History of Australian Multiculturalism

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Abstract

This book chapter describes how Australia has overcome White Australia and assimilation policies and replaced them with non-racial immigration and multiculturalism as critical foundations of social cohesion. It outlines the federal settlement and multicultural policies and programs that have been put in place since 1972 to integrate migrants and refugees into broader Australian society. The book chapter examines Australian society's gradual acceptance of non-racial immigration and multiculturalism, and associated policies and programs, and considers some linkages between immigration and multiculturalism. It also evaluates the success or otherwise of Australian multiculturalism in terms of social cohesion outcomes.

Keywords

Multiculturalism, Immigration, Australia, Racism, Social cohesion, Social integration, Assimilation

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1.0   Background—the White Australia and Assimilation Policies

Aboriginal heritage, British institutions, and mass migration are the key contributors to the character of contemporary Australia. By Federation in 1901, the total population was close to 4 million, of whom one in four was born overseas. Australia has always had a diverse population, and conflicts developed along racial, ethnic, and religious lines that required government management to secure social cohesion. The 'White Australia' policy was legislated first in Victoria after conflicts developed between European and Chinese miners in the goldfields during the 1850s. The White Australia policy was established for all of Australia by the Federal *Immigration*

Restrictions Act 1901 (Cth). Its objective was to maintain social cohesion by excluding non-British migration (Ozdowski, 2016, 2020).

In 1947 "Australia could claim to be 99% white and 96% British …" (Jupp, 1998, p. 132). The post-Second World War 'populate or perish' cry and dire labour shortages resulted in a considerable immigration boom. It was initiated by Labor's Immigration Minister, Arthur Calwell, with bi-partisan support, aimed at net immigration equal to one per cent of Australia's population. In July 1945, a federal Department of Immigration was created. Between 1947 and 1975, over 3.3 million new settlers arrived in Australia (Wilson, 1978, p. 165). Some 55 per cent of them were of non-British heritage.

New immigrants included so-called 'Displaced Persons' from countries that, after Second World War, came under the Soviet Union's control, such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary; migrants from Southern Europe, including Italy, Greece, Malta, and Yugoslavia; from Germany, Scandinavian countries, and Holland; but also people from some non-European countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria. (Jupp, 1988, pp. 102–105).

Although the eligibility migration criteria for Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) migrants were broadened, the racial criteria continued to affect the migrant selection, excluding migration from Asia and most of Africa. For example, Immigration Minister Calwell sponsored the *War-Time Refugee Removal Act 1949 (Cth)*, removing from Australia some nine hundred allied refugees of Asian origin who fled to Australia to escape the Japanese army (Price, 1979: 202).

Abandoning the White Australia policy has proved to be a gradual process. In late 1941, the Curtin Labor government ceased to use the White Australia term (Whitlam, 1985: 487), although this made no significant difference to migrant selection practice until the mid-1960s. In late 1949, Calwell's successor in the Menzies Coalition government, Immigration Minister Harold Holt, reversed the Calwell decision and allowed the wartime non-white refugees in Australia, primarily Chinese, to apply for residency and allowed Japanese war brides to migrate and settle in Australia.

From 1956, non-Europeans residing in Australia could attain permanent residence and Australian citizenship. The *Migration Act 1958 (Cth)* abolished the controversial dictation test,[1] a central feature of the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (Cth).* In 1960 the Liberal Party removed the White Australia policy from its federal Policy Platform, and the Department of Immigration was permitted to start removing barriers to immigration for people from non-European backgrounds. Several inter-governmental agreements were established to bring in non-British migrants despite criticism by the Labor Opposition Leader, H. V. Evatt, that they undermined the British character of Australia.

In March 1966, after formally reviewing the policy on non-European immigration, the Holt Government introduced more significant changes. These allowed the entry of migrants based on "their suitability as settlers, their ability to integrate readily and

their possession of qualifications which are in fact positively useful to Australia" regardless of their race or nationality (Lynch, 1971, p. 3).

The new arrangements allowed applications for permanent residence by well-qualified non-Europeans and permitted them to bring their immediate families. Following the 1966 reforms, the number of non-European migrants gradually increased from around 750 arriving in 1966 to over 6,000 arriving by 1971 (Lynch, 1971, p. 1). The reforms also reduced the naturalisation residence period for non-Europeans to five years. In addition, they repealed discriminatory laws denying non-Europeans access to various social services and pensions.

The post-Second World War migration boom delivered unprecedented cultural diversity, becoming one of this country's most defining contemporary characteristics. Moreover, it established a multicultural, polyethnic, or ethnically diverse Australia in a demographic sense. By 1971, 39.65 per cent of Australia's population was either born overseas (20.2 per cent) or had one parent born overseas (19.43 per cent), and 12 per cent of the nation's population were born outside of Australia and Britain, compared with only 3 per cent in 1947.

To secure social cohesion, programs were established to assist with integrating NESB migrants into Australian society. Funds for teaching migrants English were first made available in 1947. From 1950 annual Citizenship conventions were held to publicize the achievements of migrants and to remind the newcomers that they should become Australian citizens. (Jupp, 1988, p. 101) The post-Second World War non-British migrants were also expected to conform to the bi-partisan assimilation policy to create a uniform Australian monoculture grounded on British heritage. The expectation was that these non-British, mostly European migrants would soon melt seamlessly into Australian society. They would adopt the Australian lifestyle quickly, become local patriots, and abandon their past national allegiances and cultural 'baggage'. In James Jupp's words:

Assimilationism meant the abandoning of all characteristics that made individuals visible in the crowd. This included the public use of languages other than English, the wearing of unusual clothing, gestures not normally used, physical appearance and anything which prevented the individuals from becoming invisible to the majority. (Jupp, 1998, p. 134).

The 'New Australians', as the NESB migrants were then called, were told not to use their native languages in public places but to learn English, not live in cultural ghettos, and marry into the Australian-born community. It was generally believed that a policy of assimilation would deliver a cohesive monoculture within a generation "without self-perpetuating enclaves and undigested minorities" (Lynch, 1971, p. 7). However, despite official government endorsement and the spelling of the assimilationist message in welcoming materials, the assimilation policy was never well-defined and lacked the resources for any meaningful implementation.

The reality of settlement was somewhat different. Upon arrival, the non-British migrants did not dissolve easily into the Anglo-Celtic melting pot. However, they established lively communities with churches, sporting, youth, cultural clubs,

associations, language schools, welfare, and financial institutions. They founded these to maintain their culture and provide self-help in the settlement process.

The New Australians also developed their organisational leadership and print media and started to advance some political demands. By the early seventies, it had become evident that cultures brought to Australia by migrants were not going to fade away and that the nation would be better served by accepting diversity rather than trying to eradicate it. The term New Australians, which initially meant to show a welcoming attitude and affection, started to be challenged as a derogatory term implying inferiority of status.

As early as the early 1960s, the assimilation approach started losing support as the ideals of racial equality were gaining acceptance, social integration of non-British migrants progressed well, and no ethnic ghettoes emerged. A culinary revolution and a high intermarriage rate also played a role in this process. A small number of politically active academic researchers, such as Professors Jean Martin, George (Jerzy) Zubrzycki, James Jupp, and, to a lesser degree, Charles Price of the Australian National University and Jerzy Smolicz of the Adelaide University, pointed out that the policy of assimilation did not work well for many. Ethnic rights activists, such as Des Storer, George Papadopoulos, and George Zangalis, and people concerned with the welfare of migrants, such as David Cox, Walter Lippmann, and Alan Matheson, supported this view. Some researchers suggested that assimilationist policies delivered poor labour market outcomes, persistent welfare problems, created poverty and mental health issues, and thus slowed the integration of non-British migrants into Australian society.

There was also growing migrant demand for improved economic and cultural opportunities. As a result, a wide range of alternative ideas and change proposals were produced to deal with migrant rights, welfare, cultural identity, and class structure, with Zubrzycki's concept of "cultural pluralism" or "integrative multiculturalism" gaining broader acceptance.[2] The expectation that immigrants must culturally assimilate for Australia to maintain its social cohesion lost its dominance. It was time to acknowledge the cultural plurality of Australian society formally.

These developments and an extended period of economic growth provided a strong stimulus for policy change. First, the Liberal government abandoned assimilation policies and embraced a new 'integration' policy. It reflected a greater awareness of the difficulties faced by migrants in the settlement process and acceptance that migrants may not wish to lose their national and cultural identities and can integrate successfully without doing so. As early as 1964, the Assimilation Branch of the Department of Immigration was renamed the Integration Branch.[3]

The official departure from assimilation to an integration ideology provided an essential stepping-stone for ushering in multiculturalism as a normative ideal of how a diverse society should be organised to stay cohesive and capture the benefits of cultural and religious diversity. Since 1968 we see the occasional use of the term "multi-culturalism" borrowed from Canada in academic and activist circles. Interestingly, the Coalition Immigration Minister, Bill Snedden, criticised "… multi-culture activities within Australian society …" as early as June 1969.

The move towards adopting multiculturalism as a national policy was slowed down by ethnic communities focussing more on the unique needs of each given community rather than on pan-ethnic objectives or networks. Furthermore, Lopez suggests that:

Most ethnic organisations had ethnocentric leaders who sought improvements in migrant welfare for their retrospective communities through individual deals for government grants or general improvements to the broader social welfare system. (Lopez, 2000, p. 163).

Furthermore, most New Australians before 1972 tended not to participate in political parties, trade unions (other than paying obligatory union dues), and other critical majoritarian institutions. This lack of participation was partly fuelled by the relatively low naturalisation rate amongst New Australians, and it was partly an outcome of what Wilson calls "migrant depoliticisation" or a "political castration process" (Wilson, 1978, p. 164). The lack of political participation observed by Wilson existed despite well-documented dissatisfaction with the poverty levels amongst New Australians, discrimination in workplaces as illustrated by occasional industrial militancy outbursts, discrimination in access to social welfare, and difficulties with access to education and recognition of overseas qualifications.

Nevertheless, in 1972 Australia was one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse nations globally, with many different religious traditions and over 200 languages spoken. The challenge for Australia was to have a system that accepts differences while also promoting social cohesion.

2.0   The **Whitlam Government (1972–75) –Advent of Multiculturalism**

As the Deputy Opposition Leader (1960–67) and then the Opposition Leader (1967–72), Gough Whitlam was critical in combating racism and anti-migration attitudes amongst the trade union and Labor movement. In 1965, the Labor Federal Conference decided to remove the White Australia policy from the ALP platform and replace it with a statement focussing on an expanded immigration program to be:

> … administered with sympathy, understanding and tolerance. The basis of such policy will be: (a) Australia's national and economic security; (b) the welfare and integration of all its citizens; (c) the preservation of our democratic system and balanced development of our nation; (d) the avoidance of the difficult social and economic problems which may follow from an influx of peoples having different standards of living, traditions, and cultures. (Whitlam, 1985, p. 492).

However, focus on migrants' needs and aspirations or criticism of the White Australia and assimilation policies were virtually absent from Whitlam's 1969 election policy speech. According to Whitlam, "Calwell's presence on the backbenches from 1966 to the 1972 election inhibited the FPLP (Federal Parliamentary Labour Party) from mounting general debates on immigration". (Whitlam, 1985, p. 494).

Only in the period leading to the 1972 election, the existence of an ethnically diverse Australia was recognised by Labor as a demographic and political reality. The so-

called ethnic vote was recognised as a potential game-changer. According to Whitlam: "The percentage of migrants was much greater in electorates which the ALP held or could win than in the electorates which the Liberals could not lose". (Whitlam, 1985, p. 495) In June 1971, the ALP finalised its immigration policy, representing a significant win for anti-racist reformers. It was launched in Perth on 24 October 1971 by Whitlam, who said:

> "The welfare of people, the people who are already here and the people who may come, must be the primary consideration, not mere numbers … [T]here must be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or nationality" (Wilson, 1978, p. 182).

Labor regarded the New Australians as victims of disadvantage and injustice. In his speech to a meeting of ethnic organisations in Sydney in July 1975, Whitlam said:

> "My government was the first to identify migrants as one of the prime disadvantaged groups in society. Our policy has been to rectify a long tradition of injustice and deprivation, to give migrants the same rewards and opportunities as other Australians." (Whitlam, 1975, p. 5).

While preparing for the 1972 election campaign, the ALP started investigating how to accommodate migrants' needs. It was when ethnic communities and their leaders started to be noticed by the ALP, consulted, and given access to senior officials. Al Grassby, Shadow Minister for Immigration, conducted the first nationwide consultations with leaders of ethnic organisations before the 1972 election. Labor then adjusted its campaign strategy to communicate ALP policies with non-British migrants better. Whitlam's all-important 1972 election policy speech mentioned two issues of direct relevance to the migrant community. Firstly:

> "We will change the emphasis in immigration from government recruiting to family reunion and to retaining the migrants already here. The important thing is to stop the drift away from Australia." (Whitlam, 1972: 4). And secondly: "All Australian residents who have gained the right to receive any Australian social service will continue to enjoy that right wherever they choose to live. This concerns principally aged, invalid or widowed migrants who choose to return home, but it will apply to all Australians". (Whitlam, 1972, p. 13).

Later, in his 1977 policy speech, Whitlam claimed that in 1972 the ALP created the first election manifesto "in which a political party attempted to genuinely appeal to ethnic groups" in large cities (Wilson, 1978, p. 182). In Whitlam's judgment: "Largely as a result of my Government's reforms in immigration and ethnic affairs, the bulk of migrants have since preferred the ALP to the Liberals" (Whitlam, 1985, p. 498).

However, Whitlam's, 1972 policy speech did not mention issues such as multiculturalism, White Australia, assimilation, or a pro-migrant anti-racial discrimination agenda. Nor did Whitlam, in the long list of his government's achievements which he tabled in the House of Representatives on 5 December 1974, make mention of multiculturalism, immigration, or migrants, except for migrant English language education (Whitlam, 1974). Similarly, there was no mention of

multiculturalism in the index to Whitlam's book, *The Whitlam Government, 1972–1975*. (Whitlam, 1985)

After winning the government on 3 December 1972, the Whitlam government established a range of policies to end the White Australia policy, moved from assimilation to an integration approach in settlement policies, and established several social justice and cultural programs.

In 1973, the Whitlam Government passed amendments to ensure that race is disregarded as a component in assessments for immigration to Australia. The amendments concluded the legislative process of gradually dismantling the White Australia policy. Instructions were sent to overseas posts to ignore race as a factor in the selection of immigrants. Changes were also introduced to remove the privileged treatment of British migrants.

To demonstrate internationally, and particularly to Australia's Asian neighbours, that the White Australia policy had ended, the Easy Visa System was introduced and promoted by the Immigration Minister, Al Grassby (1972–74), on his tour of several Asian countries in June 1973. The system expanded the simplified three-month tourist visa access scheme, previously reserved for Britain and some other Western democracies. However, Clyde Cameron, who became Labour and Immigration Minister following the 1974 election when Grassby lost his seat, had to cancel the Easy Visa System in January 1975 because of significant system abuse by overstayers (Price, 1979, p. 204).

Labor also ratified the 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,* which came into force in Australia on 13 December 1973. In practical terms, it meant that, for the first time, Australia accepted its obligations to protect people displaced in Asia, Africa, or elsewhere without regard to their racial origins.

All these changes to immigration laws were, however, of little practical impact between 1972–75 because the inflow of immigrants and refugees was significantly cut to erase 'structural labour imbalances' or, to put it simply, unemployment, as the economic recession deepened, and the Whitlam Government focused on the protection of domestic employment opportunities. As a result, in the financial year 1975–76, the immigration intake was only 52,748, and the net immigration outcome resulted in "a mere 13,000 in 1975"—the lowest intake in the post-Second World War years (Price: 208). As a result, "despite all the rhetoric of eliminating racist policies, there appeared to be little difference in the type of immigrant who arrived on these shores compared to the previous Liberal government" (Wilson, 1978, p. 172).

Whitlam's treatment of Vietnamese refugees after the collapse of South Vietnam in April 1975 was a particular failure. Initially, Whitlam "… refused outright to help with the 130,000 refugees evacuated by the USA to Guam and the Philippines …" (Price, 1979, p. 208; see also Kalantzis & Cope, 2013, pp. 247–8). After lengthy delays, the Whitlam Government relented to pressure. It allowed settlement in Australia for a few hundred Vietnamese refugees, mainly those with family relatives who had already settled in Australia. However, it was Whitlam who, because of his deep prejudice against South Vietnamese, personally vetoed a Vietnamese refugee

intake following the fall of Saigon (Price, 1979, pp. 207–208). Clyde Cameron, in his memoirs, approvingly quotes Whitlam as saying: "I'm not having hundreds of fucking Vietnamese Balts coming into this country with their religious and political hatreds against us!" (quoted in Colebatch, 2014, p. 11 and in Kalantzis & Cope, 2013, pp. 247–8).[4]

In addition to removing race from immigration legislation, the Whitlam Government also outlawed all domestic racial discrimination in Australian laws and practices. On 30 October 1975, *The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (CERD) came into force in Australia. To implement Australia's obligations under CERD, the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (RDA) was enacted, which made using racial criteria for any official purpose illegal and prohibited racial discrimination in any State or Territory legislation. It also created the Office of Commissioner for Community Relations, later incorporated into the Australian Human Rights Commission established by the Fraser government.

RDA has been a measure of particular significance to people of non-majoritarian ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds as it assisted with removing all racially discriminatory provisions from Australia's laws and practices. It helped to redress past injustices and meant de jure acknowledgment of cultural pluralism. It also ensured better access to welfare services for migrants. In addition, through High Court decisions, RDA confirmed the Commonwealth's power to make laws concerning external affairs under s. 51 (xxix) of the Constitution and has also played a significant role in securing land rights for Australia's Indigenous population.

Although the ALP statements embraced the ideas of cultural pluralism and equality in settlement policies, multiculturalism as a well-defined and officially endorsed, public policy was not a part of the ALP program. Professor Zubrzycki's attempts (as a social policy chair of the Social Patterns Committee of the Immigration Advisory Council to the Whitlam Labor Government) failed to include multiculturalism in the Labor policy. According to Jupp: "Despite attempts to define multiculturalism by advisers to the government such as Professor George Zubrzycki, the term remained rather vague until the 1978". (Jupp, 1998, p. 138).

Whitlam's Minister for Immigration Grassby never proposed a precise definition of multiculturalism. His speeches suggest that for him, it was a rather vague combination of different ideas, concepts, and policies associated with national unity, equality, cultural identity, and social cohesion as applied to non-British migrant settlement. His concept of "the family of the nation" came close to being the first official definition of multiculturalism:

> "In a family, the overall attachment to the common good need not impose sameness on the outlook or activity of each member, nor need these members deny their individuality and distinctiveness in order to seek superficial and unnatural conformity. The important thing is that all are committed to the good of all." (Grassby, 1973a, 1973b, p. 5; see also Grassby, 1973a, p. 19).

After reviewing the critical policy speeches delivered by Grassby, the word "multiculturalism" could only be found in the title, not the text, of one of his speeches, *A Multicultural Society for the Future* (Grassby, 1973a, 1973b). Mark Lopez argues that this could be explained by the fact that Grassby wanted the term "family of the nation" to be seen as his personal contribution to public policy, and he, therefore, resisted the official adoption of the terms multiculturalism and cultural pluralism (Lopez, 2000, pp. 210 and 224–7). Examining other public statements by Grassby, they reflected the language of integration ideology dominant in the early seventies. However, Prime Minister Whitlam referred to Australia as a "multicultural nation" at a ceremony proclaiming the *Racial Discrimination Act, 1975.*

The Whitlam government, however, established a range of programs that ushered in the emergence of multiculturalism in the late 1970s. In this context, Al Grassby must be acknowledged as the key architect of the ALP approach to ethnic communities. Unfortunately, the Whitlam Government did not officially confirm the policy direction outlined in Grassby's speeches. Lopez observes that Al Grassby was:

> "… passionately opposed to the Anglo-conformism of hard-line assimilationism. He was also vehemently anti-racist in his beliefs. Grassby regarded national unity as of supreme value. His opposition to Anglo-conformism was, to a degree, an expression of his desire to remove what he perceived as obstacles to bringing diverse Australian communities together. This aspect of Grassby's thinking had much in common with integrationism …" (Lopez, 2000, p. 245).

Grassby's reforms were to be implemented by the Department of Immigration, which in addition to its initial responsibility for migrant recruitment, was tasked with meeting the settlement needs of migrants, such as English language training, welfare, and citizenship services. In 1973 the Settlement Services Branch was established in the Department. It also upgraded communication about welfare services for non-English-speaking settlers and public relations campaigns supporting ethnic tolerance.

In 1973 the *Australian Citizenship Act* removed inequality between British and non-British settlers. Before 1973, migrants from non-Commonwealth nations had to reside in Australia for five years before becoming eligible for citizenship. In contrast, Commonwealth migrants could qualify after one year of living in Australia. The 1973 legislation meant that all immigrants could obtain citizenship after three years of permanent residence, regardless of their origin. As a result, under Whitlam, naturalisations rose significantly. "In 1972 a total of 42,361 applications for citizenship were received. This rose to 57,188 in 1973 and 115,213 in 1974. Figures so far for 1975 suggest a total between 130,000 and 140,000." (Whitlam, 1975, p. 6). The legislation also abolished favourable conditions for Britons to obtain re-entry permits and participate in local voting. Australian passports no longer referred to British subjects. Australia cancelled the deportation of naturalised Australians who committed crimes in their country of origin.

The Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service, developed and announced under the previous Coalition Government, commenced operations in early 1973. In addition, a National Council on Interpreting and Translation was formed, and steps were taken

to establish interpreting and translating services and standards for the accreditation of interpreters and translators.

The Whitlam Government also supported the 1970 Child Migrant Education Program through its *Immigration (Education) Act 1973 (Cth).* Additional teachers, learning spaces, and specialised classes were funded to teach English to minority migrant children at schools (Price, 1979, p. 504). Migrant Education Centers were expanded in most State capitals to deliver adult English services, focusing on English tuition to women and a home tutoring scheme.

The Whitlam Government continued to support the Commonwealth-funded nationwide network of Good Neighbour Councils created in 1950 to welcome and assist the influx of refugees and settlers. The Councils had been popular with British migrants and Displaced Persons but not with southern European migrants. The Whitlam Government also encouraged and supported the emerging alternative pan-ethnic networks of migrant organisations created first on the State level and then nationally. Ethnic Communities' Councils were formed in Victoria in 1974 and New South Wales in the following year, with the national Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia established in 1979 under the leadership of Bill Jegorow after The Good Neighbour Councils were ultimately abolished in 1978.

After Grassby lost his seat at the 1974 federal election, Whitlam decided to abolish the Immigration Department and mainstream its functions by relocating its responsibilities to other departments. The responsibility for migrant intake was allocated to the Department of Labour, with Clyde Cameron becoming the Minister for Labour and Immigration. He supported assimilationist values and showed little interest in immigration and multicultural ideas. Cameron's key focus was on the high unemployment rate amongst native-born Australians. He did not implement Grassby's proposed Ethnic Heritage Program. Cameron abolished the Immigration Advisory Council advocating for adopting multicultural policies and replaced it in February 1975 with a National Population and Immigration Council to monitor longer-term demographic trends and limit immigration intake.

Bill Hayden, Minister of Social Security, took over the welfare and settlement issues from the Immigration portfolio and continued with reforms that Grassby had initiated. Hayden established a Welfare Rights Officers Program. Some forty multilingual welfare officers were employed nationwide to assist migrants with access to social services. Ethnic Liaison Officers were also used to promote Medibank. Although a multicultural approach was incorporated into health, welfare, and education policies, no administrative unit was created to manage cultural diversity. The dismemberment of the Department of Immigration also denied migrants the benefits of having one authority responsible for their interests.

In June 1975, the Whitlam Government sponsored the establishment of experimental multi-language radio stations 2EA and 3EA in Sydney and Melbourne as a pilot for an initial period of three months. To create the radio stations, the government had to remove a legal restriction that limited foreign-language broadcasts to 2.5 per cent of station broadcast time. The legislative change was achieved in late January 1974, and additional public broadcasting frequencies were established soon after. In

addition, the ethnic press gained financial support through government departments placing advertisements about government programs in community languages.

Initially, these reforms won considerable support amongst some migrant communities. However, after the 1974 election, despite the continuation of many gestures of goodwill, it appears that Labor gradually began losing support across ethnic communities because the government's ability to communicate with ethnic communities had diminished after Grassby's departure and the disappearance of the Immigration portfolio. It was also due to credibility problems associated with the growth in unemployment and inflation, low pay, and poor working conditions that had a more profound impact on non-British migrants and the inability to effectively address the existence of migrant poverty as demonstrated by the 1975 Henderson inquiry's report, *Poverty in Australia* and the low immigration intake stopping family reunions.

To sum up, the Whitlam Government's reforms that focused on the rights and equality of opportunity for NESB groups have helped acknowledge cultural and racial differences as part of broader social policy and prepared the ground for establishing multicultural Australia in its current form. However, the claim that the Whitlam Government created a fully-fledged policy of multiculturalism and programs to support it cannot be sustained. In the judgment of Kalantzis and Cope:

> "Whitlam was not noticeably an ardent multiculturalist: he saw the cultural diversity of his seat and the comings and goings of immigrants at the local migrant hostel through the Labor prism of disadvantage and access to services; disadvantage needing to be rectified by policies and access to education, medical services and employment possibilities to everyone in Australian society." (Kalantzis & Cope, 2013, p. 246).

According to Jupp, the practical end of the White Australia policy took place after the fall of the Whitlam Government in November 1975:

> "The decisive year in a breakdown of White Australia was essentially 1976. The first Vietnamese 'boat people' arrived in Darwin in April, and special concessions were made for those escaping from the civil war which had begun in Lebanon." (Jupp, 1998, p. 120).

However, the Whitlam era left a lasting impact on how Australians think about and manage both immigration and community relations. Some of the reforms initiated by Labor remained in place, often re-engineered by successive governments, a long time after Whitlam's departure in 1975 and continue to be of lasting relevance to contemporary multicultural Australia. Whitlam's determined attack on racial discrimination remains his government's key and long-lasting achievement.

3.0   The Fraser Government (1975–1983)—Establishment of Multicultural Policies, Institutions, and Programs

Malcolm Fraser's conservative coalition government came to power in late 1975. While in office, Fraser backed the Labor anti-racist foundations, advanced protections of human rights, and embraced multiculturalism, even though his

government, nor any future government, did not legislate along the lines of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act 1985*.[5]

Fraser's interest in multiculturalism dates to the mid-1960. Initially, Fraser was appointed to the ministry as Minister for the Army (1966 -1968) by Harold Holt. It established Fraser's conservative credentials but also enhanced his interest in Asia. When Fraser took over the Education and Science Department in February 1968, he: "…promoted the teaching of Asian languages, and worked to encourage public acceptance of the demographic fact of multi-culturalism and the recognition that Australia's future was bound up with that of her Asian neighbours." (Ayers, 1987, p. 134).

In 1969 Fraser, as a minister in the Gorton government, used the word 'multiculturalism' for the first time in an Australian Parliament. (Fraser & Simons, 2015, p. 426) In November 1969, Fraser addressed the State Zionist Council of NSW on a subject of "*A Multicultural Society",* in which he stressed the importance of preserving one's cultural ties with the country of origin. In Ayer's view: "The speech clearly signalled Fraser's preference, already clear in 1969, for a policy of multiculturalism rather than the older policy of assimilation of immigrants." (Ayers, 1987, p. 138).

Fraser's commitment to multiculturalism led to an open conflict with the then Immigration Minister Snedden and with the leadership of the Liberal Party, which in May 1971 re-adopted an immigration policy that was assimilationist and focussed on a large intake of immigrants but failed to address settlement and welfare issues adequately. Only after Malcolm Fraser took the party leadership from Billy Snedden on 21 March 1975 and became Leader of the Opposition, the Liberal Party embraced ethnic voters and multicultural ideas. With Grassby's departure from politics in 1974, Fraser realised that Labor's direct connection with the ethnic electorate had gone astray and put forward a set of attractive policies to ethnic communities for the 1975 election.

Fraser's prime ministership (1975–83) was characterised internationally and domestically by strong anti-racism and support for human rights. Internationally, he supported the Commonwealth in campaigning to abolish apartheid in South Africa. Fraser also strongly opposed white minority rule in Rhodesia. Domestically, Fraser established Australia's first Human Rights Commission, introduced laws providing freedom of information, and set up a permanent women's body to advise the government on women's affairs. He also legislated to give Indigenous Australians control of their traditional lands in the Northern Territory but resisted imposing land rights laws on state governments.

One of the first things the Fraser government did after its election victory in 1975 was to re-establish the Department of Immigration under its new name Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA), with Michael Mackellar as the new immigration minister. Australia's refugee and immigration policies were significantly changed to expand immigration from Asian countries and allow more refugees to enter Australia. The immigration laws were finally reviewed to remove all racist migrant selection practices and procedures entirely, and in 1982 Australia adopted

the Numerical Migrant Assessment System (NUMAS) that disregarded race in migrant selection.

Following the fall of Saigon in 1975, boats with Vietnamese refugees started arriving in Australia. Between 1976–79 2,029 refugees arrived by boat. Public opinion welcomed them, with some 73 per cent of Australians wanting refugees arriving by boat to be allowed to stay. (Phillips & Spinks, 2013) In 1977 the Fraser Government adopted a humanitarian refugee resettlement policy which opened Australia's door to the orderly migration of Indochinese, resulting in some 70,000 of them settling in Australia. The settlement of Indochinese refugees changed the ethnic mix of the Australian population forever with: "Entry of refugees together with family reunion programs meant that by 1995 there were 238,000 first- and second-generation Indochinese living in Australia—more than 1 per cent of the population." (Fraser & Simons, 2015, p. 421). The government also adopted a compassionate approach to Timor-Leste refugees, predominantly Muslim refugees fleeing the war in Lebanon and those from other conflict areas.

In addition to re-establishing DIEA, Fraser established an ethnic affairs unit in his own Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet—a forerunner to Hawke's Office of Multicultural Affairs. The Population and Immigration Council was 'reconstituted' with broad membership, including the then Australian Council of Trade Unions President and future Labor Prime Minister Bob Hawke. The Council produced a green paper on Immigration Policies and Australia's Population by March 1977. It advised on the annual immigration intake and settlement strategies to achieve integration and social cohesion by giving the new migrants "the opportunity to preserve and disseminate their ethnic heritage". (Fraser & Simons, 2015, pp. 165 and 428).

In March 1977, Fraser Government established the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council under the Leadership of Jerzy Zubrzycki. The Council produced a report on Australia as a multicultural society which recommended the adoption of a policy of multiculturalism based on three principles: "social cohesion, cultural identity and equality of opportunity and access." The government accepted the recommendation, and thus in 1977, Australia formally adopted the policy of multiculturalism. Prime Minister Fraser was convinced that "love of and loyalty to Australia were in no way incompatible with differences in culture and affection for the homeland." (Fraser & Simons, 2015, p. 165). In other words,

ethnic diversity

 was no longer seen as a threat to social cohesion; on the contrary, diversity was seen as Australia's strength. In 1982 Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, also with Zubrzycki as chair, proposed the fourth principle: "equal responsibility for, commitment to and participation in society." (ACPEA, 1982, p. 12).

Fraser also believed that the policy of multiculturalism requires a range of specific settlement programs targeting non-English background migrants and that it is the government's responsibility to deliver them. Accordingly, in May 1977, Fraser established a review of post-arrival programs and services to migrants to be

conducted by Melbourne barrister Frank Galbally. The inquiry was to report directly to him and was supported by his Department, not the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

The December 1977 election Liberal platform firmly focussed on ethnic affairs issues and the rights of individuals:

> "After pointing to the increased number of interpreters, translators and resource centres which his government was providing to the ethnic communities, Fraser promised to establish Ethnic Television, a national channel to give real and exciting substance to his support for the concept of multiculturalism which went back to his portfolio of Education and Science in late 1960. He also promised to establish Human Rights Commission, to introduce laws providing freedom of information, and to set up a permanent Women's Body to advise the government on women's affairs." (Ayers, 1987, p. 327)

During Fraser's second term as Prime Minister (1977–80), the multicultural programs were significantly advanced. Within 4 months of the election ethnic liaison officers were employed in all Commonwealth Departments and agencies whose programmes and services affected affairs of immigrants. From mid-January 1979 they should be generally available in their respective States to assist the Minister for Ethnic Affairs in promoting direct relations between the Federal Government and the ethnic communities. On 29 April 1979 the Prime Minister launched ethnic television on an experimental basis, with transmissions initially restricted to Sundays. In September he appointed his adviser, Petro Giorgiou, as Secretary of the Ethnic Television Review Panel. (Ayers, 1987, p. 373)

The Galbally *Review of Migrant Programs and Services* was reported in May 1978 (Galbally, 1978) and it played a decisive role in further defining multicultural policy and Australian settlement programs. The Report was tabled in parliament in multiple languages with the Prime Minister Fraser telling the parliament that Australia was:

> "… at critical stage in developing a cohesive, united multicultural nation. The government accepts that it is now essential to give significant further encouragement to develop a multicultural attitude in Australian society. It will foster the retention of the cultural heritage of different ethnic groups and promote intercultural understanding." (Fraser & Simons, 2015, p. 435).

The Galbally Report provided *"Guiding principles"* of multiculturalism to lead the development of Australia as "a cohesive, united and multicultural nation", where all members have equal opportunity to realise their full potential and equal access to programs and services. The Report declared that all Australians have the right to maintain their culture without fear of prejudice and that the maintenance of diversity enriches Australia's culture. It also created several ethno-specific rights, mostly dealing with access to government services to reduce the disadvantage experienced by migrants. The Report also recommended the creation, where necessary, of

special programs and services for migrants to ensure equality of access and provision.

Government adoption of the Galbally Report ensured that multiculturalism emerged in Australia for the first time as a well-articulated and government-endorsed policy based on an ideal of a society embracing the principles of social cohesion, equality of opportunity, and cultural identity. It is possibly essential to note here that multiculturalism was initially a policy oriented toward successfully settling migrants of non-English speaking backgrounds. Multiculturalism was never intended as a policy to guide governments in forming immigration policies. The Report proposed the creation of a range of additional ethnic-specific services and programs, including the Multicultural Education Program, the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, Migrant Resource Centres, and the significant extension of existing services such as the Grant-in-Aid scheme, the Adult Migrant Education Program, the Bilingual Information Officer program, translating and interpreting services and government communications. Although no significant structural transformation of the existing centralised government departments and agencies was proposed, government agencies were to adjust their mainstream programs, employ ethnic liaison officers to provide better access to support general services and improve communication with migrant communities.

The Galbally Report also recommended the creation of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)—permanent radio and TV services to replace the experimental ethnic radio stations set up toward the end of the Whitlam era and the establishment of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA)—"a government-funded, independent research and advocacy body with a brief to assert pluralism and ensure that it was a source of strength rather than a treat." (Fraser & Simons, 2015, p. 436).

The Fraser government promptly implemented the above recommendations with the help of specially created by the then Immigration Minister Ian MacPhee taskforce of senior government officials.[6] In 1979 an act of parliament established AIMA, whose objectives included raising awareness of cultural diversity and promoting social cohesion, understanding and tolerance. In addition, in 1981, the Fraser government created the first federal Human Rights Commission to implement the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* provisions domestically.[7]

Perhaps SBS, a government-sponsored radio and television service with the principal function spelled out in its charter, "to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society" (Special Broadcasting Service, 2016) has been a standout, unique and long-term educational success of the Fraser reforms.

Initially, Prime Minister Fraser intended that Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) would establish permanent ethnic broadcasting, but after almost a year-long negotiations government withdrew the offer to ABC in 1978. After a failure to win the Labor Opposition in the Senate to create the Independent and Multicultural Broadcasting Corporation, SBS was created as a "reformed SBS" with a new board, and its TV started its regular daily broadcasting on its own Channel 28 on 24

October 1980. (Fraser & Simons, 2015, p. 438). When launching SBS TV, the Prime Minister emphasised that:

> "These programs are not going to be designed for one particular group at one moment, and for another particular group at another moment, [but] designed to appeal to a very wide cross-section of people within Australia, designed in such a way that all Australians would want to see the programmes that are conducted on multicultural television. In that sense, multicultural television is not something that divides or sets apart, as just a foreign language broadcast would tend to do; rather it is something that tends to unify and have people understand better what this Australia is about. /…/ It is important that all Australians understand as much as possible of the backgrounds, the history, the culture, of other Australians. (Ayers, 1987, p. 373).

Fraser government also created effective consultation networks with ethnic communities and gave their leaders unprecedented access to government. He promoted with his parliamentary colleagues and Federal departments the development of an ongoing liaison and direct relations with ethnic communities. In May 1981, the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, the Australian Population and Immigration Council, and the Australian Refugee Advisory Council were merged to form the Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs under the leadership of Professor Zubrzycki. It was also when states and territories established multicultural agencies, policies, and programs. State-managed school education systems put in place a range of multicultural policies and programs seeking to address cultural and linguistic diversity and to win support for the policy of multiculturalism in the broader Australian community. School curricula were reformed to acknowledge and respond to the multicultural nature of Australian society. (for more: Chodkiewicz & Burridge, 2013) Also, community-based ethnic schools started to flourish after securing extra government resources.

Malcolm Fraser took pride in his multicultural policies and regarded them as one of the key achievements of his prime ministership. Fraser's attitude is reflected in his autobiography *The Political Memories* (Fraser & Simons, 2015), which devotes some thirty pages long chapter called "Leadership. Immigration and Refugees" to his achievements in this area. Fraser's government policies established a lasting place for the policy of multiculturalism on the Australian political scene, and many of Fraser's multicultural initiatives lasted and were built upon by all successive Federal governments.

Regrettably, Fraser's positive approach to the intake of Vietnamese and Lebanese refugees, robust multiculturalism, and support for Aboriginal land rights was only sometimes appreciated by the elements of Australian public opinion and some of his parliamentary colleagues. Ayers argues that:

> "the image of the Fraser government suffered because of these progressive policies and the emerging hard mood of economic rationalism." (Ayers, 1987, p. 470)

and contributed to his election defeat in 1983.

4.0   The Hawke/Keating Labor Government (1983–1996)—Mainstreaming and Economic Focus

Although the Labor Whitlam Government created an environment and the opportunities to develop a new multicultural approach to managing cultural diversity, it was only during Labor's 1979 Conference that multicultural concepts were officially introduced into the party platform.

Labor was returned to government in 1983 under Bob Hawke's leadership and initially started dismantling some of the multicultural institutions and programs created by the Fraser government. First, a review of AIMA was commissioned in 1983, resulting in the repeal of the AIMA Act and the closure of the Institute in 1986. (Committee of Review of the AIMA, 1983) Then, preparations for the forthcoming budget revealed a proposed merger between SBS and ABC broadcasters that would effectively disband SBS, a significant reduction in funding for the English as a Second Language program, and the abolition of the Multicultural Education Program. Public protests followed and forced the government to change its approach.

In December 1985, a Committee of Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services (ROMAMPAS) was created under the leadership of Dr James Jupp to advise on the federal government's role in assisting migrants to achieve equitable participation in Australian society. The Committee reported in August 1986 (Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1986). It adopted four guiding principles that aligned with the Galbally, 1978 principles. The key differences with Fraser's approach were the implementation proposals.

The main ROMAMPAS recommendation was to move away from an ethno-specific service delivery model to provide services, where possible, by government mainstream service providers under the new policy of 'Access and Equity' (A&E).[8]

There were also several recommendations for cost-sharing between federal and state governments, including a proposal about the progressive introduction of agency-user-pay arrangements with state governments to use Telephone Interpreting Service. In addition, the Hawke government implemented the A&E framework and established procedures to ensure the onus is on the government departments to provide equitable access to services to all Australians regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Another key outcome of the Report was the establishment in 1987 of the

Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and of a prime ministerial advisory body, the Australian Council of Multicultural Affairs. In addition, in 1989, the government established the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (to fill the vacuum created by the closure of AIMA).

The establishment of OMA as a central coordinating agency for multicultural policy and programs under the dynamic leadership of Professor Peter Shergold created a golden era in Australian multiculturalism and ensured that the years of Hawke/Keating governments were characterised by a high-profile expansion of multicultural narrative and linking it to the mainstream with a maxim that

"multiculturalism is for all Australians". Throughout the Australian Bicentenary in 1988 and afterwards, constant efforts were made to link multiculturalism to Australian values. Strong educational efforts were made to "place multiculturalism within a national narrative where cultural diversity and tolerance were part of Australian national identity." (Koleth, 2010).

Perhaps the most significant achievement of the Hawke government was the adoption—in 1989—of the "*National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia. Sharing Our Future*" developed by the Australian Council on Multicultural Affairs under the leadership of Sir James Gobbo. (Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1989) The Agenda was developed with the help of significant social and economic research and community consultations with input from the Advisory Council of Australian Multicultural. The National Agenda identified and defined three dimensions of multicultural policy, namely:

(1) Cultural identity: the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion.

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

(3) Economic efficiency: the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background. (OMA, 1989, p. viii)

The National Agenda also defined the "limits of Australian multiculturalism" by stating that:

(1) multicultural policies are based upon the premise that all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, to its interest and future first and foremost;

(2) multicultural policies require All Australians to accept the basic structures and principles of Australian society—the Constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language, and the equality of the sexes; and

(3) multicultural policies impose obligations as well as conferring rights—the right to express one's own culture and beliefs involves a reciprocal responsibility to accept the rights of others to express their views and values. (OMA, 1989, p. viii)

The National Agenda was a high-profile document and won bi-partisan support. It shifted the emphasis away from Galbally's focus on migrants' needs and entitlements in the settlement process to the broad principle that multiculturalism first requires an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia and acceptance of Australia's basic structures and principles. It represented a shift from an ethnic rights approach towards a citizenship model of multiculturalism. It has established a model of multiculturalism that all future governments will adopt. Nevertheless, it also meant a decline in the delivery of ethno-specific services, such as access to hospital interpreting services, and provided the government with some savings.

Furthermore, the Agenda did not address structural inequities or racism. It rejected the contention by some left-leaning ACMA members and some academics that equal opportunities alone may not be sufficient to deliver social justice for some non-English language-speaking background migrants and that some migrants may require special affirmative measures to achieve equality. It also rejected the argument that the governments are responsible for providing funds to NESB communities to preserve their customs and traditions. Preserving minority cultures was seen mainly as a private group responsibility. In contemporary terms, it rejected what we would now call a "woke" approach to multiculturalism and migrant rights.[9]

The Hawke government reduction of ethno-specific settlement services could be justified to some extent because the new labour market suitability and English language criteria were toughened for prospective migrants. Migrants selected under NUMAS criteria have been very different to post WWII migrants. They have the English language and require much less settlement support; they also more often maintain active links with their countries of birth. In addition, a robust system of dedicated settlement support was created for people migrating under refugee or humanitarian entry program.

Hawke's era was also characterised by the further enhancement of consultations with ethnic communities and by the strengthening of the links between ethnic leadership and the Commonwealth and State governments. In addition, a major educational effort was made to inform the Australian community about the nature of Australian multiculturalism, promote intercultural understanding, and combat racism. Teaching non-English languages was also enhanced (Lo Bianco, 1987), and interpreting and translating services were re-engineered.

When Paul Keating replaced Bob Hawke as Prime Minister at the end of 1991, he ditched the creation of an Australian Multiculturalism Act supported by Hawke. Keating regarded multiculturalism through the prism of his experience in the suburb of Bankstown, where he spent his youth and where from he was elected to the House of Representatives in 1969—it was a picture of tolerance and patriotic conformity:

> "I lived in Bankstown where it had gone from Anglo-Irish to Greeks and Italians and then to Lebanese and Vietnamese and I lived there until I became treasurer in 1983 and I had never seen one nasty ethnic inspired event. I am not saying there hadn't been some … I thought the thread that held the place together, in the minds of the public, the tolerance of different cultures, religions and ethnic groups was the fact that they would and should commit first and foremost to the new adopted country, to its principles and standards, to Australia. And this was not too much to expect." (Kelly, 2009, p. 156).

As the Prime Minister, Keating viewed multiculturalism as a big-picture policy that delivers conformity with Australian values and brings international connections. These are that the first loyalty of all Australians must be to Australia, that they must accept the basic principles of Australian society. These include the Constitution and the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as a national language, equality of the sexes and tolerance. (Kelly, 2009, p. 156).

The novel element of Keating's approach to multiculturalism was his attempt to link it more effectively to the benefits of globalisation by creating a 'productive diversity' policy that sought to promote a business case for better utilisation and economic management of diversity. It attempted to utilise multicultural diversity to increase the productivity of Australian workplaces and international trade. It assumed that, with proper management, a diverse workforce would deliver a broader range of skills, cultures, and experiences amongst employees, resulting in innovation dividends and higher productivity. It is also assumed that Australia's multicultural character gives Australia a competitive edge in an increasingly globalised world. (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997).

In 1991, Keating also ordered OMA to undertake a major evaluation of the effectiveness of the 1985 Access and Equity Strategy (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 1992). The evaluation had a significant research budget and involved federal service departments. It brought mixed results and resulted in forty-three recommendations about better delivering mainstream Commonwealth services to ethnic clients. (Ozdowski, 1992). In 1994, a new National Multicultural Advisory Council was established to review and update Hawke's 1989 National Agenda. Its Report, launched in June 1995, found that much had been achieved and recommended some further initiatives, but the concept of multiculturalism remained the same.

However, the high profile of multiculturalism brought some populist backlash towards the end of the Hawke/Keating era. Questions started to be asked if the multicultural society was indeed a desirable model for Australia. First signs were noted as early as 1988, when a report brought by the government created an ad-hoc Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies, chaired by Dr Stephen FitzGerald, found

> "a key problem in maintaining support for immigration was a profound distrust by Australians of the policy of multiculturalism." and that as the philosophy of multiculturalism was not widely understood, "… the ensuing uninformed debate (was) damaging the cause it seeks to serve." (FitzGerald, 1988).

Some also criticised the slogan that multiculturalism is for all Australians as reducing the mainstream Anglo-Celts to a status of ethnic group and demeaning their heritage and its right to primacy (Markus, 2011, p. 90). Graeme Campbell,[10] a maverick Labor member for Kalgoorlie, and some politicians and academics amplified the FitzGerald message and further fuelled by emerging public criticism of the high immigration intake, an apparent lack of border control because of "boat people" arrivals,[11] and the fact that some of the most recently arrived humanitarian settlers from Vietnam and Lebanon were experiencing significant settlement problems. To deal with public criticism of immigration policies, in 1992, the Keating government introduced an indefinite mandatory detention system for unauthorised boat arrivals. It strengthened some other detention laws for persons entering Australia without a valid visa.

5. 0   The Howard Government (1996–2007)—Cohesion and Citizenship

During his first time as the Leader of the Opposition (1985–89), John Howard was known as a critic of aspects of multiculturalism. His immigration policy statement, "*One Australia*", outlined a vision of 'one nation and one future' and rejected multiculturalism. Howard thought that multiculturalism was a populist slogan with no real meaning that was undermining both a distinctive Australian culture and social cohesion. He worried that assertive multiculturalism might pull Australia apart and that Australia may become 'a nation of tribes'. Howard advocated instead the idea of a 'shared national identity', grounded in concepts of 'mateship' and a 'fair go'.

Howard also publicly argued in 1988, as the Leader of the Opposition, that the rate of Asian immigration was too high and should be "slowed down a little". The comments divided the Coalition members, opinion makers, and the general public. The then Prime Minister Hawke used the opportunity to explore the divisions within the Liberal Party and pushed for a vote in parliament on a motion that race should not be used as an immigration selection criterion. Three Liberals—Philip Ruddock, Ian MacPhee, and Steele Hall crossed the floor to support the Labor motion. The issue contributed to Howard subsequently losing the party leadership in 1989. Later Howard took back his 1988 remarks on curbing Asian immigration.

In March 1996, the Coalition, under Howard's leadership, was swept into power with a significant majority and strong policy mandate. Philip Ruddock was appointed as Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and, following the 1998 election was promoted into Cabinet to become the longest serving immigration minister in Australia. It was an exciting appointment considering that in 1988 Ruddock challenged Howard's leadership on race by crossing the floor and that he was also known to be a powerful advocate for multiculturalism who could move things along.

Soon after the election, Howard rearranged multicultural affairs. It was claimed that changes were needed to deal more with practical solutions than symbolism. He dropped multicultural affairs from the Prime Minister's portfolio by closing the Office of Multicultural Affairs and transferring the responsibility for multicultural issues to the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. He also closed the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research and temporarily reduced funding to ethnic organisations. Funding, however, was increased to programs Howard has seen as a priority, such as the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), other programs responsible for the provision of English language and settlement skills tuition to eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants, and to services for the refugee coming out of the Horn of Africa.

However, after the election, Howard faced several challenges that tested his leadership. One of them was the 1996 election of Pauline Hanson, a dis-endorsed by Howard Liberal Party candidate because of her views which included fervent anti-multiculturalism, opposition to migration, and a strong anti-Asian platform. In her maiden speech to parliament on 15 September 1996, Hanson said, "I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians." (Hanson, 1996) She attacked Howard for not standing up for 'real Australians', while those critical of him accused Howard of being a closet supporter of Hanson. The

Hanson phenomenon provided a real baptism of fire to Australian multiculturalism. Other policy dilemmas included continuing a national debate on the appropriate immigration intake levels, race relations, and criticism of the policy of multiculturalism initiated under Labor by Fitzgerald and Campbell.

Howard initially refused to criticise Hanson, claiming free speech as her right. However, after she formed the One Nation Party, with the potential to split the conservative and blue-collar vote, her tirades began to affect international relations and divide Australia Howard acted. Six weeks after Hanson's maiden speech, on 30 October 1996, the government, with bi-partisan support, formally moved a parliamentary *Statement on Racial Tolerance* in the House of Representatives. When launching the statement, Howard said:

> "There is no place in Australia that we love for any semblance of racial or ethnic intolerance. There is no place within our community for those who would traffic, for whatever purpose and whatever goal, in the business of trying to cause division based on a person's religion, a person's place of birth, the colour of the person's skin, the person's values, ethnic make-up or beliefs." (Howard, 1996).

In 1997, a new National Multicultural Advisory Council (NMAC) was announced, with Nevil Roach as chair, who is credited with convincing Prime Minister to start using the term 'Australian multiculturalism'. Two years later, in April 1999, the Council delivered a significant report: "*Australian multiculturalism for a new century: towards inclusiveness*".

In December 1999, the Prime Minister launched a new policy statement called "*A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*" (Commonwealth of Australia, 1999), which endorsed the 1989 National Agenda with added focus on citizenship, and NMAC was wound up. The New Agenda document indicated that the policy of multiculturalism, although in a redefined form and focus, will continue. Multiculturalism was seen as a two-way street. On the one hand, NESB migrants have the right to maintain their own culture and share it with other Australians, but on the other, they should be loyal to Australia and adapt their behaviour to be more like other Australians. In other words, cultural diversity is OK if migrants, in other respects, are one of us.

The government also created a few practical programs to advance social cohesion and combat racism. One of the critical initiatives was created in 1999, a well-resourced Living in Harmony program with its popular flagship "Harmony Day". It was to commemorate each year on 21 March, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, established by the United Nations in 1979. Harmony Day is typically celebrated in workplaces and educational institutions by sharing ethnic food and entertainment and displays of orange ribbons and images showing Australian multicultural diversity.

Since 1999, Harmony Day has developed into a tradition, that successive Conservative and Labor governments honoured, to promote events and celebrations that highlight multicultural success stories and belonging. In his 2001 Centenary of Federation address on Australia Day, Howard said social cohesion was "arguably the

crowning achievement of the Australian experience over the past century."
(Kelly, 2009, p. 338). Despite its success, the left spectrum of Australian politics and academia criticised Harmony Day since the early days. It has been claimed that the Day distorts a globally recognised Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and, through it, whitewashes historical and ongoing racism in Australia.

In July 2000, a new Council for Multicultural Australia (CMA) was created to, among others, "raise awareness and understanding" about multiculturalism, strengthen public understanding of a shared "Australian identity" as a unifying characteristic of Australia, and support community harmony and cohesion through promotion of Harmony Day and the Living in Harmony grants. Soon after, in 2001, the name of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs was changed to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. When launching the *Strength Through Diversity* policy in October 2001 in Adelaide, Prime Minister said that he believed that:

> "… all Australians have the right to be active and equal participants in Australian society, free to live their lives and celebrate cultural traditions in a diverse, accepting and open society, united by an overriding commitment to our nation and its democratic institutions, its laws and its values.

> No country in the world has been more successful in achieving the twin goals of loving Australia but always keeping a place in your heart for the land of your birth. And that, in my language, is how I can best describe Australian multiculturalism." (*Strength Through Diversity*, 2001).

Around the same time, a new wave of asylum seekers attempted to travel, mainly from Indonesia, to Christmas Island, an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean, on tightly packed, often unseaworthy boats, usually with the assistance of 'people smugglers'. For example, in 1998, only two hundred people arrived by 17 boats; in 1999, 3,721 by 86 boats; in 2000, 2,939 by 51 boats; and in 2001, 5,516 by 43 boats. The 'boat people' were predominantly from Afghanistan and the Middle East. Opinion poll data indicated that public concern grew with increased boat arrivals. It was alleged that there is a lack of government control over Australia's borders and the boat people "are jumping the immigration queue" and are not "genuine refugees". (Phillips & Spinks, 2013) The boat people become a political issue. (Howard, 2001).

On 24 August 2001, a 20-m-long fishing boat with 438 mainly Hazara on board reported distress. The Norwegian cargo ship Tampa responded and lifted the asylum seekers to safety. After Tampa set toward the Indonesian ferry port of Merak, with the agreement of Indonesian authorities, a delegation of asylum seekers visited the bridge to demand passage to Australia's Christmas Island aggressively, and the ship's captain obliged. The Australian government responded by denying permission for Tampa to offload the rescued asylum seekers in Australia, and after the ship crossed into Australian waters off Christmas Island, ordered the Special Air Service (SAS) troops to intercept it. The asylum seekers were not allowed to enter Christmas Island but were transferred to HMAS Manoora and sent to the Pacific island of Nauru. According to Katharine Betts: "In September 2001, 77 per cent of Australians supported the Howard Government's decision to refuse entry to the

Tampa, and 71 per cent believed boat arrivals should be detained for the duration of the processing of their asylum application." (Phillips & Spinks, 2013).

Soon after the Tampa incident, parliament passed *the Migration Amendment (Excision from Migration Zone) Bill 2001* and *The Migration Amendment (Excision from Migration Zone) (Consequential Provisions) Bill 2001*, and Australia signed an *Administrative Agreement with Nauru* to allow the processing of asylum claims under the Refugee Convention, not domestic, criteria. The so-called 'Pacific Solution' ensured that boat people were processed offshore in places like Nauru and Manus Island. The Pacific Solution stopped unauthorised boat arrivals in Australia. In 2001, 5,516 asylum seekers arrived on forty-three boats. After introducing the Pacific Solution policy, only one boat arrived per annum between 2002 and 2004, bringing together 69 people. At the election campaign launch on 28 October 2001, Howard's statement, "But we will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come." won the day. These changes underpin Australia's immigration policy till today.

Howard's handling of national security post the 11 September 2001 attacks in New York won widespread support because of increased voter concern with Islamist terrorism. As a result, the government could portray itself as strong on border protection and anti-terrorism measures, polls swung toward the Coalition, and on 10 November 2001, the government was returned to power.

The Pacific Solution reassured Australians that government is again firmly in control of immigration policy and the borders, lessening the tensions about the level of migration intake. Howard, when interviewed by Ellen Ransley in 2022, said:

> "If you have an optimistic view about the capacity of this country to continue taking in a large number of migrants, and also having a sizeable humanitarian program, you have to always remember that the maintenance of those two things depends crucially on the acceptance of immigration by the Australian people. And the evidence is overwhelming – whenever the public thinks immigration is out of control, the support drops, but once they see it back under control, then most Australians have quite a positive view " (Ransley, 2022).

Although the Pacific Solution had restored a sense of integrity to Australia's immigration program, both the Pacific Solution and already existing Australia's immigration detention laws applying to the unauthorised boat arrivals raised significant human rights concerns which resulted in numerous public protests, legal challenges and inquiries by the

Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) asserting that mandatory and indefinite detention of asylum seekers breaches a range of international human rights conventions. The key HREOC inquiry was the *National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention* titled "*A last resort?"* that reported to Parliament in April 2004. Human Rights Commissioner, Dr Sev Ozdowski, found that Australia's mandatory detention system is fundamentally inconsistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and recommended the release of children with

their parents from immigration detention centres within four weeks after the tabling of the report and amendments to Australia's immigration detention laws. The government released children with their parents, but no laws were changed.

The boarder protection policies have also impacted multicultural policy with added focus on unity and the need to share Australian values associated with Australian citizenship. Prime Minister, in his 2001 pre-election Adelaide speech, summarised a range of already introduced citizenship initiatives such as the introduction of Australian Citizenship Day on the 17 September as the day to celebrate citizenship annually or the affirmation ceremonies at civic events enabling all Australians to affirm their loyalty to Australia publicly and promised significant additional spending on citizenship programs if re-elected. (Howard, 2001).

The Solution also required further strengthening of anti-racism programs in Australia. The boat arriving asylum seekers and the perpetrators of the 11 September terrorist attacks were Muslim. Thus, popular perceptions often fused Muslim asylum seekers with terrorism. Considering that the Muslim population was rapidly increasing in Australia (the 2021 Census indicated 209,150 people affiliated with Islam), the government had to act to decouple public perceptions of the Islamic religion as being associated with terrorism and to prevent racism. Unfortunately, the politicization of Muslim community politics was not avoided.

Despite 1995 Howard's statement: "Australians, whatever their background, deserve to be treated with tolerance and with respect. Racial intolerance is incompatible with the kind of society we are and want to be. /…/ Our response should reflect this nation's unswerving commitment to racial equality…" (Howard, 1995) no significant increase in anti-racism program funding followed the 2001 election. One could, however, acknowledge that the dramatic decrease in boat arrivals between 2002 and 2007 resulted in the public debate on the issue becoming much less venomous.

In 2003 the government issued a new policy statement, *Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity: Updating the 1999 New Agenda for Multicultural Australia: Strategic Directions for 2003–2006*. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003) It updated the 1999 Agenda and set strategic directions for 2003–06 government multicultural policies and programs. In particular, the Multicultural Australia statement further shifted the focus of multiculturalism to unity, social cohesion, and citizenship. It also returned to old community consultation practices and opened government access to community leaders. In 2005 after the Prime Minister's Summit with Muslim Community Leaders, a Muslim Community Reference Group was created to advance Muslim integration with the rest of the community.

However, the multicultural policy was regrettably de-emphasized during the last year of the Howard government. The mandate of the Council for Multicultural Australia was not renewed when it expired in 2006, and few new initiatives were introduced. Perhaps, it reflected the emerging public concerns about Muslim boat people's ability to integrate into Australian society successfully or a reaction to the images of racial violence at the Cronulla riots that erupted on 11 December 2005 in the Sydney beachside suburb. Or, more likely, it was a result of the departure from the of Arthur Sinodinos, Howard's chief of staff and resident multicultural champion in his office.

During the last year of the Howard government, further measures were taken to advance the value of Australian citizenship. This policy shift was reflected in the name change from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in January 2007. The citizenship rules were also changed. The waiting time to be eligible to apply for Australian citizenship was extended from two to four years. Those applying for citizenship were required to undertake an Australian history and culture test in English and pledge: "loyalty to Australia and its people … whose democratic beliefs I share … whose rights and liberties I respect … and whose laws I will uphold and obey." (Border.gov.au, 2016). But also, without too much public fanfare, the government introduced expanded dual citizenship rights.

The changes to the citizenship law secured Labor support, and a Newspoll survey undertaken in September 2006 indicated 77 per cent of Australians supported the change. However, some opposition was voiced by several Islamic and Chinese community leaders and some federal MPs like Petro Georgiou and Julie Owens to the extension of waiting time and introduction of the citizenship test. (Iqbal, 2018).

Australia Day Address to the National Press Club in the Great Hall, Parliament House, Canberra on 25 January 2006 perhaps best reflects Howard's views on Australian multiculturalism in the late stage of his prime ministership:

> "We expect all who come here to make an overriding commitment to Australia, its laws and its democratic values. We expect them to master the common language of English and we will help them to do so. We want them to learn about our history and heritage. And we expect each unique individual who joins our national journey to enrich it with their loyalty and their patriotism.

> … Australia's crowning achievement, borne of its egalitarian tradition, was its social cohesion. /…/ No country has absorbed as many people from as many nations and as many cultures as Australia and done it so well. The strength of a culturally diverse community, united by an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, is one of our greatest achievements and one of our great national assets.

> We've moved on from a time when multiculturalism /…/ came to be associated with 'the transformation of Australia from a bad old Australia that was xenophobic, racist and monocultural to a good new Australia that is culturally diverse, tolerant and exciting'. Such a view was always a distortion and a caricature. (Howard, 1995).

The above quotes suggest that Howard's attitude to multiculturalism has evolved from a belief held in the late 1980s that multicultural policy undermines established Australian identity and social cohesion by creating what Geoffrey Blainey has called "a nation of tribes" to a view that multiculturalism was helping to integrate ethnic minorities into a common Australian culture. The exception appears to be the coalition's attitude towards Muslim communities and their ability to accept "Australian values". (Roose & Possamai, 2015, p. 94).

Although John Howard was never at ease using the "M" word, his policy and biographical writings indicate his deep personal interest in the subject matter. Looking back at his government's record, one could conclude that Howard consolidated the basic policy dimensions of Australian multiculturalism and helped to win its broad public acceptance. The Multicultural Policy Index suggest that Australia has the strongest multicultural policies in the Western World and has maintained these over the past decade. (in Roose & Possamai, 2015, p. 93–4). Contrary to what Howard's detractors say, one could even conclude that Howard's multiculturalism was not that different from the views of his Labor predecessors. According to Paul Kelly, both the then Prime Ministers Keating and Howard:

> "drew the same conclusion – the need for a singular identity as the foundation for successful identity. Contrary to mythology, Keating and Howard were not far apart on multiculturalism. On occasions, Keating warned that multiculturalism might contribute to 'circumvent the emergence of a singular Australian identity'." (Kelly, 2009, p. 157).

Both former prime ministers Keating and Howard wanted to strengthen Australian national identity and patriotism and distrusted multi-ethnic internationalism often championed by the Left. Keating patriotism was oriented toward the future—our place in Asia; Howard based its patriotism more on the past—the ANZAC legend.

6.0   Rudd/Gillard Labor Government (2007–13) -Equity and Anti-Racism

Labor's multicultural policies during its time in the opposition were confusing and poorly expressed. Mark Lathan, the Labor opposition Leader (2003–05), in his pre-election speech delivered to The Global Foundation on 20 April 2004, proposed to abandon the government policy of multiculturalism. He agreed that Australia is a multicultural society in the demographic sense of the word but argued that multiculturalism as a public policy is a static concept frozen in time that must be redefined to prevent it from "separating people from each other, rather than bringing them together to share each other's cultures and the goals of a good society." Latham argued that a "new and realistic way of thinking about multiculturalism" was necessary to emphasise social cohesion and citizenship.

The Labor government was returned in November 2007 with Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister (2007 to 2010). Upon election, Labor's initial approach to multiculturalism disappointed many. The electoral platform promised to re-establish the Office of Multicultural Affairs in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet was not implemented after the election. Howard's focus on citizenship became a permanent feature of the immigration portfolio, with Rudd appointing Chris Evans as Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

The word multiculturalism was restored to the name of a junior portfolio by creating the position of the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, to which Laurie Ferguson was appointed. Early in the term Government undertook a broad review of how to promote best the benefits of cultural diversity, including a review of the 'Living in Harmony' program. In January 2009, Mr Ferguson launched the new 'Diverse Australia Program', which, as compared with the 'Living in

Harmony Program', had an increased focus on addressing issues of racism and intolerance, and aimed to empower a local response.

A new Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC) was appointed one year later, in 2008, and asked to advise the Government on "practical approaches to promoting social cohesion and overcoming racism and intolerance through positive engagement with diversity." The AMAC provided its statement with recommendations to the government in April 2010. It recommended the importance of ensuring equal access to services for all Australians, the need to tackle discrimination, prejudice, and racism, and the need to provide all opportunities for community participation. The statement emphasised that government has a responsibility to "maintain a just, inclusive and cohesive society" but did not recommend the establishment of the Australian Multiculturalism Act or a central multicultural research institute.

The Government responded by launching *The People of Australia—Australia's Multicultural Policy* on 17 February 2011. The policy endorsed the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council statement and referenced shared rights and responsibilities 'enshrined' in the citizenship pledge. In the following years, however, the focus of attention and resources further shifted toward the needs of asylum seekers and away from the broader multicultural policy issues. The Rudd government dismantled the critical architecture of the Pacific Solution in 2008, despite that during the 2007 election campaign, Labor promised to continue Howard policies. The Nauru and Manus processing centers were not to be used, and the last Nauru asylum seekers were resettled in Australia. The future unauthorised boat arrivals would be processed on Christmas Island, which remained excised from Australia's migration zone. The UN Refugee Agency welcomed dismantling the Pacific Solution.

After the Pacific Solution was ended, boats started to arrive in increasing numbers. In 2007, the last year of the Howard government, five boats arrived with 148 asylum seekers. In 2009, 60 boats arrived with 2726 asylum seekers; in 2010, 134 with 6,555; in 2011, 69 with 4,565; in 2012, 278 with 17,202; and in 2013 (to 30 June), 196 with 13,108. The numbers grew, despite the Rudd government putting in place additional measures to discourage unauthorised boat arrivals; for example, $654 million was provided in the 2009–10 federal Budget to fund a comprehensive, whole-of-government strategy to combat people smuggling.

This new policy undermined public trust in government border protection policies and became a particularly prominent issue in the context of the forthcoming 2010 federal election. Various public opinion polls indicated that most Australians were concerned about asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat; only a minority of voters believed the Government was doing a good job managing the asylum seeker issue. Also, Julia Gillard, Rudd's Deputy Leader, became so concerned about the issue of asylum seekers that on 21 June, she wrote to the Prime Minister arguing that:

> "… the issue of asylum seekers is an enormous reason why our primary vote is at that low level … it is an issue working at every level – loss of control of the borders feeding into the narrative of government that is incompetent and out of control." (Rudd, 2018, p. 292).

This policy failure was a key issue leading to Prime Minister Rudd's resignation as Labor leader on 24 June 2010, with Julie Gillard being elected unopposed as his replacement.

In August 2010, Labor was elected as a minority government for the second term. However, for the first time since the Whitlam government election in 1972, Labor did not propose a multicultural election policy. Possibly this could be explained by government attention being focused on the increasing number of unauthorised boat arrivals. Another explanation could be Gillard's relative inexperience in multicultural policy issues. When Julia Gillard became ALP leader in 2010, she did not include multiculturalism as one of the ministerial responsibilities and kept the Howard-preferred name of the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship. With time, however, the Gillard government gave multiculturalism a higher public profile and focussed on "understanding and acceptance".

The new Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Chris Bowen, announced a new multicultural policy during his address to the Sydney Institute. His speech titled *The Genius of Multiculturalism* was well-publicised and received. Minister claimed that:

> "Multiculturalism is about inviting every individual member of society to be everything they can be, and supporting each new arrival in overcoming whatever obstacles they face as they adjust to a new country and society and allowing them to flourish as individuals. /.../ If Australia is to be free and equal, then it will be multicultural. But, if it is to be multicultural, Australia must remain free and equal." (Bowen, 2011).

The policy that was released, *The People of Australia* (Australian Multicultural Advisory Committee, 2011). The policy focused on just and inclusive society with government services responsive to the needs of all Australians and championed respect and support for cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity. The policy also reaffirmed the government's commitment to multiculturalism as a policy in Australia's national interest and protection against discrimination. It reaffirmed the well-established foundation blocks of multiculturalism, including respect for parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, a reaffirmation of equality between men and women, and a celebration of diversity within the bounds of a shared national unity.

At the same time, the policy of multiculturalism become the subject of public challenges. Much of the public disquiet related to boat people entering the western suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne and negotiating with broader community acceptance for their cultural and religious traditions, such as the use by women of the full face-covering burqa in public places, slaughtering of animals according to Islamic ritual or charging fees for halal certification. There were also calls to accept various aspects of Sharia or Islamic law in Australia.

The 2011 Australian Federation of Islamic Councils made a submission titled *Embracing Muslim Values and Maintaining the Right to be Different* to an inquiry formulating government multicultural policy that suggested that there should be "twin toleration", that is, that both Australian Muslims and the broad Australian community should both accept their respective values. The core of the proposal was

that Sharia law should be incorporated into the Australian legal system. The submission made national headlines and earned a sharp reaction from the federal Attorney General McClelland who stated:

> "As out citizenship pledge makes clear, coming to Australia means obeying Australian laws and upholding Australian values. Australia's brand of multiculturalism promotes integration. If there is any inconsistency between cultural values and the rule of law the Australian law wins out." (in Roose & Possamai, 2015, p. 96).

State Attorney Generals and high-ranking judiciary members expressed similar views that there is no place for the Sharia law in Australian society and its legal system, and the discussion was closed. The exception, however, was made for the Islamic finance sector, where a degree of legal pluralism was allowed, and Islamic finance products were allowed to enter the Australian domestic financial market. (in Roose & Possamai, 2015, p. 98–101).

Possibly the most critical challenge was provided in April 2011 by Greg Sheridan, a prominent foreign affairs journalist described by ABC as "one of Australia's most respected and influential analysts of domestic and international politics" and a former strong supporter of the policy of multiculturalism who back in 1996 wrote: "There is nothing in multiculturalism that could cause any worry to any normal person. Multiculturalism officially promotes an overriding loyalty to Australia …". In his 2011 article "How I lost faith in multiculturalism", Sheridan argued, that in the Belmont suburb where he lived for nearly 15 years, a suburb located next door to Lakemba mosque in Sydney's southwest, the policy of multiculturalism neither delivered social cohesion nor the integration of the Middle Eastern people, but that:

> "Three dynamics interacted in noxious fashion: the growth of a macho, misogynist culture amongst young men that often found expression in extremely violent crime, pervasive atmosphere of anti-social behaviour in the streets and the simultaneous growth of Islamic extremism and jihadi culture. /…/Certainly, the presence or absence of multiculturalism as a state policy seems to have no effect. Canada practices multiculturalism. Australia did it for a while but then stopped and is now, apparently, half-heartedly starting again, according to a recent speech by Immigration Minister Chris Bowen." (Sheridan, 2011).

Prime Minister Gillard took up the challenge and in September 2012 when speaking at the Lowy Institute together with the Leader of Opposition Tony Abbot, reaffirmed the well-established concepts of multiculturalism and described it as:

> "… the meeting place of rights and responsibilities where the right to maintain one's customs, language and religion is balanced by an equal responsibility to learn English, find work, respect our culture and heritage, and accept women as full equals.' /…/ 'Where there is non-negotiable respect for our foundational values of democracy and the rule of law, and any differences we hold are expressed peacefully. /…/ Where old hatreds are left behind, and we find a

shared identity on the common ground of mateship and the Aussie spirit of a fair go." (Australianpolitics.com, 2012).

In March 2012, Gillard promoted Senator Kate Lundy to the outer ministry position of Multicultural Affairs Minister after she reported to the Prime Ministers as the parliamentary secretary in the same portfolio since 2010. The new and independent Australian Multicultural Council, with Judge Rauf Soulio as its chair, was subsequently launched to advise the government on implementing the policy and advocate for multicultural issues, although the community severely criticised the appointments to the AMC as lopsided and lacking independence because Immigration Department Secretary and Race Discrimination Commissioner were made ex-officio members. Furthermore, no resources or legislative authority were given to the Council in pursuing its responsibilities. In addition, the government has established a small budget line for an anti-racism strategy to be administered by the Human Rights Commission and in March 2013, the Government announced its response to the recommendations of the Access and Equity Inquiry Panel. All this suggested that should Gillard have won the 2013 election; the multicultural policies would have been given a higher profile.

Similarly, the Rudd policies dealing with boat arrivals were changed. In January 2011, the Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Afghanistan and UNHCR to deter unauthorised boat arrivals, allowing for failed Afghan asylum seekers to be involuntarily returned to Afghanistan. In June 2012, Gillard announced the creation of an Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers to consider the best way forward in managing the issue of asylum seekers arriving by boat. The recommendations presented by the Panel in August 2012 included reopening offshore processing centers in the Pacific.

7.0   Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison Coalition Governments (2013–22)—Social Cohesion

Following the election on 7 September 2013, the new Coalition government was sworn in and in power for almost nine years until 23 May 2022. During that time, there were three prime ministers Tony Abbot (2013–15), Malcolm Turnbull (2015–18) and Scott Morrison (2018–22); six cabinet ministers responsible for immigration and multicultural affairs: Kevin Andrews, Christian Porter, Scott Morrison, Peter Dutton, Alan Tudge (acting) and Alex Hawke; and six outer/assistant ministers and parliamentary secretaries responsible for multiculturalism: Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Craig Laundy, Zed Seselja, David Coleman, Alex Hawke, Jason Wood. Considering that fifteen politicians were involved with multicultural affairs between 2013–22 and that no cabinet minister title mentioned the responsibility for multicultural affairs, it is difficult to assume the existence of a forward looking, well-defined and consistent policy direction in multicultural affairs during that time.

Tony Abbott led the Coalition to a landslide victory in the 2013 election. He entered the federal Parliament in 1994, held several ministerial positions during the Howard government, and became the opposition leader in 2009. Abbott was a conservative politician who, like Howard, changed his approach to multiculturalism. In his policy manifesto "*Battlelines*", Abbott declared:

"As a journalist in the 1980's I attacked multiculturalism for eroding Australia's distinctive identity. In fact, along with other contemporary critics, I made the mistake of underestimating the gravitational pull of the Australian way of life." (Abbott, 2013, p. 162)

He explained his change of heart in 2012:

"With (historian) Geoffrey Blainey, I used to worry that multiculturalism could leave us a nation of tribes. But I was wrong, and I've changed my mind. The scales fell from my eyes when I discovered - while running Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, would you believe - that the strongest supporters of the Crown in our constitution included indigenous people and newcomers who had embraced it as part of embracing Australia." (Steketee, 2014).

Abbott criticised Pauline Hanson as early as 1998, "urging the Liberal Party to put One Nation candidates last on its how to vote card." (Abbott, 2013, p. 49) He argued that "the vast majority of migrants are coming here to join us, not to change us." (Abbott, 2019) and argued that Hanson "was making non-Anglo Australians feel like strangers in their own country." At a Ramadan function prior 2013 election, he stated that multicultural Australia was a "beacon of hope to a divided world." Abbott perceived multiculturalism as a force that integrates Australian society and warned that "I am the sworn enemy for anyone who seeks to divide Australian over Australian on issues on issues of class, gender, birthplace, race and particularly over faith". (in: Roose & Possamai, 2015, p. 92)

Similar pro-integration sentiments were expressed by Peter Dutton, Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in the second Abbott ministry:

"As far as future policies are concerned, I can assure you that in terms of people's rights, there is only one class of citizens in Australia. All citizens have the same rights but they also have the same obligations and one of those obligations is obviously to obey the law. That applies whether you were born here or whether you took out your citizenship last week." (Hurst, 2016).

Abbot also promised to repeal Sect. 18C of *the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975*, which makes it unlawful to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate someone based on their race, colour or national or ethnic origin as it, in his opinion, did not sufficiently protect the right of freedom of speech. He also intended to review the citizenship test. Furthermore, Abbott foreshadowed modifications to the balance between measures for community safety and personal liberties.

Despite his pro-multicultural statements, the first Abbott ministry did not contain the word "multicultural" in any of the ministerial titles. The position of Multicultural Affairs Minister existing under the previous Labor government has been abolished. Perhaps, his avoidance of the word 'multiculturalism' reflected the perception held by some in 2013 that multiculturalism is no longer relevant to the broader Australian community because it has been marginalised to serve only the needs of refugee and Muslim communities. Or perhaps because multiculturalism was deemed to be a word relating to a special interest group.

Furthermore, multicultural affairs were transferred under the Administrative Arrangements Order to the new Department of Social Services and not kept within the Immigration portfolio as it has been since 1975. The transfer created an impression that migrant communities are a social welfare issue and not equal contributors to Australian society. A New South Wales Senator, Concetta Fierravanti Wells, was appointed as "Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services" and given special responsibility for multicultural affairs and settlement services.

In December 2014, the Minister for Social Services, Kevin Andrews, announced the appointment of a new Australian Multicultural Council (AMC) with Sev Ozdowski as its chair. Compared with the previous Council, the new Council was smaller—it only had six members, and the government removed from its mandate the advocacy function. It was to be serviced by the Department of Social Services but had no own budget, no research capacity, and no ability to consult with the communities or take a public stand. Concerning the working of access and equity strategy, the Council did not have legislated powers to enable it to check on its implementation. The Council's role was to respond to the government's requests for advice on a broad range of multiculturalism-related issues, including building stronger and more cohesive communities and addressing barriers to participation, including racism and discrimination; promoting the importance of mutual respect and responsibility, which foster our shared Australian values, identity, and citizenship; harnessing the economic and social benefits of our diverse population; strengthening public understanding of a shared 'Australian identity' and ensuring that migrants could participate, engage, and contribute to Australian life and promoting greater intercultural and interfaith understanding and dialogue.

The critical issue challenging social cohesion in the early 2010s was the emergence of Islamist violence. Just around the time the AMC membership was announced, on 15 December 2014, a lone gunman Man Haron Monis held hostage ten customers and eight employees at the Lindt coffee shop in Martin Place in the centre of Sydney. Monis appeared to be an Islamic terrorist, although later, it was claimed that he had mental health problems. On his website, Monis had pledged allegiance to "the caliph of the Muslims", believed to be referring to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and denounced moderate Islam. During the 16-h standoff, hostages were seen as forced to hold an Islamist flag against the café window. Monis demanded that a hostage ask all media to broadcast that "this is an attack on Australia by the Islamic State". The siege finished after a gunshot was heard from inside, and police stormed the café. Two hostages and Monis were killed.

To respond to the problem, the direction of Australian multiculturalism concentrated over the next few years on building social cohesion, mainly dealing with the root causes of Islamist violence. Immediately following the Lindt coffee shop attack, The Grand Mufti of Australia and around fifty major Muslim groups issued statements condemning the attack. Also, the Muslim community leaders offered to help the government authorities stop similar future occurrences. The government accepted this offer and established additional consultative mechanisms with Muslim leaders and community groups.

The government has also taken a range of measures to prevent emerging islamophobia. Also, the response of broader civil society, especially religious organisations, to emerging islamophobia was constructive and focused on preventing the potential for violence or intimidation directed at Muslim Australians. For example, immediately following the siege, there was an increase in anti-Muslim messages being posted on social media. In response to it, a unique grass-roots initiative emerged that aimed at reducing the possible intimidation directed at Muslims travelling on Sydney public transport. Some 150,000 people started using the hashtag *#illridewithyou* (I will ride with you) to support Muslims travelling alone on public transport. Non-Muslim people were tweeting their bus/train route to advertise that they would be willing to "ride with" anyone who might feel threatened.

The Abbott government has established programs and provided funding for community initiatives to prevent violent extremism and islamophobia effectively. On the one hand, the programs involved enforcement authorities that dealt with the factors that nurture the emergence and appeal of violent extremism, such as Islamists' supportive social networks or well-organised groups. On the other hand, government community initiatives involved education and programs to deal with the marginalisation of Muslim communities, racism, discrimination in access to equal opportunities in education and employment, denial of rights or persecution and other socio-economic factors. Particularly effective programs focused on including Muslim mothers of school children in local communities. Funding was also provided to the Human Rights Commission program "Racism Stops with Me".

In 2015 the federal Attorney-General's department, with the help of the Global Terrorism Research Centre at Monash University and multicultural experts, produced a comprehensive manual, *Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in Australia.* It focused on the role played by the community and religious leaders and education in assisting people in moving away from violent extremism and intervening to stop acts of violence before they occur. Attention was also paid to measures combating radicalisation on the internet.

In addition to the wide-ranging practical programs, the Prime Minister offered his leadership by sponsoring a roundtable discussion and a dinner held in his Kirribilli residence for some thirty top Australian experts dealing with preventing Islamist radicalisation and top Muslim leaders. Minister for Social Security and his Parliamentary Secretary undertook a range of community consultations across Australia. The government provided sponsorship of the first national Advancing Community Cohesion Conference held in July 2015. Australia also supported several international educational initiatives dealing with violent extremism.[12]

Prime Minister Abbott's attitude to handling of unauthorised boat arrivals was much more focused on the task of stopping the boats in comparison with the previous Labor government. Immediately upon entering office, the Abbott government policy of zero tolerance towards illegal maritime arrivals was successfully implemented. The Abbott Government established Operation Sovereign Borders in September 2013. It involved the forced removal of vessels from Australian waters, with passengers and crew returning to their departure countries. Officials from the

Department of Immigration and Border Protection confirmed at the Senate Estimates on 17 October 2016 that no boats with asylum seekers were allowed to land in Australia and that 740 people from 29 vessels had been returned to their country of departure since December 2013.

Malcolm Turnbull replaced Tony Abbott as Prime Minister of Australia in September 2015, and Christian Porter became Minister for Social Services and cabinet minister responsible for multicultural affairs. Prime Minister Turnbull brought a new approach to the policy of multiculturalism:

> "When I became prime minister, I was determined to lead an inclusive government that embraced and promoted Australian multiculturalism and, in particular, didn't demonise Muslims, let alone tag them all with the crimes of a small extremist minority. No PM before me had ever held an *ifta*r, the dinner that breaks the fast during the months of Ramadan. /.../ we arranged to hold it on 16 July at Kirribilli House in Sydney. The guest list was assembled by my department and included leading members of the Islamic community as well as of other religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism." (Turnbull, 2020, p. 378).

The title 'multicultural' was restored to the position of junior minister assisting Minister Porter, but four junior ministers served in this position in less than three years of Turnbull's prime ministership, namely Concetta Fierravanti-Wells—her title was changed from Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services to Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs; in February 2016, Craig Laundy replaced Fierravanti-Wells and held this position till July 2016; when Senator Zed Seselia became Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs till December 2017; only to be replaced by Alan Tudge as Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs till August 2018.

Two weeks after Turnbull took office, on 2 October 2015, a police accountant Curtis Cheng was murdered in Parramatta by 15-year-old gunman Farhad Jabar. Prime Minister Turnbull described the murder as an 'act of terror' motivated by extremists' political and religious views. Further, Turnbull delivered a public appeal for unity at a media conference in Sydney. He said:

Respect for each other, respect for our country, respect for shared values, these are the things that make this country one of the most successful countries in the world, as a multicultural country in particular. /.../ So, if you want to be respected, if we want our faith, our cultural background to be respected, then we have to respect others. That is a part of the Australian project.

The Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, added that "our Muslim communities now need to own the problem and own the solutions." Tasking the community leadership, in the first instance, with providing a solution to a community problem was a very typical government practice used since the Hawke government.

Regarding policy response to the Islamist violence, the government recognised that ongoing media anti-Islam campaign and focus on policing and harsher penalties for

those inclined to engage in terrorist activities alone is not the answer to tackling radicalisation. Instead, the Turnbull government focused its multicultural policies on stopping Islamophobia and on building strong, trusting relationships between his government and Muslim communities. His approach drew some criticism. For example, The Australian newspaper criticised Turnbull as being soft on terror. In his autobiography *A Bigger Picture*, Turnbull recalls:

> "This anti-Islam backlash was of concern to our security chiefs, including ASIO head Duncan Lewis. He and his colleagues were appreciative of the change of tone since I'd become PM. In December, he described this backlash as extremely dangerous, pointing out that any estrangement with the Australian Muslim community would be 'very unfortunate for our operations. We need to be very temperate and we need to be smart as a community'." (Turnbull, M., 2020, p. 302.)

Australia started looking for best practice strategies for early intervention targeting at-risk young Muslim people. The aim was to address the underlying causes rather than the symptoms. Research suggested that the young Australian Muslims joining terrorist agendas were less socioeconomically marginalised, but instead, they appeared to be disenfranchised by an unsupportive social, cultural and family environment and misunderstanding as to the expectations placed on them in Australian culture. They spoke good English and looked like other Ozzie teenagers but did not understand how the Australian culture operated. Further programs focused on social and cultural integration and developing a sense of belonging.

The Multicultural Affairs Council continued offering advice on programs needed to maintain social cohesion and prevent violent extremism. However, in February 2016, Social Services Minister Porter attempted to narrow the focus of the Australian Multicultural Council from general advice on multiculturalism to advice on empowering culturally and linguistically diverse women, particularly in the areas of economic and social participation, leadership and safety, advice on matters that were a core responsibility of his Department of Social Services. With the arrival of Assistant Minister Seselja and then Minister Tudge, the role of the AMC returned to its previous focus.

Also in February 2016, a leaked government document indicated that the Turnbull government might consider toughening Australia's humanitarian resettlement program, including increasing the screening and monitoring of refugees and making it harder to obtain permanent residency and citizenship. The document claimed the changes might be introduced because "it has been established that there are links between recent onshore terrorist attacks and the humanitarian intake". It also singled out the Lebanese community as the 'most prominent ethnic group amongst Australian Sunni extremists'. The leak drew a swift reaction from ethnic communities and the Labor opposition, alleging elements of the paper were 'verging on bigotry and racism'. (Hurst, 2016). The incident was followed by a conciliatory meeting with Muslim leaders in Melbourne in March 2016, where Malcolm Turnbull signalled a continuing willingness to work with Australia's Muslim community.

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The 2016 election campaign added life to the discussion about Australian multiculturalism. The government linked the success of the border protection policy to broad public support for multiculturalism. Prime

Minister Turnbull stated that tough border protection is essential to guarantee and sustain Australia as the most successful multicultural nation on earth—"If you don't have strong border protection, then people lose faith in the immigration system and the whole Australian multicultural project is threatened" Mr Turnbull told The Australian newspaper on 29 June 2016. The Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, promised, that if elected, he would re-establish the Office of Multicultural Affairs, but this time in the Department of Social Services, not in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The election held on 2 July 2016 also saw a resurgence of the politicians opposed to multiculturalism, with Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party re-elected and securing four places in the Senate and Cory Bernardi, a former Liberal Senator, moving to the crossbench and creating the Australian Conservatives party.

After the election, in October 2016, Prime Minister moved a statement on racial tolerance in the Australian Parliament's House of Representatives. The statement that the Opposition Leader supported read:

> "That this House:
>
> reaffirms its commitment to the right of all Australians to enjoy equal rights and be treated with equal respect regardless of race, colour, creed or origin
>
> reaffirms its commitment to maintaining an immigration policy wholly non-discriminatory on grounds of race, colour creed or origin
>
> reaffirms its commitment to the process of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in the context of redressing their profound social and economic disadvantage
>
> reaffirms its commitment to maintain Australia as a culturally diverse, tolerant and open society, united by an overriding commitment to our nation, and its democratic institutions and values and
>
> denounces racial intolerance in any form as incompatible with the kind of society we are and want to be."

On Harmony Day, 20 March 2017, Prime Minister Turnbull and the Australian Multicultural Council Chair jointly launched at Parliament House Australia's latest multicultural statement, "*Multicultural Australia—united, strong, successful*". The statement aimed to renew and reaffirm the government's commitment to Australian multiculturalism. It repeated the well-established tenants of Australian multiculturalism, such as commitment to shared values of respect, equality, and freedom, to Australia's democratic institutions and English as a national language, to equal opportunities to participate in economic, social, and political life and to building a harmonious and cohesive society. It brought together and highlighted the existing government programs around multiculturalism but did not commit to any new initiatives. It defined social harmony as the foundation of national security and, for

the first time in a multicultural government manifesto, added wording rejecting any forms of violent extremism. In the Foreword to the statement, Prime Minister said:

> "We are defined not by race, religion or culture, but by shared values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and equality of opportunity – a 'fair go'. The glue that holds us together is mutual respect – a deep recognition that each of us is entitled to the same respect, the same dignity, the same opportunities. And national security – a resolute determination to defend our nation, our people and our values – is the foundation on which our freedoms have been built and maintained." (Australian Government, 2017).

One week later, on 27 March 2017, a Senate Select Committee on Strengthening Multiculturalism commenced an inquiry, initiated and chaired by the Australian Greens, into ways of strengthening Australia's multiculturalism. The Select Committee report of August 2017 made thirteen recommendations, including on improvements to settlement services, continuation of the National Anti-Racism Strategy, developing media and education strategies, and establishing a Parliamentary Code of Multicultural Ethics. It also proposed developing a Federal Multiculturalism Act, a charter of rights, and a multicultural commission. Coalition members on the Select Committee issued a dissenting report, and the government did not respond to the report.

In November 2017, the second national Advancing Community Cohesion Conference was held at Western Sydney University with significant government support. It brought together government ministers, senior officials, academics and researchers, both Australian and international, and community and religious leaders, to explore Australian answers to global and local challenges to community cohesion. The government also responded to the 2013 Inquiry into Migration and Multiculturalism. It argued that budgetary measures have already met most of the Inquiry recommendations and that re-establishing an independent multicultural research body is unnecessary.

Turnbull did not change, however, Abbott's policy on unauthorised boat arrivals. An interesting incident occurred soon after Turnbull came to power when he scored a victory with US President Trump on the refugee swap deal agreed to under the Obama administration. Despite Trump's misgivings, a deal to exchange some two thousand refugees held on Nauru and Manus Island for 1250 Central American refugees was honoured.

On 24 August 2018, Scott Morrison became Australia's 30th prime minister. Previously Morrison acquired some experience with multicultural affairs when he was Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship (2009–2013). At that time, he argued that multiculturalism "simply means too many things to too many different people and increasingly runs the risk of fuelling division and polarising the debate, which is the antithesis of what it is supposed to achieve". In 2013 Prime Minister Abbott appointed Morrison to Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, where he was responsible for Operation Sovereign Borders, the government's new strategy to stop unauthorised boat arrivals. A Cabinet reshuffle in December 2014 saw him appointed as Minister for Social Services to a portfolio that included responsibility for

multicultural affairs, and Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells became his Parliamentary Secretary.

Prime Minister Morrison appointed Peter Dutton as cabinet Minister for Home Affairs responsible for border protection and now multicultural affairs, including the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy, the Harmony Week initiative, the 'Australian values' website, and the administration of a number of grants programs. The Home Affairs mandate was also tasked with the maintenance of social cohesion and countering violent extremism through the Living Safe Together program.

A welcome move was the creation of the Ministry for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs with David Coleman, as its head. The establishment of this ministry finally removed multicultural affairs from the Families and Social Services portfolio and linked it to Home Affairs. After the government's re-election at the 2019 election, his title was changed to Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs. In December 2019, Alan Tudge took over his portfolio as acting minister, with Alex Hawke taking over in 2020.

The Morrison government did not put forward any significant changes to the policy of multiculturalism or related programs as it concentrated on managing ongoing issues, in particular, a national COVID impact on ethnic communities. It however addressed a national decline in English language proficiency. Islamist violence was no longer at the top of the government's priority list. Morrison also kept the border protection regime as the Abbott government established it.

The Australian Multicultural Council was instrumental in providing advice on the multicultural policy issues. For example, it provided practical recommendations on better access to employment for women, assessment of overseas qualifications, citizenship test or access to English language training. It also advised on the benefits of the development of the Multicultural Australia Act, which should include multicultural principles, current government Access and Equity policy and mandate their implementation throughout APS and provide a legislative foundation to the Australian Multicultural Council, establish its secretariat, and preferably locate the body in Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio. AMC also suggested the establishment of legislation to create a research body to focus on the social integration of migrants and refugees into broader Australian society, the implementation and impact of government Access and Equity policies, and citizenship issues.

AMC also assisted with not strictly policy matters. In cooperation with Western Sydney University, it has got involved with the "*3rd Advancing Community Cohesion Conference. The way forward*." In February 2020, AMC cooperated with Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove to organise a "Long Table" luncheon for some four hundred people at the Government House in Yarralumla to celebrate Harmony Day. It was also involved with government consultations, assessment of grants and providing submissions to various parliamentary inquiries.

One of the key inquiries of importance to multiculturalism was an Inquiry into nationhood, national identity and democracy established on 29 July 2019 by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee. The Committee report was tabled in February 2021. Recommendation 8 was that the government establish 'a national research centre on migration, citizenship and social cohesion'. Another inquiry was established by the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee on 14 May 2020. It was an Inquiry into the issues facing diaspora communities in Australia; it reported in February 2021. The inquiry focused on national security and foreign interference and addressed multicultural policy issues. Its Recommendation 1 stated that 'Multicultural policy statements should reinforce the recognition and celebration of the contribution of diaspora communities to Australia', and Recommendation 2 noted that the last whole of the government Multicultural Access and Equity Policy report was for the period 2013–15 and recommended that the Department of Home Affairs table the report for the period 2016–18 'as soon as possible'.

There were also recommendations on renewing the anti-racism campaign, including Recommendation 8 'that the government consider resourcing the development of a new and comprehensive national anti-racism framework'. In January 2020, the first Australian case of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was confirmed in Victoria, with further cases soon reported in other states. On 13 March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Morrison government formed a National Cabinet with state and territory leaders. A Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Matters, part of the Council of Australian Governments architecture, was disbanded in October 2020.

In the following weeks, the government announced a host of measures to combat the pandemic, some of them including the closure of public gathering places and enforced social distancing. Implementing such measures was clearly a state and territory responsibility, and it involved directly dealing with ethnic communities and their leadership on the state/territory level. In March 2021, the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, Alex Hawke, re-convened an all-Australian government Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Affairs be held biannually. In March 2022, Minister Hawke appointed a new 17-person large Australian Multicultural Council. A new Albanese Labor government was elected on 21 May 2022, and Andrew Giles was appointed Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs.

8.0   The Conclusions

Since its establishment as a modern nation, Australia has always had strict border controls focusing on race, aiming to deliver social cohesion. In the early 1970s, Australia adopted a new approach—strict border controls were to be maintained but based on racially non-discriminatory foundations, and social cohesion was to be achieved through a new policy of multiculturalism. Multicultural policies and programs have developed incrementally across the years. They have enjoyed unparalleled bipartisan support from the early 1970s until now. All leaders of Australia's major political parties, at least at the level of political rhetoric, publicly

stated their commitment to the policy. Some leaders, like Fraser and Hawke, worked on advancing the concept, while others, like Turnbull, utilised multicultural machinery to address various pragmatic goals, such as dealing with Islamist-inspired violence or COVID. But there has been always an agreement on the core values underpinning the multicultural enterprise, such as parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, equality of opportunity, English as a national language, compassion for those in need, or equality between men and women, with Labor focusing more on social justice, equity and combating racial discrimination while the Coalition governments focusing more on social cohesion, citizenship and rights and responsibilities.

By now, most Australians support the policy of multiculturalism. In fact, the level of support has grown over time, and by now, the level of support for multiculturalism is one of the highest in the developed world. Andrew Markus (2018, p. 2) states, 'Since 2013, the Scanlon Foundation surveys have asked for a response to the proposition that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia. The agreement has been consistent, in the range 83%-86%.' Similar research outcomes report by James O'Donnell (2022, p. 59), 'The proportion of people who agree or strongly agree that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia' increased significantly from 77 per cent in 2018 to 88 per cent in 2022.' Further, 'The proportion of people who agree that 'immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures' increased significantly from 76 per cent in 2018 to 86 per cent in 2022.'

So, why is multiculturalism so popular in Australia compared to other countries? Perhaps the shortest answer to this question was provided by former Prime Minister John Howard, who told a National Press Club audience in 2001, "The truth is that people come to this country because they want to be Australians". (Kelly, 2009, p. 339).

Australia is a relatively new and peaceful country, with strong economy and solid political system that offers new settlers a rapid integration on fair terms. It provides them with individual liberties and upward movement opportunities in the long term. It allows migrants not only to find a job where they will be paid decent wages but to build life careers, educate their children, buy a home and plan for retirement.

It also allows migrants to keep their original culture and traditions within the broader Australian culture. New migrants and their cultural heritage are welcomed and celebrated, and their economic and civic contributions are cherished. Furthermore, it allows migrants to become full citizen, participate actively in community life and contribute to the national identity that is being formed. It gives newcomers respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or background. And this is most important. It allows newcomers to develop a new Australian-oriented identity and a sense of belonging. It is possible to identify as Australian national not that long after the arrival. Such outcome is unlikely for settlers in the centuries-old nations of Europe.

A final word. For multiculturalism to stay strong, as the key architecture for securing social cohesion, it must advance and evolve in response to the changing world. To further build on the current success, an Australian Multicultural Act would need to be legislated for with some powers to secure the ongoing Access and Equity strategy

implementation. A multicultural central research institute would help conduct large-scale empirical research into the issues underpinning the social inclusion strategy.

Finally, multicultural policies and programs require a better whole of government policy coordination. A central bureaucratic body modelled on the previous Hawke's Office of Multicultural Affairs could provide such coordination.

Notes
1. The Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (Cth) enabled the Commonwealth Government to exclude any person who "when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out at dictation and sign in the presence of the officer, a passage of 50 words in length in a European language directed by the officer". The Dictation Test could be administered to any migrant during the first year of residence. In 1905 this was changed to "any prescribed language" to lessen offence to the Japanese. From 1932 the Test could be given during the first five years of residence and any number of times. The Dictation Test was administered 805 times in 1902-03, with 46 people passing and 554 times in 1904-09, with only six people successful. After 1909 no person passed the Dictation Test, and people who failed were refused entry or deported.
2. For a comprehensive description of assimilation policy and for analysis of different schools of thought and personalities contributing to the development of ideas that led to the establishment of multiculturalism in Australia, see Lopez (2000). See also: Naraniecki (2013) for information about Jerzy Zubrzycki's evolving approach to multiculturalism.
3. James Jupp sometimes calls it "Section" and sometimes "Branch" of the Immigration Department (Jupp 1998: 138 & 190). However, Lopez (2000: 62) calls it: "Branch". Most likely, the name "Branch" is correct.
4. The reference to "Balts" may not, however, indicate a racial prejudice towards post-Second World War refugees from the Baltic states, but rather Whitlam's annoyance with demonstrations by Australians of Baltic and Eastern European descent after Whitlam had decided to recognise the Soviets de jure occupation of Baltic countries while his Foreign Affairs Minister Senator Willesee was overseas.
5. Some states, for example, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, have specific multicultural legislation. Western Australia enacted a Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Act in 1983, which was repealed in 2006. The Queensland Parliament recently adopted a Multicultural Recognition Bill.
6. Despite the existing financial austerity measures, the government allocated an extra $50 million over three years to secure implementation. The program was paid for by the revenue resulting from the removal of tax deductibility for money sent by migrants to support families overseas.
7. Of particular importance was ICCPR Article 27, which states: "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their religion, or to use their own language".
8. For more about the A&E concept, see Access and Equity Evaluation Report. (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 1992) and Cross-Portfolio Evaluation (Ozdowski, 1992).
9. Kathrine Betts distinguished two meanings of multiculturalism.(Markus, A., 2011, p. 91) 'Soft' multiculturalism is based on the idea that we should be tolerant, and 'hard' multiculturalism means that in addition to welcoming cultural diversity, the government should provide resources to NEBS groups for cultural maintenance. The National Agenda and all post-Hawke governments clearly opted for a more popular soft version and, in their policies, avoided the hard version of multiculturalism.
10. For his views, Campbell was expelled from the party on 30 November 1995 and, in June 1996, founded the Australia First Party. However, he was defeated in the 1998 federal election.

11. Between 1990 and 1998, boats arrived at the rate of about 300 people per annum—mainly from Cambodia, Vietnam, and southern China.
12. For example, Australia participated in developing and implementing the 2015 UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The Plan of Action recognised the importance of quality education in preventing violent extremism and deradicalizing young people.

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