

Excerpt from *Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship in the 21st Century*, RMIT University for the Multicultural Education Unit (DEECD), December 2008:

During the 1970s after the earlier arrival in the 1950s and 1960s of immigrants and refugees from the United Kingdom and the continental European countries, Australia came to its self-realization as a multicultural nation. The word, “multicultural” was always controversial but the realities it was describing could not be questioned. With the abrogation of the White Australia policy in 1973 and the arrival of immigrants and refugees from Asia, Latin America and the Middle East and, more recently, from the world’s two most populous countries, China and India, and now from Africa, Australia has become a global nation networked into both the world economy and the other global processes, positive and negative, that characterise the phenomenon known as globalization.

It is in this global environment that the economic benefits to all Australians of cultural and linguistic diversity have come to be recognised. It is no longer possible to compete successfully in a complex global economy from a mono-cultural and mono-lingual base. The benefits of what has come to be known as *cultural literacy* have been highlighted in research and policy discussion papers since the mid 1990s. For example the *Report of the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills* (The Karpin Report)¹, cites data pointing to a direct relationship between the cultural literacy of middle managers and the economic success of the enterprise. In 2002 the Victorian Multicultural Commission publication: *Valuing Cultural Diversity* included the promotion of the economic benefits of cultural diversity for all Victorians in its four policy principles, and in 2004 the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004* specifically recognised the “social, cultural and economic contribution of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity” and “the cultural, economic and social benefits that diversity brings to Victoria”.

Now that boundaries are softening and becoming more porous – at least for some groups – the multicultural and global dimensions of social and educational policy have become interfaced and interwoven, two faces of the same coin: the one internally-focussed, the other externally-focussed. This complex multicultural and global context demands curricular and pedagogical initiatives which equip and prepare all students for their active participation and inclusion in this context and which create the conditions in which they have agency over their lives. This policy document has been framed with these objectives in mind.

¹ : *Enterprising Nation: Renewing Australia's Managers to Meet the Challenges of the Asia-Pacific Century*, 1995

Changing patterns of immigration: a new reality

The current signs of the times or new realities are those factors which are impacting upon the Victorian school system and which have rendered it more diverse and complex. These factors include the changing patterns of migration - in 2006/07, the top ten source countries for Victoria were: India, New Zealand, China (not including SARs and Taiwan), U.K., Philippines, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, Malaysia, the Sudan and Afghanistan.

These factors which broadly delineate the relevant new realities fall into three categories.

Global and Transnational Factors:

- ∞ The greater networking of the world through mobile phones and the internet, and the informational spread through the exponential growth in the number of websites;
- ∞ The transition by 2025 to a new list of the world's most populous countries to be led by India followed by China;
- ∞ The rise of global and world-class cities and the transition from village to city with, now for the first time in history, more people living in cities than villages;
- ∞ The greater number of people on the move, estimated to be 200+ million, including immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, border-hoppers, international contract workers, temporary international professional and trade workers, international students, international adoptees and partners in intercultural marriages;
- ∞ The thickening of the transnational bonds across the various cultural, linguistic and religious diasporas as a result of migration;
- ∞ The revitalization of religions across the world, emergence of religiously-based extremism as part of the rise of the politics of identity and grievance;
- ∞ The rise and strengthening of the interfaith movement, especially in response to the events of 9/11;
- ∞ The aftermath of 9/11, the reinforcing of *Islamophobia* and the impact upon Muslim communities and families;
- ∞ The rise of new racism in individual and organizational modes, including 'hate' websites, hyper-religions, virtual museums etc;
- ∞ The gradual drawing in and acceptance of Australia into the Asian and Pacific world and its representative organizations and the growing influence of Australia in helping to broker international initiatives to address global issues;
- ∞ The movement of international students in search of both a superior educational experience and of competency in the English language.

Australian and Victorian Demographic and Migration Factors

- ∞ In Australia, the diversification in the number of families from non Anglo or European backgrounds, with a decline in the numbers from the U.K. offset by an increase in those from South Africa and the USA;
- ∞ The increasing diversification of Australia's non-English immigrant and refugee intake, including intakes from the Middle East and Africa;
- ∞ The continuing and increased need for skilled workers in competition against countries such as USA and Canada as the baby boomers retire;
- ∞ The greater settlement dispersal of immigrant and refugee families across the metropolitan areas creating difficulties for educational service delivery;
- ∞ The settlement of immigrants and refugees in regional and rural Victoria to offset the drift of young country people to Melbourne;
- ∞ The rise of refugee and special humanitarian students and the continuing arrival of unaccompanied minors and torture survivors from the world's war-zones and refugee trouble spots;
- ∞ The emergence of Australia as a multifaith nation and, paradoxically, as a secularized nation with the decline of both mainstream Christianity and the Judaeo-Christian heritage;
- ∞ The increase in the number of students born to parents of more than one nationality, or adopted transculturally and transracially and students with complex ancestral family backgrounds as a result of intercultural marriages and partnerships;
- ∞ The small but growing numbers of immigrant children in Australia who move back and forth between Australia and their home country, and those who have one or both parents working in the home country;
- ∞ The arrival of international students in Victorian primary and secondary government schools, numbering 2,747 in 2008;
- ∞ The rise and fall of the Hanson phenomenon and the continuing racist and religious vilification voices that make themselves heard in Australia.

International and Australian Linguistic Factors

- ∞ The increased internationalization of English and the emergence of global and local Englishes;
- ∞ The rise in the numbers of speakers of the Chinese, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Hindi and Turkic languages in Australia;
- ∞ The formidable rise in the number and proportion of websites in languages other than English, and the necessity to be able to read these for business and commercial reasons;

- ∞ In Australia, the increased pressure on Australian English to be a recognized variant of a form of global English;
- ∞ The increased numbers of students from EAL countries (English as an associate language in former British and USA colonies such as India, Malaysia and the Philippines);
- ∞ The increased breadth in the number of languages other than English (LOTE) spoken by arriving students, including from pre-literate educational contexts;
- ∞ The huge rise in the number of international students coming to Victoria to study English in intensive programs;
- ∞ The supplanting after fifty years of Italian as Australia's second language by the Chinese languages;
- ∞ The decline in the university sector of training opportunities for ESL and LOTE teachers.

The combination of these factors represent a new set of realities for the Victorian Government school system and impact upon and affect everyone involved in that system – students, parents teachers, principals, support staff and communities. These factors have played an important role in influencing and shaping the priorities outlined later in this policy document.

1.2 The Evolution of Australia's Multicultural Social and Educational Agenda

Multiculturalism and its policy expressions have not always been well understood. In 1989, when the nation first formally articulated in a detailed way the notion of a multicultural Australia in a statement supported on both sides of the Australian Parliament and articulated fully in *A National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, the description in its underlying principles focussed, firstly, on **commitment to Australia** by its citizens and its permanent residents and, secondly, on **equality of opportunity**, including for those recently arrived in Australia and their immediate descendents.

The three dimensions of this agenda were;

1. **Cultural identity** (the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and faith);
2. **Social justice** (the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, faith, language, gender or place of birth); and,

3. **Economic efficiency** (the need to maintain, develop and utilize effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background) for national well-being.

The 1989 description of multiculturalism then articulated the fixed points or basic structures around which Australia coheres: the Constitution and the rule of law; tolerance and equality; Parliamentary democracy; freedom of speech and faith; English as the national language; and equality of the sexes. The *Review of the Commonwealth Multicultural Education Program* (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1983) had emphasized how the Aboriginal view of history beginning in the mists of time was foundational to the multicultural perspective. It recognized that colonization had made them refugees even though they had been the first explorers and the first settlers to discover and name this vast and ancient land. Recognising and acknowledging the foundational role of Aboriginal people to Australian multiculturalism is a crucial beginning point for the proposed policy and needs to be reflected both in the policy and how it is implemented and enacted.

The fundamental aspirations and underlying values expressed in the 1989 articulation have not essentially changed. As the social, economic, political, religious and demographic landscapes have evolved, so has the character of multicultural policies according to the principle of gradualism as new groups have arrived and the external world has changed. Australia and the people who live here keep changing every decade. As well, according to the principle of 'accommodationism' and the cultural impact inquiries that are undertaken from time to time, exemptions are sometimes made to accommodate the particularities of various cultures (e.g. turbanned Sikhs on motorcycles not required to wear helmets) or special provision made (e.g. Muslim burial customs), but only in accord with enabling, not disabling, values and with human rights considerations. Subsequent iterations of the 1989 statement have further emphasized cultural respect – treating everyone with respect in all ways – and diversity. Diversity is, of course, an ambivalent concept. There is productive diversity; but there is also destructive diversity as seen in anti-Semitic pogroms, episodes of ethnic cleansing and anti-indigenous racism. Currently, as the policy has further evolved, Australia's multicultural social and educational policies are being impacted by the notion of social inclusion and its associated notions of social capital and social cohesion. These notions, in describing a process of creating social harmony, are built around a sense of belonging, participatory democracy with compulsory voting, social justice and equity, participation in all societal sectors, acceptance of others with the rejection of discrimination and, lastly, feeling worthwhile as happy and satisfied citizens. Such ideals are reflected in the Victorian Government School curriculum through VELs and in many other Departmental initiatives, but have a much longer history and genesis.

Since the late 1960s, Victoria has been at the forefront of the application of multicultural principles. The *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004* (Act No. 100/2004) articulated the following five principles of multiculturalism:

1. All individuals in Victoria are entitled to mutual respect and understanding regardless of their cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds;
2. All individuals and institutions in Victoria should promote and preserve diversity and cultural heritage within the context of shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities;
3. All individuals in Victoria (regardless of background) have shown that they can work together to build a positive and progressive future and this cooperation is to be encouraged so as to enhance Victoria as a great place in which to live, work, invest and raise a family;
4. All individuals in Victoria are equally entitled to access opportunities and participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of this State;
5. All Victorians have a responsibility to abide by the State's laws and respect the democratic processes under which those laws are made. (*Multicultural Victoria Act 2004, Part 2, Section 4.*)

Under the Act, every Victorian Departmental Head must submit annually to the Minister a report on (i) its use of language services; (ii) its communications in languages other than English; (iii) any major improvements or initiatives to promote multiculturalism or to meet the identified needs of Victoria's CALD communities; and (iv) the extent of representation of CALD people on the boards and committees under its bailiwick. Such system-directed initiatives are crucial to the development of a policy with practical bite and day-to-day impact. The above Act is reflected in numerous Departmental policies and initiatives – there is a web of such policies that affect Victorian schools. Initiatives which reflect and leverage the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004* have been included in this policy document and where possible explicit links have been made to other Departmental policies and initiatives.

1.3 The DEECD Commitment to Promoting and Managing Diversity in Schools

Imagining new policies in response to changing times

Since 1997, much has changed on the global, demographic and linguistic landscapes as Australia has moved into a new millennium characterised by greater flows of ideas, peoples, technologies and media images across the globe. Emerging signs of the times in this complex and networked world include a greater degree of cultural diversity and an expectation that this diversity will be enabled.

Since 1997 the Victorian schooling system has grown in size and complexity. As of February 2008, there were 1,587 government schools educating 538,116 effective full-time students. They were being taught by 38,943 teachers. In government schools, the number of those children from families with a language background other than English and where English is not the main language spoken in the home has gradually risen from 68,981 in 1999, representing 13.0 per cent of the total school population, to 79,801 in 2007 (14.8 per cent). This increase represents a significant challenge for the school system. The main language backgrounds are, in order, Vietnamese, Arabic, Cantonese and Turkish, a pattern little changed in recent years except for the rise in the student numbers from newly emerging communities such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran, Iraq, Somalia and the Sudan. Students drawn from these diverse social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds have different learning and support needs. The teachers working with these students - both in specialist and mixed classes - need a broad range of pedagogical and cross-cultural communication needs.

The decade since 1997 has also seen a vast extension of the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education, the economy and cultural formation. In 1997, the World Wide Web was just five years old and Victorian teachers and students were engaged in the first global learning networks, supported by national initiatives such as EdNA. Schools were just beginning to establish LANs and computer laboratories were coming to be regarded as part of the school architecture. Whole of government strategies to utilise the new technologies to transform the way in which government services were managed and delivered and to develop a global communications and multimedia industry in Victoria had commenced in 1995. In that same year the Office of School Education was rolling out the first version of a new online administrative system and the first teacher professional learning in the use of ICT was offered. Ten years on, globally networked computing is ubiquitous in business and industry and is the major vehicle for information storage and dissemination, and international and local communication and collaboration. Computers are now an embedded part of the normal classroom configuration, and teachers routinely use a range of ICTs for communication, administration and planning and teaching. Students are commonly engaged in the use of collaborative Web 2.0 applications such as blogs and wikis. Global citizenship is now impossible without high level ICT skills. A global and multicultural education cannot be framed without due consideration of the role of ICT in its implementation and achievement of objectives.

The other major triggering factor in globalization has been the revolution in air transportation since the introduction of the jumbo jet in 1970 to allow ease of movement of people and goods across the world. These two triggering factors have led to the following global processes:

- ∞ The innovative design and global distribution of more and more consumer products;
- ∞ The increase in world population movements, including the movement of refugees and asylum seekers;
- ∞ A change in the role of the nation state and the rise of more international organizations;
- ∞ An increase in the politics of identity and grievance with fundamentalist reactions;
- ∞ The rise of global religious and social movements;
- ∞ The rise of global and world cities together with the localization of global poverty into the world's impoverished urban areas;
- ∞ The thickening of the networks of diasporic and transnational communities;
- ∞ A heightened sense of risk and unpredictability, especially since 9/11, whether in terms of natural, financial or social disasters;
- ∞ An increase in people with multiple identities and the greater precariousness in human relationships;
- ∞ The need for a greater degree of governance and regulation at the global level.

The financial benefits of a multicultural and globalising policy, often ignored, are real:

- ∞ The capacity of a multilingual workforce to penetrate more and more overseas markets when tapping into the global economy and into the diasporic economies;
- ∞ The use of Australia as a business hub to deliver goods and services into Asia and the other countries of the Pacific and Indian Ocean Basins;
- ∞ The creative entrepreneurship of immigrants in establishing new industries and new products;
- ∞ The capacity to attract and service large numbers of tourists, international students and, lastly, convention attendees, particularly with the completion early in 2009 of the new Melbourne Convention Centre;
- ∞ The development of Victoria's small business sector since about one in two small businesses are owned by overseas-born or second-generation Victorians;
- ∞ The additional skilling of Victoria through the settlement of immigrants and refugees in regional cities and rural towns;
- ∞ The economic benefits of festivals and conventions in city and country which are often multiculturally based.