

The Hon. John Ajaka MLC  
Minister for Multiculturalism  
Government of New South Wales

Dear Minister,

Please find below full text of the ACCCI Submission to your Multiculturalism Survey as promised. The submission was emailed at about 10 pm last night according to the extension of time given which is gratefully acknowledged.

There is little, philosophically, in our submission that departs from our lengthy discussion/lunch at the Hyatt On The Park when you were in Opposition. Next to the Premier and Treasurer, and perhaps in the future a Minister for Greater Sydney, the Minister for Multiculturalism is the driving force for NSW Foreign Affairs/Relations and it's integration with domestic issues.

I hope you accept our often trenchant remarks made in good faith as a worthwhile perspective and contribution to the issue of "hateful and violent influences" on our youth.

Yours

Michael C H Jones  
President - ACCCI

#### FULL TEXT

1. How do you think NSW can build on its strengths as a peaceful and resilient multicultural society and ensure that hate and violence in any form do not affect our way of life.

Obviously the world is multicultural.

With 21st century technologies, and accelerating global integration of communications, transportation and migration, Australia cannot cocoon it's Governance at any level - global, regional, national, state, city or district.

For 40 years since 1975, re the Racial Discrimination Act, Australia has declared itself a multicultural society. In 2015 almost 60% of Australians were either migrants or have a parent who was an immigrant. By 2024 it is estimated that people born overseas will include 1.35 million from Britain, 1.18 million from India, 0.96 million from China and 0.92 million from New Zealand. Plus perhaps up to a million temporary entrants and students, and just as important millions of international tourists walking our streets.

As a nation dependent for it's growth and well-being on trade and investment, this multicultural reality cannot be changed. Governance in a continental constitutional democracy such as Australia is at different levels with perhaps different stakeholders. Globally Australia supports the UN and associated institutions, Regionally we sign Treaties and adhere to diplomatic cooperation, National via State Sovereignty, State by separation of powers under the constitution, and Local/District through delegated authority from the

higher levels. There is no City-wide Governance in Australia akin to cities in China and elsewhere.

For NSW the Minister for Multiculturalism, The Honourable John Ajaka MLC, with the demise of the pioneering initiative by Premier Barry O'Farrell to appoint a Trade and Investment Minister, is akin to the State's Minister for Foreign Affairs/Relations as his brief covers such a range of international and domestic related issues.

However, NSW Minister Ajaka's powers and authorities are hamstrung by national ministries and local councils. There are gaps and oversights in past legislations at all levels. Perhaps some order may come from the deliberations and recommendations of the new federally funded Australian Intervention Support Hub at ANU which has the objective "to research radicalisation and develop responses and methods to be used by community workers and governments". This is part of the Abbott Government's \$40 million package "to counter violent extremism and stop the radicalisation of susceptible people in Australia".

The NSW Minister should run with these national programs.

2.0 What are communities or government already doing well in terms of protecting young people from hateful and violent influences and offering them safe community connections and support.

2.1 What are communities or government doing less well.

There is nothing sacrosanct about laws: laws are made by men and women who work together with like-minded associates. Most laws begin as party-partisan resolutions subject to negotiation and agreement by a majority of differing interests. Sometimes they are blatantly persecutory and discriminating against minority viewpoints.

Arguably the legislations of Nazi Germany were legally passed and implemented: the result was between 12 and 17 million Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, socialists, coloureds, infirm, etc murdered by law. The laws of China are Party generated; the laws of the US and Australia have a "free enterprise/private property" hue.

Various Australian minority ethnic and religious interests have since World War 2, and most likely previously, returned to their homeland of birth to participate in political movements often involving revolutionary/civil war hatred and violence. The Jewish "extremists" in the post 1945 British Protectorate of Palestine where hotels etc were bombed. The Croatian partisans, fresh from their Australian training camps, returning to Tito's Yugoslavia to assassinate communist officials. Chinese, citizens of Australia, supporting/opposing the Mao's communist troops advancing on Hainan and Taiwan.

So it is not surprising that various elements of the younger Muslim communities in Australia may wish to support different sectarian groups in Syria and Iraq, and across West Asia in general. It is just at this particular time they are branded by the ruling elites in Australia as the "bad guys", the black hats of US cowboy movies.

The solution, as is the usual case, lies in education and genuine consideration of the issues, something that politicians with three/four year terms of office and the Murdoch mob screaming in their ears, can not possible do.

The continuation and growth of the Greater Jewish State of Israel despite all the UN Resolutions since 1967 means there will never be peace in that region of West Asia - Australians of Arab Muslim descent will continue to return illegally to fight and die for their cause, just as Australians of Jewish persuasion will continue to return to fight and die legally in the Israeli armed forces.

The key issue is "fundamentalism" and exclusiveness - the American "exceptional" society that can drone bomb everywhere in the world without international Human Rights sanction. However when the Russians, and soon the Chinese, do the same they are the "black hats". Tony Abbott and Bill Shorten don't dare address these issues.

How do communities respond when governments at higher levels adamantly refuse to acknowledge their culpability in prolonging the hatred and violence of fundamentalism? What do parents say to their children when the hypocrisy is so nauseatingly obvious?

Australia is a multicultural society. Allegedly we do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, race, colour, religion, class, sex, age, and so forth? We aspire to a mutual respect and civility for differences of opinion on the grounds of equality without violence or intimidation. Our identity is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-sexual, and therefore multi-identity? Arguably there is no Australian identity in the 21st century, we are the world and the world is us? Australians reflect in their individual pursuits the rainbow of world views and political alignments and tastes. Our familiarities in progression are family, friendships, associations, work and marriage with children. Nationality is more and more suspect?

So the "good" of governments and communities is proposing and supporting laws that foster these multicultural values and refrain from legally type-casting specific groups. That is not to say due attention shouldn't be given to sections of the community where from time to time violent elements may emerge, only that this should be done on a non-discriminatory basis. It is not to say that the Jewish Board of Deputies shouldn't be involved in sponsoring Human Rights Awards, just that we should understand their motives and allegiances. Similarly Communist Party of China "supported" groups calling for the Re-unification of China should be encouraged to participate in NSW Multicultural activities, yet again it ought to be understood how this alienates and discourages organisations with different views re supporters of the Democratic Party in Taiwan.

As someone wrote elsewhere "the question is how do we share the public and private spaces, and specifically how does government facilitate or inhibit this sharing peacefully without hatreds and violence"? A beginning is to genuinely address the issues of Who betrays multiculturalism? Who actually use hate speech? Who are really violent? The current Prime Minister Tony Abbott fails on all three grounds, which statement immediately distances the Liberal Party from the conversation. It is a bit like saying that the trade unions have become a self-serving minority pressure group - there goes the Labor Party.

In the Australian political party system communities are on their own, historically politicians lurch from one stuff-up to another. Oh, I/we hear the howling!

3.0 The new two-year program aims broadly to build on the strengths of our multicultural society and protect our young people from hateful and violent influences.

3.1 What outcomes would you like to see at the end of this two-year program.

3.2 What would success look like for such a program.

Realistically, given the international/domestic interface of Australia's multicultural society, the Federal Government's package of \$40 million and a NSW program of \$4 million will have little impact. To be cynical it will subsidise the activities of vested, no doubt party-partisan, interests whether Jewish, Chinese ethnic, "good" Muslims or whoever? Perhaps a vote winner in future elections. A two-year program certainly looks like such an exercise. Which young people are we talking about? What exactly are the "hateful and violent influences", and where do they originate in Australia and overseas? Muslims? Young Muslims? IS supporting young Muslims? Is support for the objectives, apart from the methods, of IS "hateful"? Waging wars to change the unworkable colonial boundaries of Syria and Iraq is obviously "violent" but there are many groups trying to do that re the formation of a 30 million? Kurdistan state. Is the Muslim religion "hateful and violent"? Or is it just the sects the Liberal and Labor Parties don't like? How small does a minority have to be to allow legal prosecution? For example many WASPs believe the Jewish State of Israel should never have been established and that there cannot be peace in Muslim West Asia until there is a secular Greater Israel, Palestine or no Palestine. Is this "hate" speech and a violent "influence" on young people? Similarly many Protestant Christians of the evangelistic persuasion believe and campaign that China is an Empire, not a nation-state, and that Tibet and Turkistan should be independent countries, and that Taiwan should forever remain independent and free - are these ideas/actions "hateful and violent influences" against the Peoples Republic of China, and therefore undermining Australia's trade and investment relations?

The questions are absurd. The definitions and identifications are for blatant political purposes and the proposed program is likely to do great longterm damage by rallying many Australians to a de facto support for IS? Again I stress the difference between ideas/objectives and methods/tactics.

4.0 What sort of changes do you want to see in your own community, or in society more generally, in relation to these issues in two years time.

None.

The dangers of politicians interfering in social relations far outweigh the slight possibility of constructive change in values, beliefs and attitudes. It has taken 2000 years of Christian thought to even consider legislation for same-sex marriage. Hate speech and violence towards homosexuals and lesbians is still rife. Gender change appears to be both an experimental laboratory and money spinner for doctors and the relevant pharmaceutical

companies. Many people of the fundamentalist bent in all religions are "violently" opposed to such practices. For example Hindus from India.

The NSW Government and the Minister for Multiculturalism can effectively do nothing in the short term re two years. The funding is not available for a dramatic educational dialogue in the various multicultural communities and the Federal government has a US style neo-conservative "cultural revolution" agenda. It does not augur well for stability in NSW or the country.

5.0 What skills or knowledge do communities need in order to better address these issues.

5.1 What has been your experience in accessing such skills or knowledge.

The question is wrongly stated. It should be "What skills or knowledge do politicians need in order to better address these issues". Most politicians are appalling parochial, you just have to look at their backgrounds to make that judgement. But they are broadly representative of the people in a democracy such as Australia. The problem is that multiculturalism is the world with no geographical limits and many layers and hues. This is the context for the 21st century struggle for justice which is never ending. Social change, justice, rises up from the practices of people, often originating in small minority communities, and politicians are the last to recognise or rather accept change. The Soviet Union was a hollow shell from the mid 1960s, intellectuals were writing copious quantities of books on the subject, but politicians and the Murdoch mob were still fighting the communists on Australian campuses in the 1980s, and are still writing books on their "achievements"! The downward thrust of Red China won a Federal election landslide for the Liberals in 1966 - Nixon and Whitlam and many others exposed that furphy over the last 40 years. Apartheid in South Africa was endorsed by the Australian Liberal Menzies government and the Mandela "freedom fighters" branded as terrorists. The demonstrators against the Springbok Rugby tour in 1971 were vilified as hateful and violent people. Remember Liberal NSW Premier Robin Askin. Yesterday Iran was part of the "Axis of Evil", today there is a US Congressional battle to endorse President Obama's Vienna "deal", no doubt with the hope that Iran will in some way help defeat IS?

It is more than likely that Australian citizens and residents will return to West Asia to fight with all the ethnic and sectarian groups. That is not necessarily "hateful and violent", just a continuation of different multicultural views on "justice". Politicians need the skills and knowledge of how to legislate over the longer term of say 10/20 years without perscribing or discriminating against specific selected minority groups for short term electoral purpose. This is not the forum to discuss Governance structure in Australia but it is terribly relevant to the issues of this survey. Fundamentally politicians focus on the lowest common denominator majority 50%, which is essentially the most conservative and hysterically opposed to change. Crises, whether world wars or depressions, detonate change in thinking. Is IS or events in West Asia a crisis for Australia, or the US or EU or China etc? Is democracy under threat? Is the free enterprise, private property owning citizen of Sydney facing ruin?

Bottom line is which political groups are flogging this dead horse of overstated hatred and violence influences? Are recent incidents in Sydney and Melbourne the actions of the mentally impaired or hardcore jihadists?

6.0 Who would be the key people and partners involved in developing a whole-of-society approach to these issues.

6.1 Are there existing civil and social structures or resources in your community that we can better leverage in addressing these issues.

6.2 Do you see yourself, your organisation, or your community as already being, or potentially being, a contributing partner in this work.

"A whole-of-society approach "?

Australia is a multicultural society, so is it really feasible to formulate a whole-of-society approach "to protect our young people from hateful and violent influences"? Unless you accept an Anglo unity of "Australian values" there is no foundation of common beliefs on justice and equality. Indigenous policies by all governments since the early 1970s at least in public perception have failed re health, housing, education, and work opportunity. Of course that is not so but the media story is overwhelming. If that is the case with Australia's aborigines, what programs are appropriate/workable for West Asian Muslim migrants fleeing the degradation and poverty of shattered communities with their breeding grounds for hatreds and violent vengeance? How do you address the shame of their first generation Australian children? The Palestinians have been fighting for a homeland for generations. It is clearly a national challenge with the states in support, the NSW Minister for Multiculturalism is really at the margin outside the policy structures of the Liberal Party.

The thinking behind these questions is nonsensical as the NSW 2021 10-year plan is already activated with it's 5 strategies and 32 goals. Regional Advisory Councils and Metropolitan Consultative Forums are in place, there is engagement with the Consular Corps, a Multicultural NSW Symposium is planned to develop a Community Engagement Strategy as well as a Multicultural March in conjunction with the Premier's Harmony Dinner. Unless of course the Minister wishes to discriminate by developing Muslim-only "civil and social structures" and apartheid procedures?

7.0 What do you believe is the most important issue the NSW Government needs to consider in relation to this matter.

Excluding a massive increase in police funding and the introduction of draconian law-and-order programs, the Liberal NSW Government has to moderate the policies and rhetoric of the Liberal Federal Government. A realistic Foreign Policy would be a start.

About 600,000 Sydney-siders in 2003 demonstrated against Liberal Prime Minister Howard's proposed joint invasion with the US of Iraq. It was bigger than the Sorry March across the Sydney Harbour Bridge which was claimed to be over 500,000? Result: an unmitigated international disaster which laid the seeds for today's IS. Like the Vietnam War intervention, no Liberal Party responsibility has been accepted for Iraq. And now Prime Minister Abbott

wants to have the Australian Airforce bomb Syrian towns where civilian casualties will be inevitable. As the de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs/Relations in the Liberal NSW Government Minister John Ajaka MLC should beat a hasty path to Liberal Federal Minister Julie Bishop MHR in Canberra. Sanity is the key word.

8.0 What do you believe would be barriers to participation in any future program of this nature.

Foreign policy - the Neo-cons policies of the Bush Presidency seem to be alive and well in the thinking of the Abbott Government. Australia has alienated virtually all of West Asia from Palestine to Pakistan, plus unnecessary provocations of Russia in Eurasia. Our Human Rights credentials, tattered as they were, took another hit with our support for the past government of Sri Lanka. And Indonesia and Malaysia are on our doorstep, both Muslim countries.

Communications - Wikileaks and Edward Snowden have proved that even governments can no longer cover up events and close down the free flow of ideas. Muslims know the histories of the EU and US interventions in their countries. Wishful thinking in Canberra is no substitute for an even-handed Foreign Policy. Australia's voting pattern in the UN is well known and tells a story to the world.

Cooperation - to succeed Federal and NSW policies and programs need be endorsed and supported by the entire Muslim community, or at least the overwhelming majority. Divide and rule strategies to use one against another would be highly dangerous for long term stability. Marginalisation and alienation of young Muslims reinforces their thinly disguised passions.

Education of Anglo and European Australians - much has been achieved but much issues to be done. The feeling that their country is being lost with no compensating benefits is rampant in some less wealthy suburbs and regional centres. The school system is doing a good job but it is a generational change timespan.

Aid programs - private philanthropy is essential as first, it does not bring the taint of government and second, it re-enforces Australia's claim to care. However it should not appear exclusive to any, or a form of incentive for action. It should be available to people in need wherever.

Post Obama - the returning the Neo-cons to power in the US would heighten tensions dramatically throughout the Regions of world, not only with Muslim nations. Australia's options would be limited.

9.0 Is there anything else you wish to raise as general comments.

There were considerable misgivings among senior executive ACCCI members about participation in this NSW Multiculturalism survey. Disagreement led to today's extension of time for our submission. Indeed, was the intention ever to really canvass community views? The tone of questions, word limitation of response, and a two-year program suggests otherwise.

Government is about Power - power to do and not do, to listen and not listen, to take on board some interests and ignore others. The dimensions of the survey as one of our members states "are normally associated with the objectives of institutions of the state in terms of maintaining stability and control ". But "What are the dimensions for the people who live in political jurisdictions that are known to have a plurality of cultures"?

In other words the real question not stated is: "Is the \$4 million program intended to strengthen the ability of state institutions to supervise multiculturalism or is it to expand the desire of communities to practice, that is to live with, multiculturalism"?

Is the question of hatred and violent influences a political distraction?

We draw your attention to the Commonwealth's, past Federal Government legislation, three dimensions of multicultural policy:

> cultural identity: the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion

> social justice: the right of all Australians to equally of treatment and opportunity, and remove barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender and place of birth

> economic efficiency: the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background

That is the context re "within carefully defined limits" that we view the world and discuss hatreds and violent influences. Whatever the Policy it needs to be uniformly implemented and non-discriminatory.