



Did Australian multiculturalism die on the steps of the opera house?

Adrienne Millbank

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Did Australian multiculturalism die on the steps of the opera house?

Adrienne Millbank

The election campaign has eschewed all debate of cultural issues, despite the cultural overreach of the Albanese government's resurrection and commitment to the policy of multiculturalism. The government's commissioned review (to which it had not provided a detailed response before calling the election), has proposed new commonwealth bureaucratic infrastructure for a stronger multiculturalism to address 'prejudice and discrimination' against '21st Century migrants' from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The review determined that Australia's citizenship law and requirements are onerous and 'assimilationist' and recommended, in the interest of 'equitable multiculturalism', that citizenship should be easier to obtain for non-English speaking migrants from different political cultures.¹ This recommendation will be hugely contentious.

This report argues that the demonstration at the Opera House on 9 October 2023 marks the end of mainstream Australia's acquiescence to the policy of multiculturalism, to the notion of Australia as a nation composed of a collection of different ethnic communities living in supposed harmony and mutual respect. It points out that most migrants have preferred to assimilate and integrate into mainstream Australian economic, social and political life. It suggests that Australian voters would welcome political leadership that provided a more muscular defense of Australia's identity, culture and liberal democratic values. It argues that voters want tougher entry selection criteria, tougher citizenship requirements, and integration and assimilation, not multiculturalism.

Shock, shame and anger: Australian multiculturalism in action

As in other countries, mainstream Australians were shocked and appalled at the depravity and barbarity on display when Hamas Islamist terrorists poured out of Gaza and filmed themselves cruelly killing and kidnapping over 1400 Israelis, on October 7, 2023. While they looked incongruously familiar in their jeans and sneakers, and on their motorbikes, the display of religion-butressed savagery appeared mediievally backward and far removed, geographically and culturally, from our modern, relatively prosperous, Western liberal democracy.

Mainstream Australia was further shocked, appalled and disbelieving when, on the evening of October 9, about a thousand protesters, comprising mainly Muslim Australian residents or citizens of Middle Eastern and Arab background, marched from Sydney's western suburbs to the Opera House. They marched in celebration of the terrorist attack. The Opera House was lit up in the colours of Israel, in sympathy and solidarity with a fellow democracy and longstanding ally. The demonstrators carried Palestinian flags, set off flares, burned the Israeli

flag and shouted 'Allahu Akbar'. Some of them chanted, loud and proud, their sectarian hatred towards a smaller, longer-established religious group of Australians: they shouted Fuck the Jews, Gas the Jews, and/or Where's the Jews. There was a presence of NSW police marshalling and observing the demonstration. They did nothing to stop it; they let it run its course. One person, a lone Israel supporter, was arrested for his own safety and to 'keep the peace'.

The Opera House is a national icon and symbol of Australia, and our country became infamous for this ugly and unrestrained display of antisemitism. Mainstream Australia did not like the demonstration, and they did not like what it revealed about our immigration program, our multiculturalism and our society. In media coverage, letters and comments, the reaction was vehement: this is not my Australia; this is not the Australia I know; how could this happen here; who let these people in; multiculturalism has failed Australia; multiculturalism has passed its use-by date; we never signed up for this.

For five decades, politicians have presented an image of Australia, to itself and to other countries, as the very model of a modern multicultural nation: tolerant and harmonious, with one of the world's largest share of residents who are migrants and few of the ethnic tensions in European countries. They have described the 'diversity' brought about through immigration as an unqualified asset, as 'cultural enrichment'. Due to terrorist incidents, the recent massive scale of net immigration, in the order of half a million a year, and the stress of the rapid-change impact of this migration on Australia's cities and suburbs, mainstream Australia was already questioning its acquiescence to 'multiculturalism'. They had seen and experienced the reality that migrants have voted with their feet and assimilated or integrated into the Australian mainstream culture. There is, however, a segment of the migrant population, Muslims, for whom this integration process has seemingly slowed, or failed. To mainstream Australians, this is a bad thing; an unwelcome development.

The sense of betrayal in mainstream Australia following the Opera House and subsequent breakdown of social cohesion has been palpable. The government is seen as having handled the important issues of migration and social cohesion poorly and irresponsibly. The reasons have been plain to see: lack of responsible planning and control of migration; prioritizing business and Budget interests over the needs and concerns of the existing population; complacency, trusting the absorptive power of Australian society and culture to and beyond breaking point; and crass political opportunism, that is, currying favour with ethnic groups for electoral advantage.

The longstanding understanding or pact that government has had with mainstream Australia, whereby it would accept reasonably sized intakes of migrants and refugees through an annual immigration program and the ensuing 'multiculturalism', so long as these were managed in the national interest, has been broken. Far from being in the interest of national unity and cohesion, after October 2023, ritualistic statements by the Albanese government promoting

‘multiculturalism’ have propped up aspirations for separation, for sectarian politics. They have, arguably, enabled and provided succour for antisemites and Islamist extremists. These developments are anathema to mainstream Australia.

A crisis of antisemitism, or a failure of migration and multiculturalism?
Events subsequent to the Opera House demonstration on October 9 2023 have revealed a disturbing level of sectarianism and antisemitism within Australia’s Muslim communities. The safety of Jewish Australians has been threatened. A noisy Islamic minority has been supported by other ‘anti-Zionist’ activists – academics and students of the left, inspired by critical race theory and identity politics imported from the USA. (Under these prisms, Israel and Australia are deemed ‘white’ Western colonialist oppressors, and ‘Palestinians’, Indigenous Australians and migrant groups are deemed oppressed victims.)

Weekly pro-Palestinian marches with chants of ‘intifada’ and ‘from the river to the sea’ (calling for Israel to be wiped out) have taken over streets in Sydney and Melbourne; pro-Palestine encampments intimidating to Jewish staff and students have been set up on university grounds; a historic synagogue in Melbourne has been burned down; Jewish businesses have been attacked; antisemitic graffiti has been painted on Jewish homes, cars and a child-care centre have been fire-bombed; Jewish artists, musicians and writers have been doxed and ‘cancelled’; and Muslim nurses employed at Bankstown hospital were filmed undertaking to kill rather than care for Israeli patients. And Muslim preachers have spewed hateful bile in Australia’s mosques and on our streets, with seeming impunity².

The breakdown in social cohesion is worrying. Members of the Albanese Government, however, while expressing disapproval, have done so with a detached air – all the while commending, through the ritualistic language of multiculturalism, Australia’s world’s-best ‘social cohesion’. As if to say, nothing, really, to see here. Penny Wong advised us that she didn’t think the targeting of civilians and taking of hostages was a cause for celebration. Anthony Albanese, speaking at the Jewish Museum in Sydney in July 2024, described Australia as ‘the great multicultural society’. He observed that Australians overwhelmingly do not want conflict brought here, and that there was no place for antisemitism in Australia. At a subsequent Muslim event, he advised that there was no place for racism and islamophobia in Australia. In July 2024 Andrew Giles, then Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, advised us that ‘our diversity is our greatest strength’, and that multiculturalism ‘is one of the great success stories of modern Australia’³. All the while, the marches and encampments and displays of antisemitism continued. On Australia Day 2025, Anthony Albanese reminded us, ‘Multiculturalism is Australia’s greatest achievement’.

Commentators have suggested that stronger political leadership, with moral clarity, in response to the Opera House demonstration, could have prevented the subsequent fracturing of social cohesion in this country. They have suggested that the Albanese government's more hostile and critical position on Israel, including in the UN, encouraged it. New South Wales Premier Minns spoke against antisemitism with more conviction and moved to strengthen anti-hate speech laws in NSW. The Prime Minister appointed envoys to advise him on antisemitism and islamophobia. \$178 million was allocated in the 2024-2025 Commonwealth Budget 'to strengthen social cohesion'. These measures aside, government ministers, as noted, have seemed in denial, like passive observers, suggesting excited responses to 'conflict in the Middle East' were to be expected, and linking expressions of concern about antisemitism with expressions of equal concern about 'islamophobia'.

The viability of multiculturalism as public policy must surely be under question. The Albanese Government has made a number of undertakings to reduce net migration from its record highs of recent years, but, regarding multiculturalism, it has remained in denial, seemingly mired in its politics. Labor politicians have kept repeating its well-worn platitudes and cliches as if they were a response to the crisis of antisemitism in the mid 2020s: 'our social cohesion is a multicultural marvel'; 'Australian multiculturalism is one of our greatest strengths'; our success as a nation is due to 'the genius of multiculturalism'; multiculturalism is our strength'; 'our diversity is our greatest strength'.⁴

Multiculturalism started out as a policy to help make migrants feel welcome. Fifty years on, it was being used by the Albanese government as a rhetorical device to blanket over and normalize behaviour that does not belong in an educated, modern liberal democracy; to gaslight mainstream Australia into tolerating the intolerant and the intolerable.

Australian multiculturalism: how did we get here?

Multiculturalism was introduced into Australia as noted in the 1970s, by the Whitlam Labor government, at a time when Australia's migrant source countries were diversifying away from Europe.⁵ The earliest multiculturalists, a small group of academics and 'community organisers', argued that the expectation placed on migrant workers to assimilate and quickly become 'new Australians' was patronizing, unreasonable and unfair. Mainstream Australia was not consulted regarding the new policy. Its earliest objectives, however, appear to have been well-meaning, if somewhat confused and contradictory. These were: to make minorities with different cultures and languages feel appreciated and respected; to dignify their difference; to support and encourage them to maintain their languages and cultures; to make them feel at home; and to make it easy for them to participate and contribute within the mainstream of Australia's economic and social life as soon as possible - that is to integrate and assimilate and become 'new Australians'.

Politicians have been keen to point out that Australian multiculturalism from its beginnings has been different from European multiculturalism. In European countries, where 'immigration' has comprised large inflows of asylum seekers from countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and from Africa, and subsequent family reunion, multiculturalism has meant 'migrant' communities leading largely separate lives in separate communities. High rates of crime, welfare dependency, and terrorism coming out of those communities has caused multiculturalism to be declared a failure by political leaders, including Angela Merkel and David Cameron.⁶

Australian multiculturalism, politicians have maintained (particularly when explaining or justifying the policy to a mainstream audience), has always had common liberal democratic Western values at its core: respect for freedom and dignity; freedom of religion; the rule of law; parliamentary democracy; equality of opportunity; and a "fair go" for everyone. It has always stipulated that English is the national language. Support for ethnic groups to maintain their different cultures and languages was, presumably, in addition to or on top of this. The official policy has always been confusing and replete with vague, rhetorical proclamations and exhortations: 'Australians are defined not by race, religion or culture, but by shared values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and equality of opportunity - a "fair go"'. 'To foster belonging, the Australian Government places multiculturalism at the centre of the national agenda'. Social cohesion was expected to be maintained by ethnic groups' tolerance and acceptance of other groups: 'The glue that holds us together is mutual respect - a deep recognition that each of us is entitled to the same respect, the same dignity, the same opportunities'.⁷

Multiculturalism as public policy was embraced by the Fraser Coalition government, under which, following a review of post-arrival programs and services (the 'Galbally' review) in 1978, its core programs, services and institutional arrangements were set down. These have been: English tuition, interpreting and translation services, the Special Broadcasting Service, ethnic communities' advisory committees and councils, and grants to support both cultural maintenance and 'social cohesion'. In the 1980s an 'Access and Equity' strategy was introduced, under which government departments have been required to demonstrate how they are making the services they deliver accessible to migrants.

As noted, the policy has been confusing and contradictory from the outset. Most of the programs that have been funded under its rubric, namely English tuition or 'access and equity', or social cohesion grants, are designed to assist migrants and refugees to join in and become part of mainstream Australia, that is, to integrate or assimilate. A lot of the rhetoric and theoretical elaboration around the topic of multiculturalism, however, eschews the very notion of assimilation or integration. Government reviews and reports invariably have portrayed migrant cultures as vibrant and enriching, and the Australian identity and culture as bland, or

non-existent. There has been an embarrassing element of soft bigotry in this dishonesty: our historians, writers and artists have shown that a distinctive Australian culture existed long before post-war migration, a culture which was absorptive and, obviously, attractive to migrants.⁸

It is an obvious, common-sense observation that migrants have assimilated, integrated and contributed to Australia's national identity and culture. It is obvious that, to the degree that they have wished, they have preserved and practiced aspects of ancestral cultures compatible with such integration. It is an obvious reality that the 8 million people who have come as migrants and refugees since the migration program began in 1948, and their descendants, *are* mainstream Australians. There would be few Australian workplaces or extended families that don't have members with, for example, Dutch, German, Chinese, Vietnamese, Italian, Indian, Filipino or Lebanese ancestry.

The more radical academic 'research' and literature of multiculturalism has painted a picture of Australian society even more unmoored from reality than the government's promotional material. It has often been just plain silly in the nastiness of its denial of any value in the British-derived and Western liberal-democratic nature of Australian institutions and identity. Funding for this research may have pleased some inner-urban left voters, but it has had limited national appeal or practical use. Two examples: Professor Stephen Castles, an academic 'expert' on multiculturalism and adviser to government, advised in 1996 that 'Anglo' Australia was racist 'to its very core': 'Two centuries in which racism was an almost universal tenet have left their mark on institutions, social practices, intellectual discourse, popular ideas and national culture'. He advised that 'nothing short of fundamental change of our institutions, attitudes and practices is needed if Australia is to realise its potential and emerge as a complete and stable multicultural society, as distinct from the thoroughly racist state it now is'. He noted with disappointment that 'commitment to the fundamental changes required to implement truly equitable multiculturalism appeared to be lacking'.⁹

More recently, academic and writer Randa Abdel-Fattah has been awarded commonwealth government grants of over \$1.2 million supposedly in the interest of 'social cohesion', including \$870,000 to study 'Arab/Muslim social justice activism'. Randa Abel-Fattah has: described Australia as 'a white-settler colonial outpost'; written that 'Western democracy depends on and is sustained by genocide, by final solutions, colonialism, carceral systems and fascist repression masquerading as social cohesion'; stated that Macquarie university, her employer, 'is named after a genocidal colonizer and so I make sure whatever I do in this university is an act of resistance against that blood-soaked tribute'; and described how, driven by 'white supremacy', she 'looks to ways to bend the rules' of her grants. She and her latest grant came to public attention in April 2024, when she organized children at a pro-Palestine encampment at Sydney university to chant 'intifada' and 'from the river to the sea ...'; stated

that ‘Zionists’ ‘have no claim or right to cultural safety’; and called for ‘the end of Israel’ and ‘the abolishment of Zionism’.¹⁰

Critical race theory and identity politics are currently under retreat and there has been a ‘change of vibe’ out of the USA following the presidential election last November. Grants and grants programs for ‘diversity’ in that country are being axed wholesale. In response to the antisemitism that has played out on Columbia and other university campuses, including Harvard, the Trump administration has taken steps to withhold federal funding.

The politics of multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has, since the Fraser government, been a project of the progressive left, whose politicians have presented it as an inclusive and compassionate way of governing for diversity and countering racism and discrimination directed against ethnic minorities. Every Labor government since Whitlam has committed to an official policy of multiculturalism, usually following a review and report recommending new structures and expanded services and grants programs for ‘diversity’ and ‘social cohesion’.

Politicians of the right have been more sceptical and suspicious regarding the policy, seeing its identity-group-rights-based ideology as in conflict with liberal principles of individual freedom, and as detracting from pride in our distinctive national character and identity. They have seen the policy as open to manipulation for political purposes; as having been co-opted to attract ethnic votes. In the early 1990s the Coalition opposition accused the Keating Labor government of running the migration program, then heavily weighted towards family reunion, and ‘multiculturalism’, to curry favour in migrant electorates. It also accused the Labor party of ethnic branch stacking. When it came to power in 1996 the Howard government ended Coalition support for multiculturalism as public policy. It dropped government use of the term and stopped funding it. Nevertheless, the Howard and subsequent Coalition governments have maintained and expanded funding for settlement and other migrant programs and services including English language tuition, the SBS, and grants for ‘social cohesion’.

There are about one million Muslims in Australia, compared with 120,000 Jews. Muslim voters comprise a sizeable proportion, 25-30 per cent, of voters in several Western Sydney suburbs, currently held by Labor. The Albanese government has been accused of manipulating immigration settings and multiculturalism, and foreign policy, for votes. It issued temporary ‘visitor’ visas to 3000 Gazans who are unlikely to return. It has been critical of Israel’s war against Hamas in Gaza. Tony Burke officiated at mass citizenship ceremonies, organized in a pre-election environment, to enlarge voting populations in key electorates.

The Albanese government commissioned its review of multiculturalism (the Dellal review) in 2023.¹¹ The report, titled ‘Towards Fairness – a multicultural Australia for all’, was delivered in

July 2024.¹² The review pretty-well ignored the breakdown in social cohesion and appalling antisemitism of the previous nine months. It found that Australian multiculturalism was ‘thriving’ but under strain from ‘overseas conflicts’ and ‘international events’. It found that while all migrant groups experienced ‘exclusion’, ‘21st Century’ migrant communities from the Middle East, Africa and Asia suffered the most from discrimination and prejudice.

The review observed that Australia was ‘institutionally racist’ before mass migration and multiculturalism improved the country but that ‘comprehensive anti-racism initiatives’ are still required to address ‘systemic’ racism. Systemic racism is the sort of racism identified by critical race and identity theorists. It is supposedly inherent in Australia’s British-derived institutions, and held unconsciously by Australians of European ancestry who are insufficiently aware of their ‘white privilege’. It is measured through observation of ‘unequal outcomes’ and the self-reporting of those who claim to be on the receiving end of it. This ‘systemically racist’ view was propounded by the Dellal review and informed by the Race Discrimination Commission within the Human Rights Commission.¹³ It conflicts with the long-held view both of mainstream Australia and international observers that this country is one of, if not *the*, least racist country in the world. This long-held view is supported by sociologists who use ‘social indicators’ to compare levels of racism. Australia has for example: very high rates of intermarriage; very low (until recently) levels inter-ethnic conflict or violence; very high rates of social mobility; laws to prevent discrimination based on race or religion in employment and public life; and comprehensive services to help new migrants to participate and integrate.

The Dellal review regretted that since the mid 1990s ‘multiculturalism has been highly politicised’ and recommended that Australia’s Prime Minister and the Opposition leader both make public statements supporting it. It recommended new commonwealth-level structures to centralise multiculturalism as public policy: a Multicultural Commission and Commissioner, and a standalone Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship with a dedicated minister. It recommended a range of measures to ‘embed’ multiculturalism across Australian society, including cementing funding for grants programs.

The review openly harks back to the ‘golden age’ of multiculturalism in the 1970s and 80s. It recommends that, in the interest of ‘equitable multiculturalism’, Australian citizenship should be easier to obtain. It recommends that the citizenship process should be ‘more welcoming and inclusive’ and ‘not a tool for assimilation’. To that end, the citizenship test should be available in languages other than English, and ‘in alternative and more accessible formats’.

The review will not be warmly received in mainstream Australia. Even before the Opera House demonstration and breakdown of social cohesion, Australian voters had made it clear, including through the Voice referendum, that they do not want separate structures and programs based on racial or ethnic identity. Especially since October 9, 2023, mainstream Australians want the citizenship test to be tougher. They want it to weed out applicants unwilling or unable to live by

Australian democratic values or to ‘fit in’ with mainstream Australia. They want citizenship to be a tool for assimilation, not a tool for multiculturalism. Past experience further suggests that ‘comprehensive anti-racism initiatives’ are unlikely to be warmly received.¹⁴ As noted, most Australians do not see their country as particularly or uniquely racist.

Public attitudes to multiculturalism

‘Multiculturalism’ has always been a vague term, confusing to the public, meaning different things to different people at different times. The latest, 2024, Scanlon Mapping Social Cohesion Report (which is cited approvingly in the Dellal review), found that over 80 percent of those surveyed ‘approved’ of multiculturalism. The Scanlon report however had qualified its finding: ‘attitudes are mixed as to what multiculturalism means in practice’, and ‘many respondents supported the notion while at the same time expressing concern that immigrants are not integrating into the country’. ‘Multiculturalism’ appears to have meant, to many respondents, agreeing that there shouldn’t be discrimination in immigration selection on the grounds of race or ethnicity. Only one-third of respondents in the Scanlon survey agreed that ‘minorities should be given government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions’. Two-thirds disagreed.

The Committee to Advise on Australia’s Immigration Policies’ (CAAIP) undertook a major and influential review during the Hawke government back in 1988. It found that mainstream Australia did not support ‘multiculturalism’ or its programs if people saw that it promoted Australia ‘turning into a community of communities’, divided along ethnic lines. It also found that the Australian community distrusted multiculturalism, especially programs that respondents saw as ‘enabling communities to stay socially and economically separate from the mainstream’, described as: ‘no give, all take’.

Decades of surveys after CAAIP have shown continued public ambivalence towards multiculturalism, while policies actively promoting integration have received broad-based support.¹⁵ They show that mainstream Australia has always preferred, and expected, migrants to integrate or assimilate and become Australian, albeit while preserving compatible aspects of their heritage. The CAAIP report described surveys showing that mainstream Australia associated being ‘truly Australian’ with personal and political commitment to Australia and ability to speak English, rather than with birthplace.

The December 2024 survey by Betts and Birrell has indicated that voters, in an election environment, rejected the entirety of the leftist progressive agenda, including the priority accorded to multiculturalism. It found that migrants themselves prioritise integration: they want to be Australians and are opposed to the promotion of diversity.¹⁶

Conclusion

Multiculturalism as public policy appears to have run out of its time, and of public patience, in this country. The sillier progressive ideological aspects of it have never interested the voting public; the ‘mosaic of separate communities’ aspect of it has never been supported; the self-serving political aspects of it have been exposed; and mainstream Australia may no longer be prepared to tolerate or pay for it.

Rather than multiculturalism, mainstream Australians want ‘21st Century’ migrants to integrate or assimilate, like the migrants before them. Rather than multiculturalism, they want government to fund, focus and insist on shared values. They do not want separate advisory or administrative structures for different groups based on race or ethnicity, they want programs and services based on need. Australia does not need a public policy of multiculturalism to deliver settlement assistance such as English language tuition. It does not need multiculturalism to deliver accessible services, or grants for social cohesion. Indeed, the latter would be less counter-productive shorn of radical ‘progressive’ multiculturalist agendas.

Immigration, multiculturalism and citizenship are salient electoral issues in many countries. They have not been mobilized in Australia to the extent they have been in the USA or Europe, for example by Nigel Farage’s Reform Party in the UK. It would appear however that Australian voters would welcome more muscular political leadership to shut down the hate preachers and other displays of antisemitism, and to restore national cohesion. It would appear that they want tougher immigrant selection criteria to weed out applicants unwilling or unable to accept and adopt Australian values, identity and way of life and to prevent sectarianism, ancient hatreds and overseas conflicts being imported into this country. It would appear that, rather than multiculturalism, they would welcome tougher citizenship laws and requirements, including for example an extension of the period of eligibility.

The Albanese government may have helped save several seats in Western Sydney with its professed commitment to multiculturalism, but at the expense of voter support in the broader population. The demonstration at the Sydney Opera House on 9 October 2023 may have marked a turning point towards public insistence on national interest immigration and the integration and assimilation of migrants who want to live here permanently.

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- ¹ Recommendation three, Review Panel C. Castley, B. Dellal, N. Nyuon, *Towards Fairness: Multicultural Australia for all*, Australian Government, [Department of Home Affairs website](#)
- ² Sheik Ibrahim Dadoun, at a celebratory rally in Lakemba, stated ‘I’m smiling and I’m happy’, (The Hamas attack) ‘is an act of courage’, ‘It’s a day of pride ... a day of victory’. Abu Ousad, aka Wissam Haddad notoriously preached that the very ‘rocks and trees’ would cry out ‘... oh Muslim, there is a yahood behind me, come and kill him’; ‘If all the Muslims in that region spat on Israel ... the Jews would drown’, and ‘Muslims in Palestine are crying out to be saved from the descendants of pigs and monkeys’. A report in *The Australian* 7 October 2023 said analysis (by the paper) of dozens of Mr Ousad’s sermons at the Al Madina Dawah Centre ‘reveals a history of inflammatory and violent comments, most fervently in addresses given since the October 7 attack by Hamas in Israel’.
- ³ Speaking on 24 April 2024 at the launch of the report of the Multicultural Framework Review, ‘the first major examination of the state of Australian multiculturalism in a generation’.
- ⁴ Statements made by Anthony Albanese and Chris Bowen during the election campaign, and by Andrew Giles in an *Opinion Editorial*, 24 July 2024.
- ⁵ The policy or ideology of multiculturalism originated in Canada, as a way of incorporating French-speaking Quebecois into the national story.
- ⁶ Then German Chancellor Angela Merkel, speaking to party members, stated ‘This multicultural approach has failed, utterly failed’, and that the onus should be on immigrants to integrate into German society. Quoted in *The Guardian*, 17 October 2020. David Cameron, in a speech on radicalism and terrorism, stated that ‘state multiculturalism has failed’; that the country had ‘tolerated segregated communities behaving in ways that run counter to our values’. Quoted on BBC News, 5 February 2011.
- ⁷ Department of Home Affairs position statements on ‘Multicultural Affairs’ at the at the Department’s website at [homeaffairs.gov.au](#).
- ⁸ See for example John Hirst, *Sense and Nonsense in Australian History*, Black Inc. Agenda, 2009.
- ⁹ S. Castles in S. Castles & E. Vasta, *The teeth are smiling: the persistence of racism in multicultural Australia*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996.
- ¹⁰ Reported widely in domestic press. See also Algemeiner staff, ‘May 2025 Be the End of Israel: Australian writer Calls for Destruction of Jewish State to Mark New Year’, at [algemeiner.com](#), 26 December 2024.
- ¹¹ The review panel comprised Dr Bulent Hass Delal AO, Ms Nyadol Nyuon OAM, and Ms Christine Castley.
- ¹² On the Department of Home Affairs website, [homeaffairs.gov.au](#)
- ¹³ See Australian Human Rights Commission: Race Discrimination, *Mapping government anti-racism programs and policies relevant to anti-racism*, July 2024, on the AHRC website at [humanrights.gov.au](#).
- ¹⁴ In the late 1990s the Howard Government proposed to introduce a two-year ‘anti-racism campaign’. The government had been accused by the opposition Labor Party of fostering a climate of divisiveness and debate that had led to a ‘resurgence of racism’. The proposal faltered because of the dearth of convincing evidence of widespread racism in Australia and lack of public enthusiasm for such a campaign. Research at the time also showed a wide gap between ‘expert’ or ‘elite’ opinion and the views of ‘ordinary’ Australians on the issue. Described in A. Millbank, *An Anti-Racism Campaign: Who Needs It?* Current Issues Brief No. 20 1997-98, Department of the Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 29 June 1998.
- ¹⁵ See Katharine Betts’ surveys in *People and Place*, including ‘Immigration and Public Opinion in Australia, *People and Place*, vol.4, no.3; and Scanlon Mapping Social Cohesion reports at [Scanloninstitute.org.au](#). See also Department of Immigration and Citizenship Strategic Policy Group, *Community attitudes to immigration: 1988-2008*, February 2008; and, for example, C. Bailey, University of Technology Sydney, *Food’s great, but ...: Evolving Attitudes to Multicultural Australia 1985-1995*, Australian Association of Social Research Conference, Melbourne, 1995.
- ¹⁶ Katharine Betts and Bob Birrell, *The divide between elites and the electorate: Australians get ready to vote – Report No. 2*, Research Report, TAPRI, March 2025.