



PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, DINNER FOLLOWING
OPENING OF THE FEDERATION OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES COUNCIL
OF AUSTRALIA HEADQUARTERS, SYDNEY, 26 APRIL 1984

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU THIS EVENING AS WE
CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF THE NEW HEADQUARTERS FOR THE
FEDERATION OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA.

I DO NOT BRING TO YOUR AREAS OF INTEREST SOME CONCERN RECENTLY
ACQUIRED AS PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA. FOR FROM MY EARLIEST
TIME OF CONTEMPLATION ABOUT OUR GREAT COUNTRY I HAVE PERCEIVED
MUCH OF THAT GREATNESS, AND POTENTIAL FOR GREATNESS, TO BE
ASSOCIATED WITH OUR READINESS TO OPEN UP OUR LAND TO THOSE
WHO WOULD JOIN US FROM OTHER COUNTRIES.

IN JOINING THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY IN MY FIRST YEAR AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF W.A. IN 1947, AND IN ESTABLISHING THE FIRST
BRANCH OF THE PARTY THERE IN 1948, ONE OF THE REASONS WAS A
SENSE OF EXCITEMENT AND IDENTIFICATION WITH THE VAST
IMMIGRATION PROGRAM THEN BEING INITIATED BY THE GREAT LABOR
GOVERNMENTS OF THE WAR AND IMMEDIATE POST-WAR PERIODS.
IN MY WAY, THEN, I ATTEMPTED TO PLAY SOME PART IN THIS
OPENING UP PROCESS BY ESTABLISHING ALSO THE AUSTRALIAN-OVERSEAS
STUDENTS CLUB AT THE UNIVERSITY TO BRING CLOSER TOGETHER THOSE
FROM DIVERSE NATIONAL BACKGROUNDS.

2.

AND AS PRESIDENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS IN THE DECADE OF THE 1970'S I PARTICIPATED FULLY WITH THE GOVERNMENTS OF BOTH POLITICAL PERSUASIONS IN THEIR WORK DEALING WITH IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS.

AND SO I STAND BEFORE YOU TONIGHT, PROUDLY, AS ONE WITH ALMOST FORTY YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO, AND ACTION IN SUPPORT OF THOSE CONCEPTS AND ISSUES WHICH ARE SO IMPORTANT TO ALL OF YOU.

THE FEDERATION IS MAKING AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE QUALITY OF AUSTRALIAN LIFE. YOUR ROLE IN PROMOTING JOINT ACTION AND CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES ON ISSUES OF COMMON CONCERN IS CRUCIAL. YOURS IS NOT JUST A CO-ORDINATING ROLE. YOU ALSO HAVE A ROLE IN HELPING TO ENSURE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA ARE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN AUSTRALIAN LIFE ON AN EQUAL BASIS.

AS WELL YOU HAVE A ROLE IN ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE OF THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES. YOUR CONGRESS LATER THIS YEAR WILL BE A LANDMARK IN BRINGING ETHNIC COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA TOGETHER.

3.

THE DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION THE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES MAKE TO OUR SOCIETY ENSURES A RICHER, MORE DIVERSE AND BETTER AUSTRALIA. I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE PARTICULAR MENTION OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY. I UNDERSTAND THE SUPPORT EXTENDED BY THE CHINESE COMMUNITY HAS BEEN VITAL TO THE FEDERATION. MORE SPECIFICALLY I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE NEW HEADQUARTERS HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CONSIDERABLE GENEROSITY OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY - THIS GENEROSITY IS TO BE APPLAUDED.

AT THE HEART OF THE FEDERATION'S TASK HAS BEEN THE PROMOTION OF A MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA.

THERE IS NOTHING "HIGH-FALLUTIN" OR "NEW FANGLED" ABOUT THE IDEA OF A MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA. AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN DEVELOPING TOWARDS A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY FOR NEARLY 200 YEARS AS EACH SUCCEEDING WAVE OF IMMIGRANTS HAS ADDED TO THE DIVERSITY OF OUR CULTURAL TRADITIONS. THE PROCESS HAS ACCELERATED MARKEDLY IN MORE RECENT TIMES AND PARTICULARLY SINCE THE END OF THE LAST WAR. THE EFFECT HAS BEEN THAT WE HAVE NOW DEVELOPED AS ONE OF THE MORE TRULY GLOBAL NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

"MULTICULTURAL" IS MORE THAN A DESCRIPTIVE TERM TO DESIGNATE A SOCIETY MADE UP OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS. IT IS ALSO AN APPROACH TO POLICY FORMULATION AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION WHICH SEEKS TO PROVIDE FOR EQUALITY OF ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY. IT DESIGNATES A SOCIETY WHICH SUPPORTS A COMMON GROUP OF INSTITUTIONS, LEGAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS, WHILE LEAVING INDIVIDUALS FREE TO MAINTAIN THEIR RELIGION, LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CUSTOMS. A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY IS A VITAL AND TOLERANT AND PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY IN WHICH ALL GROUPS, BE THEY ABORIGINAL, ANGLO-CELTIC, EUROPEAN, ASIAN, LATIN AMERICAN, OR MIDDLE EASTERN, OR FROM ANY OTHER OF THE ETHNIC GROUPINGS WE FIND IN OUR SOCIETY TODAY, MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE RICHNESS, THE DEPTH AND TRADITIONS OF OUR NATION.

MR JEGOROW

SOME TIME AGO YOU SAID:

"AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO THE MAJORITY OF THE WORLD'S CULTURES AND LANGUAGES. ...WE HAVE THE MEANS TO BUILD UP A NATION WITH EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS REGARDLESS OF RACE, CREED OR CULTURAL ORIGIN - THAT IS A NATION THAT IS SOCIALLY COHESIVE, PROSPEROUS AND CONSCIOUS NOT ONLY OF ITS OBLIGATIONS TO ITS OWN PEOPLE BUT ALSO OF ITS RESONSIBILITY TOWARDS

5.

POORER AND LESS FORTUNATE COUNTRIES. SUCH DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT OCCUR ACCIDENTALLY BUT ONLY THROUGH GOOD WILL, AWARENESS AND RESPECT OF OUR COMMON HUMANITY, AND THE REALISATION THAT ALL CULTURES HAVE POSITIVE ASPECTS WHICH CAN BE SHARED."

THIS I BELIEVE IS THE LOGIC OF A MULTICULTURAL APPROACH. PERSONALLY I FULLY SUBSCRIBE TO IT.

FEW OF YOU HERE TONIGHT WOULD DISAGREE WITH THE BROAD TERMS OF A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY. MANY OF YOU, HOWEVER, HAVE MORE SPECIFIC CONCERNS, CONCERNS WHICH YOUR FEDERATION HAS BEEN ASSIDUOUS IN DRAWING TO THE ATTENTION OF GOVERNMENTS. FECCA HAS MADE SUBMISSIONS TO VARIOUS BODIES SUCH AS THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION AND THE SCHOOLS COMMISSION, TO REVIEWS BEING UNDERTAKEN SUCH AS THAT INTO THE SPECIAL BROADCASTING SERVICE AND THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS. THE FEDERATION ALSO MADE A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC SUMMIT LAST YEAR.

ONE OF THE UNDERLYING THEMES OF YOUR SUBMISSIONS HAS BEEN THE CONCERN THAT THE NEXUS BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND DISADVANTAGE BE BROKEN. THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR GOVERNMENT SHARES THIS CONCERN. THE PARTICULAR CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN LIFE OF THE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES SHOULD BE RECOGNISED AND APPRECIATED AS PART OF OUR NATIONAL HERITAGE.

6.

THE GOVERNMENT GIVES PARTICULAR PRIORITY TO ITS SPECIAL MIGRANT AND ETHNIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICE AS WELL AS TO DEVELOPING MORE RESPONSIVE MAINSTREAM SERVICES THROUGH EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS.

THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO DIRECTLY SUPPORTIVE OF BODIES SUCH AS THE FEDERATION. I CAN ASSURE YOU I RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE TO THE FEDERATION OF ADEQUATE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT.

ANY SOUND IMMIGRATION POLICY MUST BE BACKED BY APPROPRIATELY SUPPORTIVE EDUCATION POLICIES.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL TO HELPING NEW ARRIVALS BOTH FEEL MORE AT HOME AND MORE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR SOCIETY. THROUGH THE ADULT MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM THE COMMONWEALTH FUNDS "ON-ARRIVAL" AND "ON-GOING" ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING COURSES FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES.

EXPENDITURE FOR THESE PROGRAMS ROSE BY OVER 14 PER CENT LAST YEAR, AND INCLUDED PROVISION OF FUNDS FOR INCREASING THE NUMBER OF PERMANENT TEACHERS IN THIS AREA. ARRANGEMENTS ARE ALSO UNDERWAY TO ESTABLISH A NEW MATERIALS AND SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING THROUGH BETTER PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT.

AS WELL, FUNDS HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE OCCUPATIONAL ENGLISH CLASSES FOR MIGRANTS IN THE WORKPLACE.

A MAJOR THRUST OF MY GOVERNMENT'S EDUCATION POLICY HAS BEEN TO PROVIDE EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO ALL CHILDREN. WE AIM TO ENSURE THAT NO CHILD'S EDUCATION OR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE PENALISED BY ECONOMIC, SOCIAL OR CULTURAL BACKGROUND, LACK OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT OR LACK OF SUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES. IN THIS REGARD ETHNIC CHILDREN'S NEEDS COMMAND PARTICULAR ATTENTION.

WE ARE WELL AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN ASSISTING MIGRANTS IN THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS - THIS HAS BEEN VERY MUCH PART OF OUR THINKING IN ADDRESSING EDUCATION ISSUES. EXISTING COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE BEING CHANGED TO GIVE INCREASED EMPHASIS AND ASSISTANCE TO THOSE SCHOOLS MOST IN NEED. THE GOVERNMENT HAS AN UNSWERVING COMMITMENT TO THIS APPROACH. REGRETTABLY A DISPROPORTIONATELY LARGE NUMBER OF ETHNIC CHILDREN ARE AMONG THE STUDENTS OF SUCH SCHOOLS. INDEED I WOULD NOTE THAT THE MAJORITY OF NEEDY GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS ARE MORE OFTEN THAN NOT PRECISELY THOSE HAVING TO CATER FOR A WIDE RANGE OF ETHNIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS. THE NEEDS OF SUCH SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN GIVEN A PARTICULAR PRIORITY IN GOVERNMENT FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO INTRODUCED THE PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY PROGRAM TO TACKLE CONCERNS WE HAVE BOTH AT THE LOW NUMBERS OF CHILDREN COMPLETING FULL SECONDARY EDUCATION, EITHER IN SCHOOL OR TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION, AND AT THE INEQUALITY IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME FOR CHILDREN FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS. THIS PROGRAM HAS ALSO, IN LINE WITH THE GENERAL THRUST OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS REVIEW OF THE POST ARRIVAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, GIVEN EMPHASIS TO THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF MIGRANTS.

THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THAT THE LANGUAGES OF ITS ETHNIC AND ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES ARE A VITAL NATIONAL RESOURCE. WE ALSO ATTACH CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THE PROVISION OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, PARTICULARLY USING A BILINGUAL APPROACH WHEN CHILDREN DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT POLICIES IN THIS AREA BE PART OF A COHERENT, PROPERLY CO-ORDINATED APPROACH.

I WOULD ALSO NOTE THAT TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES ARE VITAL FOR ENSURING ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE AND BENEFITS.

YOU WILL BE AWARE THAT THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE ARTS IS CONDUCTING AN INQUIRY INTO A NATIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY. THEIR REPORT IS DUE IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS YEAR. IN THE MEANTIME COMMONWEALTH AUTHORITIES SUCH AS THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND YOUTH AFFAIRS AND THE BUREAU OF STATISTICS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING SURVEYS ON LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SCHOOLS AND LANGUAGE USAGE IN THE COMMUNITY. OUT OF THESE INQUIRIES AND REVIEWS I SHOULD HOPE A BASIS MIGHT BE FOUND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COHERENT AND APPROPRIATE POLICIES IN THIS IMPORTANT AREA.

MY COLLEAGUE SENATOR RYAN, THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUTH AFFAIRS, HAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY AND CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION TO BE HEADED BY PROFESSOR JAYASURIYA, HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA. THIS COMMITTEE WILL ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON THE CULTURAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND CHANGES NEEDED TO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM SO THAT IT BETTER REFLECTS THE ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY AND PROVIDES FOR EQUITY OF OUTCOME. THIS COMMITTEE IS AN IMPORTANT STRENGTHENING OF THE LINKS BETWEEN THE ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM. I HAVE NOTED THAT THE FEDERATION HAS ITS OWN LINKS WITH THIS IMPORTANT COMMITTEE.

WHEN MIGRANTS ADOPT AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP THEY TAKE ON THE RIGHTS AS WELL AS THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THEIR NEW NATIONALITY. THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO WORK TO FULFIL THEIR DREAMS FOR FREEDOM AND ECONOMIC BETTERMENT FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES. THEY ALSO HAVE THE RIGHT OF RECOGNITION THAT THEIR CHILDREN ARE THE CHILDREN OF AUSTRALIA, AND THAT THOSE AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN MUST HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR FULLEST HUMAN POTENTIAL.

IT IS BECAUSE OF THEIR DETERMINATION TO REALISE THESE DREAMS FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR CHILDREN THAT WOMEN FROM ETHNIC COMMUNITIES HAVE FOR SO LONG WORKED IN JOBS OFTEN INSECURE, POORLY PAID, UNDER-UNIONISED AND UNHEALTHY. A LACK OF REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANY OF THEM TO LEARN ENGLISH HAS LED TO THE PERPETUATION OF THESE DISADVANTAGES. IT IS NOW WELL-KNOWN AND WELL-DOCUMENTED THAT THESE WOMEN SUFFER PARTICULAR DISADVANTAGES RELATING TO HEALTH, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, PSYCHIATRIC CARE, DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT, AND LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE.

IN LINE WITH ITS ELECTION COMMITMENTS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN MANY INITIATIVES TO REDRESS THE PROBLEMS FACED BY MIGRANT WOMEN. WE HAVE PASSED THE SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT, WHICH WILL PROVIDE REDRESS FOR MIGRANT WOMEN WHO SUFFER FROM DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING OR ACCESS TO SERVICES, OR FROM SEXUAL HARRASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE.

11.

WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A MIGRANT WOMEN'S DESK IN THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS. WE HAVE PROVIDED SUBSTANTIAL FUNDS FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES IN ASSOCIATION WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES, TO HELP ENSURE THAT MIGRANT WOMEN ARE ABLE TO ATTEND THOSE CLASSES. WE HAVE ALLOCATED FUNDS WITHIN THE WOMEN'S EMERGENCY SERVICES PROGRAM TO EMPLOY ETHNIC WORKERS IN WOMEN'S REFUGES. MIGRANT WOMEN WILL BE REPRESENTED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATION WITH WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS AND INTEREST GROUPS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION POLICY IS FIRMLY GROUNDED IN THE POLICY OF NON-DISCRIMINATION INTRODUCED BY THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IN 1973, AND CONTINUED BY THE COALITION. IT IS APPLIED EVENLY REGARDLESS OF NATIONALITY, RACE OR CREED. NO RACIAL GROUP OR GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IS BEING FAVOURED BY OUR MIGRATION POLICY.

A BIPARTISAN POLICY IN THIS AREA IS OF CRUCIAL NATIONAL IMPORTANCE - SPLITTING THE DEBATE ALONG POLITICAL AND PARTISAN LINES WOULD ONLY SERVE TO CAUSE WHOLELY UNDESIRABLE DIVISIONS WITHIN OUR SOCIETY.

THERE IS NO DISCRIMINATION IN ANY PART OR ASPECT OF AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION PROGRAM. WE HAVE PUT BEHIND US FOREVER THE DAYS WHEN ANY SUCH DISCRIMINATION MIGHT HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO OPERATE.

THE RECENT INCREASE IN THE ASIAN PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL MIGRATION PROGRAM IS A RESULT OF FACTORS SUCH AS LESSENING INTEREST IN SPONSORSHIPS FROM MIGRANTS IN MORE TRADITIONAL SOURCE COUNTRIES; THE PREVAILING PATTERN IN THE GOVERNMENT'S REFUGEE PROGRAM AND THE STRONG PRIORITY GIVEN BY THIS GOVERNMENT AND THE WHITLAM AND FRASER GOVERNMENTS TO THE REUNION OF FAMILIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE CAUGHT IN TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF WAR AND CIVIL STRIFE.

AUSTRALIA HAS A PROUD RECORD IN ASSISTING REFUGEES. MANY OF YOU HERE WOULD KNOW THE ANGUISH, THE HUMAN SUFFERING, THE HUMAN WASTE OF THE REFUGEES' PLIGHT. I BELIEVE AUSTRALIANS WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT STRONGLY POLICIES PROVIDING FOR A SUBSTANTIAL INTAKE OF REFUGEES.

THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT RESETTLEMENT ALONE IS NOT THE ANSWER TO THE REFUGEE PROBLEM. PROVISION SHOULD ALSO BE MADE FOR VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION TO COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, ORDERLY DEPARTURE ARRANGEMENTS (AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE COST AND TRAUMA OF ILLEGAL DEPARTURES), AND INCREASED INVOLVEMENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES.

THESE ARE ALL NECESSARY ELEMENTS IN ANY SOUNDLY BASED REFUGEE POLICY. THE GOVERNMENT IS WORKING TO SEE THAT ITS OWN APPROACH REFLECTS A BALANCED MIX OF ALL THESE ELEMENTS.

PUTTING THE SAME POINT ANOTHER WAY - WE HAVE MOVED FROM A SIMPLE RESETTLEMENT POLICY TO A POLICY WHICH SEEKS A VARIETY OF LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO A COMPLEX PROBLEM.

AS REGARDS IMMIGRATION POLICY MORE GENERALLY, THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT ANY RETURN TO A DISCRIMINATORY QUOTA SYSTEM IN OUR MIGRATION PROGRAM WOULD BE A RETROGRADE STEP. IT WOULD ENCOURAGE THE PREJUDICED. IT WOULD DEPRIVE OUR COUNTRY NOT ONLY OF ITS INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION AS A HUMANE AND TOLERANT SOCIETY, BUT ALSO OF THE CREATIVE VITALITY WHICH IS BUILT UP THROUGH THE CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ALL ETHNIC GROUPS.

IT IS SOMETIMES ASSETED THAT TODAY'S MIGRANTS ARE COMPETING IN A MARKET WHERE JOBS ARE SCARCE AND DEPRIVING THOSE ALREADY HERE OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES. WE NEED TO BE WARY OF DRAWING TOO SIMPLISTIC CONCLUSIONS ON SUCH MATTERS. NEW ARRIVALS, AND THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY FEWER OF THEM LATELY, NEED NOT NECESSARILY BE COMPETITORS FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF JOBS. AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION POLICY, WHILE REFLECTING A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CRITERIA, DOES INCLUDE A CONSIDERED ASSESSMENT THAT THOSE ADMITTED ARE THOSE BRINGING SKILLS IN SCARCE SUPPLY.

A TOTAL LABOUR FORCE PLANNING SYSTEM AS IT AFFECTS MIGRATION POLICIES IS EXPECTED TO OPERATE FROM THE BEGINNING OF 1984/85. IT WILL INVOLVE INTEGRATING FOR THE FIRST TIME x AUSTRALIAN LABOUR PLANNING, EDUCATION AND IMMIGRATION POLICIES.

THE SYSTEM WILL INVOLVE A FORWARD ASSESSMENT OF LABOUR REQUIREMENTS IN THE APPROXIMATELY 60 MAJOR SKILLED OCCUPATIONS, IN WHICH INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION HAS RECENTLY PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE. THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS HAS BEEN TASKED WITH PROVIDING AN ANNUAL REPORT ON SKILLED LABOUR MARKET NEEDS FROM WHICH A CEILING OF OCCUPATIONAL ANNUAL SHARES WILL BE SET FOR SKILLED MIGRATION PURPOSES. THESE CEILINGS WILL BE REASSESSED HALF YEARLY.

WHERE LONG TERM CHANGES IN THE BALANCE OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICE ARE IDENTIFIED THESE WILL THEN BE FED INTO THE COMMONWEALTH TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION'S TRIENNIAL PLANNING PROCESS.

MY COLLEAGUE THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, MR WILLIS, ALSO EXPECTS TO USE THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED REVIEW OF COMMONWEALTH LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMS AS A BASIS FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPROVING FLEXIBILITY IN TRAINING AND RETRAINING SYSTEMS.

THE NEW STRATEGY IS TO COVER SHORT TERM SHORTAGES, AND IN THE LONG TERM, CHANGE THE BALANCE BETWEEN DOMESTIC AND OVERSEAS SKILLED LABOUR SUPPLY TO THE BENEFIT OF WORKERS WITHIN AUSTRALIA.

THE OPENNESS OF OUR SOCIETY SHOULD ALLOW AUSTRALIANS TO HOLD MANY DIFFERENT AND SUBSIDIARY IDENTITIES AND LOYALTIES WITHOUT DETRACTING FROM OUR NATIONAL UNITY. THE OLD STEREOTYPE OF THE "TYPICAL AUSSIE" CAN GIVE US ALL SOME REASON FOR HISTORICAL PRIDE BECAUSE IT EMBODIED MANY DESIRABLE QUALITIES; BUT IF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY, WHICH ARE AMONGST THOSE QUALITIES, ARE TO REMAIN MEANINGFUL CONCEPTS IN TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S AUSTRALIA, THEN THE VISION OF OURSELVES AS AUSTRALIANS MUST REFLECT THE CHANGING REALITIES OF OUR DEMOGRAPHIC AND CULTURAL COMPOSITION.

MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ACHIEVING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY IN A NUMBER OF WAYS; THROUGH PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP ACT TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATORY PROVISIONS; THROUGH THE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE OF NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUND ON ADVISORY COUNCILS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVE BODIES; AND THROUGH MAKING GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES MORE GENERALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES.

AUSTRALIA HAS CLEARED FROM ITS STATUTE BOOKS, BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL, MOST OF THE RELICS OF LEGISLATION WHICH DISCRIMINATED ON THE BASIS OF RACE. THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT IS A CORNERSTONE OF LEGISLATIVE PRACTICE IN THIS AREA.

BUT WE CANNOT REST UNTIL NOT ONLY THE STATUTES, BUT THE PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF THE COMMUNITY ACKNOWLEDGE THE INHERENT FAIRNESS OF NON-DISCRIMINATION.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE ALLOCATING \$200,000 OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS TO COMMISSION PRODUCTION OF A SERIES OF SHORT MEDIA SEGMENTS TO PROMOTE RACIAL AND ETHNIC TOLERANCE IN AUSTRALIA. THIS PROGRAM HAS MY PERSONAL ENDORSEMENT. I CONSIDER THAT COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE ONE OF THE BEST WAYS OF ADVANCING THE GENERAL CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RACIAL TOLERANCE IN THIS COUNTRY. THE MEDIA HAS A MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS REGARD. INDEED I SHALL BE CONSIDERING CLOSELY THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW OF THE SPECIAL BROADCASTING SERVICE WITH THIS POINT IN MIND.

MY GOVERNMENT BRINGS AN UNSWERVING AND FUNDAMENTAL COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE POLICIES AND TO TAKE INITIATIVES WHICH DEVELOP AUSTRALIA AS A FAIR, HARMONIOUS AND PROGRESSIVE MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY. WE WANT A SOCIETY IN WHICH ALL GROUPS HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

THE FEDERATION OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES COUNCILS AND YOUR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS IN THE STATES AND TERRITORIES HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN HELPING PROMOTE THIS. I HOPE YOU WILL NEVER LET UP IN YOUR EFFORTS.
