

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

Settlement, Multicultural and Citizenship Policy: Living in Harmony

Settlement, Multicultural and Citizenship Policy: Living in Harmony.
Settlement and multicultural programs to unite us and build a stronger nation.

Settlement, Multicultural and Citizenship Policy: Living in harmony

Table of Contents

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS [*](#)

Executive Summary [*](#)

Labor's Record [*](#)

Highlights of the Government's Achievements [*](#)

A Settlement [*](#)

Services Provision [*](#)

[Access and Equity *](#)

[English Language and Literacy Services *](#)

[Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement *](#)

[B Consultation *](#)

[C Multicultural Affairs *](#)

[Facts about Immigration and Multicultural Australia *](#)

[Living in Harmony Education *](#)

[Productive Diversity *](#)

[D Citizenship *](#)

[Future Directions *](#)

[A Settlement Policy *](#)

[Services Provision *](#)

[English Language And Literacy Services *](#)

[Community Consultations *](#)

[Access and Equity *](#)

[Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement *](#)

[B Multicultural Policy *](#)

[YOU ME aUStralian – Living in Harmony *](#)

[C Citizenship Policy *](#)

Executive Summary

The Coalition's settlement and multicultural policies aim to engage all Australians in building a united, strong nation.

Racial intolerance is abhorrent and incompatible with the kind of society we are and cherish.

The Coalition will maintain Australia's cultural diversity as the basis of a strong, accepting, confident and open society, united by a commitment to our nation and its democratic institutions and values.

A Coalition government will continue to consult widely with stakeholders on settlement and multicultural policy.

Underlying the Coalition's settlement policies are commitments to accountability and to ensure resources are distributed on the basis of needs as well as merit.

A Coalition government will:

- maintain current levels of funding for settlement programs and the Adult Migrant English Program;
- maintain its commitment to the YOU ME aUStralian – Living in Harmony campaign, through the allocation of another \$5 million, taking the total sum to \$10 million;
- continue to give priority in settlement programs to refugees and special humanitarian entrants;
- continue to reform the Translating and Interpreting Service, and
- promote Australian citizenship as a unifying factor and a symbol of what being Australian is about.

Labor's Record

Under Labor, settlement and multicultural programs were not run in the national interest nor for the clients' benefit. They became a source of political patronage to gain support of special interest groups for the ALP and its factions.

Under Labor:

- settlement programs were politicised at the cost of service delivery;
- ‘advocacy’ became a synonym for political activity conducted with taxpayer funding;
- poor management and poor accountability often crippled settlement programs;
- the Translating and Interpreting Service was allowed to become inefficient and uncompetitive;
- the community perceived multiculturalism as a policy that was transforming Australia into a nation of tribes;
- 97 per cent of taxpayer funded grants - at least \$143 million - were handed out to organisations in Labor electorates, and
- most of the Migrant Resource Centres were located in Labor electorates.

Highlights of the Government’s Achievements

A Settlement

The Coalition has redefined the priorities and focus of settlement programs. **It has based funding allocations on objectively assessable criteria and enforced accountability requirements.** Most importantly, **it has required that settlement programs engage all sectors of the community.**

Services Provision

The Coalition has:

- **committed additional funds of more than \$37 million over four years** to improve re-settlement services for migrants;
- endeavoured to **avoid duplication of service** and **maximise the benefit from taxpayer-funded initiatives** through the implementation of an integrated settlement plan with state and territory bodies;
- **focussed** government and government-funded community services **on outcomes** and made them more **accountable**;

- **reviewed the performance of Migrant Resource Centres** and introduced new service agreements to ensure programs are transparent, effective and targeted to clients' needs;
- **maintained a strong and effective system of Migrant Resource Centres;**
- **established new Migrant Resource Centres** in the northern suburbs of Sydney and eastern suburbs of Melbourne;
- **reviewed of community grants** to enhance accountability and ensure grants were distributed on the basis of needs as well as merit, and
- **enhanced the National Integrated Settlement Strategy** to encourage greater co-operation between all levels of government and the community.

Access and Equity

The Coalition implemented a *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*, to ensure that all Australians were able to access government services and programs.

English Language and Literacy Services

The Coalition is committed to improve the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), which offers basic English language tuition to adult migrants for whom English is not the first language.

The Coalition has:

- provided an additional **\$17.7 million over four years** to the AMEP;
- **introduced competitive tendering** in 1997 to improve flexibility and effectiveness of the program

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) provides:

- a national 24 hours a day, seven days a week telephone interpreting service on a national telephone number;
- face-to-face interpreting where telephone interpreting is not appropriate; and

- a document translation service.

The Coalition has:

- **consolidated the TIS operations into three centres** in Melbourne, Perth and Sydney;
- **enhanced access by people in rural areas** by establishing a national telephone number (131 450), and
- **improved cost recovery.**

Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement

The Coalition is committed to helping refugees and people who have suffered serious abuses of their human rights.

Many people seeking our protection, including children, have been subjected to torture and trauma which, if left unacknowledged and untreated, can have devastating long-term effects upon their health and well-being.

To respond to these needs the Coalition:

- initiated the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy, to ensure the proper co-ordination and integration of essential services;
- targeted settlement services to refugee and humanitarian entrants by:
- improving the quality of information to people who offer to support humanitarian entrants settling in the community, strengthening their capacity to support the people they propose;
- training and equipping volunteers, particularly in the Community Refugee Settlement Scheme, who help refugees and humanitarian entrants to settle in Australia;
- increasing the level of material assistance to needy refugees and humanitarian entrants;
- providing a case by case needs assessment of refugees and humanitarian entrants, enabling service providers to target new arrivals who are most in need of assistance, and ensure that clients

receive essential services such as health, English language training and employment, quickly;

- increasing funding to the Adult Migrant English Program to ensure that humanitarian entrants are able to benefit from additional and more flexible English language training, and
- expanding the Home Tutor Scheme, strengthening links between mainstream and community-based providers of English as a Second Language, and
- established a Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council of community representatives to advise Commonwealth Refugee Services.

B Consultation

Consultation with stakeholders on settlement and multicultural issues has been a characteristic of this Coalition government.

The Coalition:

- **maintained open communication** with all individuals and groups who expressed interest in settlement and multicultural affairs;
- **completed a national consultation program** with economic, business, industry, environment, planning, refugee, humanitarian and ethnic community groups, individuals and other stakeholders on the size and composition of the migration program as well as on settlement issues in 1996, 1997, 1998, and
- **hosted the first public meetings** on immigration, settlement and multicultural issues ever held in Australia.

C Multicultural Affairs

The Coalition has maintained its commitment to the principles of the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia.

The Coalition was the first to appoint a federal government Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

The Coalition established a new National Multicultural Advisory Council to recommend a policy and implementation framework for the next decade to ensure that cultural diversity is a unifying

influence.

Facts about Immigration and Multicultural Australia

The Coalition launched initiatives aimed to inform Australians about Australia's immigration and settlement programs as well as its multicultural characteristics.

In August 1997, the Coalition published *Australian Immigration - The Facts* - a kit which addresses the myths about immigration and multicultural affairs and updated it in July 1998. In September 1998, the Coalition released a Speaker's Kit to enable more people become 'Ambassadors for Truth' and promote the benefits of migration.

Living in Harmony Education

After consultation and research the Coalition Government launched the first stage of the *YOU ME aUStralian – Living in Harmony* campaign to strengthen community harmony and social cohesion.

The first stage of the initiative includes a \$2.5 million program of community grants and a series of partnership projects with the Australian Cricket Board, the NSW Rural Fire Service, and the national retailer, Woolworths.

These organisations will ensure that all Australians regardless of their cultural and racial background can fully participate in their field of endeavour.

Productive Diversity

The Coalition ran two seminars with the Australian Graduate School of Management and the Monash Mt Eliza Business School to promote the 'Productive Diversity' Strategy.

In December 1997, the Coalition commissioned research in partnership with the Committee for Economic Development of Australia, to determine the how productive diversity principles were being applied across Australian companies.

In March 1998, a study began to determine the extent to which curricula in the Australian University and TAFE sectors use productive diversity management principles.

D Citizenship

Citizenship reflects our democratic traditions and diversity and

emphasises our shared values, common purpose and vision.

To emphasise the value of citizenship, the Coalition established the Council for Australian Citizenship to open the public debate on citizenship issues and plan for the celebration of 50 years of Australian Citizenship in 1999.

The Coalition launched a new Internet site, *About Citizenship* (<http://www.immi.gov.au/citizen/index.html>), to inform school children and worked with Australia Post to design a postage stamp to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Australian citizenship, published a revised ceremony handbook, and published an information booklet for prospective citizens.

Future Directions

A Settlement Policy

The Coalition is committed to deliver a settlement program that enables our newest arrivals to participate fully in the Australian community.

A Coalition government will continue its commitment to a settlement policy that:

- is based on needs identified through objective criteria;
- requires high levels of accountability;
- maintains support for the Migrant Resource Centres network;
- maintains the essential role that community organisations play in the provision of settlement services;
- maintains the current level of funding to settlement services in order to enable non-government agencies to better assist their members;
- provides non-government agencies with the opportunity for involvement in service delivery, and
- ensures government services are delivered around a set of principles that are planned and delivered with cultural diversity considerations in mind.

Services Provision

The Coalition will:

- maintain support for Migrant Resource Centres;
- maintain the role of community organisations in provision of settlement services;
- continue to implement the Community Settlement Services Scheme;
- continue to build an integrated settlement scheme that assists humanitarian entrants and migrants participate in society quickly, and
- maintain funding for settlement programs and for the Adult Migrant English Program.

English Language And Literacy Services

A Coalition government will:

- implement the recommendation contained in the Lohrey Report to tender out the AMEP Research Centre. This reaffirms the Government's commitment to maintaining AMEP's position as a world leader in the field of English as a second language;
- ensure that the operations and eligibility criteria of the AMEP are sufficiently liberal and flexible to achieve more effective and long-lasting benefits for non-English Speaking migrants, and
- maintain funding to English Language and Literacy training and education.

A Coalition government will:

- improve the operations and management of the Translating and Interpreting Service and provide better access to the service nationally, and
- put the operation of TIS on a commercial basis.

A Coalition government will ensure that the states and territories play their appropriate roles in the operations of National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters.

Community Consultations

The Coalition will:

- consult and collaborate with multicultural organisations, community groups, and academics;
- take major decisions on settlement and multicultural policies only after community input, and
- engage all sectors of the Australian community in the settlement process of refugees and migrants.

Access and Equity

The Coalition recently published a *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*, which integrates a set of service principles concerning cultural diversity into mainstream service planning, delivery, evaluation and outcomes reporting.

Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement

The Coalition will continue to implement the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy, to ensure that the hardship and trauma experienced in the past will not prevent refugees and victims of human rights abuse from becoming positive and rich contributors to the fabric of Australian society.

B Multicultural Policy

All Australians should accept the basic structures and principles of Australian society - the Constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language, and equality of the sexes.

The right to express one's own culture and beliefs involves a reciprocal responsibility to accept the right of others to express their views and values.

The Coalition recognises that multiculturalism is a manifestation of these precepts.

It intends that Australia will remain a culturally diverse country and seeks to ensure that the diversity enriches us as a nation.

All Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment

to Australia, to its interests and future first and foremost.

The Coalition will:

- manage this diversity in the interests of society as a whole;
- report to parliament on the report from the National Multicultural Advisory Council on a policy framework to ensure that cultural diversity is a unifying influence; and
- continue to endorse the principles of the 1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia. These are:
 - "cultural identity" - the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion;
 - "social justice" - the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth; and
 - "economic efficiency" - the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background.
- **YOU ME aUStralian – Living in Harmony**

The Coalition will maintain its commitment to the extensive multi-pronged education campaign *YOU ME aUStralian – Living in Harmony*, through the allocation of an extra \$5 million, taking the total sum for the campaign to \$10 million, to eradicate racism and consolidate social harmony.

C Citizenship Policy

The Coalition will:

- report its response to the findings and recommendations of the Australian Citizenship Council to parliament ;
- use the input from the council to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Australian citizenship on 26 January 1999, and
- encourage recognition of Australian citizenship as a unifying force and the symbol of 'being Australian'.

Authorised by L. Crosby, Liberal Party of Australia, Corner Blackall & Macquarie Sts, Barton, ACT, 2600