Date Introduced: 13 September 1979
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: The Honourable M.J.R. MacKellar, M.P., Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

To establish the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, and to lay down its functions together with arrangements for its management and administration.

Background

In 1977, to ensure that the changing needs of Australia's migrants were met, the Federal Government commissioned a review of post-arrival programs and services for migrants under the chairmanship of Mr. F.E. Galbally, C.B.E. The Galbally Report, Migrant Services and Programs, was tabled in May 1978, and expressed the view that Australia is at a critical stage in its development as a cohesive, united, multicultural nation.

The Report pointed out the need for skilled research and information on experience in other countries to assist in the development of multiculturalism in Australia. The Report also recommended that the Commonwealth provide $1.8m over a three-year period to establish an Institute of Multicultural Affairs to provide advice and information on multiculturalism.

Provisions

Part II

Clause 4(1) and (2) propose the establishment of the Institute as a corporate body.

Clause 5 sets out the objectives of the Institute, which include: development of awareness among cultural and ethnic groups; promotion of tolerance, understanding, harmony and mutual esteem; promotion of cohesiveness through existing political and legal structures; promotion of an environment conducive to participation.
Clause 6(1) sets out the functions of the Institute which include:

(a) Advice to the Government on achieving the objectives in Clause 5.

(b) Promotion of these objectives through: commissioning and conducting research, reporting to the Minister, informing the public, promotions and community education, and establishing a literature repository.

Clause 7(1) empowers the Institute to do all the things necessary and convenient for the performance of its functions. This clause covers such matters as contracts, financial autonomy, and property.

Clauses 8 and 9 cover transfer of material to the Institute and lands and buildings.

Clause 10 gives the composition of the Institute. It is to consist of Council members, and not more than 100 members appointed by the Minister in consultation with the Council.

The remainder of Part II deals with frequency of meetings, and terms of office of Institute members.

Part III establishes the Council of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs and sets out its composition, duties, terms of office, frequency of meetings and appointment of Chairman.

Part IV deals with the appointment of the Director of the Institute, his/her terms and conditions of appointment and provides for the appointment of an Acting Director.

Part V covers arrangements relating to staff of the Institute.

Part VI deals with the financial management of the Institute.

Part VII covers miscellaneous matters including:

(a) the rights of the Director if he/she is a career public servant;

(b) delegation by the Minister of his powers under this Act.
(c) the annual report of the Institute;
(d) regulations.

19 September 1979

Education and Welfare Group
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE