

Review of Australia's Immigration Policies – Message from the Minister

A letter from the Minister for Immigration sent to community organisations in 1987, along with information on government immigration policy and on the FitzGerald inquiry to encourage them to make submissions to the review.

**Minister for Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs,
Vice President of the Executive Council and Leader of the House,
Mick Young, MP
Member for Port Adelaide**

Letter from Mick Young

“Understanding Immigration” has been prepared as information and background for people in the Australian community who may want to put a point of view about Australia's immigration policies.

The Government has established a Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies which will be chaired by Dr Stephen FitzGerald, together with people from broad economic, social and community backgrounds. Details of the members are given below.

The Committee's Terms of Reference which are also set out below require it to look at the broad relationship between immigration and the social, cultural and economic development of Australia. It will also advise on those population considerations which will help shape immigration policies and examine our capacity as a nation to receive immigrants.

The Committee will be calling for views and comments from the public, including community organisations, and consulting widely between now and the end of March 1988 when it is required to report.

You will be notified through media

announcements about how to send in your submissions. These will need to be provided by early December this year and your organisation and the people it represents might want to start thinking now about the points you make under any or all of the Terms of Reference.

“Understanding Immigration” is a comprehensive description of our immigration policies and practices and the effect they have had upon Australia. It is intended to help those people or organisations who will be talking or writing to the Committee about the policies it is examining.

Your own organisation is probably most interested in the question of who might be able to come to Australia under the various categories - including family reunion - and how they apply (Chapter 5); and what they can do to have their case re-considered if they are unsuccessful (Chapter 7).

“Understanding Immigration” also gives some information about the history of immigration, how the program is planned, some community views about present policies, immigration trends world-wide and the policies of other countries.

In introducing “Understanding Immigration” I made two important points which I hope people will think about when putting views to the Committee.

Interest around the world in immigrating to Australia remains high and is far greater than we can accommodate. Because of this, it is essential that we have clear, objective criteria to select only some of the huge numbers who apply.

The Committee's work aims to help people to understand and respect the

breadth of views that exist within the Australian community about immigration. Australians sometimes look to immigration to serve objectives which often compete, if not conflict. We need to balance those objectives.

The Committee has been asked to guide the development of immigration policies in the years ahead so not all the recommendations will be able to be implemented quickly.

The Government's other major initiative which will be important to those interested in immigration is the task it has given to the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs to develop a National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia. This task will involve wide consultations throughout Australia in 1988 and will be concluded by the adoption of a National Agenda sometime in 1989.

I encourage all those with a point of view about the future of Australia's immigration policies to respond to the Committee's public advertisements seeking views.

Mick Young

(You can find the Terms of Reference of the Committee as a separate document in this section of the Library.)