

Author's name and surname: Seweryn (Sev) Ozdowski

Affiliation: Western Sydney University & The University of Sydney

Email address: sevozdo@gmail.com

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Summary

The paper reviews Australian multiculturalism from a historical perspective and also reviews current practice. The paper starts with the description of historical background and then outlines the existing definitions, objectives and principles underlying the concept of Australian multiculturalism. It also evaluates the success or otherwise of policies/programs that have been put in place since 1975 to integrate migrant and refugee intake into broader Australian society. Finally it outlines the concept of social compact and its contribution to the social cohesion outcomes.

Keywords

Australia, immigration, multiculturalism, social cohesion and integration.

Bio Note

Dr Sev Ozdowski AM has played a major role in the advancement of multicultural and human rights policies and institutions in Australia. He has worked in senior government positions for over 20 years and published widely on refugee issues, multiculturalism and human rights. As the Australian Human Rights Commissioner, Dr Ozdowski conducted the ground-breaking review of Australian mandatory detention system for asylum seekers entitled: “*National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention. A last resort?*”. Currently he works at two Australian universities and is Chair of the Australian Multicultural Council and President of the Australian Council for Human Rights Education.

Dr Ozdowski has an LLM and MA in Sociology degrees from Poland and a PhD from the University of New England. As a Harkness Fellow, Sev spent 1984-86 on research at Harvard, Georgetown and the University of California in Berkeley. He was awarded Doctor of Social Science *Honoris Causa*, from RMIT University in 2004. Dr Ozdowski is Member of the Order of Australia.

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Dr Sev Ozdowski AM

Director, Equity and Diversity, Western Sydney University and
Adjunct Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Sydney University
PO Box A959, Sydney, South NSW 1235, Australia
Ph: (+61) 413 474744 E-mail: sevozdo@gmail.com

AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM

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1. Immigration and Multiculturalism

The post-WWII migration to Australia delivered cultural diversity which became one of this country's most defining contemporary characteristics. Immigration also required a government response in terms of societal organisation to integrate the migrants. Australian multiculturalism delivered such a response. It aims at integration with a human face and through it, social cohesion

Initially, assimilation of non-British migrants and the continuation of a mono-cultural 'Australian way of life' was the ideal to be followed. The expectation of the post-WWII immigration policy was that these non-British European migrants would, in short time, melt seamlessly into Australian society and adopt the Australian lifestyle as fast as possible; become local patriots and abandon their past national allegiances and cultural 'baggage'. 'New Australians', as they were then called, had to speak English, not live in cultural ghettos and wherever possible marry into the Australian-born community.

However, upon their arrival, non-British migrants did not dissolve easily into the Anglo-Celtic melting pot, but established their own lively communities with churches, sporting, youth and cultural clubs, associations, language schools, welfare and financial institutions. They established these to maintain their culture and to help themselves in the process of settlement as there was no welfare state to look after their needs. New Australians also developed effective community leaderships and ethnic media.

The process of moving away from the policy of assimilation towards multiculturalism gained momentum in the late sixties. With the increasing number of non-British settlers arriving, their concentration in certain localities and their growing wealth and political influence, the so-called ethnic vote started to make a difference. This clearly points to a political dimension of the origin of current multicultural policies. In addition, the policy of assimilation started losing the high moral ground and public support, including amongst the Anglo-Celtic majority. The ideals of racial equality were gaining acceptance as social integration of migrants progressed. A culinary revolution and a high rate of intermarriage also played a role in this process.

By the early seventies it had become obvious 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.

Since then the successive national governments have created architecture, policies and programs to acknowledge and support cultural diversity, although Australia did not legislate along the lines of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act 1985.¹

For example, all post-1975 governments issued major policy statements defining and endorsing multiculturalism. The themes of multiculturalism were embedded in the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* under which “*Australian citizenship is a common bond, involving reciprocal rights and obligations, uniting all Australians, while respecting their diversity.*” and in the anti-discrimination legislation – especially in the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*. The Australian Human Rights Commission has statutory responsibilities to investigate and conciliate complaints of alleged racial and other discrimination and human rights breaches lodged with it.

In addition, some states, for example New South Wales,² Victoria and South Australia have specific multicultural legislation in place. Western Australia enacted a *Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Act* in 1983; however this was repealed in 2006. A *Multicultural Recognition Bill* was recently adopted by the Queensland Parliament.

2. Definition of Multiculturalism

There is no generally agreed definition of ‘multiculturalism’. Taken literally, multi-culture means simply many cultures. Looking at how the word ‘multiculturalism’ is used one must conclude that multiculturalism means different things to different people.

Below I distinguish four different meanings that are most commonly given to the word ‘multiculturalism’.

First, multiculturalism could be defined as ideology or a normative ideal of how a diverse society should be organised to maximise the benefits of cultural and religious diversity.

Australia has adopted an inclusive model of multiculturalism where migrants can belong to Australia while keeping their original culture and traditions. Migrants and their cultural heritage are welcomed and celebrated and their economic and civic contributions are cherished. Australia’s ‘fair go’ culture is the backbone of such an ideal.³ Some 40 percent of Australians define multiculturalism as two-way integration ‘...with Australians doing more to learn about the customs and heritage of immigrants and immigrants changing their behaviour to be more like Australians.’ (Scanlon Foundation, 2016, p.6)

The majority view is that Australian multiculturalism has, at its core, some common elements of the established culture such as; the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, civil liberties and freedoms, equality of sexes and English as a national language. The non-dominant cultures are seen as contributors and not as pollutants.

A minority view would argue that the ideal of multiculturalism implies that all cultures are equal as the prefix ‘multi’ implies many equal parts. It would follow that all cultural beliefs and activities have equal standing and must be at least tolerated and preferably respected. For example, if a culture requires women’s status in the society to be different to that of men, this should be respected by the authorities and the broader society and on occasions it should be able to override the egalitarian provisions of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*.

This notion represents a relativist view of culture where a range of different standards could co-exist on equal footing, for example, Sharia law could coexist with Australian laws. It also, to a degree, challenges the normative system of the dominant culture by bringing to the fore issues of integration of cultural minorities into the so-called mainstream and by rejection of democracy and in particular separation of state and religion. The Scanlon research has suggested that approximately 25% of Australians support a cultural relativist definition. Opponents of multiculturalism focus their criticism on this definition of multiculturalism seeing it as synonymous to tribalism and likely to undermine social cohesion.

Second, the word multiculturalism is simply used as a demographic descriptor of a diverse population. This is the most common use of the word. For example, Germany, France, Peru, India or Malaysia are often described as multicultural societies, meaning that they include multiple national identities, cultures and religions living next to each other.

Sometimes the usage of the word as a demographic descriptor is limited to only indicate the presence of minorities and does not refer to the whole of society concept. For example, many European leaders, when criticising the term multiculturalism, often refer only to the settlement problems associated with the current wave of refugees or the issue of integration of Muslims into Western societies.

Third, multiculturalism could be understood as a set of government policies and programs developed in response to and to manage cultural diversity. For example, many multicultural - in the demographic sense - countries may have some legal, policy and program responses to such diversity. These may include a range of measures aiming at social integration such as anti-discrimination laws, welfare, language training for new migrants and/or measures to combat the radicalisation of Muslim youth.

Fourth, multiculturalism is understood as a social compact or agreement about how to arrange social, political and economic relationships between different cultural strata. In modern societies like Australia, Canada, New Zealand and USA such compacts are founded on the principle of equality of status and opportunity and involve the sharing of power and wealth between different ethno-cultural groups. Social compacts are organised around a complex set of agreed national values and goals, normative and structural systems as well as policy, budgetary and program responses put in place to manage diversity.

3. Demographic diversity

Australia is clearly a multicultural society in the descriptive use of this word. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Australian Census, over a quarter (26% or 5.3 million) of Australia's population was born overseas and a further one fifth (20% or 4.1 million) had at least one overseas-born parent.

Although historically, the majority of migration came from Europe, there are increasingly more Australians who were born in Asia and other parts of the world. Renewed prosperity in Europe has meant that, where once Italians and Greeks made up the majority of non-British new arrivals, in 2010–11 China surpassed the UK as Australia's primary source of permanent migrants. Since then, China and India have continued to provide the highest number of permanent migrants.⁴ Between June 1996 and June 2013, Australia's overseas-born population grew by 51.2 percent to 6.4 million people and included 427,590 born in China and 369,680 in India. The change in the ethnic composition of migrant intake is likely to

continue in the foreseeable future under the Australian non-discriminatory immigration policies.

Conflicts overseas have also meant that Australia has been taking refugees from a range of diverse countries, for example from Sudan, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Iraq and Sri Lanka. This adds to Australia's diversity.

When we look at cultural heritage, over 300 ancestries were separately identified in the 2011 Census. The most commonly reported were English (36%) and Australian (35%). A further six of the leading ten ancestries reflected the European heritage in Australia with the two remaining ancestries being Chinese (4%) and Indian (2%). (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b; see also Jupp, 1988)

Today Australians speak more than 215 languages – this includes some 40 Aboriginal languages. Apart from English, the most commonly used are Chinese (largely Mandarin and Cantonese), Italian, Greek, Arabic, Indian (Hindi and Punjabi) and Vietnamese languages.

The 2011 Census indicated that usage of non-English languages is not equally distributed across Australia. For example, nearly 23 percent of the New South Wales population speak a non-English language at home. Arabic, which dominates the western suburbs, is the most widely spoken non-English language, with Mandarin and Cantonese the next most common second languages. In the Western Sydney suburb Cabramatta West, 40% of residents speak Vietnamese, in Old Guildford 47% speak Arabic, and in Hurstville 50% speak either Cantonese or Mandarin. In contrast, English language usage dominates regional Queensland and Western Australia.

There is also enormous religious diversity with some 61 % reporting an affiliation to Christianity in the 2011 Census, 7.2% reporting an affiliation to non-Christian religions, and 22% reporting 'No Religion'. The most common non-Christian religions in 2011 were Buddhism (accounting for 2.5% of the population), Islam (2.2%) and Hinduism (1.3%), although these proportions may have changed by 2016. Of these, Hinduism had experienced the fastest growth since 2001, increasing by 189% to 275,500, followed by Islam (increased by 69% to 476,300) and Buddhism (increased by 48% to 529,000 people).⁵ In fact, equal government support for all religions has been a foundation stone of the Australian culture.⁶

4. Australian Multiculturalism - success or otherwise

The vast majority of Australians regard both Australia's immigration outcomes and its multicultural policy as a success and take pride in them. Some would go as far as to claim that multiculturalism is "*an inherent part of Australian DNA*". (Hurley, 2016) Let us start with results of public opinion research and then examine a number of other social indicators.

4.1 Attitudes towards migration and multiculturalism

The 2015 Scanlon Foundation National Survey Report, Mapping Social Cohesion (Markus, 2015), revealed that public concern over migration to Australia is at its lowest level since 2007 with some 41% agreeing that the number of immigrants accepted to Australia is "about right" and 19% that it is "too low". It suggests that Australia is a country with one of the highest levels of positive sentiment towards migration in the western world. By contrast, in the United Kingdom, 71 percent disapproved of how their government manages migration.

Similarly, the majority of Australians support multiculturalism and believe that Australia is the world's best and most cohesive multicultural society. The Scanlon Surveys have shown a strong support for the policy of multiculturalism dating back to 2013 (3 surveys) and some other surveys have indicated similar support in earlier years. The 2015 Scanlon Survey found that 86 percent of respondents agree that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia' (Markus, 2015); 75 percent that 'multiculturalism contributes to our economic development'; 71 percent that 'multiculturalism encourages migrants to integrate'; and 60 percent believe that 'diversity strengthens the Australian way of life'. (Markus, 2013). The Scanlon Foundation findings are supported by the results of the Western Sydney University led Challenging Racism Project which reported that "*About 87 percent of Australians say that they see cultural diversity as a good thing for society.*" (Dunn, 2016)

Acceptance of migration and cultural diversity is particularly strong amongst Australia's youth with 91 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that '*multiculturalism is good for Australia*'. Also, 85 percent of young adults agree that '*we should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different cultures*'; but only 40 percent in the general sample supported this statement.

Social research suggests a high level of social cohesion. This is illustrated by some 92 percent of those surveyed indicated having a 'strong sense of belonging in Australia' with close to half (44%) reporting this "always", and only small proportions "hardly ever" (5%) or "never" (3%); also, 85 percent reported to have 'a sense of pride in the Australian way of life and culture'. (Markus, 2015).

A recent Mind & Mood report on New Australians, based on extensive interviews with Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese and Somali migrants indicated that they see Australia as a peaceful and fair nation and were more optimistic about their future in the 'lucky country' than the local-born middle class. (Megalogenis, 2012) In fact, the vast majority of migrants are happy with their decision to settle in Australia and content with the nature of Australian society and its culture. For example, the majority reported feeling welcomed in Australia 'always' (52%) or 'most of the time' (28%). (Markus, 2015.)

There is also a range of other social indicators that multicultural policy is working well in Australia; let us examine them briefly.

4.2 Economic participation

Many link Australia's prosperity to diversity and point to Multiculturalism as policy that clearly helps to integrate migrants into the economy. Although unemployment differs between different ethnic communities and between skilled and humanitarian migrants overall, migrants have greater labour market participation and earn more than Australian born workers. For example, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) data the average employee income of a skilled visa holder was approximately \$5,000 higher than the national average of taxpayers in the 2009-10 financial year. Also, unemployment rates are lower for young second generation migrants than they are for the children of Australian born parents. Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities foster the entrepreneurial spirit and contribute to economic growth.

Unfortunately migrant families are slightly over-represented in the lower income decile. This statistic however, is significantly different to the situation of migrants in France and Belgium where 23 percent and 27 percent of migrant households respectively are in the lowest income decile. (Ergas, 2015) Particular difficulties are being experienced by some Muslim Australians. The 2011 census indicated that suburbs with a large concentration of Muslims have had unemployment rates of double the national average. For example, people living in Australia's only Islam-majority suburb of Lakemba, where 51.8 percent of residents identify as Muslims, recorded unemployment of 11.7 percent when national unemployment was below 6 percent. People living in such suburbs also have significantly smaller individual incomes than the national average.

4.3 Education

To start with, the merit-based immigration system that allocates a significant number of permanent immigration places has served Australia well. 'The focus on Education and skills targets immigrants with characteristics that enable them to integrate successfully and deliver good labour market and economic outcomes.' (Productivity Commission, 2015, p.2)

Then, there is a wealth of research consistently showing the education system is utilized as a major upward mobility mechanism by migrant families. Children with overseas born parents perform relatively better in education compared to those with Australian born parents. There is however no such difference in second generation.

There is also enormous economic upward intergenerational mobility amongst the new settlers suggesting, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, that in Australia "*Achievement has no colour*". For example, a study of Sydney's Lebanese Muslim community found that 45 percent of the parents had left school before the equivalent of Year 10; in contrast, virtually all of their children had completed upper secondary school, with the majority continuing to tertiary education. Although 35 percent of the fathers were manual labourers, only 10 percent of the male children are; and while barely 3 percent of the parents were in the professions, some 20 percent of their children have professional jobs. In the Islam-majority suburb Lakemba, almost 15 percent of residents have gone to university or completed other tertiary education; this figure is in line with the national average.

The contrast to Europe could not be sharper. For example, in Germany and The Netherlands, second-generation Muslims are twice as likely to leave school before completion as their native-born counterparts and young Muslims are only one-third as likely to complete post-secondary education as their native-born counterparts. A German study indicated that educational outcomes of second-generation migrants in Germany increasingly lag behind those of the native population. (Bauer et al., 2010)

4.4 Intermarriage

A high level of inter-ethnic marriage is usually considered as one of the most definitive measures of the dissolution of social and cultural barriers. In 2009 42% of marriages recorded in Australia involved at least one partner who was not Australian-born. According to the 2006 Census, a majority of third generation Australians of non-English-speaking background had partnered with persons of a different ethnic origin (the majority partnered with persons of Australian or Anglo-Celtic background). Also a majority of Indigenous Australians partnered with non-indigenous Australians.

4.5 Civic and political participation

'New Australians' have not only developed their own organisations and leaderships but have also started to participate in mainstream political processes and civic undertakings. There has been a wealth of trailblazers at Federal, State and in particular local levels of government. For example, Nick Greiner, Premier of NSW between 1988 – 1992 was born in Budapest, Hungary; the current premier of Queensland Annastacia Palaszczuk is a daughter of a Polish migrant Henry Palaszczuk, who is a former Member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly and the Federal Finance Minister Mathias Cormann was born in Belgium. However, Australian parliaments are a long way from the point where our elected representatives are reflective of the composition of the population. As of 29 June 2015, of the 226 Australian federal Parliamentarians, 26 were born overseas (13 from the UK). (Parliament of Australia, 2016) As of 6 August 2013, during the Rudd government, four members of the 42 ministers and parliamentary secretaries spoke a language other than English. (Kenny, 2013)

Over 60 percent of new settlers apply for Australian citizenship.⁷ For example on 26 January 2015 almost 16,000 people from 152 different countries become Australian citizens in public ceremonies across the nation.

5. Australian Multiculturalism - difficulties

Despite these remarkable achievements of, and the support for, multicultural policies and immigration intake, there are some emerging issues that have the potential to undermine social cohesion.

5.1 Geographical concentration and isolation

Although there are no ethnic ghettos in the strict sense of this term in Australia, the 2011 Census indicated that some migrants concentrate in particular suburbs of large cities. At the same time, they are highly likely to live in areas where a 30 percent or higher proportion of the population shares their identity, for example in localities such as Lakemba, Auburn and Greenacre in Sydney and Dandenong South, Dallas and Meadow Heights in Melbourne. They cannot be called ghettos as many houses are of high standard; as somebody observed: 'They are moving up without necessarily moving out.'

The concentration of migrants was also formed during the days of post WWII migration with some suburbs being regarded as Italian, Greek or Polish. But this distinction has long since vanished as in time the migrants became geographically mobile, using their newly created wealth to settle in the suburbs they aspired to and integrating into broader society.

There is growing recognition in academia, government and non-government organisations that Muslim Australians have not participated as prominently as expected in the process of social inclusion despite Islam and Muslims becoming an integral part of Australian social fabric. Some Muslims, generally speaking, despite the establishment of numerous Muslim organisations, schools, mosques and businesses have remained at the periphery of Australian society and their primary social networks are frequently narrow, with one survey finding that for example, 40 percent of young Muslims of Lebanese origins have never had any Anglo-Celtic friends.

Clearly more needs to be done to involve Muslim communities with the mainstream, including governance, policy development and decision making processes. One of the ways to achieve this would be through support for a greater role of secular and grass-root level community initiatives and institutions.

5.2 Feeling of injustice

The feeling of discrimination and injustice is reported to exist amongst some visibly different migrant groups, for example, youth from South Sudan, young Australian Muslims of Middle Eastern extraction and some others. According to a recent OECD survey this feeling appears to be significantly more prevalent in Australia than it is in Belgium and France.

There is also a sense that others are responsible for and must redress. For example, only 13 percent of Australian-born Lebanese Christians strongly believe governments need to do more to advance the position of migrants; but 54 percent of Australian-born Lebanese Muslims do. And though the majority of Australian-born Muslims say they have never experienced labour market discrimination themselves, they believe it to be relatively widespread and more so now than a decade ago.

5.3 Radicalization

The problem of violent extremism and radicalisation has clearly grown over the past several years in Australia. It impacts on a very small segment of the Muslim community in Australia⁸, mainly on young men, but it has the potential for extreme violent behaviour and has resulted in sporadic acts of violent terrorism. This very small minority rejects the values of Western civilization and proclaim their support for Islamic state and intention to overthrow Australian democracy. It is the first ever determined challenge to Australian multiculturalism from cultural-relativist position.

There is also a significant growth of both right and left wing extremism. While multiculturalism has consistently had majority support, there are sections of Australian society who are less comfortable with the pace of change and with the level of migrant services provided by the governments.

5.4 Racism and racial discrimination

Finally, the issue of racism which, if prevalent, may constitute one of the biggest threats to the development and good functioning of a multi-ethnic society and its cohesion. Considering the historical overhang of past racism of the 'White Australia' policy and some recent incidents⁹, the question needs to be asked: What is the actual level of racism in Australia now?

A recent national data survey from the Challenging Racism Project reported that direct individual experience of racist behavior is relatively low – from 6-7% who have experienced direct physical attacks or unfair treatment to some 20% who have experienced racial slurs and offensive gestures. The survey also demonstrated a very high level of awareness of racism amongst the Australian public, and possibly moral condemnation and disapproval of it. Racist hotspots are reported to be in areas of economic hardship, recent immigration and below-average education levels.

There is, however, a concern that racism may be on the increase. The 2015 Scanlon Foundation survey indicated an increase in people reporting a direct experience of discrimination because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion; the rate doubled to 18 percent since 2007. The research also showed a growing disengagement of some migrants from Australian life and a growing connection with countries of origin via the internet and satellite television. This links to the Survey suggesting that a sense of belonging to a ‘great extent’ fell from 77 percent in 2007 to 66 percent in 2014.

The employment discrimination against Muslim Australians would be of particular concern as currently anti-Muslim feelings have become more visible with the Scanlon Foundation surveys indicating that the attitude towards those of the Muslim faith remains relatively high (Markus, 2014). Furthermore, research also points to some deep rooted concern in some section of the population about the cultural impact of Islamic migration. The Scanlon survey (Markus, 2015) found that 25 percent of Australians expressed negative attitudes towards Muslims which is many times higher than negative attitudes against any other religious group. A high level of concern was also uncovered by the recent AIP survey last November. Graham Young, AIP Executive Director concluded: ‘There is a very strong feeling that immigrants from Islamic countries are part of a culture war pitting their way of life and beliefs against ours.’ /.../ ‘People are in favour of immigration, so this is not per se, xenophobia.’ (Australian Institute for Progress, 2015).

To conclude, there is no doubt that racism remains an issue for Australia and that there are active pockets of racist behaviour and attitudes in existence. However, this falls short of characterising racism as being a prevalent feature of contemporary Australian society.¹⁰

6. Building a national compact

Since the very early days of European settlement, the concept of belonging to Australia was quite narrow – it was centred around Anglo-Celtic ethos and institutions. In recent decades, the mass non-Anglo-Celtic migration has broadened the national identity enormously, shifting from an originally narrow focus to a more complex outlook nowadays. Now one can be from anywhere and maintain the traditions you grew up with – and still be Australian. Australian multicultural success to date has in part been due to the malleability of Australian culture and consistent economic growth, mainly due to our resources and massive migration intakes.

Today multiculturalism is seen by many as a business card or as the best short descriptor of today’s Australia, although for some people, comfort with cultural diversity is still limited to culinary diversity. In fact, multiculturalism is not a search for utopia, but a practical policy designed to include all Australians regardless of their ethnic or national heritage.

Australian multiculturalism aims to deliver equality of opportunity and social inclusion for all. It is not however, as some would expect, a policy charged with singlehanded protection of minority cultures. It must instead be seen as an important social compact focussing on mutual rights and obligations. At its core there is a requirement for all migrants to accept Australian core values and laws. It also allows migrants to keep their birth country’s customs and traditions providing that they do not conflict with the core values. It aims at development of a well-integrated and cohesive society that values and respects difference. It does not

however encourage development of separate, parallel communities based on ethnic, religious or racial distinction.

The fundamentals of the compact as initially defined by Fraser's government 1978 '*Guiding principles*' and in particular Prime Minister Hawke's 1988 '*National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*'.

On one hand, the multicultural compact aims to advance egalitarian, economically robust, culturally sensitive and politically inclusive Australia. Cultural diversity is welcomed as an asset and governments are charged with keeping the societal structures open to and inclusive of newcomers. The compact also encourages preservation and transfer of minority cultural and linguistic heritage to the next generation and provides some resources to assist with cultural maintenance.

The multicultural compact is underpinned by core Australian values such as equality of the sexes and the rule of law and expresses the principle of respect for and tolerance of racial, cultural and religious differences. In fact, multiculturalism extended Australian egalitarianism and the '*fair go*' ethos to include cultural, linguistic and religious differences. Craig Laundy, Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, in his recent opinion piece said: 'Our commitment to the rule of law, our parliamentary democracy, equality of opportunity regardless of race, religion or ethnic background; tolerance, fair play, mutual respect – these are the values that have attracted more than 7.5 million migrants to Australia and they are the very reasons why multiculturalism has been such a success.' (Laundy, 2016).

Thus, new settlers are expected to participate on equal terms in all facets of the Australian society, to access economic, educational and other opportunities and to contribute to nation building. In particular, they are expected to join the broader Australian society and its political and cultural institutions. Settlers are to participate fully in the Australian economy delivering the so-called 'productive diversity' dividend (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997).

On the other hand, the compact requires that minority cultures do not conflict with the Australian core values and with other minority groups. The Australian Citizenship pledge reads: 'From this time forward I pledge my 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.' Thus, it is also expected that newcomers will give up their foreign loyalties and, in particular, involvement with the country of origin's conflicts and ethnic or religious hatreds. The former Prime Minister Tony Abbott expressed this idea by saying that: 'Newcomers to this country are not expected to surrender their heritage but they are expected to surrender their hatreds.'

However, the recent experience tends to suggest that an upcoming issue is the rejection within a segment of Muslim population of the values of western civilisation. For example, the Hizub ut-Tahrir Islamist group regard that singing the national anthem or pledging support for democratic values and the oath of citizenship amounts to an oppressive campaign of 'forced assimilation'. (Lewis & Higgins, 2015) This is, perhaps, an unusual development in the context of Australian multicultural experience.

The above tenants of this social compact were well summarised by the former Prime Minister Gillard who said: "Multiculturalism is not only just the ability to maintain our diverse backgrounds and cultures. It is 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". (Australianpolitics.com, 2012)

Following the terrorist attacks in Brussels on 23 March 2016 the Prime Minister Turnbull asserted that multiculturalism is one of key ingredients ensuring that Australia is better placed than many of our European counterparts in dealing with the threat of terrorism. He said: 'Strong borders, vigilant security agencies governed by the rule of law, and a steadfast commitment to the shared values of freedom and mutual respect - these are the ingredients of multicultural success - which is what we have achieved in Australia.' (Turnbull, 2016b)

To summarise, Australian multiculturalism is unquestionably a success story. It reflects a demographic reality, it is supported by national policy and institutions; and it is centred on a social compact that is built on mutual respect and shared rights and responsibilities. Multicultural policies have helped to unlock migrants' capacity and willingness to contribute to broader society. The policies were also able to build and maintain an unparalleled level of social cohesion despite a continuously high and culturally diverse migration intake level since the late 1940's.

As a high volume of migration to Australia is likely to continue in the foreseeable future, multiculturalism, with its stress on core values of democracy, equality, social justice and English as a national language, must continue as government endorsed social policy to deliver integration of newcomers and social cohesion for all. Perhaps much more would need to be done in terms of citizenship education in order to combat the relativist tendencies in Australian multiculturalism. The European Union approach to citizenship education provides a good benchmark for Australia to aspire to. (European Commission, 2012)

Multiculturalism compact, however, must also be seen as a work in progress project. To maintain a high level of social support for the multicultural compact, governments of the day would need to maintain its integrity and not to allow diversity to be used as party political football. On-going government leadership is needed to ensure that the key tenants of multicultural compact are understood and continue to be supported by all Australians and that xenophobia and racism are kept in check.

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FOOTNOTES

- ¹ A more complete history of Australian multiculturalism could be found in Ozdowski, 2013 and 2016.
- ² Taking as an example the NSW *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*, it defines multiculturalism, defines its six principles and establishes it as the policy of the state; it also creates the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW to fulfil a range of functions, including to support multicultural communities; advise government on multicultural affairs issues; and report annually on community relations and the effectiveness of government agencies in observing the principles of multiculturalism. To support the Commission's work, the Act also provides for the establishment of Regional Advisory Councils covering all regional areas of the state.
- ³ Interpretation of multiculturalism in Australia differs significantly from that in Canada and the United States. According to James Jupp, Canadian multiculturalism reflects the bi-cultural and bi-lingual character of Canada; while in the United States, where multiculturalism was largely driven out of civil rights and constitutional protections it includes ethnic quotas in public appointments and redrawing electoral boundaries to take into account ethnic distribution. For more see: Jupp J., 2009a.
- ⁴ New Zealand citizens continue to feature highly in the number of settler arrivals, but they are not counted under Australia's Migration Program unless they apply for (and are granted) a permanent visa.
- ⁵ For in-depth analysis of Australia's religious diversity see: Jupp, 2009b.
- ⁶ *The NSW Church Act* of 1836 is possibly the most important piece of legislation affecting the place of religion in contemporary Australia. It provided for equal treatment of all religions, but not for the American principle of separation between the State and Church. In fact, the Act provided state funds for clergy and building of churches. The principles that the Act has established still remain at the core of Australian society.
- ⁷ 18 years or older must have lived in Australia for 4 years on a permanent residency visa before one can apply for Australian citizenship. During those 4 years, one may leave Australia for periods that total one year. In the year immediately before application, one must have been in Australia for 9 months or more.
- ⁸ There is close to 500,000 Muslims in Australia. If we add up the number of Muslims who have gone overseas to fight for ISIS, those who rioted or have been arrested or are under investigation for terrorism-related offenses we get a total of about 1,000 people. That is 0.2% of the Muslim population in Australia.
- ⁹ In 2005 there were a series of racially motivated confrontations between white and Lebanese youths that started around a beachfront suburb, Cronulla, and continued in the following nights as retaliatory violent assaults and large gatherings of protesters in several other Sydney suburbs. This led to an unprecedented police lock-down of Sydney beaches. In 2009 protests were conducted in Melbourne by Indian students and wide scale media coverage in India alleged that a series of robberies and assaults against Indian students should be ascribed to racism in Australia.
- ¹⁰ There is no agreement amongst academia and public commentators on how deeply rooted racism is in Australian society and how to deal with it. The responses appear to depend upon who you are. People associated with the political left and those Australians who represent for example Aboriginal, Muslim or sections of Indian communities are more likely to claim that Australia continues to be a racist society, indeed full of racial discrimination and prejudice. For example, Aboriginal Reverend Aunty Alex Gater is of the view that, "*We all know that racism is alive and well.*" The same view was expressed by Colin Markham, former NSW parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous affairs who also said, "*We all know that racism is alive and well.*" Other people, especially those who belong to majority groupings and/or hold positions of wealth and/or power and many post WWII migrant communities as well the Chinese and some other communities would be more likely to argue that there is no significant level of racism in contemporary Australia. For example, former Prime Ministers of Australia have stated that "*I do not accept that there is underlying racism in this country*" (Australianpolitics.com 2005) and that "*I do not believe that racism is at work in Australia*" (Kevin Rudd). See also (Ozdowski, 2012)