



'Multicultural Australia: United, Strong, Successful'

Delivered by Dr Sev Ozdowski AM FAICD, Chair of the Australian Multicultural Council, at the launch of the multicultural statement, Canberra, Parliament House, 20 March 2017.

I, too, would like to begin, by acknowledging the Ngunnawal people, on whose lands we gather today, and I pay my respects to their elders both past and present.

- Prime Minister;
- Minister for Social Services, the Hon Christian Porter, MP;
- Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon Zed Seselja;
- Mr Joe Caputo OAM, Chair, Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia;
- Other members of Parliament and VIPs;
- Ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted to be here with you as we reflect on our multicultural history and celebrate our achievement of being one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world.

It takes time for multicultural societies to grow and mature, to become rich cultural, religious and linguistically diverse societies - Australians clearly should be pleased with their achievements thus far.

Today's ceremony marks another important milestone in our nation's multicultural journey - the launch of the Government's new multicultural statement – [Multicultural Australia: United, Strong, Successful](#).

I congratulate the Government on renewing and reaffirming its commitment to a multicultural Australia. This new policy is a timely statement confirming that Australian multiculturalism is a source of strength, opportunity and unity.

On behalf of the Australian Multicultural Council, I want to thank the Assistant Minister, Senator the Hon Zed Seselja, for inviting us to be part of this process. We are honoured and privileged to have represented the Assistant Minister in consultations undertaken with several key stakeholder organisations.

I also want to thank all the Council members for giving so generously of their time, and to acknowledge Dr Hass Dellal AO, Ms Faiza Rehman and Mr Vasan Srinivasan who are here today; while other members are helping to celebrate Harmony Day events across the country.

I, like many people in this room, have a migrant's story to tell. My story began in 1975, when my wife, my son and I migrated to Australia after spending two years as refugees in West Germany.

So I understand well, the sentiment expressed in the multicultural statement by Amina Siro, just after she arrived in Melbourne from Aleppo, Syria – *“learn English, look for a job, and try to join the community.* That's how we started back then in 1975!

That was a long time ago... since then our expectations have exceeded our wildest dreams. And I believe that has been possible only because of the country we chose to settle in.

During our journey, we have seen the challenges created and faced by the many waves of migrants to this land. But with each wave of migration, we felt new and exciting layers were being added to the pillars of our nation. This is something of which we can be justly proud.

I hope that this new multicultural statement inspires you and renews your enthusiasm for the vibrant, harmonious and inclusive multicultural Australia we can be.

Thank you.



(left to right) Dr Hass Dellal AO, Australian Multicultural Council member; the Hon Christian Porter MP Minister for Social Services; Dr Sev Ozdowski AM FAICD, Australian Multicultural Council Chair; Prime Minister the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP; Senator the Hon Zed Seselja Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs.



(left to right) Mr Vasan Srinivasan, Australian Multicultural Council member; the Hon Christian Porter MP Minister for Social Services; Dr Sev Ozdowski AM FAICD, Australian Multicultural Council Chair; Senator the Hon Zed Seselja, Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs; Ms Faiza Rehman, Australian Multicultural Council member; Dr Hass Dellal AO, Australian Multicultural Council member.