Multiculturalism:

Key Issues and Sources

This paper has been prepared against the background of recent disturbing events around the world, including in Australia and NSW that have raised questions about the integration of some groups into the broader community. One aspect to these developments is the continuing debate about the policy and practice of multiculturalism in this country. The underlying purpose of that policy is to build a strong, unified community based on recognition of the ties that bind us, on one side, together with positive public acknowledgement, tolerance and celebration of ethnic, cultural and religious differences, on the other. The policy and practice of multiculturalism can be understood therefore as an expression of unity in diversity.

Multiculturalism and the policies relevant to the culturally diverse society we live in have many aspects. At the most practical level they can be about the provision of interpreter and other services, or more broadly about the formulation of policies to support and maintain cultural ties and social cohesion. There are also more general considerations to bear in mind, including issues around non-discrimination and anti-racism.

In 2007 the Parliamentary Research Service published *Multiculturalism*, Briefing Paper 9/2007 by Lenny Roth. That paper reviewed the history of multiculturalism in Australia and NSW, and set out the debate on the subject up to that time. This Issues Backgrounder updates the relevant sources and legal and policy developments, along with the evidence on public opinion relating to multiculturalism. This paper is organised under the following headings:

DEFINING MULTICULTURALISM

According to the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Migration's 2013 report, *Inquiry into Migration and Multiculturalism in Australia* (para 2.54):

> multiculturalism is an inclusive policy which values and respects diversity *and promotes inclusiveness and engagement* within the framework of Australian laws.

Reflecting that duality of purpose, as originally enacted the preamble to the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* (NSW) provided that the Act:

> (a) recognises and values the different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds of the people of New South Wales, and
> (b) promotes the equal rights and responsibilities of all the people of New South Wales within a cohesive and harmonious multicultural society in which diversity is regarded as a strength and an asset, individuals share a commitment to Australia, and English is the common language.

From an academic perspective, the following three-part definition of multiculturalism is presented in – George Crowder, *Theories of Multiculturalism: an Introduction*, Polity Press 2013 (page 7):

1. Multiculturalism starts with the observation that most contemporary societies are 'multicultural' – that is, they do in fact contain multiple cultures.

2. More distinctively, multiculturalists respond to that fact as something to approve of rather than oppose or merely tolerate.

3. More distinctively still, multiculturalists argue that the multiplicity of cultures within a single society should be not only generally approved of but also given positive recognition in the public policy and public institutions of the society.

For Crowder, it is only with the addition of (3) that 'multiculturalism proper' or fully fledged multiculturalism comes into play. That definition, he notes, excludes 'purely descriptive theories of contemporary diversity, the mere celebration of the diversity and the advocacy of toleration and other public responses that fall short of positive recognition' (page 8).

At the Commonwealth level the current official government formulation of the dimensions and limits of multiculturalism is set out on the Department of Social Services' website - *What is multiculturalism?*

The same website provides access to The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy, in which four multicultural policy principles formulated at the time of the Gillard Government are outlined as follows (last updated 7 November 2014):

Principle 1: The Australian Government celebrates and values the benefits of cultural diversity for all Australians, within the broader aims of national unity, community harmony and maintenance of our democratic values.

….

Principle 2: The Australian Government is committed to a just, inclusive and socially cohesive society where everyone can participate in the opportunities that Australia offers and where government services are responsive to the needs of Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

….

Principle 3: The Australian Government welcomes the economic, trade and investment benefits which arise from our successful multicultural nation.

….

Principle 4: The Australian Government will act to promote understanding and acceptance while responding to expressions of intolerance and discrimination with strength, and where necessary, with the force of the law.

NSW LEGISLATION AND REVISED TERMINOLOGY

The Premier's forward to the Multicultural NSW strategic plan Harmony in Action, 2014-17 states in part:

> NSW has a strong history of championing cultural and linguistic diversity. It was the first State in Australia, and the second in the world, to introduce a policy specifically designed to welcome cultural and linguistic diversity as a social and economic advantage. The NSW Government is dedicated to bringing communities together and protecting this State's cultural diversity for the benefit of future generations. We also remain focused on bringing harmony to all of the State's multicultural communities.

In 2014 the relevant legislation was substantially revised and renamed, from the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* to the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000*; the Community Relations Commissions was also renamed Multicultural NSW. Introducing the legislation on 14 October 2014, the Minister said:

> This bill will give greater emphasis to the need for all citizens of New South Wales, regardless of nationality, cultural origin or religious affiliation, to have a collective responsibility to work together for our common welfare and future as Australians…

References to "multiculturalism" were replaced by the more descriptively neutral term "multicultural", with section 3 of the Act now referring to "Multicultural Principles" instead of 'Principles of Multiculturalism'. As the Commonwealth Department of Social Services notes on its website, "In a descriptive sense multicultural is simply a term which describes the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Australia". The text of the "Multicultural Principles" and that of the preamble to the NSW Act were also revised in 2014, with the Minister commenting:

> The principles are substantially the same, with the recognition and value of different linguistic, religious and ancestral backgrounds remaining paramount. However, the order in which they appear has been changed to reflect the importance to ensure that we celebrate our diversity and the things that unite us. The definition of "cultural diversity" will be amended by removing the term "racial and ethnic backgrounds" and replacing it with "ancestral background", wherever occurring. This has been done to remove any possible pejorative connotations that may be associated with the term

"ethnic" and to reflect the question asked routinely by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the national census when inquiring as to each person's background.

MULTICULTURAL POLICY INITIATIVES

Commonwealth Government

At the Commonwealth level the gateway into multiculturalism is through the website of the Department of Social Services. It includes links to:

- *A Multicultural Australia*, last updated 2 April 2015
- *Publications*, last updated 25 August 2015
- *Multicultural Access and Equity*, last updated 22 June 2015
- *Multicultural affairs grants*, last updated 7 November 2014
- *Related agencies and sites*, last updated 27 October 2015

This includes the Gillard Government's The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy, which sets out the following key initiatives which remain in place currently:

- ***Establishment of the Australian Multicultural Council***: The Council's webpage explains that it 'a ministerially-appointed body that provides advice to the Government on multicultural affairs policy and programmes..'.

- ***Strengthening access and equity***: This is said to include:

    Work with state and territory governments under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to ensure that data collected by government agencies on client services can be disaggregated by markers of cultural diversity, such as country-of-birth, ancestry, languages spoken at home and level of English proficiency. This will feed into the yearly Report on Government Services (ROGS), which is coordinated by the Productivity Commission.

- ***National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy***: For background to the strategy and a review see - Australian Human Rights Commission, *National Anti-Racism Strategy and Racism: It Stops With Me – Summary Evaluation and Future Direction 2015*. The Australian Human Rights Commission writes on its website:

    In 2011, the Australian Government committed to develop and implement the National Anti-Racism Strategy for Australia. The Strategy will be implemented between July 2012 and June 2015. It will focus on public awareness, education resources and youth engagement and will be underpinned by research, consultation and evaluation. The aim of the National Anti-Racism Strategy is to promote a clear understanding in the Australian community of what racism is, and how it can be prevented and reduced.

- ***Multicultural Arts and Festivals Grants***: It is commented that the Australian Government will 'reprioritise the existing scope of the Diversity and Social

Cohesion Program to include funding for multicultural arts and festivals small grants'.

- ***Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program***: The Program's website notes that:

  > The objective of the MYSP Program is to create sustainable opportunities for youth from new and emerging communities and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in sport and physical activity within local communities. Grant funding available under the MYSP Program is $300,000 annually.

In addition, the Department of Social Services Multicultural Access and Equity webpage provides information on the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy: Respecting diversity - Improving responsiveness. This is said to acknowledge 'that we live in a multicultural society and there is an obligation on Australian Government departments and agencies to provide equitable access to services regardless of the cultural or linguistic background of clients'. It is further explained that:

> The Policy consists of six core dimensions - Leadership, Engagement, Performance, Capability, Responsiveness and Openness - with minimum obligations attached to each. It covers all engagement and communication of government departments and agencies with multicultural communities, not just direct service delivery.

> Departments and agencies covered by the former *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA Act) were required to have an Agency Multicultural Plan in place from 1 July 2013.

> The Policy requires departments and agencies to report annually in their Annual Reports and biennially to Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS is responsible for tabling a biennial report to both houses of Parliament. The Agency Multicultural Plans aimed to make government policies and programmes more transparent and accountable for their interactions with culturally and linguistically diverse clients.

In 2011-2012, an independent inquiry was conducted into the responsiveness of Australian Government services to Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population. The report, Access and Equity for a Multicultural Australia, and the Government's response to it can be accessed through the website of the Department of Social Service.

See also the Australian Public Services Commission Multicultural Plan 2013-15.

Provided on the Department of Social Services' website is a timeline of key moments in Australia's multicultural history, as follows:

1973 – Al Grassby, Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam Government issued a reference paper entitled *A multi-cultural society for the future*.
1975 – At a ceremony proclaiming the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, the Prime Minister referred to Australia as a 'multicultural nation'. The Prime Minister, and Leader of the Opposition, made speeches demonstrating for the first time that multiculturalism was becoming a major political priority on both sides of politics.
1977 – the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, appointed to advise the Fraser Liberal-Country Party Government, recommended a public policy of multiculturalism in its report *Australia as a multicultural society*.
1978 – the first official national multicultural policies were implemented by the Fraser Government,

in accord with recommendations of the *Galbally Report* in the context of government programs and services for migrants.
1979 – an act of parliament established the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA), whose objectives included raising awareness of cultural diversity and promoting social cohesion, understanding and tolerance.
1986 – the AIMA Act was repealed by the Hawke Government, which, in 1987, created the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
1989 – following community consultations and drawing on the advice of the Advisory Council for Multicultural Affairs, the Hawke Government produced the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, which had bipartisan political support.
1994 – a National Multicultural Advisory Council was established to review and update the national agenda. Its report, launched in June 1995, found that much had been achieved and recommended further initiatives.
1996 – following the election of the Howard Government in March 1996, OMA was absorbed into the then Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.
1996 – parliament endorsed the *Parliamentary Statement on Racial Tolerance*. **See:** Parliamentary Statement on Racial Tolerance
1997 – the Government announced a new National Multicultural Advisory Council (NMAC).
1999 – the Prime Minister launched NMAC's report, *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness.*
December 1999 – in response to the NMAC report, the government issued its multicultural policy, A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia, and NMAC was wound up.
May 2003 – the government released its multicultural policy statement, *Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity*. It updated the 1999 new agenda, set strategic directions for 2003–06, and included a commitment to the Council for Multicultural Australia. **See:** Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity
December 2008 – the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC) was officially launched.
April 2010 – AMAC presented its advice and recommendations on cultural diversity policy to government in a statement titled *The People of Australia*. **See:** The People of Australia
February 2011 – *The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy* was launched. **See:** The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy
August 2011 – the Australian Multicultural Council was officially launched.
March 2013 – the government announced its response to the recommendations of the Access and Equity Inquiry Panel.
September 2013 – under new Administrative Arrangements Order, the Prime Minister transferred multicultural affairs from the Immigration portfolio into the new Department of Social Services.

New South Wales Government

A major review of the NSW Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement Program was undertaken and reported upon in - Community Relations Commission NSW, *25 Years of EAPS: Review of EAPS operation in NSW*, March 2009. This set out a comprehensive account of the history of relevant policies in NSW to that date, plus comparative accounts of comparable programs across other Australian States and internationally.

This timeline of EAPS Milestones is from Appendix B to the publication - Community Relations Commission NSW, *25 Years of EAPS: Review of EAPS operation in NSW*, March 2009. EAPS refers to the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement Program.

1977	NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission formed to review and write a report on access issues pertaining to people from non-English speaking backgrounds.
1978	*Participation Report* released, following the NSW government's review into the needs of people from non-English speaking backgrounds in New South Wales.
1979	The Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW formally established under the *Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979.*

1983	The Premier established the Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement (EAPS) Program. All NSW public sector agencies are required to develop an EAPS, comprising a retrospective and a forward component, and submit it to the then Ethnic Affairs Commission.
1986	Local Government Ethnic Affairs Policies Statements developed and piloted in five local The first Ethnic Affairs Report 1997 on the status of ethnic affairs and EAPS outcomes in New South Wales was prepared by the Ethnic Affairs Commission for tabling in Parliament as required under section 17, of the *Ethnic Affairs Commission Amendment Act 1996*.
1990	The Ethnic Affairs Commission produced the Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement (EAPS) Program Strategic Plan which contains a set of EAPS goals and performance measures for the whole NSW government sector.
1993	Under the *Charter of Principles for a Culturally Diverse Society*, all NSW public sector agencies were required to prepare Statements of Intent, and the four *Principles of Cultural Diversity* became State policy.
1996	Following the NSW Government's review of ethnic affairs, the *Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000,* was released. The plan defines the government's three key result areas as: social justice, community harmony, and economic and cultural opportunities.
1997	As part of the 1996 review of ethnic affairs, the *Ethnic Affairs Commission Amendment Act* was proclaimed in 1997. The amendments enshrined the four principles of cultural diversity in state law, strengthened EAPS obligations on NSW public sector agencies, and enhanced the powers and responsibilities of the then Ethnic Affairs Commission. The NSW Government re-introduced the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) Program. The Premier released Memorandum No 97-7, which stated that all NSW agencies were required to prepare an EAPS. They were also required to include a statement on their EAPS progress in their annual report, by authority of the (1997) Regulations under the Annual Reports Acts. The first Ethnic Affairs Report 1997 on the status of ethnic affairs and EAPS outcomes in New South Wales was prepared by the Ethnic Affairs Commission for tabling in Parliament as required under section 17, of the *Ethnic Affairs Commission Amendment Act 1996*.
1998	The EAPS Standards Framework was implemented. For the first time, the NSW Government could benchmark EAPS progress across the public sector in five core activity areas: planning and evaluation, program and service delivery, staffing, communication, and funded services. This framework also provided the government with an objective measurement of agency EAPS performance over time. From 1998, key agencies were required to submit annual EAPS retrospective reports to the Commission against the Standards Framework criteria.
2001	The *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* was enacted. The Community Relations Commission For a multicultural New South Wales was created, with greater responsibility for the EAPS Program. The Act requires the Commission "…to assist, and assess the effectiveness of, public authorities in observing the principles of multiculturalism in the conduct of their affairs, particularly in connection with the delivery of government services".
2002	The Premier released the Green Paper, *Cultural Harmony: The Next Decade 2002 – 2012*, which evaluated the Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000. Based on this evaluation, 46 recommendations were proposed, some of which relate to the future direction of the EAPS Program.
2004	The Premier released the White Paper, *Cultural Harmony: The Next Decade 2002-2012*, which defines EAPS and aligns the principles of multiculturalism with New South Wales key objectives of: leadership, community harmony, access and equity, and economic and cultural opportunities.
2008	To assist local councils to implement the principles of multiculturalism, required by the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000,* a kit and planning framework was released for use by local councils. government areas.

More recent developments are listed below:

2011	Premier's Memorandum M2011-05 - Multicultural Programs and Service to Provision in New South Wales (MPSP). The MPSP replaced the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) program. Under the MPSP all NSW Government agencies are required to have a multicultural plan, and to report on it regularly either through their Annual Reports, or through the Annual Report of their Principal Department. Launch of the O'Farrell Government's Multicultural Advantage Action Plan 2012-2015 (MAAP). The MAAP was designed to direct actions of the government in: - Fostering **respect** and **unity** between and among different cultural, religious and linguistic groups to strengthen equity, community harmony and opportunity - Demonstrating, celebrating and growing the positive social, cultural and economic **value** of multiculturalism - Expanding opportunities for the participation of people, regardless of their cultural, linguistic or religious background in social, cultural and economic life - Fostering broader acceptance of multiculturalism as an asset
2012	Premier's Memorandum M2012-19 – Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP) .New lines of reporting for the MPSP formulated to be implemented in 2013.
2014	Launch of the Multicultural NSW Strategic Plan, Harmony in Action, 2014-17. The legislation was substantially revised and renamed, from the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* to the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000*; the Community Relations Commissions was also renamed Multicultural NSW. Labor Opposition criticises Government for shutting down 15 multicultural consultative committees (see Media Release 21/8/14) Provision is made for a Multicultural Small Business Advisory service (see Media Release of 22/10/14 and this Media Release from 4/2/15 – 'Seminars for multicultural small business owners') A "speak out' against racism hot line launched by Multicultural NSW (see Media release 29/10/14)

For NSW, the best gateway to the current policy framework is through the Multicultural NSW website. This includes the webpage Multicultural Policies and Services Program, which states in part:

> The Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP) is a whole-of-government program which is overseen by Multicultural NSW. The MPSP is also a public accountability mechanism. The Multicultural NSW Strategic Plan, Harmony in Action, 2014-17, is our strategy for building and maintaining a cohesive and harmonious multicultural society that enriches the lives of all the people in NSW. The MPSP is our main way of enabling equitable access to services and programs for every individual in NSW.
>
> Multicultural NSW works with NSW government agencies to implement the Multicultural Principles, as required under the Multicultural NSW Act 2000. We also assess how well agencies are implementing the Principles through their multicultural plans.
>
> NSW government agencies are each required to have a current multicultural plan which shows how it will conduct its business within a culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse society Premier's Memorandum M2012-19. Like any other corporate plan, a multicultural plan will identify strategic priorities, assign corporate responsibilities and specify a timeframe for its implementation.

NSW public authorities are required to report publicly on progress through their Annual Reports. Multicultural NSW reports on the Government's progress through the Community Relations Report.

Agency specific programs include the Education Department's Multicultural Policy for public schools in NSW. The website explains

Multicultural Education includes a wide range of strategies which aim to achieve two goals: (i) provide all students with the knowledge, skills and values needed to participate successfully in our culturally diverse society and (ii) support the specific needs of students from language backgrounds other than English including new arrivals, refugees and students learning English as an additional language/dialect (EALD).

The Department's Multicultural Education Policy outlines the responsibilities of schools and department offices in meeting the needs of our culturally diverse population. The Multicultural Plan 2012-15 outlines specific departmental multicultural education strategies with achievements reported in Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP) Reports.

The Multicultural NSW website also makes reference to the Multicultural NSW Symposium:

The purpose of the Multicultural NSW Symposium is to inform, engage and consult government and community representatives and discuss issues that affect the community. Under the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000*, Multicultural NSW is required to undertake systematic and wide-ranging consultation with people and groups with respect to its objectives. The hosting of the Symposium annual activities is one of the avenues used by the Multicultural NSW to meet this requirement.

MULTICULTURALISM – CRITICISMS AND RESPONSES

This Issues Backgrounder does not engage with the complex and sometimes fractious debate for and against multiculturalism. The main criticisms and responses were outlined in Chapters 5 and 6 of the 2007 Briefing Paper, *Multiculturalism*. Further discussion on the broader debate is found in - Elsa Koleth, *Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas*, Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, Research Paper 6/2010-11.

Common criticisms of multiculturalism are also set out in - George Crowder, *Theories of Multiculturalism: an Introduction*, Polity Press 2013 (page 4). These include: that emphasis on cultural diversity and distinct identities undermines cohesion and shared identity; and that illiberal cultural traditions are accommodated by multiculturalism.

While acknowledging the issues and controversies that attend multiculturalism, the Commonwealth's Joint Standing Committee on Migration's 2013 report, *Inquiry into Migration and Multiculturalism in Australia* was of the opinion that (para 2.51):

multiculturalism is an indisputable success story for Australia. The policy has contributed to the transformation of Australia from a small, insular community with a colonial mindset to a sophisticated and cosmopolitan nation that can engage with the region and the world on its own terms.

Comparing Australia with Europe, the Committee noted claims that Australia has had more success integrating migrant communities than many European countries, primarily because Australia planned for migration as part of a long-term population and economic model (para 4.59):

> …widely cited references to the 'failure' of multiculturalism in Germany and France proceed on the assumption that ethnic diversity is the same thing as having a multicultural policy. These countries, however, have not planned for migration as part of their long-term population or economic model. Australia's migration program and policy of multiculturalism by contrast has been predicated on nation building and integration, offering permanent migration, options for citizenship after three years, and a policy for respect of diversity.

FACTS, FIGURES AND SOURCES ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The policy debates about multiculturalism operate in the context of a culturally diverse Australia, the key statistics and sources for which are outlined below.

Statistical sources for Australia

The best entry point into the data found in the 2011 Census of Population and Housing is the ABS paper, _Cultural Diversity in Australia – Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census_ (cat. no 2071.0) The same paper observes that that further analysis of Census data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia can be found in Counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2011 (cat. no. 2075.0).

A current snapshot of cultural diversity nationwide is found in _Mapping Social Cohesion, The Scanlon Foundation surveys 2015_ by Professor Andrew Markus (page 11).

> In 2011, 27% of the Australian population was born overseas and 20% born in Australia with at least one overseas-born parent, a total of 47% There has been a gradual increase in the proportion overseas-born, from 23% in 2001 to 27% in 2011, an increase from 4.1 million in 2001 to 5.3 million in 2011.
>
> **The estimated 27% overseas-born ranks Australia first within the OECD among nations with populations over ten million**. It compares with 20% overseas-born in Canada, 13% in Germany, 13% in the United States, 11% in the United Kingdom, and 12% in France. The average for the OECD is 12%.
>
> A relatively high proportion of the overseas-born in Australia live in capital cities: 82% in 2011, compared to 66% of all people. In 2011, the overseas-born comprised an estimated 37% of the population of Perth, 36% of Sydney, 33% of Melbourne, 26% of Adelaide and Brisbane, and 14% of Hobart.
>
> The overseas-born are also unevenly distributed in the capital cities, with concentrations above 50% in some Local Government Areas. Data on language usage provides a fuller understanding of the extent of diversity than country of birth, as it captures the diversity among both first and second generation Australians. **In some suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne, where over 60% of the population is overseas-born, over 75% speak a language other than English in the home.**

These suburbs include, in Sydney, Cabramatta (88%), Canley Vale (84%), Lakemba (84%); in Melbourne, Campbellfield (81%), Springvale (79%), Dallas (73%).

In 2011, of the overseas-born, the leading countries of birth were the United Kingdom (20.8%), New Zealand (9.1%), China (6.0%), India (5.6%), Vietnam and Italy (3.5%).

Over the last thirty years, an increasing proportion of immigrants have been drawn from the Asian region. In 2013-14 the leading country of birth for immigrants was India (21%), followed by China (14%) and the United Kingdom (12%). Of the top ten source countries, seven are in the Asian region and only 27% of the total is from OECD countries. Settler arrivals from New Zealand, who are not included in the Migration Programme, numbered 27,274, a marked decline from 41,230 in 2012-13.

Much of the recent debate about multiculturalism has centred on Australia's Muslim population. A snapshot of that population is found in *Australian Muslims: a demographic, social and economic profile of Muslims in Australia 2015*, University of South Australia, International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding. According to the report (page 14):

Muslims constitute 2.2% of the Australian population, making Islam Australia's third largest religion. Islam is the second-fastest growing religion in Australia, after Hinduism. Australian Muslims come from 183 different countries, making them one of Australia's most ethnically and nationally heterogeneous communities. About two fifths of Australian Muslims are of North African or Middle Eastern origin and about a quarter are of South and Central Asian origin.

In summary, the following demographic findings were also reported.

Ethnic diversity (p 19)	In 2011, 38% of Muslims in Australia were Australian born and another 39% were born in Lebanon, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Bangladesh, Iraq, Iran, Indonesia and India. In the 2011 Census there were 35 countries from which 1000 or more Muslims were reported to have originated; and 79 countries from which 100 or more Muslims originated. Altogether Australian Muslims came from 183 countries, making them one of the most ethnically and nationally heterogeneous communities in Australia.
Geographical distribution (p 21)	New South Wales and Victoria are home to 78% of Muslim Australians. Of these 75% live in Sydney and Melbourne. Another 19% live in Perth (7.5%), Brisbane (6.3%), Adelaide (3.8%) and Canberra (1.6%). In short, Australian Muslims are overwhelmingly urban dwellers.
Age profile (p 22)	The distinctive feature of the Australian Muslim age profile is that they are significantly younger than the overall Australian population. In 2011, 75% of Muslim Australians compared with 61% of all Australians were below the age of 45, and only 3.4% were 65 years and older, compared with 14% of all Australians. This means that Australian Muslims are adding significantly to the economically active labour force in Australia, thus contributing to economic productivity.

Statistical sources for NSW

The Multicultural NSW website includes a Community Profiles page which sets out detailed statistical information based on the 2011 Census. Information is presented in respect to the following categories of profiles:

- **Ancestry profile**
  Ancestry defines the cultural association and ethnic background of an individual going back three generations. Ancestry is a good measure of the total size of cultural groups in New South Wales regardless of where they were born or what language they speak.
  View the demographic characteristics of 121 ancestral groups in New South Wales.

- **Birthplace profiles**
  Birthplace identifies where people were born and is indicative of the level of cultural diversity in the New South Wales.
  View the demographic characteristics of 12 countries of birth in New South Wales.

- **Language profiles**
  Language spoken indicates how culturally diverse a population is and the degree to which different ethnic groups and nationalities are retaining their language.
  View the demographic characteristics of 83 languages spoken in New South Wales.

- **Religion profiles**
  Religion is an indicator of cultural identity and ethnicity when observed in conjunction with other key variables. Religion data reveal the major concentrations of religions as well as revealing the proportion of people with no religious affiliation.
  View the demographic characteristics of 47 religions in New South Wales.

- **Local Government Area profiles**
  View the demographic characteristics of 152 Local Government Areas in New South Wales.

  - **Electoral Division profiles**
    View the demographic characteristics of 93 Electoral Divisions in New South Wales.

Note that more detailed reports relating to all these categories can be requested by email from this webpage.

For NSW State Electoral Divisions, as redistributed in 2013, statistical information on cultural diversity based on the 2011 Census can also be found in the following Parliamentary Research Service papers:

NSW Electorate Profiles: cultural diversity (2013 Redistribution - Greater Sydney), Background Paper 8/2014 by Jack Finegan and Dan Montoya.

NSW Electorate Profiles: cultural diversity (2013 Redistribution - Regional NSW), Background Paper 9/2014 by Jack Finegan and Dan Montoya.

A separate profile is presented for all 93 State electorates. Each electorate profile is in two parts. Following a map of the electorate, the first part sets out three census indicators of cultural diversity – country of birth, ancestry and language spoken at home. The second part of each profile examines the electorate's five largest populations of people born in a non-English speaking country. These populations are broken down by the following indicators:

- Year of arrival;
- Age;
- Citizenship;
- Labour force; Personal weekly income;
- Highest level of schooling completed; and
- Highest non-school qualification attained.

PUBLIC OPINION ON MULTICULTURALISM

The 2007 Parliamentary Research Service paper, *Multiculturalism*, set out the findings of public opinion polls on multiculturalism from the late 1980s to the poll conducted after the Cronulla riots in December 2005. In respect to this last poll, the paper reported that (page 39):

> the *Sydney Morning Herald* published the results of a poll showing that 81 per cent of those surveyed supported multiculturalism. This figure included 37% who strongly supported multiculturalism'.

A further overview of surveys of attitudes to multiculturalism is found in - Andrew Markus, Attitudes to Multiculturalism and Cultural Diversity in *Multiculturalism and Integration: a harmonious relationship* edited by Michael Clyne and James Jupp, ANU E-Press 2011. Markus started on this cautionary note (page 89):

> It is a complex matter to unravel attitudes to multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Taking specific poll findings at face value can lead to misrepresentation, evidenced in the contending claims made from time to time concerning the level of support for multiculturalism.

One recent report is - Professor Andrew Markus, *Mapping Social Cohesion, The Scanlon Foundation surveys 2015*. Specifically in relation to multiculturalism the report found in summary (page 2):

> The Scanlon Foundation surveys have found a **consistently high level of agreement with the proposition that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia'**: 84% in 2013, 85% in 2014 and 86% in 2015. The 2015 survey provides further evidence on the meaning of multiculturalism in Australia. In Europe, multiculturalism is often seen as a policy of failure, with cultural difference entrenched in immigrant communities which are removed from the main currents of national life. In Australia, multiculturalism is seen as a success in facilitating integration.
>
> **Bivariate analysis finds that close to two-thirds of respondents are in support of both Australians and immigrants adapting to a changing Australian society, or of the view that Australians should 'do more to learn about the customs and heritage of ethnic and cultural groups in this country'**. A minority, close to one in four respondents, consider that it is up to immigrants to accommodate themselves to life in Australia.
>
> An increasing proportion also indicates acceptance of government assistance to ethnic groups to maintain their cultures and traditions. While such policy divides opinion and is supported by a minority, support has increased from 32% in 2007, 36% in 2012, to 41% in 2015.

In respect to social cohesion more generally, based on the *Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion* the report found in summary that:

> An overview of change is provided by the Scanlon-Monash Index, which finds that in 2015 the level of social cohesion has moved in a positive direction. **The 2015 Index is at 92.5, up from 89.5 in 2014, although the Index is at the third lowest point in the eight surveys (2007-2014). The three point increase between 2014 and 2015 represents the largest positive movement in the Index,** whose major movement has been negative, down by 8.6 points in 2010 and 5.9 points in 2013.

> Within the five specific domains of social cohesion covered by the Index – belonging, worth, social justice, participation, and acceptance/rejection – **largest change is in acceptance/rejection (up 10.7 points)**, indicating lowered experience of discrimination, heightened acceptance of immigration and cultural diversity, and more positive future expectations, **and in the domain of participation, up by 6.1 points.**

The findings of the Markus report are also summarised in - Harriet Spinks, *Survey finds strong support for immigration and multiculturalism (but not for asylum seekers arriving by boat)*, Commonwealth Parliamentary Library Blog, 29 October 2015.

The findings of a recent ANUpoll are set out in - Jill Sheppard, *Australian attitudes towards national identity: citizenship, immigration and tradition*, Report no. 18, Australian National University 2015. Conducted by telephone, the poll is a national random sample of the adult population. 1,200 people were interviewed between 2 and 15 March 2015 with a response rate of 23.4 per cent. The direct concern of the poll was not with multiculturalism but, rather, with a range of issues related to national identity, including 'what it means to be Australian' and 'immigration and Australian society'. In respect to 'what it means to be Australian' the findings included (page 2):

> Overwhelmingly, Australians believe that the ability to speak English is important to being Australian; while 92 per cent agree that language is important, 65 per cent see it as being 'very important', with only 27 per cent responding 'fairly important'. This represents an increase from 1995, when the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) asked identical questions. In that survey, 86 per cent responded that the ability to speak English was important, with 59 per cent responding with 'very important'. Since 1995, the percentage who do not believe English language skills are important to being Australian fell from 12 to eight per cent.

> By contrast, a majority of Australians believe it is not important to have been born in Australia to 'be Australian': 44 per cent say that it is important, compared to 56 per cent who say it is not. These figures have reversed since 1995, when 55 per cent said it was important and 44 per cent said it was not. Where Australians have become more likely to believe that 'Australianness' requires the ability to speak English, being born overseas has become less of a barrier.

> Other measures of 'Australianness' – citizenship, respect for political institutions and laws, and that individuals feel Australian – are overwhelmingly considered important. Furthermore, the strong agreement on the importance of these measures has been consistent since 1995, suggesting that they are not easily shifted by external factors and are central to somebody being described as 'Australian'.

In respect to 'immigration and Australian society' the poll's findings included (page 7):

> In regard to culture, 86 per cent of Australians agree that immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures with them, although 31 per cent agree that Australian culture is undermined in the process.

Of note, too, are the 2015 findings reported in – *Islamophobia, social distance and fear of terrorism in Australia: a preliminary report*, University of South Australia, International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding. The executive summary explains that the report is 'based on data collected through a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 1000 adult Australians' and that (page 6):

> This report focuses on Australians' perceptions of Muslims, in particular levels of Islamophobia, feelings of social distance and concern about terrorism. It investigates how demographic factors such as age, religion, place of residence, employment status and political views affect the likelihood that someone is Islamophobic, feels socially distant from Muslims, or is worried about a terrorist attack.

In respect to Islamophobia, the executive summary commented (page 6):

> The survey found that almost 70 per cent of Australians have a very low level of Islamophobia, about 20 per cent are undecided and only 10 per cent are highly Islamophobic.

> The survey found no significant differences between the Islamophobic attitudes of women and men, and of people living in capital cities or non-capital cities. People living in Victoria were less likely to be highly Islamophobic. The survey found that people are more likely to be Islamophobic if they are older, have not completed Year 12, are not employed in a professional or managerial role, or belong to a non-traditional Christian denomination. People who have regular contact with Muslims are less likely to be Islamophobic, and so are people who have tolerant attitudes towards migrants or who are not very worried about terrorism.

KEY AGENCIES AND SERVICES

Commonwealth

The following agencies and sites are cited on the Department of Social Services' website:

- Australian Multicultural Council
  Advises the government on multicultural affairs, access and equity strategy, public policy research and cultural diversity celebrations.

- Settlement Council of Australia
  The national peak body representing migrant and refugee settlement agencies across Australia.

- Refugee Council of Australia
  The national umbrella body for refugees and the organisations and individuals who support them.

- The Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council
  The Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council (RRAC) is a ministerially-appointed body that provides advice to the government on refugee and humanitarian settlement.

- Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
  The peak, national body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. They advocate, lobby and promote issues on behalf of their constituency to government, business and the broader community.

- Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network
  The MYAN is the national peak body providing a nationally coordinated approach to facilitating and improving service delivery for multicultural youth through advocacy.

- Migration Council Australia
  The Migration Council Australia brings together corporate Australia and the community sector to provide national voice to advocate for effective settlement and migration programs.

New South Wales

Multicultural NSW promotes community harmony and social cohesion. It is the lead agency for implementing the policy and legislative framework to support multiculturalism in NSW.

The peak body is the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW. According to the Council's website:

> As the peak body for all culturally and linguistically diverse communities in NSW, the ECC undertakes a range of activities, including government-funded projects, to fulfill our constitutional objectives and improve the range of services available to members of ethnic communities.

For a listing of multicultural support services in NSW, organised by 18 ISA regions, see - NSW Multicultural Resources Guide, published by the Ethnic Community Services Co-operative on behalf of Children's Services Central. For each region the publication covers such areas as:

- Children's services
- Interpreting service agencies
- Multicultural resources
- CALD/ Indigenous websites
- CALD services
- Community organisations

An agency specific resource is the NSW Multicultural Health Services Directory:

> This resource is produced primarily for health, community services and Non-Government Organisations working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in New South Wales.

Other community services cited on the Guide include:

- NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service
- Diversity Health Institute
- Mental Health in Multicultural Australia
- Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW
- Sydney Multicultural Community Services

For example, Sydney Multicultural Community Services (or Sydney MCS) is a:

> community based not for profit organisation, specialising in service provision for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. We run programs in Aged Care, Settlement and the broader community through Australian Government funded initiatives such as Multicultural Home Care Packages and the 22 member consortium NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP). Sydney MCS employs over 50 staff members, covering 8 program areas in over 16 languages for Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, Sydney City and the Inner West region.

SELECTED COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

A comprehensive list of community organisations can be found on the Multicultural NSW website.

Specific community organisations include:

- Aboriginal Resource and Development Services (ARDS)
- African Communities Council
- Australia Indonesia Association
- Australian Chinese Community Association of NSW
- Australian Lebanese Association of NSW Ltd
- Greek Welfare Centre
- Islamic Council of NSW
- NSW Council for Pacific Communities Inc
- NSW Jewish Board of Deputies
- Pakistan Association of Australia
- Thai Welfare Association
- United Muslim Women Association Inc

SELECTED SOURCES

The following sources are only a selection from the large body of literature on this subject, arranged in reverse chronological order.

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Kevin Dunn, Rosalie Atie, Virginia Mapedzahama, Mehmet Ozalp, Adem F. Aydogan, *The resilience and ordinariness of Australian Muslims: Attitudes and experiences of Muslims report*, Islamic Sciences and Research Academy of Australia, 30 November 2015

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Commonwealth of Australia, *Access and Equity Inquiry Panel, Access and Equity for a multicultural Australia, Inquiry into the responsiveness of Australian Government services to Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population*, June 2012

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Elsa Koleth, *Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas*, Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, Research Paper 6/2010-11

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Community Relations Commission NSW, *25 Years of EAPS: Review of EAPS operation in NSW*, March 2009

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