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Welcome to issue 50 of FECCA’s flagship magazine, the *Australian Mosaic*—a celebratory issue where we acknowledge the success of Australia’s multiculturalism while also discussing future challenges. In this issue, we wish to look at multiculturalism from the angle of people living in the communities.

What does it mean for people to live in a multicultural nation—for people who interact, work, collaborate, and meet across cultural, religious and ethnic divides every day, as most people living in Australia do? What does everyday multiculturalism really mean; what is happening in the communities, how does multiculturalism in Australia play out for the people living their every-day lives in multicultural Australia—working, going to school, doing their shopping, playing sport?

Australia is a proud multicultural country. We celebrate our achievements often, and are referred to by many outside our country, as one of the most successful multicultural nations in the world. Likewise, our own politicians frequently talk about the successes and the benefits we reap from being a multicultural nation.

Australia has had a multicultural policy since the Galbally report in 1978. From the very start its focus was on access and equity—ensuring equal opportunity and access to services for new migrants and encouraging the maintenance of their own culture.

Australia’s current official multicultural statement—*Multicultural Australia: United, Strong, Successful*—was launched in 2017 and highlights the ‘Government’s commitment to a multicultural Australia, in which racism and discrimination have no place.’1 The statement welcomes new migrants to a ‘free and open society’ where people can ‘build their lives and make a contribution to Australia’. The focus of this statement and policy is on the mutual obligations between government, community and individual. It highlights the formation of a sense of belonging through shared values, rights and responsibilities, as well as a shared vision for the future. Further, it emphasises a safe Australia, through economic and social participation.

FECCA’s multicultural policy focuses first and foremost on access and equity. FECCA supports and advocates for a multicultural Australia where equitable policies and non-discriminatory practices are available and exercised for all Australians, regardless of their cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious background. Our first issue of Mosaic back in 2002 focused on principles of access and equity in Government services and highlighted the relevance of a multicultural policy, particularly with regards to accessible health services, education, housing and employment. Particularly for second and third
generation migrants, carers, those with disabilities, and the ageing population from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background. Since this, we have had numerous successive issues focusing on multiculturalism such as Interfaith in Multicultural Australia, Multiculturalism: An Audit, and Advancing Multiculturalism: Strengthening Australia’s Multicultural Agenda.

While this is issue 50 of the Australian Mosaic, FECCA did publish a different magazine before the Mosaic. Ethnic Spotlight was the first newsletter of FECCA—launched in 1984. I find it very interesting to read these older magazines today while reflecting on what has changed over the past 30 or so years. In our first issue of Ethnic Spotlight, FECCA, or the Federation as it was then referred to, expressed concern over the immigration debate which back then focused on the number of Asians entering Australia. It is evident that since the formation of FECCA in 1979, the debates have moved forward with regards to welcoming people from a range of backgrounds. At the same time, we continue to see discussions focus on migration to Australia and unfortunately, we can still see instances of harmful debates around certain migration groups.

While the focus of this issue is celebrating everyday multiculturalism, FECCA does acknowledge the need to embrace and promote multiculturalism at all levels in society. Government policies on multiculturalism are part of the shaping of the landscape in which everyday events and interactions occur. As we all know, migration has been back in the spotlight lately. There have been discussions on the number of migrants we should accept into our country and even on which migrants we would welcome. Further, debates on the benefits or dangers of multiculturalism continue, with voices expressing concerned views on how certain communities do not integrate and how other communities do not participate or contribute to the wider society. FECCA supports former Race Discrimination Officer, Dr Tim Soutphommasane, and what he stated in his lecture in Sydney this August, ‘[W]e need to restore some standard in our public debates. … There is simply no compelling evidence that Australian multiculturalism is in danger of veering towards ethnic separatism. The evidence show that we continue to conduct integration extremely well.’

2 Dr Tim Soutphommasane, Race Discrimination Commissioner, Lecture to the Whitlam Institute, Western Sydney University, 6 August 2018
Media language and portrayals play a large part in influencing the Australia we live in today. Everyday interactions and language are shaped by what people see and hear in the media, as well as in the policies and debates that our politicians develop and engage with.

While we have seen many negative debates over the years, the Australian people have demonstrated that we are a generous, curious and open people who welcome new-comers to our neighbourhood. The articles in this issue of *Australian Mosaic* demonstrate exactly this. Multiculturalism happens every day, people interact with neighbours, with colleagues, while shopping, at school and at work. Media, politicians and public commentators must understand the power they have in shaping the landscape in which people have these interactions. They can set the agenda for how people feel towards each other and act towards each other.

A successful multicultural nation very much depends on a sense of belonging to the nation among the people living there—newcomers and the established communities. It is a matter of ensuring that we can work together, have equal rights, access to services and information and can build a life in Australia as part of the wider society, where everyone can participate and contribute. As noted in many of the articles in this issue, there are many factors impacting on this sense of belonging.

We still have a way to go before we can call ourselves truly multicultural, with everything this entails; where people feel at home, that they belong, where they see themselves in images presented by media, where crime is not linked to a specific ethnic or cultural background and where people are free from racial abuse and accepted as part of the Australian society irrespective of their cultural and linguistic background. This issue of *Australian Mosaic* notes the challenges in today’s Australia while at the same time presents a positive outlook for the future generations of Australians living together in a socially cohesive society.

I wish to thank all the contributors to this last issue of *Australian Mosaic* for 2018. All the articles in this issue will inspire discussions and debate on how multiculturalism is experienced by newcomers to Australia, how a sense of belonging develops and how shared stories among all Australians can be a positive step towards a united society.

Finally, I wish to welcome our Acting CEO, Mohammad Al-Khafaji. Mohammad is not new to FECCA. Before taking on the role as Acting CEO, he had about four years on the FECCA Executive Board and a short period as the Director of Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement. Mohammad will be in the role as Acting CEO until FECCA has secured a new person to take over the role as CEO for the coming year and beyond. I wish to thank Dr Emma Campbell for her excellent job as FECCA’s CEO for the last two years and wish her the best in her future role.
I am delighted to present to you issue 50 of FECCA’s flagship magazine, the *Australian Mosaic*. This is my first issue as Acting CEO of FECCA and I am very excited to be able to present issue number 50 in this role. Celebrating Everyday Multiculturalism is very close to my heart. In my previous position as CEO of Welcome to Australia my job was in many ways focused on what successful multiculturalism is all about—welcoming communities that embrace difference and encourage a sense of belonging. This sense of welcome and experience of belonging must be felt at all levels of society. Only by making recognition of diversity intrinsic in society—in institutions, departments, media, policy and politics—can we ensure that people feel included, develop a sense of belonging and contribute to the Australian society.

At FECCA we work to promote fairness and responsiveness in the delivery and design of government services. Multiculturalism is at the core of all the work FECCA does and we have focused on Australian multiculturalism throughout the years of publishing *Australian Mosaic*.

This 50th issue of *Australian Mosaic* is an exciting issue with a wide range of contributors, including an international leading scholar on multiculturalism, Professor Tariq Modood; Australia’s leading scholar on multiculturalism, Professor James Jupp; a South Sudanese passionate human rights advocate, Ms Elisabeth Lang; and an Afghani asylum seeker turned life saver on the beaches of Victoria, Mr Ramzi Hussaini, all form part of what multiculturalism is all about—politics, policy, belonging, access and equity and the right to feel welcomed and included no matter your background.

We start this issue by introducing FECCA’s newest life member. Ms Eugenia Grammatikakis, a former board member of FECCA, has demonstrated the multicultural spirit throughout her life and is a genuine example of how people in the community play a big part in ensuring a successful multicultural nation.

Looking at the history of multiculturalism in Australia, Dr James Jupp notes how the logic behind the development of Australian multicultural policy was to ensure public assistance to non-English-speaking migrants equal to what other Australians received. Dr Jupp provides an excellent illustration of the historic development of multicultural Australia as we know it today. Despite referring to numerous attacks on multiculturalism throughout the years, Dr Jupp ends on a positive note emphasising how ‘multiculturalism cannot die in an immigrant nation’ and by learning from the past, we would know that all new migrants to Australia will settle, fit in and contribute to the Australia society given the appropriate time. In his latest book, as reviewed by Dr Morgan Harrington, Dr Jupp does however note how we cannot take social cohesion for granted but must look for answers to a successful multicultural nation by exploring the myths, realities and practices in Australia.

Professor Tariq Modood speaks of multiculturalism as genuine when we respect people’s diverse identities. Professor Modood introduces the concept of ‘multicultural nationalism’ where people can belong to a group—racial, cultural, religious—while at the same time belong to their country. While Professor Modood is speaking from a UK perspective, lines can be drawn to an Australian context by focusing on embracing difference while giving space for people to create their own identity.
Successful multiculturalism must embrace differences and encourage interactions across different cultural, racial and religious background—everyday exchanges must be facilitated through politics, media, services and institutions. Associate Professor Amanda Wise explores what it means to inhabit multiculturalism in our everyday lives. She notes how individuals are transformed through their engagement with multi-ethnic settings and create successful multicultural cities through ‘everyday acts of community’. Amanda’s own research has found that all Australians—CALD or Anglo—are very good at ‘making’ new communities. These new communities bridge differences of culture and language through everyday events and activities.

These mundane and common-sense ways of developing ‘new’ communities are also the topic in the article by Dr Shanti Sumartojo and Dr Tim Edensor. Exploring Melbourne city, they wish to learn what people in the city think of as ‘national’ in their daily lives. Results demonstrated the essence of everyday multiculturalism—multiculturalism as ‘utterly commonplace’ in people’s daily lives and as central to the national identity. Cultural differences were talked about as something positive, valued and accepted as part of contemporary Australian life.

Everyday multiculturalism will, however, be impacted by government policies, media landscape and debates in the communities. Negative discussions on migrations together with the creation of divisions in society create an atmosphere where people start developing a fear of ‘the other’.

Shukufa Tahiri, Elizabeth Lang and Rachel Wong all explore their identity and sense of belonging as young multicultural Australians. Shukufa Tahiri reflects on her journey from Afghanistan to Australia as a refugee. She considers the current political and media landscape and how this has impacted on her community’s experience of welcoming and belonging in an environment where people seeking asylum are often dehumanised. Shukufa notes how everyday multiculturalism must be embedded in the systems, structures and leadership for it to impact on development of belonging among newcomers to Australia.

Elizabeth Lang describes everyday multiculturalism beautifully as a ‘the ever-changing dance’ with the desire to belong mixed with a need to keep her own cultural roots. She reflects on the continuous search for her own identity as a migrant and how a search for belonging is ever-present for people living in diaspora. For Elizabeth, finding a meaning in her new home facilitated this process.
Rachel Wong looks at the challenge of marrying Australian culture and values with her cultural roots as a Malaysian Australian. This is a challenge faced by many second-generation youths in Australia today and the role of Australia as a nation is to allow space for this marriage to happen.

The media landscape and what we ‘allow’ to be accepted as the norm in Australia is linked to the development of a sense of belonging for new arrivals. Associate Professor Geoffrey Levey addresses this in his article on diversity by analysing certain voices in today’s Australia claiming that multiculturalism divides rather than unites us. Levey notes how an ‘us’ with no room for diversity is a fantasy; in reality ‘us’ is dynamic and forever changing.

A successful diverse nation is also about sharing stories, about recognising people’s differences and about giving space for this difference. Sharing stories and experiences through common events and reaching out to the communities is for Juma Piri Piri, President of the Sudanese Community of Launceston Inc., the pinnacle of true multiculturalism and essential for a successful integration process. It is also, Mr Piri Piri says, a reason for the great success his community has experienced when settling in Launceston. This sharing of stories and a space for Sudanese in Launceston to come together to celebrate their background is essential for both their own community and for connecting with the wider community in Launceston.

This issue of Australian Mosaic is all about celebrating the successes of everyday events, of diversity and of people from different backgrounds getting together in contexts of mutual understanding and recognition. A great example of activities where people, in particular youth, come together is sport. In this magazine we introduce two, what many will call, typical ‘Aussie sports’ and look at how they have introduced multicultural ambassadors to reach out to communities of diverse backgrounds. Alipate Carlile speaks on behalf of Port Adelaide Football Club and the Power Intercultural Program. Focusing on inviting diverse players to join the AFL, the aim is to encourage discussions on difference, inclusion and recognition.

Ramzi Hussaini represents Life Saving Victoria which he joined after a flash-course in swimming. Based on an understanding of the dangers of water and often due to limited experience with water among Australia’s new migrants, Ramzi speaks of their multicultural ambassadors and their value in reaching out to the communities.

Finally, also noting the power of media in driving a multicultural nation, SBS Director for Audio and Language content, Ms Mandi Wicks, looks at how SBS provides balanced and impartial information to breakdown the stereotypes which can form through lack of knowledge and misunderstandings. Ms Wicks notes how access to news and other information in preferred language enables a sense of connection, ownership and facilitates a sense of belonging—essential for a successful multicultural nation.

I wish to thank all the contributors to this issue of Australian Mosaic for sharing their stories and for reminding us that while we still have a way to go until we fully embrace the diversity, knowledge, and the skills that our new migrants bring with them, we can truly celebrate what we have achieved so far. We must acknowledge that this is a joint project where both newcomers and the established community need to work together to create a welcoming society through shared experiences.

I wish you a happy reading and hope that you enjoy the articles and the images as much as I do.
FECCA Life Member:
MS EUGENIA GRAMMATIKAKIS

FECCA is delighted to announce the induction of Ms Eugenia Grammatikakis to its Honour Roll of respected Life Members.

At last year’s AGM in Darwin, FECCA members unanimously elected Ms Grammatikakis to the position of Life Member and showed their appreciation of her significant contribution to the advancement of FECCA’s work through a standing ovation. She is also recognised for her important work in Multicultural Affairs which has extended over three decades and included professional roles within the government and community sectors.

Ms Grammatikakis has served four consecutive terms in the position of Senior Deputy Chair, providing valuable leadership and strategic direction across the spectrum of issues important to FECCA, its affiliates and CALD communities Australia-wide.

As Senior Deputy Chair of FECCA, Ms Grammatikakis actively advocated for CALD women’s participation in leadership roles and co-managed FECCA’s research project ‘Promoting CALD Women’s Participation on Boards and Decision-Making Positions’. She was also instrumental in FECCA retaining Constitutional provisions that enabled CALD women’s greater participation on FECCA elected Executive positions and continues to support the work of FECCA’s CALD Women’s Leadership and Participation portfolio through her involvement on its Women’s Advisory Committee.

Ms Grammatikakis has represented FECCA at a range of meetings, conferences, working groups and other strategic fora including the SBS Community Advisory Committee. In addition to FECCA, she has served on a range of boards and advisory committees including Chairperson of the Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues Network, the Advisory Council of Multicultural Affairs, Board member of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and former President of Pronia.

Ms Grammatikakis was drawn to voluntary community work from an early age, always being motivated by her passion for social justice and for a fair and inclusive society. Earlier in her life, Ms Grammatikakis, took on voluntary executive roles in organisations like the Hellenic Youth Association of Hobart in Tasmania, the Task Force Action for Migrant Women in Tasmania and the Ethnic Communities Council of Tasmania. These roles gave her opportunities to work at the grass roots and advocate for issues important to ethnic communities including young people, women and more generally migrants and refugees.
In moving to Melbourne in 1988, Ms Grammatikakis continued her volunteer engagement in the community with organisations like Pronia, serving as President for seven years and the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, as Board member. Ms Grammatikakis also served on the Board of the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria in the positions of Secretary and Vice President.

Ms Grammatikakis is a firm believer that everyone in society has a responsibility to be involved in community life including politics, in all its forms, and in working towards making a positive difference to this world. In particular for those in society that lack opportunities, are excluded and marginalised, disadvantaged, discriminated against and do not have a voice and presence.

Ms Grammatikakis, throughout her career in government, has worked in professional roles focusing on access, equity and inclusion with diversity and multicultural policy development and service planning being core business. Ms Grammatikakis has also served on numerous committees and sector networks advancing issues of access, equity and inclusion. In 2013, Ms Grammatikakis was the recipient of the Multicultural Award for Excellence and recognised for her service delivery to Multicultural Victoria in Community Services and Local Government.

‘I have always tried to influence positively on how government, and in particular local government, develop policy and plan for services and programs that are inclusive of diversity including cultural and linguistic diversity. I have always tried to be a change agent and influence structural and systemic change.’

In addition to her life membership with FECCA, Ms Grammatikakis is also a life member of Pronia, an organisation that empowers, advocates and cares for the Australian Greek community in Melbourne, Victoria.

FECCA congratulates Ms Eugenia Grammatikakis on her life membership with FECCA and looks forward to her continued participation and assistance in advancing a fair and just Australian multicultural society.
on the ropes
now streaming
The former Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, claimed that Australia was the ‘Most successful multicultural country in the world’. This elevated us above many multicultural societies such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Russia, India and many other more obvious multicultural societies.

What is multiculturalism? It all depends on where you are. The term originated in Canada in 1971 and became most popular in Scandinavia, ambivalently received in the UK and deeply controversial in the US. The pioneering Canadian version placed most emphasis on cultural diversity and the right of ethnic groups to preserve and develop their own culture. The Australian version developed around the Galbally report on post-arrival services in 1978 and was focussed more on the principles of access and equity. It focussed on immigrant welfare and services for the large numbers of non-English speaking arrivals under the post-war Displaced Persons Scheme and subsequent labour market migration. It did not include Aborigines and never has, at their own request. It has most frequently rested with the Commonwealth Department of Immigration or its equivalent.

The policy of multiculturalism has never been applied to British immigrants, who were being welcomed in many thousands and enjoyed citizenship rights on arrival (as I did).

The logic of Australian multicultural policy was simply that non-English-speaking (NESB) immigrants deserved public assistance equal to that enjoyed by other Australians. White Australia had just ended and while race, colour and religion were no longer meant to be barriers, language capacity for NESB immigrants certainly was. The teaching of English became one of the most expensive duties of the Commonwealth. The programs created were widely accepted under governments from both major parties. Some of the best arrangements were made under Liberal Malcolm Fraser, some of the worst...
have been made by Labor ministers. But the main operators of the system were usually at the State and even municipal levels where party politics were less important. Not until the advent of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation in 1997 was there a serious attack on the whole concept.

The settlement services developed under the rubric of multiculturalism were obviously not designed to change Australia into a different society, although they were directed in favour of new arrivals from a much wider range of backgrounds than previously. They were based on essentially liberal notions of equality of access. Where the new policy began to be controversial was when funds became available not only to multicultural migrant services but also to ‘ethno-specific’ organisations. These already existed to provide welfare support and guidance in relation to education or employment and over time became increasingly important in providing equitable access to aged-care services.

As the recent NESB populations settled down they began to seek further assistance, including use of their own languages, which was provided through the telephone interpreter system, especially for hospitals. In the 1970s these forms of assistance expanded and become popular with many immigrants. They included information provided through the new community radio licences introduced at the end of the Whitlam Government, eventually leading to multilingual services which became SBS Radio and later SBS Television.

A ‘golden age’ developed for ethnic groups, with the growth of their services and organisations, especially during the Prime Ministership of Malcolm Fraser. One odd feature was the abolition of the Immigration Department by Gough Whitlam, in an attempt to eliminate the institutional legacies of White Australia. There was still a mistaken belief that effective services could be provided without the help of cultural and linguistic diversity. The ideal was for immigrants to learn English and then the special provisions would fade away. This has not occurred although different ethnic groups are using them now.

Fraser undid the abolition of the Immigration Department and it came back. While Labor picked up much of the newly created ‘ethnic vote’, the Liberals had a good record for providing services and support. This soon ended in the face of growing concern that ‘multiculturalism’—the use of varied languages and encouragement of immigrants—was going too far in what was still a very ‘British’ society. Critics became voluble and the reaction against multiculturalism began late in the 1970s.
The reaction against multiculturalism was partly inspired by nation-wide discussions of ‘Australian values’ during the build up to the celebration of the Bicentenary of the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. This was a muddle, with different interests making different claims on the considerable funds that were available for celebrations. The attack came largely from conservative elements rather than from the Liberal Party itself.

Labor politicians like Whitlam and Dunstan continued to be active supporters of multiculturalism. But influential and hostile voices were raised including those of John Howard and Geoffrey Blainey. The new voice of Pauline Hanson began to attract media attention from 1996. The Murdoch press, which covered 70 per cent of the print market, joined in. However, two of the most controversial changes in later years, the mandatory detention of refugees without a visa and the later claim that nobody arriving by boat without a visa would ‘ever’ be settled in Australia, were both made by Labor governments before being actively taken up by the Liberals. Most public debate around refugees now takes place in the light of these two quite drastic objectives, which weigh most heavily on people from states previously barred under White Australia.

By 1990 there was a coherent and broadly unified body of opponents of multiculturalism, which overlapped existing communities in regional Australia that had never had much time for it. These communities had little experience of immigrant minorities and were predominantly of British origin. Thus, the consensus that had built up under Fraser slowly disintegrated. A battery of opponents was created. In 1996 John Howard won the federal election. As Prime Minister he proceeded to eliminate all references to multiculturalism and to close down or defund existing research and policy agencies. The axe fell even on the Australian Government Publishing Service, which had published the findings of the immigration research bodies.

Multiculturalism had been developed by both sides of politics as a reasonable approach for the post-War intake of NESB Displaced Persons. Related policies were implemented by Liberal Governments and were as good as (and sometimes better than) those of Labor, which had gained the most electoral benefit. But by the 1990s immigration was no longer based on Europeans. It was moving towards Asia and even Africa, where refugee movements were increasing. This was no longer blocked by the White Australia policy.
Refugees from communism were being replaced by those from former colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America and even the Balkans. Lingering prejudices were revived by those who had never liked even the word ‘multiculturalism’. The debate shifted over to stressing culture, traditions, languages and even religions, none of which had been involved in the original liberal welfare objectives. There the arguments now remain and merged into racism and control. Official policy moved from assistance to exclusion.

Non-British immigration had made multicultural provisions desirable. In time most Australians accepted this. But the intrusion of organisations like One Nation and of powerful public opinion agencies like the Murdoch Press, changed the situation. Labor began to be worried about the electoral impact of all this, while the Liberals were divided, with those like Howard and Abbott taking one side while Fraser and Turnbull took the other. The ultimate chaos from this has shattered the unity of the Liberal Party. But the previous Labor support for multiculturalism has also been challenged by fear of the possible electoral reactions. With rising conflict in Asia, refugee flight came to be seen as a threat rather than as the result of communism. In the past, most ‘new Australians’ had been Christians of various faiths, but many new arrivals were not. Islam came to replace communism as the main fear but in reality, it was not a united force. The many internal problems of the Islamic world were producing a new wave of refugees.

Political differences began to influence official policy. The Immigration Department moved towards ‘border control’ as numbers of refugees without visas began arriving from southeast Asia and later from the Middle East. The FitzGerald review of 1988 had incorrectly predicted that refugee pressures would drop off and social provision such as refugee hostels began to be sold off.

The number of refugees expanded steadily as political violence broke out in Sri Lanka, Iraq, Syria, Vietnam, Yugoslavia and most of these refugees would never have been accepted under White Australia.

A Labor government introduced mandatory detention for the refugees without visas in 1992. Events, even more than local opposition and partisan competition, moved public opinion away from the previous liberal multicultural approach and towards quite repressive policies. In the end multicultural policy largely disappeared, being swallowed by the new giant Home Affairs structure, while settlement services remained in the Department of Social Services. Only at the State level was multicultural policy still strongly supported. But otherwise, multiculturalism was almost swamped in angry accusations of ‘denying the British inheritance’ or ‘Western values’ presenting a series of contradictions in attitudes and policies.

Be that as it may, Australia was not only a multicultural society but was even more all-embracing than before. Its newcomers were much more likely to be Africans, or Arabs, or Chinese or Indian than ever before. As these become citizens and voters they will not quietly disappear through assimilation. John Howard, the architect of the battle against multiculturalism, found that out when he was defeated in Bennelong by Chinese and Korean voters annoyed by his refusal to criticise Pauline Hanson’s attacks on Asians.

Multiculturalism will survive, but not necessarily in its previous form as a help for the needy. Multiculturalism cannot die in an immigrant society, unless it closes its gates, as it once did under the White Australia policy. Australian nationalists, waving their tiny flags against the mighty influences of China, Islam and India will be cheered on from the safety of the United States. But remaining safely within our region will require constant diplomacy and relationships with states and movements which do not always share our ‘values’.

One great benefit of multiculturalism has been that the once feared Asian and other alien elements have shown by settlement in Australia that they can, in time, fit in well in a stable and tolerant society. Those who have always attacked multiculturalism in the past should seek to learn from these lessons rather than look to oppressive and dangerous alternatives. The creation of detention centres far away in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific and tightly run can never be a satisfactory answer for a democratic, liberal and multicultural society.
BOOK REVIEW
BY MORGAN HARRINGTON

‘AN IMMIGRANT NATION SEeks COHESION: AUSTRALIA FROM 1788’

Morgan Harrington is a researcher, lecturer and writer with a background in journalism and a PhD in anthropology. He is a Research Fellow on the ARC project ‘Representing Multicultural Australia in National and State Libraries’.

With immigration a political lightning rod, ‘An Immigrant Nation Seeks Cohesion: Australia from 1788’ is an all too timely publication. In this crowning achievement of a career dedicated to understanding the complex identity of Australians, James Jupp traces the current hostility towards immigrants as far any history of post-Cook Australia allows, and frames this history within its proper international context.

Jupp teases out the tension between two opposing forces: control and reform. On the side of control Jupp highlights the treatment of Aboriginals and convicts, The White Australia Policy, assimilation policies, One Nation, the Howard Government’s dismantling of multicultural programs, the mandatory detention of asylum seekers and, most recently, the increasing obstacles to the obtainment of Australian permanent residency and citizenship. Jupp highlights a tradition of reform that is almost as long. The ‘Golden Age’ of the second half of the 19th century saw both the rise of a strong, successful labour movement and the rise of universal rights to democracy (although this did exclude Aboriginal people), inextricable from an unprecedented wave of migration (albeit white) which transformed Australia. The signing of the 1951 Refugee Convention, the opening of Australia to migrants from war-torn Europe, the end of the White Australia Policy and, of course, the moves for multiculturalism are more recent examples of this tradition of reform.

Yet all this is in the past too. Marking its demise around the year 2000, Jupp puts multicultural policy within a much longer historical tradition of bureaucratic nation-building, insisting that Multicultural Australia was never a nation-wide attempt to change society, as its enemies claimed, but merely a bureaucratic process concerned with providing government services to immigrants.

Control has re-emerged in the domestic policies of ‘cohesion’ and ‘integration’ that have come to replace multiculturalism. Internationally, this has come in an era marked by the global war against terror and by increasing climatic instability. The mandatory and irrevocable detention of asylum seekers arriving by boat without a visa—a policy introduced in 1991; amendments to the Migration Act in 2014 that have effectively nullified the UN convention on refugees; the creation of Border Protection Department in 2015; and the creation of the Department of Home Affairs in 2018 are all potent examples.

Which brings us to the present: a nation of immigrants searching for cohesion. Jupp warns that our national myths are not to be trusted, pointing out that race is far more significant to Australian history than Gallipoli, and that the so-called ‘Judeo-Christian inheritance’ is a recent artefact coming from the United States. But if Australia isn’t what such myths would have us believe, how can we understand the present situation? ‘An Immigrant Nation Seeks Cohesion’ is an excellent place to find answers. For Jupp, ‘the search for social cohesion, the urgency of economic development and the belief that the state has a central responsibility in both areas for planning and control,’ help explain these and ‘many other myths, realities and practices.’

The central point of this book is that Australia cannot afford to take cohesion for granted. Jupp’s encyclopaedias of ‘The Australian People’ and ‘Religion in Australia’ remain remarkable feats, capturing the mercurial and multifaceted nature of Australian identity. In this book, which has been an entire career in the making, the doyen of Australian migration studies considers both the promise of, and challenges to, the cohesion of these groups.
There is a lot of nationalism about today. Yet, what is often described as ‘a new nationalism’ arguably looks like the old nationalism. What is emerging as genuinely new are the identity-based nationalisms of the centre-left, sometimes called ‘liberal nationalism’ or ‘progressive patriotism’. I want to tell you about one such progressive view, what I call multicultural nationalism.

To get there, not only do I need to get you to think of nationalism in a new way but also multiculturalism.

MULTICULTURALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM

You may think that multiculturalism is about persons valuing their personal diversity, having multiple identities—like Londoner, young, woman, with parents who are Indian and Scottish—and mixing freely with others who are equally mixed and who together produce ever changing further mixes. On this view, group identities—forcing you to choose one over all others, for example, having to be a good Indian girl or being Scottish but not British—can be stifling. And the worst kind are those that demand a singular loyalty to the nation. On this view of multiculturalism, we should think of ourselves as citizens of the world and we should be free to live and work and travel to wherever we want to and so our policy goal should be to eliminate national borders. That is one version of multiculturalism. Let us call it cosmopolitanism. It is not the version of multiculturalism that I hold.
Multiculturalism, as I understand it, is the idea that equality in the context of ‘difference’ cannot be achieved by individual rights or equality as sameness but must be extended to include the positive inclusion of marginalised groups marked by race and their own sense of ethnocultural identities. It is not opposed to integration but emphasizes the importance of respecting diverse identities. It should be understood as a mode of integration, just as assimilation is another mode of integration.

No state, including liberal democracies, is culturally neutral—all states support a certain language(s), a religious calendar in respect of national holidays, the teaching of religion(s) in schools and/or the funding of faith schools, certain arts, sports and leisure activities and so on. This language, religion, arts, sport and so on will be that of the majority population. For multiculturalism, it is a matter of extending this valued condition—of creating a society based on one’s cultural identity—to include minorities; minimally, the predominance that the cultural majority enjoys in the shaping of the national culture, symbols and institutions should not be exercised in a non-minority accommodating way. The distinctive goal of what we might call multicultural nationalism is to allow people to hold, adapt, hyphenate, fuse and create identities important to them in the context of their being not just unique individuals but members of socio-cultural, ethnoracial and ethnoreligious groups, as well as national co-citizens.

So, note that I have now brought in two things that were missing from cosmopolitanism: firstly, the idea of a group identity, of belonging to an ethnoracial or ethnocultural or ethnoreligious group, of not just being a free-floating individual, mixing and matching elements of other people’s cultures. I have introduced the idea of having some rooted identity of your own, an identity that has to be shared because it is part of a group heritage or group membership, and which matters to people and which they want to pass on to the next generation and see it survive and flourish into the future.

Secondly, I have brought in the idea of national co-citizens: people who share a country, people who belong here and who care about their country. That country is not just another place on the map or workplace opportunity, it is where they belong, it is their country. So, on the version of multiculturalism I am now presenting, people can have group identities and they have attachments to specific countries—they are not just citizens of the world.
But of course, that country—Britain—may not allow all its citizens to feel British, to be accepted as British; some may be treated as foreigners, with the wrong colour, second-class citizens. Multiculturalism is about changing that—it is, amongst other things, about ‘Rethinking the national story’. This was the most important—yet the most misunderstood—message of the report of the Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain in 2000 (chaired by Lord Prof Bhikhu Parekh). It argued that the post-immigration challenge was not simply eliminating racial discrimination or alleviating racial disadvantage, important as these were to an equality strategy. Rather, the deeper challenge was to find inspiring visions of Britain—which showed us where we were coming from and where we were going, how history had brought us together and what we could make of our shared future. No one should be rejected as culturally alien and not sufficiently British because of their ethnicity or religion but rather we had to reimagine Britain so that, for example, Muslims could see that Islam was part of Britain; and equally importantly, so that non-Muslims, especially secularists and Christians could see Muslims were part of the new, evolving Britishness.

My Conclusion then.

Given that majoritarian nationalism seems to be the dominant politics in so many parts of the world today (in Russia, China, India, Israel, many Muslim-majority countries as well as the USA and across Europe) we have to come up with a better nationalism. I suggest that multicultural nationalism unites the concerns of some of those currently sympathetic to majoritarian nationalism and those who are pro-diversity and minority accommodationist in the way that liberalism (with its emphasis on individualism and national majorities) nor cosmopolitanism (with its disavowal of national belonging and championing of global open borders) does not. Multicultural nationalism therefore represents the political idea and tendency most likely to offer a feasible alternative rallying point to monocultural nationalism.

"National co-citizens: people who share a country, people who belong here and who care about their country"
My research on everyday multiculturalism (Wise 2005, Velayutham & Wise 2009) has been interested in understanding the everyday lived dynamics of multi-ethnic coexistence and how new communities emerge across lines of cultural difference. Others working on related topics also use terms such as everyday cosmopolitanism, everyday multiculture, and commonplace diversity. For me, main points of concern have included how the rituals of social life are negotiated, improvised, and transformed in multi-ethnic settings; and how individuals themselves are transformed through their engagements with these settings—including whether they acquire capacities or habits particularly attuned to navigating culturally diverse environments.

Critics of multiculturalism have variously claimed that it is a singular doctrine that stifles debate, fosters separateness, refuses common values, denies problems, and supports ‘problematic’ cultural practices (Wessendorf & Vertovec 2008). This could not be further from the truth. Contrary to recent negative claims among some Australian commentators that multiculturalism produces ‘ethnic segregation’ and works against ‘integration’, what I have found in my more than 15 years researching this, is that diverse Australians, including White Australians, are actually very good at ‘making’ new communities. These are communities that bridge differences of culture and language through everyday acts of neighbourliness, collegiality, through sharing food, enlisting humour and play, helping and service. The everyday people I have studied over the years have developed rich ways of connecting with those who are different from themselves—not so much by way of grand gestures but through everyday acts of community.
As a sociologist, much of my research has had a central focus on what makes for ‘convivial’—in the Spanish sense of *convivir*/*convivencia* ‘to live together, shared life’—multi-ethnic coexistence. We know that ‘social cohesion’ and ‘community’ doesn’t just happen. It involves people acting in everyday situations to produce social relations with people who are different from themselves. I have spent many years exploring what differentiates communities that manage to ‘muddle along’ with diversity, where diversity has become mundane, commonplace, unremarkable, from communities and people averse to difference or uneven in their accommodation of difference. I consider the ways in which cultural difference appears and dissolves in mundane spaces of social engagement; how classed, raced, gendered and generational identities interplay with other mediating forces such as socio-economic inequalities, migrant and citizenship status, neoliberalism, and urban environments.

It does need to be emphasised though that this focus on the everyday highlights questions of everyday racism as often as ‘rosy’ modalities of togetherness. I’ve thought a lot about ‘tipping points’ and the dynamics at play when formerly benign coexistence turns to hate and exclusion. I consider how wider atmospheres of nativism, tolerance, racism, hate, and fear interplay in mundane spaces of ‘getting along’.

This is very much a grounded area of research involving ethnographic and qualitative studies of various sites where cultural diversity is lived every day. Places of shared co-existence and community like schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods and
neighbouring, parks, local shops, community groups, and local sporting clubs. Empirical areas of focus have included attention to the micro-sociology of social ritual, forms of everyday reciprocity, accommodation and exclusion, civilities, everyday ways of talking that I call ‘bridging scripts’ including humour, language adaptation and accommodation, the spatial and temporal dimensions and rhythms of multicultural encounter, the ways in which food, friendship, festivals, religion, sport, work or school mediate togetherness, how the media shapes everyday relationships. This also involves a focus on how urban environments, institutions and other macro-forces shape the quotidian cut and thrust of everyday multiculture.

Important to the knitting together of multicultural communities are people—like Eihab—I call Transversal Enablers. These are personalities in towns, communities, workplaces, and neighbourhoods who produce what I call intersectional gossip, knowledge, and inter-ethnic social networks and are important in building spaces of intercultural care and trust. They are individuals who go out of their way to create connections between culturally different residents in their local area, workplaces, clubs and other places of community connection.

Bus driver Eihab is a great example of someone who works hard to build intercultural community in his Sydney bus depot through his role as social coordinator.

“Because we’re doing barbeques or food activities ….. I have to deal with vegetarians. Most of them are Indian background. Buddhist as well, they do that. I have to deal with halal food for Muslims. I have to deal with the food for Aussies, which is bacon and egg, what they want…I have to deal with the Middle Eastern people. They love their meat. Lamb, and stuff like that. I ask them, first, which day you are fasting? Muslims are fasting on Ramadan, I will not do a barbeque when they’re fasting, so I have to shove it in a week before, or a week after, or stuff like that. Same with the Orthodox Christians, the Catholic. The Indians, they have one or two days in the week they cannot eat chicken, so we always have to go to the Friday. Some of them, they’re eating veges only [vegetarian], so I have to go for the special type of burgers, plus I have to put a salad and stuff like that. We have a lot of respect – I mean, you deal with, around it.”

Eihab – Sydney bus driver
Over the years my research has found many such characters who intuitively understand the power of small gestures of care and inclusion. For example, one Lebanese Muslim man employed at a small Western Sydney factory described how his Anglo boss enquired about his regular absence from the Friday afternoon work BBQ. Mostafa explained that it was because the meat wasn’t halal. His boss did not know what halal was but politely asked how he could source suitable meat. Mostafa introduces him to the local halal butcher and his boss thereafter bought all the meat for Friday BBQs there. Mostafa described a feeling of respect and gratitude for this simple gesture of inclusion and holds it up as a talisman to remind himself that ‘not all Anglos hate Muslims’ when Islamophobic reporting permeates the tabloid news.

In another example, we met an older Turkish man who has played social soccer in a local park on a regular Tuesday night for many years—with players from many backgrounds—Anglo, Iranian, Chinese, Afghani, Iraqi, Bangladeshi. Aside from friendship, he acts as a senior guide and mentor to them all—helping them find housing, jobs and settle into Australia and their local community. Or the Lebanese Christian man who attends the Sydney fruit and vegetable wholesale markets each week, buying in bulk and dropping off to his diverse neighbours, or the elderly Anglo lady who helps the little Lebanese boy with his homework as his mother struggles with English.

Research into everyday multiculturalism is perhaps more important than ever to counter overblown and ungrounded claims that ‘multiculturalism’ is somehow a threat to social cohesion and national identity. What we find instead is a rich new form of local and national community emerging through the hard work of diverse everyday Australians.

### Suggested reading:

- Harris, A., 2013. Young people and everyday multiculturalism. Routledge
EVERYDAY MULTICULTURALISM IN URBAN AUSTRALIA

BY DR SHANTI SUMARTOJO, RMIT UNIVERSITY AND
DR TIM EDENSOR, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE AND MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Dr Shanti Sumartojo is a Senior Research Fellow and Vice Chancellor’s Research Fellow in the School of Media and Communication at RMIT University. Her research investigates how people experience their spatial surroundings, including both material and immaterial aspects, using ethnographic and practice-led methodologies. With a particular focus on the built environment and urban public space, this includes ongoing work on memorials and commemorative sites. She is author of Trafalgar Square and the Narration of Britishness (2013), co-author of Atmospheres and the Experiential World: Theory and Methods (2019) and co-editor of Commemorating Race and Empire in the Great War Centenary (2017).

Dr Tim Edensor teaches Cultural Geography at Manchester Metropolitan University and is currently a visiting fellow at Melbourne University. He is the author of Tourists at the Taj (Routledge, 1998), National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life (Berg, 2002) and Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality (Berg, 2005), From Light to Dark: Daylight, Illumination and Gloom (Minnesota, 2017) as well as the editor of Geographies of Rhythm (2010) and co-editor of From the Lighthouse: Interdisciplinary Reflections on Light (2018). Tim has written extensively on national identity, tourism, ruins, mobilities and landscapes of illumination and darkness. He is currently working on a project about urban materiality: Living with Stone in Melbourne.

Multiculturalism is often thought of in abstract terms—as related to identity, as a question of policy at every level of government or as an ongoing political challenge. However, for many of us, multiculturalism is not just an idea but is simply part of our everyday lives. It is central to the mundane, commonsense ways in which we make sense of ourselves and others and is constantly evident in our daily routines in numerous small ways.

This was one of the unexpected findings of a study we conducted in 2017. We explored ‘everyday nationhood’ in Melbourne, asking people from a range of cultural backgrounds to identify what they perceived as ‘national’ in their daily lives. We did not define the task any further than this, but simply requested that our research participants take photographs of things that evoked the nation during the course of one day’s activities. After they had taken them, we interviewed our participants with these photos, letting them tell us in their own terms why they had selected these particular images, what ‘national’ meant to them, how it was present in their routines, and what they thought and felt about it.
What we found was that almost everyone who took part explicitly identified multiculturalism as utterly commonplace in their everyday lives, and importantly, that they understood this as central to Australian national identity. Put simply, when asked to show us what they perceived as ‘national’, they very commonly talked about cultural difference, but not in a negative way. Rather, this was a valued, positive and completely accepted aspect of contemporary Australian life.

While this did not surprise us, it was notable because it was a definition that came from the participants themselves, rather than being suggested by us as researchers. People pointed to examples in their own homes and neighbourhoods. They discussed food in their cupboards from different cultures, or buildings like a local Russian Orthodox church or Chinese New Year decorations hanging in the street. They identified how public transport brought many different people into proximity with each other and explained that most of the time this was easy and even convivial. They recounted their shopping trips and market visits, as they sought out particular products or encountered exciting new vegetables.

They also described multiculturalism in the workplace. For example, one of our participants, Beth, has a homewares business. Her everyday working life occurs together with people from many different cultural backgrounds to constitute a community of workers with specialized skills in handling textiles that allow her design vision to be realized. She explained her experience of a recent visit to a factory:

*I really like working with all these people with all their different stories … there’s a sense of family and community within that factory, and the way that they deal with me is an embodiment of that family, you know. It’s not just business, we’re all working on something together and we’re all going to push it forward.*

In Beth’s case, everyday multiculturalism occurs through production processes and shared forms of knowledge that go far beyond business outcomes. As she emphatically told us, ‘we’re working on something together’. For Beth, multiculturalism is expressed and understood through common goals and collective manual effort in which relationships are enacted and built, and skills and knowledge are shared. In concert, these create a sense of identity that is both embedded in the everyday and identified as specifically Australian by Beth herself.
University of Western Sydney academic Greg Noble refers to the acceptance of people who are different as ‘unpanicked multiculturalism’, contrasting it with the ‘panicked multiculturalism’ that all too frequently dominate debates about cultural and religious diversity. Beth’s account of her working practices hints at how this easygoing sense of multiculturalism might flow between people of different backgrounds, rather than just being extended from one dominant group to another minority one. Indeed, all our research participants explained how their approach to multiculturalism is not merely ‘unpanicked’ but is actively valued as an integral aspect of Australianness that they regularly experience.

Through our series of in-depth interviews, we found that multiculturalism was an inherent part of everyday life in urban Australia. Our participants could easily identify and discuss what they thought and felt about it, and it was a uniformly positive aspect of their daily experiences. In other words, it was both completely normal and highly valued. Cultural difference is commonly about visibility, about constant reminders of a sense of unfamiliarity. Crucially, social researchers have tended to focus on the problems and points of conflict rather than positive accounts of everyday intercultural interaction such as those we have identified. Challengingly, this can contribute to lazy, pessimistic appraisals that multiculturalism ‘has not worked’. However, we found that multiculturalism can also be invisible—in that it is so normal and commonplace that people are very comfortable with it. Our study showed us that we should recognise, celebrate and honour the modest, fleeting ways in which urban dwellers negotiate difference in creative, adaptive ways. This sharing of spaces and aspirations as they work and live side by side is an admirable aspect of everyday Australian life.

Multiculturalism—more than mixing cultures

By Shukufa Tahiri

Shukufa Tahiri was born in Afghanistan and left with my family at the age of six for the neighbouring country Pakistan. We stayed in Pakistan for another six years before reuniting with my father in Australia through the Humanitarian Program.

I have always been a keen enthusiast of Australian and international current affairs. When I had just finished high school, I was prompted to pursue human rights and advocacy due to the misrepresentation of people seeking asylum and of refugee communities that I saw happening in Australia every day. The negative public discourse and sensationalised political discussions, together with the idea that refuge communities lacked agency, was for me difficult to just sit still and watch. While I was concerned with international affairs and public discourse it was, however, my conviction to the principles of fairness and equity born out of personal experience of forced displacement from Afghanistan in 1999 that drew me to the human rights space.

Together with thousands of other Australian Hazaras¹, I was a product of the first wave of people seeking asylum under the John Howard government in the wake of heightened persecution and Taliban control in Afghanistan. In 2012, the Hazara community in Australia was a new and emerging community and we were on a passionate road to establish ourselves in Australia—to gain a sense of inclusion by active economic participation and education. We were all looking for a welcome that was not offered in our home country.

¹ The Hazara ethnic minority lives largely in Afghanistan and makes up around nine per cent of the country’s population. Some communities are also living in Iran and Pakistan. The Hazaras have been the targets of multiple documented massacres and human rights abuses at the hands of Taliban forces. The combination of being a sectarian as well as an ethnic minority has put them in real risk historically in the country, where they tend to be marginalised and where they tend to be the first people victimised when the situation gets rough. See more here: https://www.sbs.com.au/news/explainer-who-are-the-hazaras
By 2012-2013, in light of the re-emergence of boats, the renewed dehumanisation of people seeking asylum and having developed a certain degree of political and social consciousness, I felt a deep sense of urgency to humanise people seeking asylum and who were part of my immediate community. The toxic political discourse—then and now—which deemed them ‘illegal’ coupled with negative media projection had a very disempowering and negative effect on the Hazara community in Australia. The extreme exclusion that drove the community out of their homeland, followed them in a different medium in Australia, shaking the community’s self-confidence and sense of inclusion.

Having studied modern history in high school, I had become familiar with the course of social and political change. I understood very well that I was not a ‘seasonal activist’; rather I wanted to advocate for a lasting systemic change based on compassion not deterrence. I also knew that it would take time, effort and grit. Affecting change seemed insurmountable, but I knew that I could be ‘a voice’ in a dwindling platform and that I could contribute positively in political and media frames—two areas that had adopted a binary representation of refugees focusing on the ‘legitimacy’ or ‘illegality’ of asylum seekers and refugees.

Not only did my passion for fairness drive me to pursue law—it also led my public advocacy. I started volunteering with community legal centres and with the local community to maximise access for them in the face of increased degradation of their rights over the years. Naturally, I pursued policy work at Refugee Council of Australia as a continuum. Also, my own story bestows a duty to advocate as my comfort and protection stem from, and is premised on, a perilous boat journey my father had to take.

My current work is informed by real human experiences around me, by my community and other communities. Negative policies create collateral damage to communities and I feel an obligation to protect them. I believe change is possible when the positive sentiments of the Australian public are tapped into, like they have on many policy issues in the past. I believe my own story and immediate community connections add to the merits of policy issues I seek to provide a solution to.
FROM SETTLEMENT TO INTEGRATION

There is a close correlation between integration and settlement, where ‘settlement’ is the preliminary phase of a longer process of integration. Due to the nature and multi-facedness of settlement, it may be a lifelong process for many. Integration is very subjective—it means different things for different people. Refugees, migrants and people seeking asylum each have very different settlement needs and manage the process in different ways.

Generally, within the current political and media landscape, integration seems to mean the merging of refugees into the dominant social and cultural groups in Australia which is an impossible and harmful ambition. Being aware that integration means very different things to refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers, I take the view that successful settlement outcomes need to be closely correlated with how a healthy and harmonious society defines successful integration. For this reason, early settlement processes need to ensure they prepare newcomers to be part of the receiving society without foregoing their own cultural identities while, at the same time, ensuring that the receiving community is ready to welcome refugees in all areas of society.

To enable settlement that may lead to any type of integration, one pre-requisite is to ensure access to entitlements and rights are enjoyed by Australian citizens—particularly for people seeking asylum, including access to education, travel, family reunion, citizenship and other rights.

The second aspect of settlement is to ensure that refugees are job ready, self-reliant and are able to participate in the labour market and economic life of the country. This means, thorough and targeted training, skills recognition and opportunities for local employment must be provided as early as possible.

The third important aspect of settlement is to provide a conducive environment for the social and cultural inclusion of refugees into the wider local community without discrimination or exploitation. Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers must be allowed to be part of the social and community life in Australia. While settlement services can provide assistance and initiate approaches to build bridges, current political leadership must avoid creating a counter-productive environment which alienate, stigmatise and isolate refugees and other migrant communities. Rather, a focus must be on building mutual understanding and bridges. This requires positive public and political discourse.

So, while settlement is only one aspect of the integration processes and cannot alone achieve the multifaceted requirements of meaningful integration, it can generally focus on helping rebuild, rewire, and regain the morale and confidence of refugees to readjust their lives in Australia economically and socially when legally enabled. It is important to learn from previous waves of European and Asian migrant communities and realise the complexity and the generational adjustments in all levels of integration.

BELONGING AND A PLACE TO CALL HOME

A sense of home is developed on the premise of protection and inclusion and in an environment that is conducive to forming bonds and multi-faceted inclusion. Any type of exclusion is a barrier to developing a sense of home. I see different layers of protection, and inclusion be it legal, political, social, economic or emotional, as impetus for best developing a sense of home.

I also believe that perception of home is multi-dimensional and can be an ideological or emotional construct as well as physiological security. For me, home is a mix of this as well as ancestral connections. I see home being built from a foundation of meaningful bonds, security and stability where one feels included, accepted and nurtured.

Displacement is essentially the opposite of home as it robs people of their sense of security and inclusion and make it extremely difficult to rediscover a new home. I know of so many who are displaced forcibly and lament forever about their lost home that they never find again. Home to me can be rediscovered because of the dimensions of attachment I attribute to home.
For people to be able to develop a sense of home and belonging in a new country, there are many factors that must be present. While it is complex, the most powerful impetus behind experiences of belonging and home is the degree of inclusion—socially, economically and legally. There is no single formula for creating a sense of belonging. However, all actors in society, including the government, economic stakeholders, social and community leaders and members need to ensure that they are creating an ecosystem where all forms of exclusionary factors are eliminated.

The existence of a conducive environment where one’s sense of belonging is determined depends on the extent to which important players play their role based on mutual values of inclusion, acceptance and fostering opportunities for all devoid of favouritism, covert and subconscious bias and discrimination.

BELONGING AND IDENTITY

My own sense of self and identity has been ever-evolving and paralleled with my perception of home, sense of purpose, values and bonds I have created and continue to create in the context of where I come from and my history.

At the outset, considering the level of alignment of fundamental values and principles I share with other Australians of what Australia is about, I very much feel at ease in navigating my sense of belonging. As long the values of fairness, compassion, diversity and mutual respect and understanding are at the forefront of Australian identity and culture, I will always maintain a strong sense of belonging to it.

I have reached a stage where I do not give in and allow my sense of belonging or my identity as an Australian be uprooted or dictated by the outpouring of political rhetoric and at times toxic public discourse created by the media portrayal of people like me. Although, I cannot deny that these factors challenge my sense of belonging.

I am comfortable in my identity as an Australian, because I know that migration is a journey. This is true for all Australians—from the Indigenous people who migrated 50,000 years ago, the first fleet just over 200 years ago, the European refugees 50-60 years ago, and Asian refugees about 40-50 years ago. Seeking a better and safer life, is a fact of human civilisation and is undeniably a crystal-clear fact of Australian identity.

I am part of the Australian narrative while I am also part of my Afghan Hazara ancestry and a product of the legacy my ancestors left behind in this ever-changing world. I navigate my identity through all these lenses. Far from diluting my sense of belonging to Australia, it makes my sense of belonging richer and more meaningful.

NEW ARRIVALS TO AUSTRALIA—AND THE POLITICS OF FEAR

Refugee communities are dedicated to becoming new Australians. They share mutual values of respect, human dignity and seek opportunities to prosper and contribute to better Australian society. They have landed in Australia seeking better protection, humanitarian standards and better lives as individuals.

Refugee communities resent being identified as victims or enemies—either too weak or fragile to have own agency—they resent being defined by the trauma of war, famine or killings they have put behind them, as an enemy defined by the emergence of ‘ethnic gangs’, or as groups arriving by boats to overtake and pose a threat. While maintaining this narrative may mean Australian nationalism remains protected, this imposed victim—or villain—identity is not helpful to a stronger, more harmonious Australian society.

Labelling is neither healthy nor fair. Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers are individuals with agency that must be recognised and given space so that people can define themselves, enhance and strengthen their lives. People must be given the opportunity to have a voice and the opportunity to be Australians living by the values and principles most Australians believe in.
EVERYDAY MULTICULTURALISM

To me, everyday multiculturalism defines the essence of what Australia should be about. It has been five decades since multicultural policies were introduced and White Australia policies were abolished.

We must all reflect on whether the stamping out of mono-culturalism led by Gough Whitlam decades ago has meant multiculturalism is truly reflected and embedded in senior leadership, economic participation and social cohesion today. Or, are the notions of everyday multiculturalism too far-fetched in light of normative rules and structural discrimination in the system and in society.

Multiculturalism is much more than a visible mixing of cultures and tolerance. I believe that the strongest reflection of everyday multiculturalism is the extent to which it is adopted and translated in the systems, structures and leadership that make up Australia. There is a long way to go and still work to do for all of us to make this happen.

Being recognised as one of Australia’s most influential women meant a lot for me. This recognition meant that the community beyond my immediate involvement cares about the work I have been involved with. It means that the broader community is willing to be allies in advancing human rights and community cohesion in Australia.

This recognition means I can broaden my work to influence policies and be an effective voice for communities who are often not granted a platform. Of course, this also means that I am encouraged to continue doing what I have been doing with the same conviction and principles. It feels great to be recognised by the Australian Financial Review as a Women of Influence together with women from other industries, careers and journeys and who are extraordinary and inspirational. As a woman of diverse background in Australia and in current atmosphere, it empowers me to know I can positively influence beyond my imagined scope and defined depth.
**THE SEARCH FOR MEANING AND BELONGING**

BY ELIZABETH LANG

Elizabeth Lang is a passionate human rights advocate and has presented on several platforms, nationally and internationally including at the UNHCR in Geneva, Switzerland in June 2016. Originally from South Sudan, she arrived in Australia on the humanitarian visa with her family in 1998. As Founder and CEO of Diversity Focus, Elizabeth provides diversity consulting and training on a range of topics to welfare, health and legal sectors. In line with her passion in domestic and family violence education, she facilitates a range of specialist training on understanding domestic and family violence in cross-cultural contexts among other cultural diversity training modules. Currently completing her PhD at Curtin University on ‘Conceptualising Domestic and Family Violence in the Frame of Collectivist Cultures’, she seeks to broaden the current legal and conceptual framework of domestic and family violence. Elizabeth is also a Sessional Academic at Curtin University School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work teaching a range of multidisciplinary units since 2015. She serves as the Organisation of African Communities (OAC) WA Vice President (Operations), is the WA Representative for the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council Australia (FECCA) Women’s Committee and sits on the National Committee of the Australian Refugee Action Network (ARAN) advocating on refugee issues.

For me, everyday multiculturalism is balancing the ever-changing dance of the natural human desire to belong while maintaining the cultural roots that uniquely shape my human experience. As a visible racial minority living in Australia, I am at times out of step in this dance from the daily (both subtle and not so subtle) reminders of my visible difference. The dance can become cheerful when this difference is positively acknowledged and celebrated, although this is rare, or made more challenging when such difference is highlighted to ostracise, which sadly seems to be the more common experience these days. Despite what may be happening on the dance floor, the dance continues, ever changing and evolving and it must because life goes on.

Growing up in Australia, originally from South Sudan (born in what is now a different country Sudan), spending four years in Egypt before arriving to Australia at the age of 10 on a refugee humanitarian visa with my family, I’ve had an interesting experience through my last 30 years of life to say the least. I’ve grown up in diverse environments which have all shaped me in ways that I sometimes struggle to articulate. The search for identity continues, perhaps because I keep getting asked where I come from, but I think most importantly because my life has been shaped by circumstances beyond my control which continue to solicit such internal questioning.

It’s interesting for people living in diaspora who travel through different countries as children how the search for belonging, meaning and a sense of place is an ever-present reality. It’s a journey coloured by memories and experiences that shape the human experience in ways that others who have had the privilege of being rooted in place find challenging to understand. I am beginning to settle with the idea that I am a world citizen with cultural roots in South Sudan, somewhat influenced by Middle Eastern
culture through upbringing and travel and ‘semi-Australianised’ (if that’s even a real word). A part of finding my place goes beyond defining the self and life through more than geographical parameters. I’ve found a sense of self through spirituality which grounds my human experience and impacts everything that I do including my career trajectory which I consider a calling rather than a job or career per se.

A part of finding my sense of place in the world has come through this calling. If I was to try and put into words what I actually do, I would say that I have a passion and commitment to human rights and use education as a means to nurture a society where human rights violations are openly challenged through word and deed. I work in research and training, predominantly in the area of domestic and family violence. This was a journey that began at the age of 13 when (in year 7 at Catherine McCauley High School in Sydney) we were sent to the library to research about NGO’s and humanitarian organisations. I was confronted with a story that has shaped the trajectory of my life and ignited a fire that led to what I now do today, some 17 years later. This story shocked me with the reality of the injustice that exists and how children, in this case a seven year old girl, can be violated with few if any avenues for protection and justice. From that very moment sitting, in the school library, I have been in search of this assignment. As a young person I struggled to fully understand how to find, or even articulate, what I felt I was being called to. Now, as an adult who can comprehend and articulate such experiences, I can bring about positive change at a social, cultural and political level. I have found the assignment and continue to work towards the realisation of this higher ideal. It is an experience that has brought me to a critical consciousness of who I am as a black woman living in Australia, as a mother, daughter and aunt, as an educator and researcher and all that encompasses my identity. Reaching this conscious awareness of the self, which has been a challenging experience in various ways, has allowed me to continue the journey with a sense of confidence not only in my ability and my work but with the appreciation that what I had been running away from internally is what I need to manifest in order to contribute to healing the world.

“Everyday multiculturalism is balancing the ever-changing dance of the natural human desire to belong while maintaining the cultural roots that uniquely shape my human experience.”
I have founded a company (Diversity Focus) where I work as a trainer and consultant. I develop and deliver training on a range of topics including cultural diversity, understanding domestic and family violence in cross-cultural contexts and working with interpreters in domestic and family violence contexts among other modules. I have also had the pleasure of working with a range of government and non-government organisations in a variety of contracted roles. This is work that is deeply enriching and soul nourishing for me. It is work that has positive impact at an individual and communal level and I have had the honour and pleasure of hearing from a diverse range of individuals about the significance and impact of this work which I must admit gives me a great sense of hope and drive to continue.

As a second year PhD researcher, I am exploring domestic and family violence in collectivist cultural contexts (Conceptualising Domestic and Family Violence in the Frame of Collectivist Cultures) and I have a passion for broadening the current legal and socio-cultural notion of what constitutes domestic and family violence in Australia. I have learnt, again through this journey, how people’s lives can be severely and adversely impacted by the prescription of rigid definitions that place parameters around experiences such as family violence.

As a trainer I see how limited some of the frameworks around domestic and family violence can be. Such articulations of domestic and family violence come from an understanding of ‘family’ which is not applicable to all family dynamics and compositions. We live in an Australian society where the cultural fabric is rich in diversity and I feel it is time that our understanding of such crucial topics as domestic and family violence is informed by the realities of such diversity. This is why I have followed such a path in both research and training. I consider it a privilege to do what I do, and life is exciting when your work touches lives. I look forward to taking advantage of more opportunities to touch lives through the spoken word as a trainer, educator and speaker.
‘For me, everyday multiculturalism is a sense of pride in who I am and the ability to enrich the Australian fabric with my presence and contributions.’
(Pakistani background 5 years in Australia)

‘For me, everyday multiculturalism is acceptance and inclusion’
(New Zealand Born Samoan, 6 years in Australia)

For me, everyday multiculturalism is embracing and respecting different nationalities and cultures, like my workplace!’
(Singaporean background, 1 year in Australia)

‘For me, everyday multiculturalism is associated with my identity who am I and where I come from. My struggles to establish connections with main stream Australia and look after my family.’
(Indian background, more than 15 years in Australia)

‘For me, everyday multiculturalism is adding value and being valued through my contributions to Australia in a safe environment where I can come back home with a sense of fulfillment and happiness.’
(Pakistani background, 7 years in Australia)
Growing up, I’ve never doubted my ‘Australianness’—I love the beach, I love sport and my extended family constantly tell me how strong my Australian accent is.

But there’s one question that I always dread being asked: ‘So, where are you from?’

And the twist of the knife follows with ‘No, but where are you really from?’

It’s the conversation that I, like many other multicultural Australians, have had time and time again. It serves as a sad reminder to me that while I might proudly identify as Australian, not everyone identifies me as Australian. There is a growing transitional generation of those that identify as Australian as well as another ethnic or cultural background.

Born in Australia as the daughter of two migrant parents from Malaysia, I have always lived with an element of duality in my cultural identity. I am just as much Australian as I am Chinese. I’ve been very fortunate to have never experienced direct discrimination or racial violence. But I have been a victim of prejudice and unconscious bias. My thick black hair, yellow skin and petite build seem to sing out to others that I am not from here, and as if giving permission for others to talk to me as if I know nothing about the Australian way of life.

If you think Australia isn’t a racist country, then you probably aren’t looking hard enough. The power of unconscious bias is that sometimes, even the victim doesn’t realise.

“The power of unconscious bias is that sometimes, even the victim doesn’t realise.”
Take me for example. I’ve had a handful of experiences where in my everyday life I’m told mid-conversation ‘Your English is really good’. It’s only upon reflection that I’ve come to realise that I am to some extent, still combatting prejudice of my skills and abilities based on my cultural background.

As a university student and a young professional, it’s been difficult talking about racism and cultural diversity without coming across like a politically-correct left wing loony. But I’m hopeful that our young people today will bring a global and harmonious view to local communities.

As a young adult, I am part of a generation that travel. We are the millennials with itchy feet. Today, young people are travelling. Exploring new countries. Eating exotic cuisines. Experiencing culture. We are part of a generation living in rapid globalisation. Experiencing and understanding other cultures and practices is the key to fostering a harmonious multicultural society. It can’t be ignored that our ability to travel and understand the world we live in is an accessible body of knowledge that wasn’t available to our parents or grandparents. Whether you’re of European or non-European background, young people today are equipped with opportunity and the ability to be informed.

Monumental social changes are happening too, even at minor levels such as movies like Black Panther and Crazy Rich Asians. The positive and dominant representation of non-European cultures holds great power in their ability to empower those of different ethnic backgrounds whilst chipping away at the divide and lack of understanding of other cultures.

Young multicultural Australians will continue to face challenges with social acceptance and cultural competency. If I’m completely honest with myself, I don’t think I would have fit into certain friend groups or work environments if I hadn’t embraced and adopted a strong Australian identity. I’m what you would call a ‘Banana’. Yellow on the outside, white on the inside. I’m competent in my understanding of Australian values and cultural norms, but not to the extent of forgetting my cultural roots and traditions. The challenge for young multicultural Australians today is to bring your cultural values and marry them with your Australian values. A multicultural Australia is not impossible, but it will take time and effort before ideas and norms of my generation trickle down into multicultural Australia.

So to answer my question earlier—‘Where are you really from?’ I tell people I’m from Australia, from the southern suburbs of Perth. I pause. And I welcome the opportunity of start a meaningful conversation about my family and cultural background.

“Bring your cultural values and marry them with your Australian values”
“For me, everyday multiculturalism is about the ways in which we interact with the diversity of people who live around us and the institutions that we have to deal with every day to meet our daily needs including securing material goods, safety, developing social networks, navigating cultural differences competently, resolving conflict fairly, self-determination, civic participation, contributing to society positively, and securing sense of belonging and social inclusion.’
(South Sudanese background, 16 years in Australia)

‘For me, everyday multiculturalism is the ability to participate freely in and contribute openly to community and to cover the holistic welfare of all Australians who live and enjoy our modern, diverse nation.’
(Australian South Sea Islander, born in Australia)

For me, everyday multiculturalism is being open, welcoming and having positive regard for the many beautiful cultures within the community. Where this comes from a base of love and not one of fear. Not where one is deemed as necessary of having a “special status” but there is equity for all without any underlying positions of power.’
(Jamaican/UK background, 16 years in Australia)
Immigration and multiculturalism undermine Australian culture and identity. It is a refrain increasingly heard these days. While such claims have been vented in the past, they are now being expressed evermore shrilly and assertively. Senator Fraser Anning’s ‘final solution’ first speech to Parliament is a recent example. Another is Andrew Bolt’s article in the Murdoch press a few weeks earlier.

The Daily Telegraph published Bolt’s piece under the title ‘The foreign invasion’. In the ensuing controversy, Bolt retorted that columnists do not get to choose their headlines and that his was unfortunate. Yet the subeditor’s title caught exactly the imputation of Bolt’s piece: Australia is being ‘colonised’ (Bolt’s term) by foreigners who don’t assimilate into the established culture. As evidence, Bolt points to the residential concentration of particular ethnic groups in our major cities and how languages other than English are widely spoken in the street and at home.

The sense of being overrun by foreigners is matched only by a sense of having been undermined by subversives at home. For decades, writes Bolt, we have had ‘activists, academics and politicians push multiculturalism—a policy to emphasise what divides rather than celebrate what unites’. He points to the public contestation over national symbols such as the flag and celebrations like Australia Day, challenges to the superiority of Western civilisation, the declining hold of Christianity, and the acceptance of Aboriginal-only courts.

In short, immigration and multiculturalism have created an Australia in which, says Bolt, there is no ‘us’ any more.

“Human diversity is integral to the human status”
Bolt defended his article by claiming that he was only describing the situation. His statistics are, however, unreliable. Robert Manne has pointed out how Bolt cherry picks his figures and, in one case, double counts census categories to produce an exaggerated number of ethnically Chinese residents in Melbourne’s Box Hill. Such missteps aside, it is clear that Bolt is evaluating the situation, as he sees it, rather than simply trying to describe it.

The contention that there is no ‘us’ anymore is an interpretive evaluation. So, too, is his claim that multiculturalism is a policy that emphasises what divides rather than unites us. What are these evaluations based on? What is the benchmark against which Bolt is measuring division and the absence of an ‘us’?

The assumed standard seems to be a culturally uniform society that allows for no differences. For example, Bolt bristles at the suggestion that Australia now comprises ‘ethnic communities’, as if there were a time when Australia wasn’t home to such communities. It takes a particular, albeit all too common, blindness to ignore the presence of our Indigenous groups. But it also ignores the myriad of ethnic groups represented here since several disembarked the First Fleet. He hankers after a time when migrants, like his Dutch parents, simply assimilated into ‘the wider us’. The fact is that ethnic community associations abounded in the 1950s just as they do today.

The imagined ‘us’ in this account is a fantasy if not a dystopia: a monocultural society in which all citizens behave, think, speak, believe and worship the same way. It is as if being Dutch could only mean wearing clogs and lace caps, clasping tulips and daffodils, and sticking one’s finger in dykes. Never mind the Netherlands’s system of pillarisation in which distinct religious and ideological groups enjoy wide-ranging authority over their adherents from cradle to grave.

Bolt’s intolerance of difference ties him in political knots. Sometimes he idealises a monocultural nation state, other times, a rootless cosmopolitanism. After the Federal Court found, in 2011, that he had breached the anti-vilification provisions of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth), he told the gathered media that his ultimate concern was the unity of peoples. ‘I argued then and I argue now that we should not insist on the differences between us but focus instead on what unites us as human beings’ (The Age 28/9/2011). Such a stricture would, of course, put a damper on expressions of Australian culture and national identity. Bolt moves effortlessly between insisting on national-cultural assimilation and embracing universal men and women shorn of all particularity.

Whether the framing is nationalistic or universalistic, the underlying problem is the same: a refusal to accept, as Hannah Arendt put it, that human diversity is integral to the human status. In her study of totalitarianism and her reportage on the Eichmann trial, Arendt explored what can happen when people want to erase human diversity. It is no accident that Fraser Anning should invoke the language of ‘final solutions’ concerning an ‘immigration problem’ even if, in this case, at this time, it had nothing to do with mass deportation or murder. The Holocaust proceeded in steps: ‘You cannot live here as Jews’ (assimilation); ‘You cannot live here’ (deportation); ‘You cannot live’ (extermination). Each step rejects difference on a path to the most final of final solutions.

Bigotry is what creates division and undermines any semblance of an ‘us’.

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Bolt also misunderstands Australian multiculturalism. It did not generate ethnic neighbourhoods. Immigrant groups have concentrated in particular areas since time immemorial, not least because proximity provides welcome support and network opportunities. Neither does multiculturalism insist that people assert their cultural difference; rather, it merely allows and supports such assertions as an option open to all Australians within the law.

Bolt’s complaint against multiculturalism is actually a discomfort with liberal democracy and the freedom and equality it ascribes to all citizens. Liberty must include some cultural liberty, equality must include all citizens, and democracy must allow different voices to be heard. From the outset, Australian multiculturalism has been concerned mainly with ensuring these common citizenship rights so that all Australians can participate as part of the ‘us’. That is also why so many ethnic and religious minorities mobilised against the Abbott and Turnbull governments’ attempts to dilute the federal racial hatred laws, and why public opinion overwhelmingly opposed the changes. Bigotry is what creates division and undermines any semblance of an ‘us’.

Unlike Canada, Australia’s multiculturalism policies have never repudiated the country’s British heritage, established institutions, or predominant culture. If there is contention over Australia Day or the Australian flag, that is a measure of the same right to contest conventions that Bolt claims for himself against his critics. It is also an indication that there remains an ‘us’, a diverse and vibrant political community of ostensible equals who care enough about the future and direction of their country that they wish to debate it. The ‘us’ is always dynamic and ever evolving.

The alternative vision of an Australia where the ‘us’ is defined by conformity in thought and behaviour is exclusionary, culturally stultifying, and, above all, politically dangerous.

“The ‘us’ is always dynamic and ever evolving.”
Celebrating unity and diversity in Tasmania

By Juma Piri Piri

Juma Piri Piri is the President of the Sudanese Community of Launceston Inc. and the Federation of Equatoria Community Association in Australia (FECAA). In this article he gives us an insight into how Australia became the melting pot it is today, and why it works. He also explores why the South Sudanese Community of Launceston is such a successful community when it comes to connecting with the wider community.

Celebrating Australian Multiculturalism is a celebration of unity and diversity—and a celebration of harmony. The success of Australian Multiculturalism is embedded in the harmony we now enjoy. As with all words, it is useful to return to the roots of the word ‘harmony’. Harmony is derived from the Greek harmos and the Latin harmonia—harmos meaning ‘joint’ harmonia meaning ‘agreement’. Harmony, in other words, is a process and not merely a result. This is also true, I believe, of our multicultural harmony in Australia. That we live in a society of remarkable harmony is indisputable. Our diversity is exceptional.

Home to the world’s oldest continuing cultures, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, Australia is also home to people who identify with over 270 ancestries. More than 25 per cent of us are born overseas; an additional 20 per cent of us have a parent who was born overseas. Our modern cultural diversity has been largely generated by the waves of immigration that have arrived on our shores following the end of the Second World War and this continues today.

Our cultural harmony though, has not been organic. Multicultural success is not certain. Further, mass immigration could not have been sustained over the past years unless Australians were open and generous towards those who came here. I say this as a migrant who arrived in Australia as refugee from South Sudan. I was received with warmth and kindness.

In the immediate decades following the Second World War, the official stance towards immigrants was, of course, assimilation. Those who arrived here as migrants were expected to discard their cultural identity as excess baggage.
Names were Anglicised, native tongues were abandoned. New Australians were expected to become Australian—Neumenkos would become Newmans; Giuseppes would become Joes. All were to forget about the Old World, their heritage and their culture.

By the late 1960s, this approach was becoming untenable. The rate at which migrants were returning to Europe was increasing; that is to say, an increasing number of new arrivals believed that it was a mistake to settle in Australia. Reports such as the ‘First Main Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty’ (April 1975) also pointed to the concentration of social and economic disadvantage in newly arrived migrant communities. It was against this background of concern that multicultural policy came into being in the early 1970s. Australian multiculturalism was the response to the shortcomings of assimilation. Gone was the expectation that migrants must obliterate their own cultures in order to become Australian citizens. Instead, the idea of a multicultural Australia saw diversity as a means of strengthening the nation.

All this contributed to the process behind today’s harmony: one that can be traced to the institution of Australian multicultural policy. It was only with the formal adoption of multiculturalism that anti-discrimination legislation was introduced at the Commonwealth level in the form of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975. This was the legislative expression of racial equality in Australia, writing into our laws that any “discrimination, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin” was unlawful.

Australian multiculturalism was always, from the outset, an exercise in nation-building and an expression of citizenship. Contrary to what critics of multiculturalism say, it has never meant cultural relativism. There have always been firm limits to what is permissible in the name of cultural identity or expression. Any diversity must be consistent with the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, equality, freedom of religion and freedom of speech. To put it another way, in our policy of multiculturalism there has always been a harmony of rights and responsibilities.

We are speaking not only about cultures and identities existing together, but also values being in harmony which is the strength of Australian multiculturalism. We are speaking about a harmony of culture and citizenship, freedom and friendship, a harmony of thought and deed, of values and laws.

It is exactly this harmony of values, cultures and identities that we in the South Sudanese community in Australia are embracing as we share our stories with the rest of the Australian society. Former South Sudanese refugees like myself and others are here to tell our stories. We were fortunate enough to reach a refugee camp and we were resettled under the humanitarian program. That is when a future opened to us: we realised we cannot be part of a society where there is no equality, no justice—where there are no basic human rights. These are all fundamental things that we assume everyone has access to but are being deliberately denied some people, forcing them to leave their loved ones in very difficult circumstances.
SOUTH SUDANESE IN AUSTRALIA

The South Sudanese community in Australia, nationally and locally in Tasmania, is an active community intent on connecting with the wider Australian society, sharing our experiences and at the same time ensure that members feel they have somewhere they can come together, feel a sense of unity and work together to improve their own situation in Australia.

As the President of the Sudanese Community in Launceston and the Chairperson of the Federation of Equatoria Community Association in Australia (FECAA), I have seen first-hand how Sudanese and South Sudanese former refugees sometimes feel that they are not part of a multicultural Australia—they do not feel that they belong here or are treated with respect in this country.

One example includes the recent issue of the so-called ‘African gangs’. As part of the South Sudanese community, I do not believe that these gangs exist. Rather, there are groups of young individuals struggling to integrate into the Australian community. Not because of their ethnic background but because of other issues such as unemployment, lack of education opportunities and often racism. They are individuals who come here, they may have lost everything, and they need more time to adjust into real life than anyone else.

As noted by Doctor Liz Allen from the Australian National University after the report by Channel 7 on the issue: ‘By framing the debate through fear, the public is drawn to engage in the hope solutions are offered to protect us. 10th July 2018 data doesn’t support the notion of a plague of migrant crime, whether it be African gangs or European hipsters. Australians are at greater risk from Anglo Australians than any other ethnic or cultural group’.

Yet, the South Sudanese community acknowledge something needs to be done and that some of our members are struggling with different aspects of the settlement and integration process. But, we are doing something about it! At the recent FECAA national conference in Melbourne community leaders came together to discuss the devastating impact the negative media reporting has had on the community. We also discussed how to best respond to this, how to build and strengthen our community and how to include many of the young members who for one reason or another are not involved. The aim of the conference was to celebrate the strength of the South Sudanese community.

The keynote speaker at the conference, Dr Graham Poole a Launceston GP, has an immense respect for refugees resettling in Launceston. He also has a unique perspective through his cross-cultural experience and has lived in South Sudan for five years. Between July 2012 and September 2016 Dr Poole served as the medical director for a women and children’s Centre in Yei South Sudan. Dr Poole emphasised the importance for the community coming together ‘to share stories, to share wisdom, in the hope that we can all be part of building communities that thrive’.

Dr Poole was among about 30 guest speakers who presented at the conference, ranging from government and non-government organisations, business, and community and mediarepresentatives. Aimed at promoting engagement, innovation and critical debate around issues affecting the wider South Sudanese community, the event was crucial for us as a community.
THE SUDANESE COMMUNITY IN LAUNCESTON

The Sudanese Community in Launceston is very engaged with the young people in the community. A significant commitment to supporting and building migrant young people has occurred locally over several years in Tasmania. One example was the 2017 Youth Leadership Summit which worked on the principle that, just because they are young, doesn’t mean young people don’t have wisdom to share. This summit, organised by the Launceston Sudanese Community, put young people front and centre in discussions about youth. The summit was a place for young people to air their concerns and be supported to implement solutions.

‘I think it is very vital that there is a place for us all to come together because we don’t want to lose our identity, we want to be able to come together and be able to express our culture and our tradition.’ (Youth Leadership summit participant)

The summit was solution-focused and Sudanese community leaders said they would support the young people to help realise the dreams and goals that come out of the summit.

‘I believe youth have a lot to offer, we need to ask the questions and give them that opportunity to tell us what they want, and we’ll be surprised by what they say, what they share, what they can give us.’ (Sudanese community leader at the Youth Leadership Summit)

‘Connecting is sharing our culture and accepting other cultures, which is very good for people... to connect is really a vital role in day to day life.’ (Participant at the Youth Leadership Summit)

The Sudanese Community of Launceston is a particularly successful community. Through arranging soccer tournaments, community BBQs and sharing our traditional food with the wider community during special Sunday lunch at Inveresk we emphasise the connectedness with the wider community and the sharing of stories and events. We also celebrated a true community Christmas last year welcoming friends and family to an evening of dancing and celebration. As a community, we have an emphasis on reaching out and sharing the festive season with others—we welcomed anyone who wanted to join.

The community was successful in a funding application a few years back and we now have more freedom to explore the state with a new bus. The bus is available for other community organisations to use in Launceston area, and I think it will help the other groups enormously. I guess it shows that the Sudanese Community is one of the best-established and well-integrated communities to have the ability to work together as a community and at the same time support other community organisations.
Power Intercultural Program: Celebrating the Vibrancy of Cultural Diversity

Alipate Carlile

Alipate Carlile is a former professional Australian rules footballer who played for the Port Adelaide Football Club in the Australian Football League. He is now the Multicultural Program Manager with Power Community Limited and runs the Power Intercultural Program—a program designed to celebrate vibrancy of cultural diversity and expression, promote inclusion and build social cohesion by recognising the positive contribution of different cultures within Australia.

Sport in Australia is like a religion. Elite sports people are highly regarded in the community and are role models as soon as they step out on the field, pitch or arena. Sport in Australia becomes a place of belonging for people of all ages and creates communities that are welcoming. Sport is often the centre point for gatherings on weekends. AFL is the number one sport in Australia and uses its players and reach to drive multiple messages from healthy living and stopping domestic violence, to social cohesion and harmony.
Sport can also be a conduit for diplomacy. We saw this when Port Adelaide Football Club (PAFC) brought footy to China and took on the Gold Coast Suns in the first ever AFL match to be played for premiership points outside of Australia and New Zealand last year.¹ This was an example where government tensions were broken down by a game of Australian Rules.

Port Adelaide’s Power Intercultural Program was developed to assist students from multicultural backgrounds to learn about AFL and to celebrate the vibrancy of cultural diversity and expression. The Program aims to promote inclusion and build social cohesion by recognising the positive contribution of different cultures within Australia. The Program uses Australian Football as a vehicle to engage students, encourage them to explore their own personal identity and culture—including Aboriginal culture—and to build an understanding and acceptance of difference within their classroom, school and community. Some of the activities in the program include:

- School Guernsey design and description to reflect the cultures within the school
- Harmony Day Activation
- Cultural Awareness Video
- Participation at the Power Intercultural Program Carnival
- A video review of the Power Intercultural Program showcasing the outcomes achieved.

The aim of the Program is to give all participants confidence to address issues within their own communities. Racism, for example, is just one issue that many Australians face in their community. By creating self-confidence in students to stand up for injustices that they see, we can create a snowball effect for people to stand up for minority groups.

The program also aims for the students to gain a sense of empathy by linking their journey to Australia, whether that’s from their parents or grandparents, with ten significant events in Aboriginal history and comparing what they see as similarities.

The Power Intercultural Program achieved a huge milestone in its second year by gaining South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) accreditation where the students gain 10 points upon completing the program. This was significant because it is directly linked to their education and gives the students life skills as well as contributing and encouraging them to complete their secondary schooling. We had 223 students from over 200 nationalities participate in the program and roughly a 50/50 split of male and female participants. Another bonus has been exposing PAFC staff and players to new cultures and religions, which has added to their personal development.

MULTICULTURAL AMBASSADORS

Last year the AFL and Australia Post announced the 2017 Australia Post AFL Multicultural Player Ambassadors which included 19 AFL and AFLW players. The program aimed to use well known AFL players such as Nic Naitanui, Stephen Coniglio, David Rodan and Aliir Aliir to name a few, to deliver messages of social cohesion and harmony. They also have elite academies that play off against each other and create pathways into high grade Australian rules.

These ambassadors are crucial as they create role models at the top level of the sport for the younger generation to look up to. The role of the multicultural ambassadors is also central to opening up conversations with communities and engaging with young people. Having access to elite sportspeople has a long-lasting effect on students and their parents and can lead to assisting them with a sense of belonging outside of their cultural or religious groups.

¹ http://mailmangroup.com/sports/how-port-adelaide-brought-footy-to-china/
REACHING THE COMMUNITIES

Working with the communities hasn’t always been easy. In the beginning the reactions and conversations with the students were tough as they didn’t necessarily watch the game—some had never even heard of it. But, once we break down the initial thoughts, the majority of the students love the game and embrace it as a new challenge. The skills are hard to learn but some of these students bring a new level of athleticism that has been displayed at AFL level by the likes of Nic Naitanui and Aliir Aliir.

Engaging the parents can be challenging as most of the work we are doing happens at schools. One method we have used to engage parents, has been to get the students to do the research piece on their journey to Australia. This has opened up conversations with the parents. The students have found this to be extremely beneficial with parents reporting back to the PAFC via case studies that they are now having meaningful conversations with their child at home about their future and their ambitions, which is a huge bonus for the program.

We know from other projects involving sport and in sport in general that role models play a huge part in engaging the community. We use past and present PAFC players as well as female role models to deliver the messages and the role models also help out with the skills sessions.

Our role models come from a wide range of backgrounds and all have a particular story as to how and why they have become a role model. One of our female role models, for instance, is a past program participant who now has a coaching role with a team in the amateur league. Another one of our female role models is a Fijian girl who plays cricket for the Adelaide Strikers at the highest level in Australia.
Designed to celebrate vibrancy of cultural diversity and expression, promote inclusion and build social cohesion by recognising the positive contribution of different cultures within Australia.
AFL and multiculturalism

The Power Intercultural Program is about inclusion, diversity and social cohesion. By encouraging diverse players to engage with AFL we might start small conversations that with time, will lead to bigger conversations on difference, diversity, inclusion and recognition.

For me, multiculturalism, and in particular everyday multiculturalism, is about exactly this—practices, customs and traditions that new, and for many, different, communities might perform on a daily basis that we, as Australians, might not know about or see, or conversely that we might see but not recognise. Only by having these conversations can we begin to break down the initial apprehension that may exist in some established communities when it comes to reaching out to newly arrived communities.
Ramzi Hussaini arrived in Australia 7 years ago as an asylum seeker from Afghanistan via a boat from Indonesia. In Australia he started as a volunteer with Edithvale Lifesaving Club and followed this pathway as a career. He currently works full-time with Life Saving Victoria as Multicultural Project Officer. He has been involved with lifesaving (at the Beach) and Lifeguarding (at the Pools) for about 5 years now. During his time as a Lifesaver he has been part of some amazing things such as educating and mentoring new immigrants with their work at the Pools and about water safety as well as visiting Overseas (Sri Lanka) and training the Sri Lankan Personnel about water safety.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

My first impressions when I arrived in Australia was how different everything is from Afghanistan. First of all, everyone spoke English! Meeting people was different from where I am from and the systems are different. I was just amazed by how everything seemed to work—like people’s lifestyle, travel system and everything works.

I felt very welcome when I arrived. I came via Pakistan, then Thailand and then Indonesia and then I spent a month and a bit in a detention centre on Christmas Island and a month and a bit in detention centre in Western Australia. I was then moved to community detention and I could go to school. After two months in community detention I got a visa and I could start living by myself. I was only 17 years old and felt welcome straight away because people were friendly, and they were looking after me.

**WHY LIFESAVING?**

I came to Australia via boat and yet I did not know how to swim. It was quite scary even if I wasn’t really aware of how dangerous the water can be. I also had a scary experience in a local pool once and realized then the dangers of water if you don’t know how to swim or how to behave around water.

I met my current employer, Mr. David Holland, at my school. I was at a school for early English language learners and he came to give a presentation on water safety and on lifesaving at the beach. I told him I want to become a lifesaver.

He asked me if I know how to swim and I said no. Mr. Holland then funded me for four terms so that I could learn how to swim. In 2013 I joined the lifesaving club. I really wanted to do this as I saw how important lifesaving skills were. It was also important for me as coming from Afghanistan, I had no experience with water. I had never been near water and my own mother was always very nervous around water.
I knew that there were many people from Afghan background in Australia and they would all have similar experiences; a lack of knowledge on how to behave around water and what to do in a situation where they lost control. At the same time, a friend of mine drowned in Adelaide and I just knew that I wanted to become a role model. I wanted to teach others in my community what to do around water, how to behave and how dangerous water can be if you don’t have this knowledge.

CALD AUSTRALIANS AND LIFESAVING SKILLS

Each year over 16,000 people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds come through different programs that we provide here at Life Saving Victoria. Since 2007 over 100,000 multicultural participants have been involved in activities. So yes, there is definitely an increase in number of people who are interested in learning lifesaving skills. People want to make sure that they and their families are safe on the beach and at pools. There are many programs for people to choose from here at Life Saving Victoria. We offer many different and fun programs for people to learn different life saving skills. We are not only offering swimming lessons, but we have beach programs where participants get to learn about life saving techniques and water safety; meet a lifeguard program designed to educate students and community groups about how to make safe decisions when enjoying inland and coastal aquatic environments; resuscitate a mate program focused on emergency response management; and a senior’s water recreation program aimed at improving participants’ health and wellbeing.

It is incredibly important for new migrants to Australia to learn to swim. Many new migrants do not necessarily have the understanding of the dangers that water can pose and they also don’t know how to behave around water—mostly because of limited experience with water.

Life Saving Victoria therefore go into areas with a large multicultural population to mobilise people to join lifesaving programs. We also go into the school in the areas and have programs there as well as at universities—the universities invite us to educate students.
MULTICULTURAL AMBASSADORS

Our Multicultural Ambassadors are very important as they are the ones who attract the participants. The Ambassadors are from different CALD communities in Victoria and the program is playing an important part in the settlement process of our Ambassadors. Life Saving Victoria provide training in life saving skills. We then support the ambassadors in looking for and obtaining a job. The ambassadors also go back to their community to motivate people in their communities to attend lifesaving skills programs. We include the whole community—children and adults. We have, for example, the Little Learners Program where children come to the community centres with their parents and the aim is to educate the children as well as the parents. I would say that between 20 – 40% of our participants in our programs are families. We have the Ambassadors to mobilise the various communities. We have training days for the Burmese community, the Indian community for example where both children and adults are attending. The Ambassadors will be the gatekeepers who contact and organise the communities while Life Saving Victoria organise the event and the activities on the day.

FIRST REACTIONS

It is extraordinary to see the reactions from people when they go through our training programs. Many of them start out almost naïve and ‘innocent’ when they first start the programs. People are scared of entering the water and, scared of drowning and scared of the deep water. Then, when they have finished the program they are excited! They have had fun—we have a strong focus on having fun while learning—and they feel safe.

“...It is incredibly important for new migrants to Australia to learn to swim. Many new migrants do not necessarily have the understanding of the dangers that water can pose...”
MAIN MESSAGE TO NEW ARRIVALS

My message to all new migrants arriving in Australia will be this: water safety education is vital as everyone needs to understand the dangers around the water. The dangers that can very gravely impact on children and families. It only takes 20 seconds for someone to drown and this is something we always must be aware of. It is important that people have fun in the water but, look after each other, look after your children. Have Fun—Be Safe!
‘For me, everyday multiculturalism is balancing the ever-changing dance of the natural human desire to belong while maintaining the cultural roots that uniquely shape my human experience. As a visible racial minority living in Australia, I am at times out of step in this dance from the daily (both subtle and not so subtle) reminders of my difference. The dance can become cheerful when this difference is positively acknowledged and celebrated or made more challenging when such difference is highlighted to ostracise. Despite what may be happening on the dance floor, the dance continues, ever changing and evolving.’

(South Sudanese Dinka background, 20 years in Australia)

‘For me, everyday multiculturalism is coming to work and working closely with 5 different ethnicities and nationalities.’

(Serbian background, 3 years in Australia)

‘For me, everyday multiculturalism is who we are. It defines the essence of modern Australia.’

(Greek heritage, born in Australia)

‘For me, everyday multiculturalism is discovering a new tradition, a new culture or a new cuisine which joyfully enriches your life and gives you something to share with someone.’

(Jewish and African background, born in Australia)
Anna Harrison is a hardworking and inspirational woman who has worked tirelessly for many decades to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of seniors regardless of their backgrounds. Ms Harrison’s work in the community lead her to receive two prestigious awards this year. Anna has been involved in providing services to seniors since the inception of the Multicultural Aged Care Program in 1982. Ms Harrison’s achievement was recognised when she received an Award of Excellence from the WA Minister for Seniors in 2000 and a Multicultural Services Award from the WA Government in 2003. In addition, she received a Silver Cross for service to the WA Polish Community from the Polish Government awarded by the Polish President and a Centenary Medal for services to migrants and refugees awarded by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Ms Harrison is also a Commissioner for Declarations and Justice of the Peace. Umbrella Inc. won the Small Provider Category at the 2016 Aged Care Services WA Excellence in Care Award. Umbrella Inc. was the finalist for the COTAWA Award 2016. Ms Harrison was the finalist for the HESTA Aged Care Awards 2017 in Individual Distinction category.

Migrants face several challenges when they are restarting their life in a new country. Being a women migrant add to these challenges. When I arrived in Australia in the 70’s and 80’s there were many challenges for women, particularly for women from cultural and linguistic diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Now however, Australia has been my home for 41 years and I always wanted to pay back Australia for its kindness, acceptance and fair go to all. ‘I had a choice back then: travel through life and do nothing or stand up and make a difference in my community. I chose the latter.’

In 2000, I established a CALD specific aged care program under Home and Community Care which was named Umbrella Multicultural Community Care Services Inc. I am also a passionate advocate for the LGBTI community and have created the first LGBTI specific aged care program in WA.

Umbrella Inc. provides community aged care services for over 700 clients from 63 different countries in the Perth metropolitan and Mandurah/Peel regions. Umbrella Inc. programs and services operate primarily on the basis of recognition and celebration of diversity. I have always believed that it is recognising the value of difference that combats discrimination and promotes inclusion. The provision of culturally appropriate and flexible services for older members of these communities, enabling them to continue living at home independently for longer, has been a passion of mine for many years. The services established under Umbrella are always innovative and ground-breaking in nature. For older people who live lonely and isolated lives, these programs can make a real difference.

Umbrella Inc. invites everyone to be part of an amazing family that looks after people. Ageing is not a sentence, it’s a beautiful stage in life that should be celebrated. I think my Umbrella team is outstanding because we break barriers and look after people the best we can. I am lucky and blessed to work with such an amazing group of people, who also share my vision.
I believe that the work we have conducted under Umbrella has improved the quality of life of many older people by involving them in community activities, reducing their sense of social isolation and improving their overall health and wellbeing. I have always been committed to ensuring that Western Australia’s diverse older populations receive quality, respectful services that support them to remain in their own homes and to be as independent as possible. At the same time, I am keen to explore new and innovative responses to delivering services that most effectively meet an individual’s needs whilst respecting the cultural, linguistic, spiritual, sexuality and gender diversity of each individual.

Some of the most successful and award-winning programs you can find under Umbrella and established under my leadership are:

Ms Harrison and her team’s effort were recognised when Umbrella Inc. received the Award in the Small Provider Category at the 2016 Aged Care Services WA Excellence in Care Award and the Excellence in Service Delivery Award at the Cultural Diversity in Ageing Excellence Awards 2018 in June 2018.

The Internet Café with a strong focus on promoting and encouraging existing abilities. It provides a fun and safe environment for our clients to learn in their own language, to form new friendships and to connect with families back in their home country using Skype or Facebook. Some seniors use Google Earth to search for places where they used to live or look at the homes of loved ones. The program also assists to establish long distance caring relationships and increases social connections and emotional support. The program’s outstanding outcome was also recognised in a scientific paper.
Recognition and celebration of diversity

The Internet Café
The Home@Home program includes small, tailor-made groups. Clients are matched based on their ethnicity, language, religion and culture and it continues to be a remarkable success. Clients are empowered to sustain their independence, wellness, self-esteem and foster social networks. Current groups are from Italian, Polish, Spanish and former Yugoslavian communities.

Mobile Aged Care Van is a mobile information service packed with helpful resources for CALD and LGBTI seniors. The van provides information about aged care and other support services, entitlements, assessments, self-advocacy, dementia and services for family carers. The mobile van’s aim is to enable seniors to make more informed decisions about their current and future care needs by providing them information on their own language. The van currently provides information in 33 different languages.

“I have been a member of Umbrella for the last seven years and I can’t express how lucky I feel that I was introduced to such a warm and loving Organization and in particular Anna Harrison and her beautiful staff.” Umbrella Client

In July 2018, Ms Harrison was named the winner of the Lifetime of Achievement Award category in the 2018 Aged and Community Services Australia: Aged Care State Awards. The ACSA Aged Care Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements and contributions of organisations, teams and individuals in the aged care industry. The awards generate pride in education and training, showcase innovation and teamwork, highlight unique leadership capabilities and focus on the passion, hard work and dedication of those who work across the not-for-profit aged care and community care sector.

In June, Ms. Harrison was the winner of the Dr. Olga Kanitsaki Award for Individual Excellence at the Cultural Diversity in Ageing Excellence Awards 2018 held in Melbourne which recognises individuals who demonstrate exceptional commitment and initiative in the delivery of services to older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in aged care.

Both awards honour Anna’s more than 40 years of hard work in making a positive and lasting difference in the lives of many people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) and LGBTI backgrounds. Anna was instrumental in supporting the WA Association of Polish Women to receive funding from the Commonwealth Government for the community aged care packages program under the name of ‘Rainbow’ Multicultural Aged Care Programme. It was the first CALD specific program serving multicultural communities in Perth.

“To receive a state and a national recognition for the work I have done in the community for the last 40 years is incredibly humbling.” Anna Harrison
FINDING STRENGTH IN LANGUAGES, CULTURES AND STORIES

BY MANDI WICKS, SBS DIRECTOR, AUDIO AND LANGUAGE CONTENT

Mandi Wicks is the Director of Audio and Language Content and has been with SBS for more than seven years, overseeing SBS Radio and wider in-language radio services. SBS Radio includes seven radio networks—three focusing on Australian news and information in 68 languages, SBS Arabic24 and three music networks—SBS PopAsia, SBS PopDesi and SBS Chill. Mandi has nearly 30 years’ experience in the media industry, working at four of Australia’s leading networks (SBS, Macquarie, Southern Cross Austereo and Nova Entertainment). She worked as a journalist for 10 years before moving into senior management roles. SBS is dedicated to connecting communities through multilingual conversations across all platforms and devices, in order to inspire social cohesion in Australia.

The annual International Metropolis Conference, held recently in Sydney, provided the opportunity for Australian and international academics, practitioners and community representatives to reflect on key topics impacting migrants locally and globally, including employment, mobility, diversity and equality.

Australia is one of the world’s most vibrant multicultural nations, and the conference created a moment for us to consider some of the reasons for this success, while acknowledging the importance of keeping these conversations alive.

As Australia’s multicultural and multilingual broadcaster, SBS is a leader in championing the strengths found in languages, cultures and stories; it is something we have been fiercely passionate about since our inception more than 40 years ago.

In our capacity as the official media partner for the International Metropolis Conference, SBS’s expertise enabled us to share insights, perspectives and multiplatform coverage to engage audiences in the debate across our 68 language services and News platforms; demonstrating how the diversity found every day amongst our many communities are some of Australia’s greatest strengths.

Today, one in two Australians has a migrant background, nearly 20 per cent speak a language other than English at home and 28 per cent were born overseas.
The diversity found every day amongst our many communities are some of Australia’s greatest strengths.
However, reflecting this diversity is just one piece of a complex puzzle. It is really only when we drive forward the benefits of this diversity to inspire all Australians to explore, respect and celebrate our differences, that we can move forward as an increasingly inclusive society.

With this in mind, we shouldn’t underestimate the power of the media in helping us to achieve this goal. Sadly, media representation of our diverse communities can sometimes play a role in the development of inaccurate or unfair stereotypes, due, in part, to the overly simplistic nature of daily headlines.

SBS’s purpose remains at the forefront of what we do, and we are motivated by our belief that connecting communities through language, culture and stories can inspire greater understanding, which can ultimately help to normalise diversity within our society.

At the very core, SBS Radio provides balanced and impartial information and encourages open dialogue at all times. As the world’s most linguistically diverse public broadcaster, we are able to tackle issues affecting our communities sensitively and authentically—sharing powerful personal stories that challenge preconceptions.

“\nIt is really only when we drive forward the benefits of this diversity to inspire all Australians to explore, respect and celebrate our differences, that we can move forward as an increasingly inclusive society.”
Enable communities to feel a sense of connection and ownership of issues rather than being excluded from the debate.

As migrants arrive on our shores, we speak to them in their language—literally.

Many migrants, and particularly refugees, experience difficulties in adjusting to life in Australia, navigating a different language and culture that is often worlds away from their own. These changes can be compounded by negative media coverage and stereotypes, making an already difficult and unfamiliar situation unimaginably harder.

SBS aims to help to breakdown these stereotypes which often form through a lack of knowledge or understanding.

Australian news and settlement information provided in language are essential in helping newly arrived residents navigate life in Australia and enable communities to feel a sense of connection and ownership of issues rather than being excluded from the debate.

We give them a voice, celebrate their culture and share their distinctive stories with all Australians, via our English language platforms, in order to increase understanding between communities.

SBS is also proud to embrace language learning and retention. Language is intrinsically linked to culture and retention of culture goes to the heart of identity and a sense of belonging in Australia.

While Australia is one of the most linguistically diverse nations in the world, language learning has been declining amongst final year school students.

In the 1960s, roughly 40 per cent of school students graduated year 12 with a second language, however (according to the Asian Education Foundation), that figure had fallen to around 10 per cent in 2016.
SBS’s annual National Languages Competition aims to encourage and celebrate a love of learning languages in Australia. This year’s competition is open to all ages including adults and English language learners.

Of course, SBS’s commitment extends across the network. Across our TV, radio and digital services, there is a passion for authentic storytelling that doesn’t just reflect the reality of modern Australia, but explores often untold stories, with inclusion at their core.

Stories like The Mosque Next Door, Marry Me Marry My Family and Sunshine—powerful multicultural stories that open up worlds rarely experienced by all Australians, aimed at challenging stereotypes and increasing respect and understanding between cultures.

Australia’s increasing diversity is indeed one of our nation’s greatest strengths. As we drive forward the conversations raised at the International Metropolis Conference, it is essential that we embrace our languages, cultures and stories as they guide us in our purpose helping everyone to feel at home in Australia.
‘Multiculturalism isn’t something we “add on” to our everyday lives, such as attending a weekend festival. Instead it is an intrinsic part of who we are and how we live our lives.’


‘If we want a peaceful future for the world, it must be a multicultural future. As Australians. We can truthfully say, in our laconic manner, ‘been there, done that’. And then we can sell it to the world.’

Author Garry Wotherspoon, in Australian Mosaic issue 9, 2005.

‘Because multiculturalism is not a theory, it is a reality for modern Australia. And it has been a great success. […] it has been a success because Australians have recognised that in embracing other cultures we can forge an identity that is greater than the sum of its diverse parts.’


‘For our country to thrive and survive we must work with the human capital of all Australians. Our diversity and our tolerance are our strengths—this fact is now a basic foundation stone of our current prosperity and productivity.’

Abd-Elmasih Malak AM, FECCA Chair 2002-2005.

‘We are not a nation that mandates a particular faith. Instead we are united by our common commitment to freedom, respect and equality.’

Former Prime Minister the Hon John Howard in Australian Mosaic issue 2, 2003.

‘Part of the role of the media is to build a community among its readers or audiences. The “us” position is very important to media outlets as they build a relationship with consumer. They have an “us”, you need a “them”. The media manes the stereotypes familiar enough to be accepted as “common knowledge”.’

Professor Lynette Sheridan Burns, Australian Mosaic issue 5, 2004.
FECCA STATE, TERRITORY AND REGIONAL MEMBERS

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FECCA NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Mary Patetsos
Chairperson

Peter Doukas
Senior Deputy Chairperson

Hina Durrani
Senior Deputy Chairperson, Women

Siddique Panwala
Hon Treasurer

Kevin Kadirgamar
Hon Secretary

Joseph Caputo OAM JP
Hon President

Mithun Alexander
Deputy Chair / ACT MC President

Marta Terracciano JP
Deputy Chair / ECC NSW Chair

Miriam Cocking
Deputy Chair / MCCSA President

Kris Pavlidis
Deputy Chair / ECCV Chairperson

Dr Edwin Joseph
Deputy Chair / MCNT President

Sandra Elhelw Wright
Women’s Chair

Catherine Poutasi
Regional Chair

Waqas Durrani
MCOT Chairperson / Youth Chair

Marion Lau OAM
Healthy Ageing Chair

Suzanne Graham
Disabilities’ Chair

Parsuram Sharma-Luital JP
New and Emerging Communities’ Chair

ABOUT FECCA

FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. We provide advocacy, develop policy and promote issues on behalf of our constituency to government and the broader community. FECCA supports multiculturalism, community harmony, social justice and the rejection of all forms of discrimination and racism.

FECCA’s membership comprises state, territory and regional multicultural and ethnic councils. FECCA has an elected executive committee and a professional national secretariat implementing executive committee and a professional national secretariat implementing policies and work programs on behalf of its membership and stakeholders.

For more information and to read more about FECCA’s policies and program, please visit our website: www.fecca.org.au. Alternatively, please contact the FECCA office on (02) 6282 5755, or email: admin@fecca.org.au.

LIST OF FECCA CHAIRPERSONS

Mr Wadim (Bill) Begorow AM MBE
(Inaugural Chairperson 1979–1983)

Mr W. George Wojack AO MBE

Mr Carl Harbaum MBE

Mr Victor Rebikoff OAM

Mr Randolph Alwish AM

Mr Nick Xynias AO BEM

Mr Abd-Elmasih Malak AM

Ms Voula Mesameri
(2005–2009)

Mr Pino Migliorino
(2010–2013)

Mr Joe Caputo OAM
(2014–2017)

Ms Mary Patetsos
(2017–Present)
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