

# A multi-cultural society for the future

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## **Paper by the Minister for Immigration, the Hon. A. J. Grassby**

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ANY contemplation of the character which our urban society might assume by the year 2,000 must naturally begin with a hard look at our present society and the potential forces of change already discernible. Any other approach to futurology would be day-dreaming.

### ***Broad scope***

Within the broad scope of this Symposium, areas such as education, the law, government, communication, religion, and the environment all figure prominently. Fundamental to every one of these topics is the question: What sort of people are going to provide the human factor in the year 2,000 to flesh out our abstractions?

Societies, of course, are only composed of people. If a society is to claim any right to a long-term existence, it must also operate only *for* people, in the firm framework of justice and law.

My concept of a society able to sustain growth and change without disintegration is a society based on equal opportunity for all - a goal which no right-thinking person could dispute, but the striving for which has led traditionally to some of the deepest conflicts within society. This means full scope for all to develop their personal potential, no matter how diverse their origins, beliefs, wealth or ability. All too often in the past, equality of opportunity has been only

reluctantly conceded to less privileged sectors of our community, or even withheld. I believe that by the year 2,000 we will need to have perfected ways of inducing this equality for all, in fact as well as in law, by far-reaching legislative and ameliorative measures.

The seer gazing into his crystal ball to discern the outlines of tomorrow's society needs a sound appreciation of the character, origins and history of his present society. I suppose an Australian Minister for Immigration occupies a strategic vantage-point from which to project his gaze into the future. He is heir to an extremely diverse society largely shaped by the policies of his predecessors of the past quarter-century, during which the most dramatic changes in the composition, outlook and prospects of Australian society have taken place. Further, he is, within the framework of the parliamentary system, responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies which cannot fail to affect, in some measure, the continuing growth and rate of change within that society. Thus he must envisage some grand design or, at very least, long-term plans for that society as he exercises his options in policy-making.

### ***National pride***

I wish to record at the outset my conviction that the future of our society is essentially hopeful. When we consider the achievements of the successors to that non-descript band of 'assisted passage' migrants who landed at Sydney Cove on the first Australia Day 1788, we must be pardoned for some small sense of national pride. This pride derives as much from the creation of a stable and relatively just society as from any material success. In this lie real grounds for hope for the future.

Again, I am hopeful because there has come

about in our community in recent years a greater self-awareness and a new self-criticism which are indicative of our growing maturity. The 'lucky country' syndrome is losing something of its cynical ring. The desire to do something with our heritage rather than simply live off it is becoming commoner, as is seen in the ecology movement. Today there seems to be more of a desire to see things re-ordered as they could be or should be, rather than simply retained as they have always been. These stirrings are triggered by, and in turn contribute to, the growth of a 'new nationalism', as it is already being called. Who are we in Australia? What were our social origins? How should these origins influence us today? How can we build on them in shaping a better and more just future? Is the process to be one of steady evolution or noisy revolution? I see these questionings essentially as a hopeful sign, even if the whole range of prognostications can scarcely prove right.

### ***National fabric***

We may justly claim that to have woven our present national fabric from originally rather ill-assorted strands, but without suffering the major upheavals marking the history of other societies, is no small achievement. Again, to have built up hitherto a sort of national expertise in absorbing people from many different backgrounds lends us confidence as migration continues to strengthen and enrich the character of our society. In itself, however, this does not permit us to assume that solutions to yesterday's problems will provide answers to today's - or tomorrow's - challenges. For, as the very composition of our society changes, every problem takes on a new twist. The complexity of the issues now calls for a new flexibility of mind in approaching them and grappling with them. In this, demographic factors will increasingly come to our aid. It is a fact that 46 per cent of today's population is under 25 years of age. Thus, 46 per cent have no personal knowledge at all of an Australia without mass migration of great ethnic diversity, nor of the dynamic process of social and cultural change which it has brought about. Such change has

always been a part of their lives and must be seen by them to be perfectly normal. In the face of such change and the increasing ethnic diversification which has provided the impetus for much of it, young Australians seem to exercise an admirable openness and tolerance.

Unfortunately, this cannot be said of all other groups in the community. Despite the diversity that has always been present in Australian society - and today is the very hallmark of it - many influential circles in the community show scant evidence of recognising its importance, or even its existence. A widespread ignorance seems to prevail about what is actually happening to the fabric of Australian society under the continuous impact of a migration which, in terms of proportionate numbers of newcomers to the base population, is virtually without parallel in modern times.

### ***Conspiracy of silence***

Something of a conspiracy of silence persists in many quarters about the social impact of other than Anglo-Saxon influences on our national life. This was referred to a number of times in the reports recently submitted to me by the Task Forces set up by the Government in all States to examine problems experienced by newcomers settling in our midst. It deserves to be taken seriously.

To take a homely illustration, how often do our television screens reflect anything like the variety of migrant groups encountered in a real-life stroll through our city streets, or particularly our near-city suburbs?

The image we manage to convey of ourselves still seems to range from the bushwhacker to the sportsman to the slick city businessman. Where is the Maltese process worker, the Finnish carpenter, the Italian concrete layer, the Yugoslav miner or - dare I say it - the Indian scientist? Where do these people belong, in all honesty, if not in today's composite Australian image? Are they to be non-people - despite their indispensable economic contribution to our well-being - because they do not happen to fit

the largely American-oriented stereotypes of our entertainment industry? It would seem a mark of national maturity to be able to identify firstly what is essential and distinctive about one's own land and its people, and then to portray it consistently with insight and sympathy.

## **Cosmopolitan**

If it is a fact that Australia is now one of the most cosmopolitan societies on earth - and the evidence confirms that it is - it is time that all Australians were encouraged to develop a better understanding of what this implies.

Today there is a great deal of knowledge of the dynamics of majority/minority group relations available from generations of study and scholarship in - the United States, and increasingly also from Canada. In Australia, too, expertise in these fields is by no means lacking. Naturally, we cannot assume that North American experience will be directly relevant to the future interaction of the groups composing Australian society. But neither can we wait until the year 2,000 to establish what patterns are likely to develop.

Back in 1966, Dr Charles Price, of the Australian National University, in a definitive essay on 'The Study of Assimilation', in his *Australian Immigration: a Bibliography and Digest*, put forward three alternative social theories to describe the effects of large-scale migration on the character and structure of a society.

Evaluating the American experience, he defines the three philosophies which have emerged from the voluminous literature on the subject, as follows:

1. The 'Anglo-Conformist' view which asserts that it is possible and necessary for migrants to cast away at once their old language, customs and attitudes in favour of the basic Anglo-Saxon 'core culture'.
2. The 'melting pot' view - which in a

more recent form has emerged as the 'multiple melting pot' view - and which claims that it is possible and desirable for migrants and native-born alike to emerge from the crucible 'melted, blended and reshaped' as a brand new species of man.

3. 'Permanent ethnic pluralism' whereby each ethnic group desiring it, is permitted to create its own communal life and preserve its own cultural heritage indefinitely, while taking part in the general life of the nation.

## **'Family of the nation'**

Personally, I must confess to something of an aversion to the technical jargon in the literature. To the average Australian, whether 'old' or 'new', terms like 'assimilation', 'integration', 'homogeneous' or 'pluralistic' society are probably meaningless. The concept I prefer, the 'family of the nation', is one that ought to convey an immediate and concrete image to all. In a family the overall attachment to the common good need not impose a sameness on the outlook or activity of each member, nor need these members deny their individuality and distinctiveness in order to seek a superficial and unnatural conformity. The important thing is that all are committed to the good of all.

Of course, all labels have an unfortunate habit of becoming devalued with use, but a viable idea can nevertheless exist without a tag on it. Conversely it cannot be conjured up out of the air by hopefully coining a suitable slogan. It must evolve from real demand for it and ultimately come to stand on its own feet, if it is to prove viable with the passage of time. After all, history can only be written in retrospect.

Today, irrespective therefore of what labels we use, the fact is that the increasing diversity of Australian society has gradually eroded and finally rendered untenable any prospects there might have been twenty years ago of fully assimilating newcomers to the 'Australian way of life', to use a phrase common at that time.

## **Life styles**

We might well ask ourselves: what *is* the Australian way of life today? The life style and values of the suburban housewife in Moonee Ponds, the Italian travel agent in Carlton, the Turkish car factory worker, the Slavic Orthodox priest, or the Aboriginal at Lake Tyers? It is all too easy to overlook the pre-existence in this land of the original Australians, millennia before the advent of us 'white ethnics'. In considering the applicability in Australia of the above American social philosophies, therefore, we must bear in mind that any theory that fails to accord these people an equal place in the family of our nation is out of the question today and in the future. Likewise, other ethnic groups introduced to this land by our migration programs may not be denied an equal place in our future society. It is obvious that on present trends, no one group in our society by the year 2,000 will be able to exercise any inalienable claim to permanent dominance over all the others. This will not only be a matter of justice and human dignity, as it is today, but by then will be a simple matter of numbers and percentages in the population. The statistics tell their own tale.

Projections prepared by the Bureau of Census and Statistics indicate that, based on current trends and predicating a consistent annual net migration gain of a moderate 60,000, the population will grow to almost 21,000,000 by the year 2,001, virtually the target date of this Symposium. By that time, the percentage of people born outside Australia and their children would probably be around 40 per cent on current trends. On these trends they are likely to be from more than 60 countries. In the face of such statistics, justice will never be done by blandly asserting that the cultural and social impact of such people shall be null and void, or that Australian society can pretend to a sameness. The situation today is already so advanced that such a hypothesis is simply unreal. The first of the American social theories is not a viable option for Australia, and it has never, in fact, been a viable option.

## **Dynamic interaction**

My vision of our society in the year 2,000 foreshadows a greatly increasing social complexity, in which the dynamic interaction between the diverse ethnic components will be producing new national initiatives, stimulating new artistic endeavours, and ensuring great strength in diversity. In foreshadowing the future character of this interaction, we do little service to our history to imagine that Australia could ever have become a pale reproduction of Britain, a pseudo-America, or a make-believe Asia. In this respect we have always diverged from the ethnically static societies of the Old World and share the potential dynamism of the developing societies of the New World. From the first days, there have been people here of at least several ethnic backgrounds. To start with, on the first Australia Day the vast majority of Australians were black. Moreover, anthropologists and linguists tell us that there were at least three different racial groups and more than 26 'families' of languages among these Aboriginal peoples, Australia-wide. How then could we ever have talked of homogeneity without gross offence to these oldest of Australians?

The newcomers, too, were an extraordinarily motley crew in backgrounds, manners, and morals. We may well suppose that no mistakes made by subsequent selection officers for our immigration program overseas could ever equal those perpetrated by the screening system of 1788! At the individual level, it is known that there were Negroes and Jews in the First Fleet; that the second language of the early goldfields was Chinese; that among the freedom fighters of Eureka were some from Italy, Britain, Germany, Ireland and Canada; that the highest peak in Australia was named by a Pole after his national hero; that Leichhardt was one of many German pioneers who challenged an alien environment; while another of his countrymen, Karl Linger, won the first national anthem competition in 1860 with his music for 'The Song of Australia'.

## **Individual pioneers**

While history records the contribution of a Henry Lawson (or Larsen), a Ferdinand von Mueller, a Hans Heysen, or an Elioth Gruner, a nation's story is not only written in terms of its outstanding men of letters and sciences, its intrepid pathfinders, or its entrepreneurial geniuses. The multitudes of nameless individuals who cleared its land, built its ports and railways, fought in its wars, produced and consumed its products and created its riches, also deserve recognition, if only en masse. Among this anonymous cavalcade were many whose native tongue was not English, but whose contribution was no less significant for that factor.

Indeed, we must not overlook that there are also in our migration history numerous examples of 'group settlement', some of which have been well documented along similar lines to those occurring at the same period in the Americas. Dr Price has described such examples of group settlement as that by German Lutherans in South Australia in the 1830s, and by groups of Greeks, Dalmatians, Sicilians, Piedmontese, and Maltese in North Queensland earlier this century. A feature of this group settlement has been the movement to Australia by Italians, Greeks, Maltese, and Yugoslavs along more or less clearly defined 'migration chains' that started off on a kinship basis and extended from individual clans, villages, and regions in the home country to certain country towns, rural settlements, and metropolitan suburbs in Australia. Thus the group settlement of Calabrians in Griffith, N.S.W., began in 1922 when three agricultural labourers settled there and began to bring out relatives and friends from Italy. By 1955 the total group settlement numbered more than 1,000. The same story can be told of Griffith and the Veneto.

Other group settlements of roughly the same period were founded by Dalmatians in the upper Swan Valley, W.A., and on the rural outskirts of Sydney; by Albanians at Shepparton, Victoria and at Mareeba, North Queensland; by Bulgarians on the outskirts of

Adelaide; and by Macedonians near Canberra. More recent examples still are offered by the Italian settlement in the Ovens Valley, Victoria, where a thriving tobacco-growing community exists today; by the Estonian-Finnish settlement in the Picton-Thirlmere district of N.S.W.; by the Portuguese fishermen's settlement at Fremantle, W.A.; by the Sikhs established around Woolgoolga-Coffs Harbour, N.S.W.; and by the Russian Old Believers at Yarwun, Queensland.

## **Group settlement**

A survey in the 1950s indicated that at that time the overwhelming majority of Mediterranean migrants had settled in Australia by village or district groups through this process of 'chain migration' (1). Indeed, it may seem surprising that even some British migrants have come to Australia on the basis of group settlement, under the Ex-Servicemen's Resettlement Scheme which operated in Western Australia in the mid-1920s.

The point I wish to make from this historical digression is that migration to Australia by no means takes place simply on the basis of individuals seeking economic or social advantages for themselves or their children, as superficially seen in the popular imagination, often encouraged by the 'economic growth at all costs' lobby. The guest-worker concept has never found favour in Australia among people concerned for human values and social justice. Even in North-Western Europe, where the concept developed, severe social strains are now appearing in the fields of industrial and communal relations.

## **Ethnic groups**

The dynamism in an ethnically diverse society seems somehow related to the group life within that society. It is not simply the product of the individual differences between its citizens. These may indeed become blurred through interaction over a period of time, but the life of an ethnic group is more resilient and retains its integrity. Thus a social philosophy that presupposes the

submergence of all ethnic diversity in a melting pot - at a time when current migration is continuing to infuse new members - also seems out of touch with the realities. Naturally, individuals are always free to move in society in whatever circles they prefer, but doctrinaire views should not inhibit that freedom. The corporate life of ethnic groups represents a great deal more than the simple totality of their individual members' lives and activity. To an extent, they have created their own national image. They have brought with them a common history and culture, an ideology different from the Anglo-Saxon. They perceive different goals and pursue them in their own traditional ways. In short, they lead a way of life which, while in living touch with its ancient forms and impulses, is imperceptibly coming to terms with - or at least learning to co-exist with - that of many other ethnic groups in our society and of course with the 'old Australians'. Such pluralism is not operating within a time scale, but looks ahead far into the future.

### ***Ethnic links***

While there seems to be no reliable way of establishing the degree to which individual migrants in Australia retain their link over the years with ethnic organisations, it is a fact that the strength of corporate ethnic group life is as strong today as at any point in our history. Indeed, I believe there is fair indication that it may be destined to become stronger as the overall percentage of recent migrant stock in our community increases, and as the threat of anonymity in our society impels people to assert their identity and distinctiveness. In any case, the incidence of ethnic group activity in Australia today is such that no impartial observer could possibly fail to assess its impact on Australian life as fundamental. Clearly, we must reject that chauvinistic view which conveniently devalues the presence and activity of ethnic groups as somehow un-Australian.

### ***National narcissism***

We may well ask why this narcissism in our national thinking? Are we such an alien outpost

in an Asian world that we cannot venture far from the apron strings of our original 'Nanny'? There is no doubt that in some periods of our history, and particularly earlier this century between the two World Wars, the official desire to promote an apparently - but never quite - homogeneous Anglo-Saxon population doubtless reflected most people's attitudes. That was a day of a rather closed, derivative, society dependent on the goodwill of Imperial Governments and haunted by fears of Asian 'hordes'. However, earlier there had been periods during which the promise of cultural diversity in Australia had made an appearance, only to be negated by restrictive legislation expressing an 'intolerance of ambiguity'. Admittedly, this was dressed-up in the guise of ensuring equality of opportunity for all. As Dr Barrie Pittock has said in another context, 'newcomers were expected to see the self-evident proof that Anglo-Saxon ways were in every respect superior to their own... The established society came to fear the very existence of groups of free men who by choice lived according to different customs and traditions'?

An early flowering of cultural diversity was seen in the German communal life of the Barossa Valley. The earliest schools in this district were Lutheran private schools in which German was used as the medium of instruction for children whose mother tongue was German. Amid much bitterness in 1851 the South Australian Government withdrew its subsidy to the schools, refusing to allow any other language than English to be the medium of instruction. Matters came to a head in 1917 when all Lutheran schools were ordered to teach in English or be taken over by the State, a body blow against the transmission of group identity from generation to generation. In the absence of continuing German migration into that community, it became extremely difficult for it to resist cultural take-over by the majority. However, such is the underlying ethnic consciousness in this community that it has never quite been sapped even today by external pressures.

## **Social justice**

However, in present-day Australia, the situation has changed quite dramatically in respect of the overall proportions of 'old' and 'new' Australians. In the name of social justice a society dare not, in the long term, devalue the presence of one in four of its members. Is one out of every four to be permanently denied the dignity of self-expression and self-determination - should he so desire - as taken for granted by the other three? We do not need to be gifted with a vivid imagination to picture the explosive pressures - or else naked repression - that would inevitably become the consequences of devaluing or ignoring ethnic communities till the year 2,000.

Of course, it may be objected that the Australian talent for absorbing newcomers into its economy and its national life style will continue to operate to the extent of preventing the growth of 'communities within the community'. Unfortunately, this is wishful thinking, unsupported by the evidence available today. The real situation in the 'migrant belts' of our great cities reflects the years of high migrant intake of the 1960s, when large numbers of settlers from many cultural origins came to Australia. The aspect which should have caused us most concern in this situation was the absence of any deep understanding of what happens when thousands of people from widely differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds crowd into small areas of Australian cities, without significant social or linguistic contacts with Australians or much chance of achieving them. Can they be expected to live in a cultural and social vacuum for years while learning to adapt to the life of Australians they seldom meet?

We might well ask ourselves whether Australians living overseas could be seriously expected to bring off such a prodigious feat. Or would they be more inclined to opt for the easier alternative of reconstructing a little corner of Australia in an alien land and peopling it with fellow Aussies likewise fleeing the social pressures to conform,

haunted by memories of sun, surf, and gumleaves while indulging in a bit of harmless nostalgia? Even this analogy proves inadequate at two points: the Aussies overseas would most likely have little intention of staying for life, nor would they generally have children on whom to project their social and cultural sensibility as second generation migrant offspring.

## **The critics**

There have been critics of the pluralist approach who have seen it as leading to a fragmented society, lacking in cohesion and threatening to produce a complete, permanent, and hostile segregation of one part of our population. I believe this is postulating an unreal threat - a sort of communal apartheid - which is not founded on fact. The situation in Australia today is that concentrations of multiple ethnic groups do exist in our major cities, and that these show signs of considerable durability. However, economically they are already integrated with our society by virtue of their involvement in the Australian work-force. Further, because of the co-existence in these localities of many different ethnic groups in close proximity, there can be no question of one part of the population permanently living in hostile segregation from the majority.

The various groups are constantly interacting and adjusting, slowly but steadily, to each other and to life in Australia, without losing - at least in the first generation - their essential ethnic character. In this situation, there is nothing threatening to Australia's future in the year 2,000. We need to bear in mind that time is on our side. In terms of world history we are still a young country, and our achievements thus far lend promise for an even brighter future. It is only in recent years that our national resources have come to be realised as prodigious.

## **Human capital**

But the most precious resource of our nation, like all others, is its people - its human capital. For the planners of the year 2,000, the proper servicing of that capital must assume a higher

priority than any merely physical developing program.

We are still very much a nation in the making, in terms of the destiny we hope to fulfil beyond the year 2,000. A large proportion of our population has not been in this land long enough to have truly identified with it. Perhaps this is one reason why, after 27 years of our post-war migration program, more than a million residents of Australia have not yet adopted its citizenship. The flowering of a truly national spirit in Australia is not an optional extra, but a major objective to be sought in the next few decades. Individually, Australians do feel a pride in their country, I believe, but to newcomers this may be all too little apparent. We can hardly expect new migrants to feel a greater love for their adopted country than those born here appear disposed to show.

Yet there is an encouraging measure of unity among our diverse population, perhaps more evident on subtle occasions than in the day-to-day routine of urban life. Our bid for inclusion among the final contenders for the World Cup soccer championship has set tingling a nerve of patriotism that has run right through our ethnic communities.

Listen to the conversation of any party of Australians overseas: some of the most forthright Australianism will be expressed in varieties of accented English. When the chips are down, and one's personal identity counts for something, most migrants will be at one with the older residents in feeling proud to belong to Australia. Migrant expressions of loyalty on those occasions represent by their awkward sincerity a more impressive token of national unity than the broader Australian vernacular.

### ***Policy adjustments***

There will, of course, be policy adjustments to be made and much scope for informed and enlightened judgment to be applied, if our society is ultimately to profit from the challenge of the present situation. The first prerequisite for this is an accurate perception of what is

actually happening in our migrant communities in major Australian cities. In these centres, despite expectations that newcomers would blend in time into the local population, the fact is that today the local population is gradually moving out of many of the inner suburbs, to be replaced, to an extent, by incoming waves of newer ethnic groups - a quite classical phenomenon in American migration experience, where I understand it has been described in the literature as 'ecological succession'.

Further, there is evidence from recent surveys on poverty in Australia that ethnic groups are significantly over-represented among the poorer sections of society, tending to appear disproportionately in labouring, unskilled, and blue collar occupations.

Moreover, there is small evidence that the children in such migrant groups are broadly enjoying the benefits of real equality in education, rightly seen as the key to future social mobility. Yet, in many cases, this may have been a prime consideration in a migrant's decision to leave his homeland. Schools in migrant areas are also charged with failure to provide a curriculum that is culturally and linguistically relevant to the needs of migrant children. A recent critic characterised these schools as the 'archetypal assimilationist agency'. This could be a serious criticism in a community which is moving away from such a goal towards greater freedom of self-determination.

### ***Bilingual teaching***

By contrast with the harsh treatment meted out to the German language schools in 1917, a current development in bilingual teaching in a State High School in Melbourne is a welcome sign. From the 1974 school year a totally new approach to First Form teaching at the Brunswick Girls High School will centre on language acquisition. All students will continue to learn in their mother tongue while likewise learning the standard forms of a second language. Sixteen periods covering language, natural and social sciences, each week, will be



based on this bilingual approach using English, Turkish, Arabic, Greek and Italian, while the remaining fourteen periods will be drama, music and elective studies. This bold project seeks to minimise cultural and social conflict by encouraging the children of migrants to take a pride in their language, to become acquainted with its standard and literary forms, and thus engage the goodwill and co-operation of parents in the schooling of their children. It is hoped that this will reduce family tensions that can impose severe strains on migrant children and evoke a new respect by migrants for their adopted country's proclaimed belief in freedom and equality. I quote this interesting development in some detail because I would like to see it as a sign of a new day dawning.

### **Complex system**

In a democratic system such as ours the only acceptable means by which disadvantaged groups may seek to reverse the forces militating against them is by participating in the processes by which the decisions that affect their lives are made. However, several recent studies of the participation of migrants in Australian political life reveal that migrant representation in local, State and Federal Government is negligible. One obvious reason for this is the ignorance and understandable apathy of new arrivals confronted by the complex and cumbersome Australian system of government.

As the reports of the Task Forces recently submitted to me indicate, the community itself must bear an increased responsibility for educating migrants in important citizenship matters. Justice demands that those who obey the rules should have some say in making them. Despite our belief in freedom and equality for all, we may have somehow managed to frustrate the hopes of too many members of our ethnic groups, particularly in the inner city concentrations. However, effective ameliorative measures will not be easy to conceive nor implement.

In the Meredith Memorial Lectures given at La Trobe University in 1972, Professor Jean Martin

argued that it is precisely the prevailing egalitarian ideology in Australia that withholds from ethnic groups any unique privileges or consideration of any kind. Yet such an ideology actually fosters inequality and in the long run is self-defeating. The response of many of the ethnic groups to this situation has been to develop alternative 'micro-societies' which are becoming stronger as our migration program proceeds. They are thus intensifying relationships within their own communities, which in turn leads to a consistent increase in ethnic consciousness.

### **Social interaction**

Our prime task at this point in our history must be to encourage practical forms of social interaction in our community. This implies the creation of a truly just society in which all components can enjoy freedom to make their own distinctive contribution to the family of the nation. In the interests of Australians of the year 2,000, we need to appreciate, embrace and preserve all those diverse elements which find a place in the nation today. This involves the most fundamental issues of human rights such as those enshrined in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the Government has expressed its intention of ratifying. The Covenant guarantees freedom of social and cultural expression for all residents of countries ratifying it.

The social and cultural rights of migrant Australians are just as compelling as the rights of other Australians. The full realisation of these rights would lead to reduced conflicts and tensions between the groups which are weaving an ever more complex fabric for Australian society as we hurry towards the turn of the century.

My personal ambition is that Australians of all backgrounds will always be proud before the world to say in whatever accents, 'I am an Australian', just as the proudest boast in the days of the Roman imperium was contained in the words, 'Civis Romanus sum'.

## NOTES:

- 1 C. A. Price, 'Immigration and Group Settlement', in W. D. Borrie (ed.), The Cultural Integration of Immigrants, (Paris, 1959), pp. 267-287.
- 2 A. Barrie Pittock, 'Towards a Multi-Racial Society', in Racism: The Australian Experience, Vol. 3, Colonialism, (Sydney, 1972), pp. 240-263.