measures were announced for language training entitlements.⁸ The new arrangements allow recently arrived migrants, who are not immediately seeking employment, to have access to more than 510 hours of tuition under the AMEP. They single out migrants with learning difficulties and survivors of torture and trauma for the "highest priority for additional hours", and make provision for migrants seeking to defer their entitlements for English tuition.⁹

8.8 In addition to the revised arrangements, the total expenditure on ESL training for newly arrived immigrants and job seekers has increased, despite the drop in the migrant intake in the early 1990s. The increase is nearly \$20 million in the last three years.¹⁰

8.9 The Committee welcomes the revised arrangements and endorses the priority given for extra hours of tuition to survivors of torture and trauma and those with low levels of literacy in their own language. Deferral of language training until a migrant has settled into accommodation, and satisfied other immediate family needs addresses another concern, which was consistently raised with the Committee during the course of the Inquiry.

The Department of Employment, Education and Training

8.10 The Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) provides money for the longer term residents who are seeking work, but who do not have enough English language skills to allow them to take advantage of DEET labour market programs.¹¹ These longer term residents are often graduates of the AMEP. The English as a Second Language (ESL) element of the Special

8 Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and Minister Assisting the prime Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Media Release, B81/95, 1.9.95, *New Deal for Adult English Language Tuition*.

9 *ibid.*

10 Letter from Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to the *Canberra Times*, 17.12.1995.

11 Transcript of evidence, p.50.

Intervention Program (SIP) run by DEET, targets specifically "those for whom the CES has identified English language difficulties as their major barrier to employment or further training."¹²

8.11 The *New Deal for Adult English Language Tuition* announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs extends the provision of the ESL classes run through the SIP. For the financial year 1994/95, 32 000 ESL placements are expected to be allocated, targeted at the most disadvantaged jobseekers.¹³

8.12 Under the SIP, expenditure for ESL training in 1993-94 was over \$93 million with an anticipated increase to an estimated \$128 million in the current financial year 1995-1996. The figures include the jobsearch allowance.¹⁴

Uniform Assessment Scale

8.13 Prior to the introduction of the revised arrangements for AMEP courses, those people who exited the DIEA funded language training at ASLPR level 1 or level 1+, (minimal survival) were not ready for employment. According to the Executive Officer of the South Australian Overseas Qualification Board:

*So you are getting a whole lot of people who are going into workplaces prematurely, having all sorts of industrial accidents probably, putting pressure on the Workplace Education Program, which is very tiny. It is solving nothing.*¹⁵

8.14 According to the same witness, under the previous conditions of AMEP, newly arrived migrants were required to reach ASLPR2 or have used up 510 hours of tuition. ASLPR3 is the level of language proficiency considered necessary to be reached in order to be "work ready". This is the aim of DEET for its ESL training.¹⁶ The

12 Transcript of evidence, p.105.

13 Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Media Release, *op. cit.*

14 Transcript of evidence, pp.161-162.

15 Transcript of evidence, p.752.

16 *ibid.*

witness for the Adult Migrant English Services (AMES) in Adelaide agreed, and added that ASLPR2 rating does not provide sufficient language training:

*I personally think level 3 is a much more realistic level to aim for rather than level 2. Level 2 is really not very high.*¹⁷

8.15 The Education Manager, English Language and Literacy Services at the Adelaide Institute of TAFE endorsed the widely held view that migrants should not try to enter the workforce without a sufficient level of English language training:

*We run DEET labour programs and within those we offer work experience. The most consistent report from employers that would prevent them from employing the people that we provide for work experience is that the language level is still not sufficiently high.*¹⁸

8.16 In its Annual Report, DIEA produced a set of figures which demonstrated that 49.9% of clients exited the AMEP at ASLPR 1+ "or higher" and 17.9% exited at ASLPR 1.¹⁹ No specific figure for ASLPR2 (basic communication) was given, thus confirming the widely held view amongst English language providers that the basic level of competence was rarely reached by most migrants.

8.17 The Committee accepts that acquisition of English is the single most important element necessary to lead newly arrived migrants to participate effectively in the Australian community and endorses the Government's initiative to increase the funding level for the AMEP.

17 Transcript of evidence, p.767.

18 Transcript of evidence, p.861.

19 Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Annual Report 1994-1995*, op. cit., p.49.

8.18 In its Submission to the Committee, DEET observed that prior to ESL training becoming the major focus of SIP from January 1993, "DEET was responsible for addressing the ESL needs of jobseekers assessed as being at Level 2 or above on the...(ALSPR)."²⁰

8.19 The large increase in funding makes it no longer acceptable for newly arrived migrants participating in the new more flexible DIEA arrangements to exit the course before reaching ASLPR 2. This level should allow newly arrived migrants to build on their knowledge through participation in further programs funded by DEET, as well as interaction with English speakers in the community. Of additional importance is that the increased funding places obligations on Government planners and service providers to concentrate more on quality of education and less on numbers of enrolments.

8.20 As a result of extra funding provided by the Commonwealth Government and the new flexible measures for delivering AMEP courses, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

- a) in all future negotiations with States and Territories, DIEA should build Access and Equity principles into the terms of any Memorandum of Understanding or in measures contained in any Operational Plan, to include the availability of home tutors for carers who are unable to access outside courses and distance learning for people in rural and remote areas;
- b) outcomes proposed in the Operational Plan should be based on the level of language skills achieved by migrants rather than participation rates and these should seek to have migrants reach ASLPR2 rating before exiting the DIEA program; and
- c) in all its tendering arrangements, DEET should also seek to have documents which stipulate that participants in the SIP ESL should reach ASLPR3 or higher, before exiting the Program.

20 Transcript of evidence, p.106.

Project Audit

8.21 The Commonwealth Government funds the largest adult English language teaching programs through the AMEP and SIP ESL. As mentioned earlier, prior to 1993, the AMEP was delivered solely by DIEA to provide language tuition to newly arrived migrants during their settlement period. Since 1993, those migrants who have been through the DIEA funded AMEP continue their tuition through DEET's SIP ESL, which is designed to make them work ready.

8.22 The extra arrangements for both programs announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the Minister for Employment, Education and Training increases funding by approximately \$20 million (\$120.7m to \$139.14m) per annum. The Committee is unable to judge how the extra funding will allay many criticisms which were raised during the course of the Inquiry, about the inadequate evaluation and monitoring controls.²¹

8.23 The Committee is aware that the Auditor-General examined the AMEP in 1992 and made a number of recommendations relating to management controls, including monitoring and evaluation.²² However, given the criticisms which continue to plague the delivery of adult English language tuition and the expansion of the program since the Ministers' September 1995 initiative, the Committee believes the programs should be subject to a further audit check.

8.24 The Committee recommends that the Auditor-General conduct a further audit check of the AMEP and the SIP ESL along the lines of the 1992 audit, with particular emphasis on the effectiveness of the current management controls designed to evaluate the State education authorities and other organisations who deliver the programs.

21 See for example, Transcript of evidence: pp. 750-755; 759-768; 1180.

22 Australian National Audit Office, Audit Report No.19, 1992-93, AGPS, Canberra, 1992.

CHAPTER 9

DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING MECHANISMS

Introduction

9.1 Not all immigrants and their families share the same immigration experience. Each confronts different sets of obstacles and adjusts to circumstances in an individual way. While there are some shared experiences associated with relocation and settlement, "their personal characteristics, the social and economic climate in which they found themselves and the interaction of all three thereafter will substantially influence the pattern of their needs over time."¹

9.2 Likewise, disadvantage is not a function of ethnicity. "Rather, it is a function of the particular factors marking disadvantage which are more recurrent in some groups than others."² In identifying areas of disadvantage among the overseas born and the Australian-born members of their families, it is essential that service providers identify and examine areas of vulnerability, such as limited English competence, lack of recognition of overseas qualifications, accessibility to interpreting and translating services and racial, cultural and religious prejudices.

Definition of Target Group

9.3 The proportion of the national population (including Christmas and Cocos Islands residents) born in non-English speaking countries was 13.6 % in 1994. This represents an increase of 2 % from the 1984 figure of 11.6 % (which excluded Christmas and Cocos Islands).³

1 ROMAMPAS, *op. cit.*, p.48.

2 *ibid.*, p.49.

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends 1995*, Canberra, 1995, p.2.

9.4 In 1991, 19% of Australians (3.1 million people) had been born in Australia and had at least one overseas born parent. This figure includes English speaking background countries.⁴

9.5 What both sets of figures do not identify is disadvantage. If the current Access and Equity Strategy emphasises attainment of equitable outcomes, there needs to be an identification of the group which is being targeted for this measure. As the analysis in ROMAMPAS suggested "identification of need within immigrant groups requires uniform and sophisticated measurement."⁵

9.6 It was further observed in ROMAMPAS that the complexity of identification and definition of the target group was related to a number of causes. These included the variety of different groups and the somewhat loose definition of social boundaries caused by intermarriage, together with the lack of correspondence between 'birthplace' and 'ethnicity'.

9.7 Similarly, the socio-economic backgrounds of immigrants born in the same country and of the same ethnic background is relevant when identifying disadvantage. As ROMAMPAS observed: "the fact that some immigrants speak fluent English while others from the same birthplace do not, may be more important in assessing needs than is their common ethnicity or origin."⁶

9.8 The measurement of ethnicity in official statistics has been criticised by ethnic organisations during previous consultations by government instigated committees of review.⁷ For this reason, the Committee sought clarification of definitions with witnesses at public hearings. Throughout the Inquiry, the Committee posed questions about the appropriateness of the identifier 'NESB' (Non-English Speaking Backgrounds) for the purpose of Access and Equity data collection.

4 *ibid.*, p. 5.

5 ROMAMPAS, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

6 *ibid.*, p. 59.

7 *ibid.*

9.9 The First Assistant Secretary of OMA indicated that, at present, NESB is defined as those people whose first language is not English or those who come from a non-English speaking background, meaning that one or both parents are not English speaking. That is, NES 1 and NES 2 indicating first and second generation:

The essence of it is really the culture that you are brought up in and whether you are likely to be outside the mainstream simply because you do not speak English.⁸

9.10 For the purpose of Access and Equity, however, the OMA definitions did not indicate disadvantage. In Melbourne, a witness for the Network of Women in further Education was critical of use of the term NESB:

...which is not really terribly accurate as a measure of social disadvantage. The Prime Minister's children qualify as NESB under the Victorian Education Department's measures and so do I. It is no indice of social disadvantage to have a parent born overseas in a non-English speaking country. If you are going to take what are increasingly scarce resources and try and distribute them in a way which is best in the interests of access and equity, then you have to make sure that you do collect figures and that those figures are accurate ones. That is my point. Quite often at the moment the information that is coming through is too waffly to really help target things accurately.⁹

9.11 A witness for the Ethnic Communities Council in Queensland held similar views:

It is difficult to sort of put definitions on anything. For example, I am an NES 2 and I am not quite sure what that means...I recently found my

8 Transcript of evidence, p.8.

9 Transcript of evidence, p.477.

*cultural identity and I identify with it very strongly. But I am born Australian and I always will be Australian. I will not be defined for the benefits of a department for fear that that then marginalises me in terms of potential targeting. That is the point we need to react on. Definitions are usually manipulative devices, not so much to target in terms of funding sources but often to marginalise. So the broader the definition and the multiple definitions used are often more welcome than a narrowly defined commonly accepted definition.*¹⁰

9.12 On the other hand, a witness for the Association of Ethnic Organisations for Aged Care in Adelaide indicated that:

*...when the finding (sic) becomes available to mainstream, that there should be money available for NES groups. Monitoring, perhaps, is not as strict as it should be. Once the money is given over to a mainstream group or any other group, it is not really followed up strictly and it should be very strictly followed up, so that there is money or places or whatever for ethnic people in that monitoring.*¹¹

9.13 The generally held view about the inadequacy of the definition of 'NESB' was further endorsed by the Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales. He said that the issue was being looked at in New South Wales:

The definition of non-English speaking background, while it was good and practical and perhaps well targeted in the 1970s and early 1980s, does not seem to be so in the 1990s. That has an impact in a number of areas, including the

10 Transcript of evidence, pp.619-620.

11 Transcript of evidence, p.779.

*monitoring of equal employment opportunity performances...It is our view that this issue must be addressed, that a more effective definition be found, or a more effective identifier be found.*¹²

9.14 The Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales expressed its view in the following terms:

*Mr Chairman you just about touched on what really becomes the main difference between the way that Australia views its migrants and the way that other countries view their migrants. It is not uncommon, for example, to talk about different sorts of Americans. There are Italian Americans, African Americans, Polish Americans, et cetera. In this country, we are Australians, you see...and one of the ways in which it has been solved is not to have firm definitions...'Australians' then becomes an all-inclusive tag...So we are not interested in putting forward an idea that it is 'us and them'; it is just that the services that are provided in this country need to be accessible by all Australians.*¹³

Ethnicity Data

9.15 For the purpose of collecting "ethnicity data", The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) informed the Committee that:

*In recent times there has been concern in the ABS and in the wider user community about the definition of non-English speaking background - the population group, the characteristics, the concept encompassing the shorthand version of NESB and the best way of identifying and measuring NESB in the use of available statistics on the group.*¹⁴

12 Transcript of evidence, p.964.

13 Transcript of evidence, p.318.

14 Transcript of evidence, p.1603.

9.16 In late 1994, the ABS contacted a number of major users seeking their requirements and advice in relation to NESB. The consultations revealed the following:

*...there is a widespread view that NESB defines a group of people who suffer disadvantage of one type or another in Australian society.*¹⁵

9.17 The ABS reiterated earlier views that NESB is not an indicator of disadvantage:

*...it is important to note that NESB does not in itself indicate that individuals are described as disadvantaged. Many people of NESB are, in fact, high achievers, educationally, socially and economically.*¹⁶

9.18 The ABS also indicated that if NESB signified disadvantage, there is confusion as to what constitutes that disadvantage:

*...whether NESB is primarily an indicator of inability to speak English and the disadvantage which that can cause, or whether NESB is an indication of disadvantage associated with social, cultural and ethnic background.*¹⁷

9.19 The ABS outlined two different official definitions of NESB. The first is the Public Service Act, which defines NESB as 'persons who have migrated to Australia and whose first language is a language other than English and children of such persons'. On the other hand, the New South Wales *Anti-Discrimination Act* describes people of NESB as "representing racial minorities, disadvantaged in Australia by virtue of colour, nationality, descent and ethnic, ethno-religious or national origin."¹⁸

15 *ibid.*

16 *ibid.*

17 *ibid.*

18 Transcript of evidence, p.1604.

9.20 Because of these differences in interpretation, the ABS informed the Committee that it proposes to tighten the meaning and identification of NESB and:

...restrict the application of the NESB variable to people born overseas and their children, as is the case in some current administrative usages, but would exclude third and subsequent generation descendants of migrants to Australia even if they do not speak English as their first language.¹⁹

9.21 It is clear that the identifier 'NESB' is no longer appropriate as a measure of disadvantage. Therefore, the Committee has reservations about the ABS proposition to continue with the use of the identifier 'NESB', particularly given its long association with disadvantage and the probability that it will continue to be so defined in official documents.

9.22 While it is understood that the label NESB may conveniently solve many problems of identification, particularly as settlers could come from the same country but not belong to the same ethnic, religious or language group, a number of community groups suggest they are unhappy about being labelled, particularly as labels are perceived as a convenient bureaucratic tool which tends to divide the community into 'them and us'. Given these community views, and the perception that there is a degree of loss of self-esteem with those labelled NESB, the Committee is unable to endorse the proposition that ABS continues to use it as an identifier for its statistical purposes.

9.23 The Committee recommends that, for the purpose of planning programs, the Australian Bureau of Statistics should seek objective data through an alternative identifier to 'NESB'. The Committee further recommends that the Australian Bureau of Statistics conduct community consultations to focus test the use of alternative identifying terms.

19 *ibid.*

9.24 The Committee has already referred to the Office of Multicultural Affairs publication *Diversity Counts: A Handbook on Ethnicity Data*. While the publication describes the characteristics of ethnicity, it does not adequately indicate how this set of complex variables should indicate disadvantage.

9.25 The Committee recommends that the OMA publication *Diversity Counts: A Handbook on Ethnicity Data*, be revised to include measures of disadvantage within the migrant population.

Monitoring and Evaluating Mechanisms

9.26 The current funding arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories, outlined in Chapter 3, do not include formal Access and Equity monitoring and evaluating mechanisms for programs funded wholly or in part by the Commonwealth and delivered by other levels of government. Because the Commonwealth has not stipulated the nature of the achievable Access and Equity measures which State/Territory and local governments should aim for, strategic planning within the context of Access and Equity is not in place.

9.27 The Committee is not surprised that State/Territory and local governments have not undertaken Access and Equity evaluation. Some of the reasons which prevent adherence to Access and Equity have been discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 and relate mainly to confusion about what Access and Equity is and what it is meant to achieve. The problems associated with identifying the target group and the lack of data concerning migrant participation levels as an indicator of disadvantage is a further complicating factor. In addition, the general view is that Access and Equity strategies are resource intensive.

9.28 Moreover, as the Commonwealth has yet to put in place monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with best practice benchmarking, there is no model in place for other governments to follow.

9.29 It nevertheless remains essential that disadvantage is addressed by Access and Equity strategies. Therefore, in view of recommendations made in Chapter 4 of this Report and in the

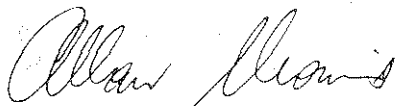
absence of adequate monitoring mechanisms at the Commonwealth level, one of the only practical means of ensuring compliance with Access and Equity principles is the existence of complaints mechanisms. The complaints mechanisms should be internally administered by the service provider and monitored by means of data collection of complaints about a particular program.

9.30 The Committee recommends that in all Commonwealth-State funding arrangements, Access and Equity requirements constitute part of the contractual and compliance obligations for all service providers. These include:

- a) the identification of disadvantaged clients at risk of permanent disadvantage due to linguistic and cultural barriers;**
- b) the maintenance and extension of interpreting and translating services;**
- c) improved access to English language training;**
- d) streamlining of the recognition process;**
- e) cross-cultural communication training for staff who are at the client interface;**
- f) the collection and maintenance of client data to enable effective evaluation and monitoring of the program; and**
- g) an internal complaints mechanism to be administered and monitored by the service provider.**

Conclusion

9.31 The above recommendations should make it possible to derive maximum benefit from the better targeting of programs for individuals and communities in most need of support and assistance. They should also assist in optimising opportunities for increased productivity and participation in Australia's diverse workforce and society.



ALLAN MORRIS MP

Chairman

22 January 1996

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

INDIVIDUALS

Mr William Anderson
Mr Carmel Attard
Ms Elfie Beer
Mr John Bolt
Mr Garry Hancock
Mr Mauricio Hayem
Mr Paul Mazourek
Mr Fausto and Mrs Consuelo Mino
Mr Robert Patching
Mrs Pushpalatha Siroley
Mr Martin Willoughby-Thomas
Dr Wong
Mrs Linda Woolard
Mr Turgut Yavuz

ORGANISATIONS

ACT Adult Migrant English Service
Adult Migrant English Services, Adelaide
Adult Migrant English Services, Adelaide Institute
Architects Accreditation Council of Australia Incorporated
Asian Women's Consultative Council SA
Attorney-General's Department, Legal Aid and Family Services
Australian Arabic Welfare Council Inc.
Australian Council of TESOL Associations
Australian Electoral Commission
Australian Law Reform Commission
Australian Library and Information Association
Australian Local Government Association
Australian Medical Association
Australian Medical Council
Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' Federation
Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants
Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association Inc.

Brazilian Community Council of Australia Inc
 Brisbane Migrant Resource Centre
 Brunswick English Language Centre
 Canterbury-Bankstown Settlement Plan Co-ordinating Committee
 Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health
 Department for Employment, Training and Further Education,
 South Australian Overseas Qualifications Board
 Department of Employment, Education and Training
 Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
 Department of Industrial Relations
 Department of Social Security
 Department of the Chief Minister, Northern Territory Government
 Department of the Premier and Cabinet, SA,
 Office for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs
 Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Victoria
 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet,
 Office of Multicultural Affairs
 Deputy Leader of the Opposition, NT, Ms Maggie Hickey MLA,
 Member for Barkly
 Ethnic Child Care, Family and Community Services Cooperative Ltd.,
 Ethnic Child Care Development Unit
 Ethnic Child Care Resource Unit Inc.
 Ethnic Communities' Council Northern Territory Inc.
 Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW Inc.
 Ethnic Communities' Council of Queensland Ltd.
 Ethnic Communities' Council of SA Inc.
 Ethnic Communities' Council of Western Australia
 Ethnic Link Services
 Family Support Services Association of NSW
 Federal Member for Greenway, Mr Russ Gorman MP
 Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia Inc.
 Health Department of Western Australia
 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
 Hunter Area Health Service, Health Care Interpreter Service and
 Migrant Health Service
 LINKCARE Community Options Project
 Migrant Resource Centre of Newcastle and the Hunter Region Ltd.
 Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs,
 QLD, Ms Anne Warner MLA
 Nepean Migrant Access Inc.

NESB Workers Network
Network of Women in Further Education Inc.
Northern Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre and
North Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre (Joint Submission)
NSW Grant-In-Aid Migrant Welfare Workers and Agencies Co-op Ltd
NSW Migrant Resource Centre Forum
NSW Teachers Federation
Office of Multicultural Interests WA
Pacific Island Workers' Interagency
Premier of New South Wales, Mr Andrew Refshauge (Acting),
Minister for Health, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Premier of Tasmania, Mr Ray Groom MLA
Residential Care Rights
Royal District Nursing Service
SBS (Special Broadcasting Service)
Soroptimist International
South Australian Council of Social Service
St George Ethnic Services Interagency Sub Committee
The Association of Ethnic Organisations for Aged Care Inc.
Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc.
University of Southern Queensland, Equal Opportunity Coordinator
Victorian Association of Community Information Centres
Wentworth Area Health Service
Western Sydney Access and Equity Working Party
Youth Action and Policy Association and
NESB Youth Steering Committee (Joint Submission)

APPENDIX 2

DETAILS OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND WITNESSES

CANBERRA - 16 MAY 95

Attorney-General's Department, Legal Aid and Family Services

- . Ms Coleen Clare, Director, Family Services Section,
- . Ms Helen Eastburn, Acting Assistant Secretary,
Family and Community Services Branch
- . Ms Joan Jardine, Director, Data Bureau

Department of Employment Education and Training

- . Mr Christopher Evans, Assistant Secretary,
Client Strategies and Training Branch,
Employment Programs Delivery Division
- . Ms Denise Jefferson, Director, National Programs Section,
Targeted Programs Branch, Schools and Curriculum Division
- . Ms Anna Kamarul, Assistant Secretary, Women's Policy,
Income Support and Participation Branch,
Economic and Policy Analysis Division
- . Ms Jennifer Ledger, Assistant Secretary,
National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition,
Higher Education Division
- . Ms Stella Morahan, Director, Innovations,
Access and Equity Section, Development Branch,
Higher Education Division
- . Mr Alan Ruby, Deputy Secretary
- . Ms Catherine Walters, Director, Client Services Section,
Client Strategies and Training Branch,
Employment Programs Delivery Division

Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs

- . Mr Peter Hughes, Assistant Secretary,
Citizenship and Settlement Policy Branch,
Policy and Program Development Division
- . Ms Linda Meech, Director,
Settlement and Ethnic Affairs Policy Section
- . Mr Des Storer, First Assistant Secretary,
Policy and Program Development Division

Department of Industrial Relations

- . Mr Trevor Cook, Assistant Secretary,
Workplace Bargaining and Best Practice Branch
- . Ms Gail Finlay, Assistant Secretary,
Awards Management and Trades Recognition Branch
- . Ms Claire Kelly, Director, Equal Pay Unit
- . Mr Glenn Newton, Director, Trades Recognition Australia
- . Mr David Peetz, Assistant Secretary, Wages Policy Branch,
Policy Development Division

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet,
Office of Multicultural Affairs

- . Mr Max Bourke, First Assistant Secretary
- . Dr Thu Nguyen-Hoan, Assistant Secretary,
Equity and Community Relations Branch

Department of Social Security

- . Ms Roksana Bako, Assistant Service Officer 5,
Migrant Services Section
- . Mr Peter de Gail, Director, Migrant Services Section
- . Mr John McWilliam, Assistant Secretary,
Client Service Programs

SYDNEY - 17 MAY 1995

Australian Law Reform Commission

- . Mr Christopher Sidoti, Commissioner

Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' Federation

- . Ms Mary Banfield, Policy Officer
- . Ms Norah McGuire, National Secretary
- . Ms Irene Rounis, Member

Ethnic Communities' Council of New South Wales Inc.

- . Mr John Cauchi, Management Representative
- . Mr Kelvin Chambers, Policy Officer
- . Ms Angela Chan, Chairperson
- . Mr Luciano Ferracin, Executive Officer
- . Mr Rick Yamine, Management Representative

Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia Inc.
(FECCA)

- . Ms Rachelle Arkles, Policy Officer
- . Mr Sam Choucair, National Health Convenor
- . Mr Alan Simakoff, Chief Executive Officer

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

- . Ms Zita Antonios, Race Discrimination Commissioner

NESB Youth Steering Committee,
Blacktown City Community Services Network

- . Ms Deborah Hatzi,
Community Development Worker (Grant-In-Aid)

New South Wales Grant-In-Aid Migrant Workers and
Agencies Co-op Ltd

- . Ms Sandra Marchesin, Committee Member
- . Ms Katina Varelis, Chairperson
- . Mrs Cheryl Webster, Secretary

Youth Action and Policy Association Inc. NSW

- . Ms Myriam Bahari, Youth Services Development Officer,
Western Sydney Project
- . Ms Debbie Wong, NESB Youth Project Worker

MELBOURNE - 26 MAY 1995

Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants

- . Mrs Amanda Blyth, Education Assessments Officer
- . Mrs Margaret Johns, Director of Education and Membership

Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association Inc.

- . Mrs Cam Nguyen, Executive Director

Brunswick English Language Centre

- . Mr Paul Hoban, Coordinator
- . Ms Anne Lynzaat, Welfare Teacher

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

- . Ms Ann Duffield, Assistant Secretary
- . Ms Meredith Sussex, Acting Deputy Secretary

Individuals

- . Mr Turgut Yavuz

Network of Women in Further Education

- . Ms Miriam Faine, Member

North Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre

- . Ms Nilgun Yucel, Social Planning and Training Officer

Northern Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre

- . Ms Ainslie Hannan,
Community Research and Development Officer
- . Mr Michael Olijnyk, Director

Royal District Nursing Service

- . Mr Lawrence Arnold, Multicultural Consultant
- . Miss Patricia McPherson, Policy and Planning Officer

Victorian Association of Community Information Centres

- . Mr Larry Stillman, Grant-In-Aid Worker

BRISBANE - 12 JULY 1995

Association of Overseas Trained Professionals

- . Mrs Ursula Ebber, Deputy President

Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Affairs

- . Mr Uri Themal, Director, Bureau of Ethnic Affairs

Ethnic Communities' Council of Queensland

- . Mr Karel Duivenvoorden,
Principal Policy and Information Coordinator
- . Mr Serge Voloschenko, Chairman

Individuals

- . Mr Mauricio Hayem
- . Mr Robert Patching

Logan City Creche and Kindergarten Association

- . Mrs Maria Delvalle, Multicultural Field Worker
- . Mrs Elnora Welsh, Multicultural Child-Care Field Worker,
NESB Workers Network

Logan City Migrant Neighbourhood Centre

- . Mrs Agnes Whiten, Vice-Chairperson, NESB Workers Network

Soroptimist International

- . Ms Adele Rice, Member and Former Regional President

University of Southern Queensland

- . Dr Krzysztof Batorowicz, Equal Opportunity Coordinator

ADELAIDE - 18 JULY 1995

Adelaide Institute of TAFE,

English Language and Literacy Services

- . Mrs Ann Beaumont, Educational Manager

Adult Migrant English Services

- . Mrs Kathleen Staker, Teacher and Counsellor

Asian Women's Consultative Council

- . Ms Florina D'Sylva, Member
- . Ms May Lee, Chairperson of Ageing Subcommittee,
Executive Committee
- . Ms Hean Bee Wee, President

Association of Ethnic Organisations for Aged Care

- . Ms Olga Alexandra, Project Development Officer

Australian Council of TESOL Associations

- . Mr Ronald Hall, Councillor and Treasurer

Ethnic Communities' Council of South Australia Inc.

- . Mr Randolph Alwis, President
- . Mr Fred Schaffer,
Social Policy and Community Development Officer
- . Mr Michael Schulz AM, Vice-President

Ethnic Link Services

- . Mrs Elizabeth Bleby, Manager
- . Mr Joseph Leung, Coordinator Eastern Region

Flinders University, National Institute of Labour Studies

- . Professor Judith Sloan, Director

Individuals

- . Mr Paul Mazourek

South Australian Overseas Qualifications Board

- . Ms Carol Potter, Executive Officer

ADELAIDE - 19 JULY 1995

Office for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs

- . Mr Paolo Nocella, Chief Executive Officer

South Australian Council of Social Service

- . Mr Mark Henley, Executive Director
- . Mrs Florinda Shanks

SYDNEY - 26 JULY 1995

Brazilian Community Council of Australia

- . Mrs Eliane Da Silva,
Public Officer and Welfare Information Officer
- . Mrs Lucia Tavares-Johns, Council Member

Canterbury-Bankstown Settlement Plan Coordinating Committee

- . Ms Randa Kattan, Settlement Plan Coordinator
- . Mr Mark Lack, Member, Housing Task Force

Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales

- . Ms Rosa Droescher, Senior Policy Officer
- . Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian AM, Chairman

Nepean Migrant Access Inc.

- . Ms Antigone Coutsonicas, Senior Development Worker
- . Mr Philip Davey, Member
- . Ms Carolin Wenzel, Grant-In-Aid Worker

New South Wales Migrant Resource Centre Forum

- . Ms Maria Kladis, Representative
- . Ms Rosa Loria, Representative
- . Ms Cristina Pebaque, Representative
- . Ms Violet Roumeliotis, Representative

Pacific Island Workers' Interagency

- . Mr John Uri, Coordinator and Chairperson

Western Sydney Access and Equity Working Party

- . Ms Wendy Hamilton, Community Worker

SYDNEY - 27 JULY 1995

Australian Arabic Welfare Council Inc.

- . Mr Charlie Coorey, Centre Coordinator
- . Ms Nada Nasser, Chairperson

Family Support Services Association of New South Wales

- . Ms Marion Gledhill, Executive Officer
- . Ms Nora Gomez, Family Worker,
Green Valley Family Support Service
- . Ms Tracey Thorne, Coordinator,
Granville Family Support Service

NSW Teachers Federation

- . Ms Glenice Aiken, Executive Member,
Adult Migrant English Service Teachers Association
- . Ms Penny Carosi, Multicultural Officer-Organiser
- . Ms Marina Pearce, Executive Member,
Adult Migrant English Service Teachers Association

NSW Teachers Federation Cont.

- . Mr Larry Wakeland, Publicity Officer,
Adult Migrant Education Service Teachers Association

St George Ethnic Services Interagency

- . Mr Barry Redhead, Social Worker
- . Ms Georgia Zogalis, Member

University of Wollongong, Centre for Multicultural Studies

- . Professor Stephen Castles, Director
- . Dr Robin Iredale, Senior Research Fellow

Wentworth Area Health Service

- . Mr John Dent, Policy Adviser, Multicultural Health

CANBERRA - 10 AUGUST 1995

Australian Capital Territory Adult Migrant English Service

- . Ms Margaret Byrne, Teacher and Consultant,
Intercultural Unit
- . Mrs Barbara Kelly, Head of Department, ESL, Access to Work

Australian Electoral Commission

- . Mr Paul Anderson, Director, Electoral Education
- . Dr Robin Bell, Deputy Electoral Commissioner
- . Mr Trevor Willson, Assistant Commissioner,
Information and Education

Australian Library and Information Association

- . Ms Charu Sood
- . Ms Virginia Walsh, Executive Director

Australian Local Government Association

- . Mr John Pritchard, Policy Manager
- . Mayor Sue Smith, National Executive Member

Australian National University

- . Dr James Jupp, Director,
Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies

Department of Human Services and Health

- . Mr Ian Bigg, Acting Assistant Secretary, Hospital Branch,
Hospital and Health Financing Division
- . Mr Peter Fisher, Assistant Secretary,
Disability Work Force Participation Branch
- . Ms Sue Kerr, Assistant Secretary,
Children's Services Administration and Development Branch
- . Dr John Loy, First Assistant Secretary,
Hospital and Health Financing Division
- . Mr Dale Stevenson, Assistant Secretary,
Quality Assurance and Access Branch,
Aged and Community Care Division

Flinders University, Social Sciences

- . Dr Robert Holton, Director, Centre for Multicultural Studies

Individuals

- . Mr Carmel Attard

PERTH - 16 AUGUST 1995

Ethnic Child Care Resource Unit Inc.

- . Ms Pola Kurayev-Nadas, Manager
- . Ms Dijana Skorsur,
Community Development and Information Coordinator

Ethnic Communities' Council of Western Australia

- . Ms Pendo Mwaiteleke, Senior Policy Officer
- . Mr Ramdas Sankaran, Executive Officer

Health Department of Western Australia

- . Ms Sandra Hopkins, Coordinator, Multicultural Access Unit
- . Mr Michael Robinson, Acting Coordinator, Central HACC Unit
- . Ms Sheryl Stone, Coordinator, Clustering Project,
Osborne Park Hospital

Individuals

- . Mr William Anderson
- . Mrs Pushpalatha Sirolely

Office of Multicultural Interests

- . Ms Paula Cristoffanini, Director

NEWCASTLE - 11 SEPTEMBER 1995

Australian Filipino Association, Hunter Region

- . Mrs Delia Del Rosario,
Womens Welfare Coordinator Spokesperson

Ethnic Affairs Commission

- . Mrs Helen Mantziaris, Regional Coordinator

Hunter Area Health Service, Migrant Health Service

- . Mrs Trudy Mills-Evers, Director
- . Mrs Lorraine Norton, Coordinator,
Health Care Interpreter Service

Individuals

- . Mr Wadim (Bill) Jegorow

Migrant Resource Centre of Newcastle and Hunter Region Ltd

- . Mr Alex Burns, Community Development Worker
- . Ms Violetta Walsh, Coordinator

Philippines-Asia Women Study Group, Newcastle

- . Mrs Jane Queripel, Spokesperson

Tongan Community of Newcastle Inc.

- . Mrs Teleisia Lolohea, Member
- . Ms Tima Oto, Secretary

DARWIN - 11 OCTOBER 1995

Council on the Ageing (Northern Territory) Inc.

- . Ms Yvonne Sutherland, Executive Director

Ethnic Communities' Council of the Northern Territory Inc.

- . Mr Joe De Luca, President

Northern Territory Government Department of Education

- . Ms Pip Hodge, Senior Education Officer,
ESL/Multicultural Program

Northern Territory Government Department of Housing and Local Government

- . Mr Chris Capper, Senior Policy Officer,
Local Government Division
- . Mr Mike Rennie, Manager, Policy and Planning

Northern Territory Government, Office of Ethnic Affairs

- . Ms Janicean Price, Director

Northern Territory Government, Territory Health Services

- . Mr Bruce March, Program Director,
Family and Community Services
- . Ms Jenne Roberts, Program Director, Women's Health Adviser
- . Dr Vino Sathianathan, Deputy Medical Superintendent,
Royal Darwin Hospital

CANBERRA - 15 NOVEMBER 1995

Architects Accreditation Council of Australia Inc.

- . Mr John Flutter, Secretary, and Chairman,
ACT Architects Board
- . Mrs Christine Harding, Registrar

Australian Bureau of Statistics

- . Mr David Hunter, Director, Classifications,
Standards and Output Processing
- . Mr George Sarossy, First Assistant Statistician,
Social and Labour Division

Australian Council of Professions Ltd

- . Mr Donald Hunter, Executive Officer
- . Dr John Southwick, President

Australian Medical Association

- . Dr Peter Arnold, Chairman, Federal Council
- . Dr Bill Coote, Secretary-General

Department of the House of Representatives

- . Mr Peter Gibson, Assistant Secretary (Committees)

Institution of Engineers, Australia

- . Dr John Webster, Chief Executive

- . Mr E J (Ted) Whitehead, Director Education

National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters
(NAATI)

- . Ms Sherrill Bell, Executive Director

Royal Australasian College of Physicians

- . Dr David Tiller, President

Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

- . Professor David Scott, Deputy Censor-in-Chief

Royal Australian Institute of Architects

- . Mr Michael Peck AM, Chief Executive

Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

- . Mr Quang Luu, Head of SBS Radio

- . Ms Sawsan Madina, Head of SBS Television

- . Ms Christine Sharp, Policy Manager

CANBERRA - 1 DECEMBER 1995

Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council

- . Ms Joan Bedford, Executive Officer to Chair

- . Mr John Wyn Owen, Chair

Australian Medical Council

- . Mr Ian Frank, Executive Officer

- . Professor John Horvath, President

- . Professor Ross Kalucy, Deputy President

Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee

- . Professor Donald Aitkin, Vice President

- . Dr Francis Hambly, Executive Director

- . Ms Christine Wise, Assistant Secretary, Policy

Department of Employment Education and Training

- . Ms Helen Allnut, Assistant Secretary,
Training and Development Branch,
Vocational Education and Training Division
- . Mr Bill Bowron, Assistant Secretary, Client Strategies Branch,
Employment Programs Delivery Division
- . Mr Ian Creagh, Assistant Secretary, Development Branch,
Higher Education Division
- . Ms Anna Kamarul, Assistant Secretary, Women's Policy,
Income Support and Participation Branch,
Economic and Policy Analysis Division
- . Ms Jennifer Ledger, Assistant Secretary,
National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR)
- . Ms Sheryl Lewin, Assistant Secretary,
Staff Development Branch, Area Coordination Division
- . Mr Brendan Preiss, Deputy Secretary
- . Ms Jo Rouston, Director, Skilltrain Section,
Employment Participation Branch,
Employment Programs Delivery Division

Department of Housing and Regional Development

- . Mr Conor Bradley, Assistant Director,
Partnerships and Access Section,
National Office of Local Government
- . Mr Doug Limbrick, Director, Housing and Support Branch
- . Ms Trish Searson, Director, Housing Access Branch
- . Mr Andrew Tongue, Director, Strategic Development Section
- . Mr Jeff Whalan, First Assistant Secretary,
Head of Housing and Social Policy Group

Department of Human Services and Health

- . Mr Ian Haupt, Assistant Secretary,
Australian Government Health Service
- . Dr John Loy, First Assistant Secretary,
Health Services Development Division
- . Mr Colin McLeod, Director, Targeted Services Section,
Family and Children's Services Division
- . Dr Louise Morauta, Principal Adviser,
Portfolio Strategies Group
- . Mr Dale Stevenson, Assistant Secretary

Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs

- . Mr Peter Hughes, Assistant Secretary,
Citizenship and Settlement Policy Branch
- . Miss Linda Meech, Director, NISS Evaluation
- . Mr Desmond Storer, First Assistant Secretary,
Policy and Program Development Division

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet,
Office of Multicultural Affairs

- . Dr Thu Nguyen-Hoan, Assistant Secretary,
Equity and Community Relations Branch
- . Ms Christine Sykes, Assistant Secretary,
Economic and Communication Branch

APPENDIX 3

The Migrant Access and Equity Inquiry was advertised in the following major metropolitan newspapers and ethnic press.

The Weekend Australian
Adelaide Advertiser
Brisbane Courier Mail
Canberra Times
Northern Territory News
SMH Newpage Display
Hobart Mercury
Melbourne Age
Melbourne Herald Sun
Newcastle Herald
Daily Telegraph Mirror
The West Australian

Sing Tao Jih Pao (Chinese)
Chinese Herald (Chinese)
Chieu Duong (Vietnamese)
Il Globo (Italian)
Neos Kosmos (Greek)
El Telegraph (Arabic)
Polish News (Polish)
Serbian Voice (Russian)
Today Denes (Macedonian)
O Portuguese Na Australia (Portuguese)
Extra Informativo (Spanish)
Tivi Tuan-San (Vietnamese)
An Nahar (Arabic)
Croatian Herald-Hrvatski Vjesnik (Croatian)
Yeni Vatan (Turkish)
Australain Jewish News - Melbourne (English)
Australian Muslim Times (English)
Gounagoun (Persian)
Unification - Russian Language Weekly (Russian)
Thai Oz News (Thai)
Korean Life Review (Korean)

