

1977

## Our multicultural future and the school

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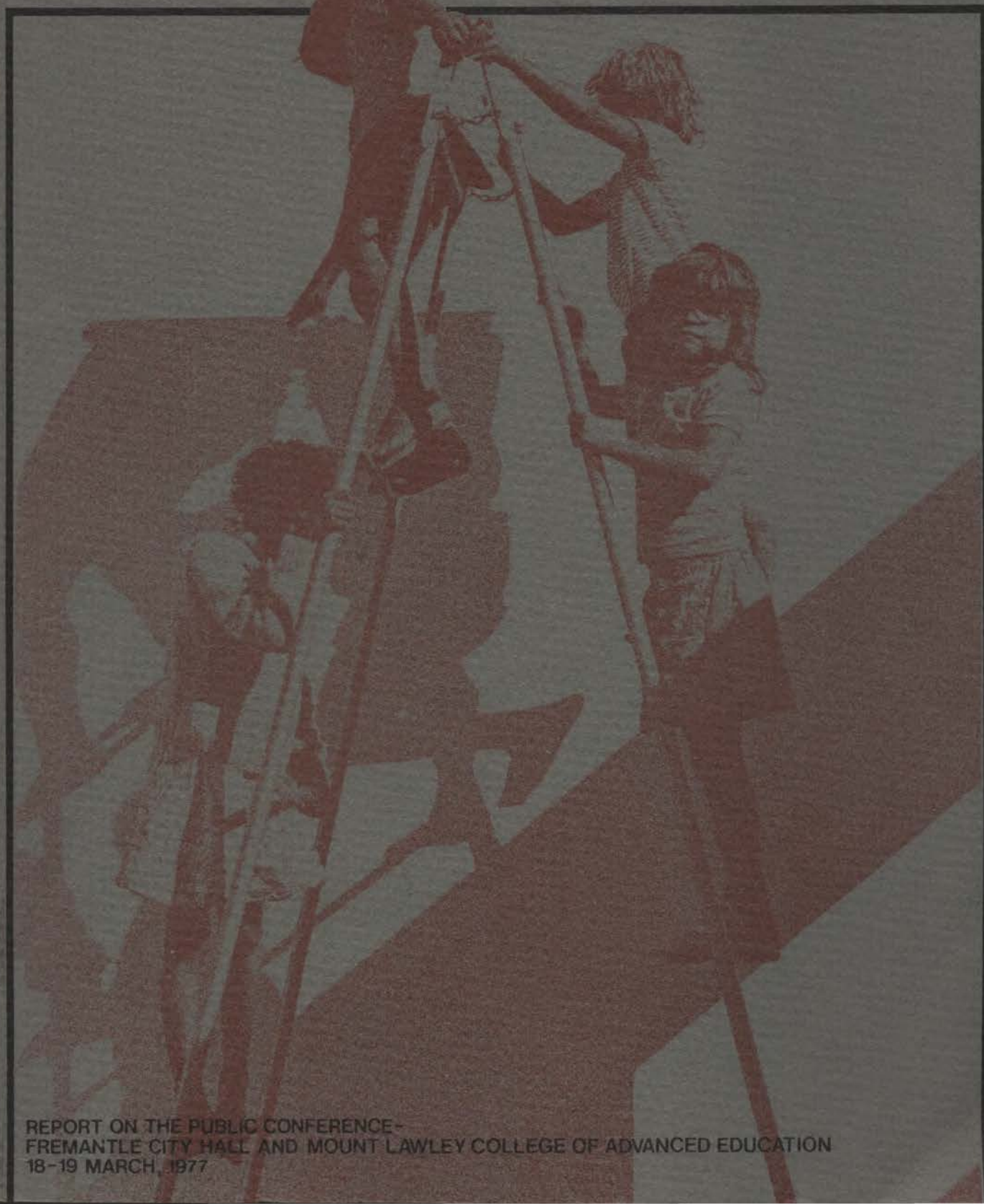
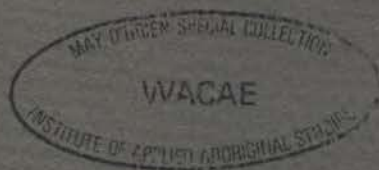
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# MULTICULTURAL FUTURE THE SCHOOL

MAY O'  
BRIEN

ed by John Sherwood & Peggy Holroyde



REPORT ON THE PUBLIC CONFERENCE -  
FREMANTLE CITY HALL AND MOUNT LAWLEY COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION  
18-19 MARCH, 1977

**M.L.O'BRIEN**

# **OUR MULTICULTURAL FUTURE AND THE SCHOOL**

**Edited by John Sherwood & Peggy Holroyde**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

John Sherwood

It is only in the last four or five years that an observable effort has been made to extend the growing awareness within the community that Australia's population is clearly multicultural in composition. Despite this, most of the political, economic and social structures and organisations in the community do not adequately reflect or cater for the variety of people of different ethnic origins and identities.

While this increasing awareness in individuals is encouraging, it has been evident that the focus of discussions, conferences and gatherings to date, in Western Australia at least, has been rather narrow. Some have concentrated on issues relating to migrants, and others to Aborigines, but none have adopted the real multicultural concern which they espouse. Any approach which does give significant coverage of both migrant and Aboriginal perspectives and experiences is guilty of the same type of monoculturalism (although a little more comprehensive) which the multicultural viewpoint is trying to overcome.

For example, it is inconsistent for persons supporting migrant groups' struggles for identity to press for recognition of ethnic groups' rights within multicultural Australia, while ignoring or denigrating the different values and patterns of living of Aboriginal groups. The converse is equally true. In fact, every ethnic group holding a multicultural perspective must respect and support the rights, values and ethnic identity of every other group. This will be consistent, and will produce an enriched and harmonious Australia.

The conference on "Our Multicultural Future and the School", held in Fremantle and Mt. Lawley on 18th and 19th March, 1977 was designed to build on the foundation of a total, multicultural perspective which would publicise the needs and aspirations of migrants, Aborigines and other Australians.

A second weakness of many conferences, seminars and workshops is that participants are too homogenous. Many conferences are predominantly filled by academics, and teachers; others by administrators and public servants; and others by representatives of community groups. Unfortunately, it is rare for all these people to meet at the same gathering and interchange ideas, and on the few occasions when a conference is more heterogeneous in composition, it is usually the representatives of community groups who are overshadowed (or is it 'over-theorised and out-talked'?) by academics and teachers. The Multicultural Conference was planned to maximise the dialogue and interchange between members of Aboriginal and other ethnic communities, teachers, educational administrators, academics and community workers. The audience on the Friday evening consisted of members of many ethnic groups, and on the Saturday, about one third of the participants were teachers, and the other two thirds were from many different categories.

This variety of representation was largely achieved by involving different groups in the planning itself. There were, in fact, three separate planning groups; the Ethnic Communities Planning Group, the Aboriginal Planning Group, and the Educationists Planning Group. A summary of their discussions and recommendations is provided in Section 3

Although the detailed planning of the Conference was occasionally made difficult by the need to refer to three different groups' wishes, the varied, comprehensive input was clearly to the ultimate benefit of the Conference. Too often conferences are planned by educationists or other professionals, who claim to 'know' what community needs are.

The organisers of this Conference were shown that community groups feel their needs and know their own experiences rather than vicariously.

One of the strongly expressed cautions from all the planning groups was that the program should be balanced particularly in terms of party-political, local interstate, and Aboriginal/migrant inputs, and the ratio of talks to workshops. The design of the program to attempt to balance such variables is summarised in Section 4, and the major inputs from the key papers is provided in Section 5.

As an indication of the 'balanced' program, the audience on the Friday evening were treated to a balance between affective and cognitive appreciation of Australia as a multicultural society. Three different sets of dances were provided by Ukrainian young people, a young Indian woman and a group of Aboriginal children, and ethnic food was available afterwards. To complement these, the two addresses provoked thought and prepared participants of the workshops on the following day. It was extremely encouraging for the future of the multicultural future of Australian society to witness the common hopes and cautious optimism expressed from two very different backgrounds, by the Hon. Ian Viner, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and the Hon. Al Grassby, Commissioner for Community Relations.

Mr. Viner, in a paper entitled 'Aborigines in Multicultural Australia', indicated the complexity of the problems facing a government trying to assist Aborigines to achieve their expressed aspirations regarding their role in Australia in this decade. He discussed land rights, customary ('tribal') law, and bilingual education as significant programs in the 1970s for supporting the rights of Aboriginal people, and calls for education of the whole community towards an appreciation of cultural differences within, and the potential richness of our society.

In similar terms, Mr. Grassby spoke of the need to promote tolerance and understanding between all groups in Australia, and stressed the role of schools in this effort. The challenge is twofold, because schools must set the example in catering for the needs of children from all ethnic groups, particularly the three quarters of a million at school with a first language other than English, and at the same time they must develop in all children an appreciation of each other's cultural heritage and identity.

Those attending the Conference on the Saturday were stimulated by ideas, and reports of the two interstate educationists. Mr. Jim Giles, Assistant Director of Schools in the South Australian Education Department, presented information on migrant and Aboriginal children in schools, and of changes in policies and in education system to cater more effectively for such children. Of special importance is the involvement of parents from different ethnic communities in schools councils, and the appointment by the Minister for Education of a Migrant Advisory Council to enable ethnic communities to advise him directly.

Moving from the administration of the education system, the Conference was told how schools can develop programs to adapt to their multicultural composition. Mrs. June English, an education consultant and former Principal of a girls high school in Victoria, explained the difficulties and the rewards of encouraging the introduction of new ideas, procedures and content into the school.

An important input into the Conference came from a panel of three people who recounted vividly and with obvious feeling, some of their experiences in West Australian schools. Rob Mykytiuk is a Ukrainian Australian, Moreen McGlade an Aboriginal Australian and Barry Panos, a Greek Australian. Instead of being told by 'experts' we were able to hear first hand accounts of helpful and hurtful incidents and approaches at school. Each of the three stressed how teachers and other pupils reacted to them on the basis of negative stereotypes, rather than as individuals. Throughout their education, it was made clear continuously that the English language and Anglo-saxon traditions and customs were the only really acceptable patterns, and that practice of non-Anglo culture would be scorned, mocked and even forbidden at times. It is to the alleviation of these Anglo-conformist attitudes and pressures that this Conference addressed itself.

Two resource papers were also provided for the Conference. The first, by Mr. Jim Houston, Assistant Commissioner (Education) Community Relations Office, provided information on the educational rights of children of ethnic minorities in Australia, after the ratification, by the Australian government, of the International Convention against Racial Discrimination. Mr. Houston raises a number of questions about the education of migrants and Aborigines in Australia. The second paper was provided by Mr. Ron James, Vice-President of the W.A. Council of State Schools Organisations (WACSSO), and is an extract from the policy statement of WACSSO in relation to Aborigines and Migrant education. It is encouraging to read that thought given by parent representatives to multicultural education.

Finally, I would like to express sincere appreciation, on behalf of those attending the Conference, to a number of individuals and groups, for their generous assistance in the planning and organisation. Without question, the person to whom gratitude is owed is Mrs. Peggy Holroyde, the honorary Conference Organiser, who gave many weeks of work, day and night, to prepare efficiently and implement the Conference. Al Grassby and Jim Houston stimulated the initiation of the Conference and gave valuable support to its planning; the three planning groups, Rosemary Tang of the Catholic Education Office, Merv Knight of the W.A. State School Teachers Union and Edwin White of the Good Neighbour Council offered special assistance; the Fremantle City Council and Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education generously provided their facilities and many support services; participants in the Conference, including speakers, dancers, and particularly the two Chairmen, Mr. Rob Winroe and Prof. Brian Hill; and many other individuals who gave advice and assistance.

The continuing effects of the Conference for the improvement of education in our multicultural society owe a great deal to these persons and groups.

## 2. WHY BOTHER? THEM OR US?

Peggy Holroyde

Is Australia 'one' nation? To ask such a question may to some people seem to beg it.

"What on earth are you on about?" is the reaction of 'oldies' amongst the present population. Australia still is boasting a 'true-blue' of rather sun-burnt brown Aussie celebrates. Christmas in the traditional Anglo-Saxon way - or should it be Anglo/Celtic, considering the original components in the early settlement of the white man placing his impress upon the original Aboriginal of the Great South Land. But the present is shaping the future. One workshop in the Conference was emphatically aware of this. Those present formed it up in this way:

"A 'mono-cultural Australian' was to be considered primarily as a person born in Australia, articulate in only the English language and being acculturated in a predominantly Anglo-Saxon mode - 'Roast beef on Christmas Day, even if it is 100° F in the water-bag'."

"Multicultural Australia was to be considered as the point on the continuum between 'mono-cultural' and 'plural-cultural' at which we are at present. Such a 'multi-cultural Australia' was seen to be an improving but imperfect intercourse between groups within the community which can be distinguished culturally. There is also the likelihood that, as the present 'mono-cultural Australia' group constitutes the power structure of the mainstream Australian Society, prejudices will remain inherent in decisions affecting the whole community. The 'mono-cultural Australian' may not only accept but reinforce this seemingly secure place in the society. It may lead to parochial myopic views that will retain divisions in our society for some time."

Those divisions may still remain latent in contemporary Australia which as a nation has not been given by race riots such as in the USA or Europe, or by social economic unrest that has set off violent group protest as the Quebecois in Canada where a Province now has its own French speaking ethos confirmed in Provincial Government and school teaching to mention only two vital areas in the lives of people who live in that particular region of Canada.

But technology bounces across oceanic barriers and to ask the question because social unrest and vocal articulation have not as yet surfaced here is however surely imperative in what is left of the seventies.

Social change has overtaken what was virtually a mono-cultural, mono-lingual society (despite the fact that large numbers of Chinese, Afghan as well as Aborigines scattered across this huge continent were ignored in the initial colonial situation which has been Australia's early European history).

Social change because it happens in a sense almost imperceptibly, takes us all - and always - by surprise. It creeps up slowly from behind and the impetus leaps ahead before we are prepared for it mentally. For the last 25 years Australia's social components which make up the total society have been changing in fact quite dramatically yet stop anyone in the streets of Perth even today and ask the question: Who makes up Western Australia? and the surprise will still register on the face when the statistics are stated.

Over half the population of Western Australia is now not of 'pure' Australian Stock - whatever that may be. In the last census 51% of the population here was born overseas or of parents who were themselves foreign to Australian soil.

The past Commissioner for Community Relations, the Hon. A.J. Grassby, has pointed out that 750,000 Australian-born children do not speak English as their mother tongue. In the area of migration the proposed needs of a developing industrial base in present day Australia have influenced the Federal Ministry of Immigration to assess that there will be further intakes (and not only from Southern Europe) for a considerable time to come.

In addition the humanitarian needs of Asian refugees are already causing questions at global level concerning the Australian response as the last great underpopulated continent able to settle within reason those desperately in need, as Canada has also done.

Meanwhile the first true Australians - black Aboriginal citizens - look on as they must have done while the first white settlers disturbed and then disrupted their own delicately balanced ecology, wondering for how much longer their own cultural rights are to be pushed aside by supposedly 'mainstream' Australia.

So what sense of identity do all these new citizens as well as the oldest in our midst feel about their Australian-ness? Do they 'belong'? Are they Greek, Italian, Burmese, Christmas Islanders first, where their roots were nurtured in other soils? And what of their children reared in Australia, learning the speech patterns of the playground, and sport. Do they grow natural double-identities as Greek-Australians, or perhaps Australian-Malays with enriching possibilities some of us mono-linguals are denied, and so impoverished also? Is it not a great enlargement of personal horizons to be able to be Greek with Greek, Irish with Irish, Srilankais with Srilankais - speaking people - and still shout the best 'strine' at the footy match?

"It just depends who you are with!" a young Greek-Australian suggested when during the young peoples' panel of the day 1 seminar at the Conference he was asked if he had problems (a common assumption by Anglo-Saxon peoples) in this conflict of mixture of identities.

"I figure I get more out of life because I have so much more to choose from", was his disarming but encouraging reply.

Perhaps then it is the Anglo-Saxon, locked up in one language and an insular culture that has so often dominated others, that is the disadvantaged person.

Much depends on social attitudes in general society makes people feel alienated. Because they are different then they will be set apart from 'us'. Australia will not be one nation. And if the use of the 'migrant' or 'ethnic' for communities is used in a deliberately differentiating way then people will in no sense feel they belong in the true sense of citizenship. In fact does the use of the word 'ethnic' to describe people really matter provided we all recognise diversity as a positive enrichment to the social fabric of one nation?

Here in a relatively new nation where there is still breathing space and a chance for social advance through education and mobility in a vast land, it would appear with Australia's other great quality a fairly relaxed attitude between different groups - that there is still a chance to lead the way into a new experiment. Building a well-balanced plural society is no mean task if tensions are not to erupt bitterly as they have done in older societies where one culture has dominated and sometimes overwhelmed others.

The Quebecois, the Basques in France and Spain, the Scots, Welsh, and Irish in Great Britain, the Bangladeshis and the native original American, the Red Indian are all reasserting themselves, sometimes more than vocally.

One of the prime factors in this contemporary political phenomena is the rising expectancy psychologically amongst minority cultures. Modern technology in the media has helped everybody - and especially through television - to know what other people are thinking. Students, black people, women, ethnic minorities see each other's struggles to escape domination by other groups as universal struggles. Migrants everywhere they settled are now aware of their rights as well as their responsibilities as never before. They are impatient to aspire, and rightly, to higher economic and social status once they have mastered a certain local know-how and language proficiency.

Australia is building up its population levels with an almost unrivalled innovation and sustained vigour in order to be able to develop its amazing natural resources. Again it is the last 'frontier' Continent with the means at hand to undertake this enormous task and expand its potential. In global terms this now is almost impossible except for Brazil's great exploration of its empty hinterland. There is enormous potential here not only in terms of mineral resources, but in terms of human capital. The first key to releasing anyone's potential is language. Unless we can speak coherently and effectively to each other, and be understood we cannot really contribute effectively to each other, let alone the nation. Educationalists again all over the world, have felt considerable disquiet in the midst of this global mobility which has led in the post war years to shifts in population everywhere with the way other languages and cultures are dealt with in local schools. Teachers in Western Australia have felt for some time the need for a more imaginative response.

Yet criticism there is of teachers as a profession. "Why is it," one hears it asked, and not only here in Australia, "that teachers seem to be so ignorant about so many matters outside their own subject?"

In Britain I have met West Indian kids in school who were astonished that a teacher thought they were from the Indian sub-continent and who had no concept of what the Caribbean meant as a geographical entity.

It was suggested in discussions on this very point after the Conference that there may be some hidden factors in the profession of teaching that make it this way. A concentration on suspect matter in all the training processes and lack of time once school is reached preclude interests elsewhere. Or is it something Einstein as a teacher from a different cultural background, who however was born in Australia, suggested - that certain personalities become teachers "to lock themselves away", "After all it is a safe profession," he went on "Teachers are always going to school and coming home. It's a syndrome. You don't have to do anything else if you don't want to. And if you go from school straight to training College, and then into school again, that's dangerous. You never get any other work experience."

But as planning proceeded, the horizons spread. People were expressing interest in doing something about the much deeper and more fundamental concern of education beyond the school. How to educate the wider public, all of us, was the question being put and not only by professional educationalists themselves. How does one see 'ethnic' groups with 'strange' English accents as human-beings with their own dignity and rich customs and qualities which can be contributed to a common pool from which we can all imbibe something enriching and useful? How do we encourage the proverbially reticent Anglo-Saxon in our midst to widen his language potential? How do we all combat racial discrimination in our midst as Aborigines participate in the wider society, and more Asians become Australian citizens?

Legal implications of the new laws on racial discrimination; under achievement in schools; a cleaner definition of citizenship and belong, in fact a triangular participation emerged.

The long-resident original 'Australians' with their accelerating expectancy of change for the better; the traditional European, predominantly from Britain; and the post-war migrant groups who have come from over a hundred countries and source centres to Western Australia, feel a need to look at each other in a new light as citizens all with room to grow under the expanding Australian sun.

From the outset, specific concern was shown for the most obvious need, that of the teaching of other languages in schools other than the basic and fundamental one of Australia's heritage, the English language.

People express awareness and disquiet about a much deeper and more complex, and therefore subtle and often not easily seen, problem - how to educate the wider society, majority society (all of us in fact) about each other.

How to see 'ethnic' groups with strange English accents as "one of us" not "them", human beings alongside anyone who might by descent belong to those people of the Anglo-Saxon/Celtic tradition who were the first Australians of European descent. And how to bridge the gap with those of the earliest people, the Aborigines?

As human beings in modern Australia each has a part to play infusing rich customs and qualities of life inherent in the different values brought with religious tradition, family life, language and all that a distinctive culture can bring with its presence.

The other question, alongside this is how to encourage the proverbial Anglo-Saxon inhibition in broadening his or her language knowledge? If other people such as the Asians can almost automatically be trilingual how can one

breach the barricades of monolingual defence put up by so many people of English descent who are so locked up in their cultural expectancies that 'everyone else' such as the French, Germans, Dutch, Italians will speak English to them rather than they speak these languages even when travelling through Europe!

Finally does the question of 'belonging', of identity, the use of the word 'ethnic' for instance to describe people really matter, provide a certain national sense of society recognises diversity as a positive enrichment to the social fabric of one nationhood?

So often diversity distinctiveness, difference that Turkish or Arabic people carry with them because of Islamic beliefs, or that Greek people possess because of their polysyllabic names, is regarded as a problem, rather than in positive terms of opportunity for us all to be made more aware of the rich and interesting life around us.

If we set to the point of realising that the problems of division in nations such as presented by the modern post-war phenomena of the Quebecois, the Basques, the Kurdish people of northern Iraq, the Tamils in Srilanka, the Scots, Welsh, Irish of the supposed United Kingdom, the Red Indians and Eskimos of Canada and the USA, are all because one culture has dominated another we may release ourselves from such restrictive inhibitions.

Understandably historic political and economic forces created this quite natural domination. But the last part of the twentieth century has seen the demise of empires. Yet cultural imperialism still holds sway in many peoples minds. With a much shorter history and less entrenched traditions and a more relaxed and open frame of mind surely Australia might, even could, prove itself to be the first nation in this accelerating mobile world, to lead the way into a true plural society which still can maintain a sense of unity (a most vital need for any nation) in the midst of adversity.

Here there is still time in a relatively relaxed atmosphere between one culturally distinct community and another to harmonise and carry double or multiple identities in one lifetime.

The population in relation to land areas is privileged in the world sense. This is still a developing nation with immense wealth in comparison with dozens of other developing countries.

There is enormous potential - and room surely in the expansive Australian sunlight for everyone who has so far come to these shores looking for, and often achieving, the better life.

## PLANNING

### 3.1 MEETING WITH ETHNIC GROUPS

A meeting was held on Sunday, 13th February, in the Community Education Centre, Fremantle, to discuss the forthcoming Conference. Twenty eight members of some of the ethnic communities were present. Mr Jim Houston, Assistant Commissioner for Community Relations (Education) in Canberra outlined the proposal to hold this Conference in order that ethnic communities' representatives and parents themselves, educationalists and teachers right in the midst of the multi-cultural situation in schools can come together mutually to discuss the challenges, needs and possibilities of such a changing situation.

After outlining what had happened at a similar conference in Melbourne, where an enthusiastic response had brought 1500 delegates to participate, it was pointed out that although the factors in Western Australia are somewhat different, in that there is less concentration in the ghetto situation, and less housing disadvantage, nevertheless what happens in teacher attitudes, and what is presented in syllabuses, in books or even what is omitted, even unintentionally, has a great bearing on how children of migrant parents grow up and relate to people around them. Eventually they become full citizens belonging to Australia but are still sometimes made to feel different, unwanted or inferior.

Schooling has much to do with the forming of these attitudes and lack of self-respect in later life both for the new comer in Australia and those who have come from several generations of Australian parenthood. How they regard newcomers of different ethnic backgrounds, religion and colour is important also.

In the need for more skilled workers which Australia has welcomed over the post war years the increasing numbers and their lengthening stay has helped minority groups realise their strength as well as their identity - and their rights as citizens both individually and in groups. Such new comers were firstly designated as 'foreign'. This changed to 'migrant' or 'New Australians'. Recently there has been a shift to the use of the word 'ethnic' to discuss those of different cultural background to the majority host society. But then are we not all 'ethnic' belonging as we do, Aboriginal, Anglo-Saxon, Turkish, Indian, Christmas Islanders, to one cultural ethnic grouping or another?

Rosemary Tang, Co-ordinator, Child Migrant Education Program, Catholic Education Commission, expressed the new thinking among teachers working in the schools where so many foreign speaking children are represented. Anyone sensitive to the situation can see that great harm has been done to children's image of themselves by over emphasis on the teaching of the English language at the expense of all else. Obviously, newcomers need to master English to make their way successfully in Australia. But in the zeal to help students communicate, many teachers quite well-meaningly, stress the need to their pupils to speak English in the home at the expense of their family language. In so doing they can give the child a sense of inferiority about their own language and culture. They then, as Al Grassby has said, are made to think of themselves as 'cultural cripples'.

Polish, Ukrainian and Greek members present said that although Saturday morning schools have been set up in the cities of Australia where ethnic groups have clustered, certainly in high numbers in Sydney and Melbourne, as a response to need felt by the parents of these communities, the very fact of going to such schools only on Saturday sets up a feeling in children that they are different. They may understandably rebel against parents for insisting on more schooling for them on a Saturday when other kids are free to go off and enjoy themselves. They rebel and tension is set up in the home. The child may well ask: Why can't these languages be taught in normal school during the week? There must be something wrong with them as kids, in that they are not taught.

Another need is to look at the terminology. Is the language of Germans or Italians a 'foreign' language? Foreigners are outside a country. Germans and Italians are now Australians, all living in our communities at large. 'Migrant languages' was also a temporary term as children born here are no longer, accurately, to be thought of as 'migrant'.

There was general discussion on the nature of language teaching and attitudes to it by teachers and educationalists, in instituting policies. Yet basic to this as a specialised subject of inquiry is the fundamental attitude to what is now called 'ethnic'? Even the use of this description to a group of people, implies that they are 'separate' - 'different' - 'strange'. Are not Anglo-Saxons, Scots, Welsh, Irish (the people who constituted the founding society of this nation), also ethnic? Strictly speaking in the precise scientific sense they are.

The best way then to reflect the new needs arising out of the present changes in Australian society as a whole is to be sensitive to other people's cultures, and also equipped to use other languages.

This was strongly felt in the plea made by the Greek representatives from the Hellenic Education Progressive Association as outlined here:-

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY AUSTRALIAN HELLENIC EDUCATION PROGRESS ASSOCIATION  
FEBRUARY 1977

1. To build into the educational system a continuing participation by ethnic groups in formulating and implementing educational policy.
2. The need for the total school program to reflect the multicultural character of today's society.
3. The need to make all teachers sensitive and all non-migrant children sensitive to the values and life styles of ethnic minority groups in order to counter the disturbing incidence of discrimination, rudeness, devaluation and rejection experienced by ethnic pupils.
4. The need to offer the possibility of study of ethnic languages and cultures to all children.
5. The need to ensure equal access by all ethnic children to the rewards of education by equipping them to use the English language as an effective tool for further study.

6. The need to examine and experiment with bilingual programs of various types, especially for adolescent newcomers whose general education is interrupted at a crucial stage.
7. The need to secure the involvement of people of ethnic background in a variety of roles, from teachers to welfare aides, community liaison officers and interpreters.

These special considerations were reiterated by the representatives of the Italian Club present who also emphasised the need for bilingual teachers to be appointed, and the difference made to both children in school and their parents, when English language teachers made extra effort in reverse, to learn one of the community languages, no matter how differently. This could be an area of great psychological breakthrough.

Considerable discussion was given to the actual mechanics of teaching language and cultures in the schools in such a multi-cultural situation. How indeed could 15 different languages be taught in a neighbourhood that consisted of so many ethnic groups? Obviously sympathetic teachers and communication with the neighbourhood would be needed.

It was felt also by the Polish, Yugoslav, Ukrainian and Italian delegates that Australians at large were too insular, and that the media and its influence was too often ignored. So many comments were made often inadvertently which implied lack of tolerance, for non-Anglos-Saxons. A strong current of feeling was quite vocally expressed that Anglo-Saxons did not want to know about the background and language of their people.

In fact at the same time that newcomers in the school system had to learn about the English language and Australian culture, it was equally important for the reverse process to take place, and for indigenous children in school, to learn about their friends and future fellow citizens and their ways of living. Many though from Southern Europe or Asian parentage, were Australian born and should no longer be called 'migrant', in any sense of the word.

One of the Polish members present worried about children being overpressured. Looking at the mechanics of how a multi-cultural society was reflected in school was very complicated. All children must learn English. This was recognised by all parents as an absolute necessity. But parents quite naturally wanted the family language taught. This did not however mean they wanted their children to have to learn Italian or Greek in school.

Brana Kostic of the Serbian Orthodox Church initiated a general discussion of how to rationalise the many aspects of teaching new languages in schools. Points that were raised were:-

1. The imperative need for well trained language teachers. Being a speaker of a native language did not mean that person might be a good teacher.
2. The need to teach adult Anglo-Saxon Australians about other cultures, and not just other children in the school.
3. To take note of the difficulties of the smaller minority groups who either because of numbers or because of the relatively short time they have settled in Western Australia, have not been able to build up the same degree of organised group consciousness shown by the Italians and Greeks.

4. The internal divisions of communities make it impossible to demand all ethnic languages be taught - for instance in the Yugoslav community a four-way division of widely different dialects written in different scripts makes this very difficult.
5. The more general need is to impress upon the authorities the importance of sensitising all teachers, even those not directly involved in mixed neighbourhoods, about the diverse cultural backgrounds.
6. The need for a sense of realism, and communication between authorities and people in positions of power, parents and teachers.

Marie Zakrich raised the concern again of small dispersed groups and the need for practical help and knowledge as to how to go about finding school buildings, provision of materials, financing a teacher to give a community a sense of cohesion in learning not only the language but a wide cultural knowledge of their own background.

Halina Szunejko agreed and pleaded for parents to be more actively involved. While some may see their responsibilities and are active in helping their children understand the roots of their cultural identities, other parents, either too tired from hard work in factories, or shift work or difficulties arising out of migration, fail to recognise their duty. Somehow more contact will be needed from the school and teacher end.

Mietka Gruszka and Mr Mandyczewsky, expressed concern about the role of the media. Newspapers and Television in fact could be harnessed in helping make this contact. Even if parents were too lazy, or tired to go to school meetings, a sensitively worded notice in the newspapers or through 6.P.R. might catch their attention. The Canadian example of community schools aided by federal funding and widely publicised was quoted. Arising out of this, two major expressions of opinion emerged. There was a need for an organisation combining all the forces in Western Australia - schools, teachers, parents, the media etc., so that the ideas about assimilation still so prevalent (so it was felt) in Western Australia and certainly in the press, could change into an acceptance of a plural society. Ethnic groups were not just being patriots of a given community if they asserted their cultural identity. This was a very real human need which Anglo-Saxons expressed themselves quite unconsciously and automatically just because they had happened to be the majority for a long time.

Secondly there was an immediate need for a trilogue to enable more and quicker communication as expectations rise among new citizens, not only of their rights as citizens, but of the possibilities of their contribution in a wider sense to Australia.

This meant the possibility of community groups feeding in their opinions to teachers who in turn discuss the issues with the authorities. A conference of this kind in a College of Advanced Education might make this possible. Those involved in the planning of this meeting are listed here.

| NAME                         | ETHNIC ORIGIN      | OCCUPATION OR ORGANISATION                         |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| John Sherwood                | English/Aust.      | Mount Lawley C.A.E.                                |
| Halina T. Szunejko           | Polish             | Cannington Senior H.S.<br>Cecil Avenue, Cannington |
| Metka Gruszka                | Polish             | Polish Association<br>189 Brisbane Street, Perth   |
| Gabriela De Sousa            | Portuguese         | Housewife  |
| Mary Jo Borseini             | Portuguese         | Pharmacist   |
| Brana Kostic                 | Serbian            | Serbian Orthodox Church                            |
| Biljana Rados                | Serbian            | Serbian Orthodox Church                            |
| Tanya Sucevic                | Serbian            | Serbian Orthodox Church                            |
| Norm Marinovich              | Yugoslav           | None given   |
| Susanne Strobel              | German             | German Teacher                                     |
| Carmela Briguglio            | Italian            | Teacher (Govt. School)                             |
| Nunzio J. Castiglione        | Italian            | Secretary/Manager<br>Italian Club                  |
| Terenzio Tavelli             | Italian            | Member<br>Italian Club                             |
| John Rodrigues               | Portugues          | President<br>Funchal Club                          |
| Salvatore Federico           | Italian            | Vice President W.B.C.                              |
| E. Mandyczewsky<br>Voladimir | Ukranian           | Vice President Ukr. Assn.<br>& Teacher in Ukrain   |
| Tony Bellos                  | Greek              | Aust. Hellenic Eucation<br>Progress Association    |
| Anthony Zempilas             | Greek              | Greek Community                                    |
| Betty Samios                 | Greek              | Greek Community                                    |
| Marie Zakrich                | Yugoslav           | Student Teacher                                    |
| Jeanette Paulik              | Yugoslav           | Primary School Teacher                             |
| T.W. Ma                      | Chinese            | Chung-Wah Assoc.                                   |
| Peggy Holroyde               | British            | Mount Lawley C.A.E.                                |
| Vera Rodin                   | Serbo-Croat        | W.A.Y.C.   |
| John Cattalini               | Italian/Australian | City Councillor<br>Fremantle                       |

### 3.2 MEETING WITH ABORIGINAL GROUP

This was held on 3rd March, at the College. The constituent members of this Advisory Committee of Mt Lawley College are as follows:-

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| KEN COLBUNG   | New Era Aboriginal Fellowship                                  |
| NORM HARRIS   | Department of Aboriginal Affairs                               |
| LORNA HUME    | Aboriginal Advancement Council                                 |
| CEDRIC JACOBS | Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship                              |
| MAY O'BRIEN   | Teacher/Aboriginal Consultative Schools Commission Group       |
| ROB WINROE    | Commonwealth Department of Employment and Industrial Relations |

Concern and very strong concern at that was felt in three main areas of the life of this State:

#### 1. STEREOTYPING

Aborigines object to being seen 'all as 'one' in the various channels of the media'. They would welcome educative programmes to explain to white Australians that the original lumping of everyone into one general group is just as wrong as calling all native original Americans, Red Indian, a term now totally out of favour by people of these communities in the U.S.A.

#### 2. CURRICULA CONTENT IN EDUCATION

There is dissatisfaction with the racial and ethnic bias in text books in schools. This is now not OVERTLY racist in attitude. As many of the older books with racist references have now been weeded out of libraries. But the subtler implicit attitudes some of which are a hang-over from earlier years, (but not all), create the negative image often projected about the original Australians - the Aborigines. Sins of commission in what is said and projected abroad into the wider society are as bad as those sins of omission. What is left out in school books in daily use in school is as important as what is put in.

#### 3. RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Which is still as strong and prevalent though more hidden or hypocritical these days.

In relation to the first, May O'Brien and Norm Harris objected to the branding of Aborigines in so many aspects of national life. Aborigines were labelled as 'full-blood' or 'part-Aboriginal'. These were now objectionable terms. Who goes around talking about a full-blooded white Anglo-Saxon, the most mongrel race of all!

People were human beings, most of all those who created Australia before the European founded it. In fact Aboriginal peoples of all kinds had provided the foundation of this land and had kept it going despite all the odds yet they felt that, in the emphasis now in the use of the word 'migrant' or 'ethnic', and in the present concern of Governments to court this voting potential the disparate needs of the smaller population of Aborigines will be by passed.

This is why they wished to re-emphasise the Aboriginal aspect of a plural society while realising that certain matters such as attitude forming, as well as practical difficulties in housing were the same for Italians and Greeks, for instance, as Aboriginal people.

The media the worst offender in putting over a negative image. Whenever there was "trouble", there the media TV and newspaper reporters were present. Mention the word 'ALCOHOL' and the people immediately thought of an Aborigine. Yet alcohol is a white Australian problem as well. Who in fact brought alcohol to this country? Nor is the alcohol problem unique to Australia alone.

It was therefore decided by the Aboriginal Committee that one entire workshop should be devoted to this subject of the media and the negative reporting of events or rather the non-reporting of positive aspects in Aboriginal affairs. This may to some extent have been rearighted by positive articles in the West Australian in recent months; it is perhaps more a sub-editors problem in choice of words in headlines, etc, Editor in the Spectrum of Aboriginal groups was discussed at length.

The modern problem is that text books of a past era still present the image of Aborigines as all being only hunters and gathers.

More importantly, text books referring to Aborigines need to be thoroughly checked to eliminate all statements which are racist, or which give offense to Aboriginal people, or which present only the European view of contact between the groups. For example, children need to learn that Anglo-Saxons did not discover Australia. They may have developed it. Aborigines indeed lived through out Australia for 40,000 - 60,000 years according to latest archeological thinking before Europeans stumbled on the island continent.

Education is to be seen as something not specifically institutional, and this has meaning in relation to outright racial prejudice one of the most urgent needs was to educate members of the Australian public in the widest possible way about each other; this could only happen by helping the present younger generation in school before attitudes hardened, and in the press by honest and constructive reporting to enlarge education of all of us.

### 3.3 MEETING WITH EDUCATIONALISTS

On Monday 14th February 1977, Mr. R.G. Peter - the Principal of Mt. Lawley College of Advanced Education, welcomed the various participants to the College. The enclosed list indicates the representatives from the Education Department, Teachers Unions, Colleges of Advanced Education and individuals interested in the ideas of what 'multi-cultural education' means and how these ideas are being put into practice.

|                    |                                |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Dr. Harry Pearson  | Education Dept.                |
| Campbell Reilly    | Graylands CAE                  |
| Clarrie Makin      | Graylands CAE                  |
| Roger Dettman      | Sec. T.C. Nedlands             |
| Peter Mills        | Graylands School               |
| Merv Knight        | SSTUWA                         |
| Nick Norris        | MLTAWA                         |
| Ron James          | WACSSO                         |
| Ian Malcolm        | Mt. Lawley CAE                 |
| Ruth Holzman       | Comm. Dept. of Education       |
| Peter Van Osch     | The Good Neighbour Council     |
| Rob Mykytuik       | La Salle College, Midland      |
|                    | Ukrainian Ass. of W.A.         |
| Joy Davidson       | Mt. Lawley CAE                 |
| Peggy Holroyde     | Community Education            |
|                    | Ex-Community Relations         |
|                    | Commission, U.K.               |
| D.L. Jayasuriya    | University of W.A.             |
|                    | Dept. of Social Work           |
| Sybe B. Jongeling  | Mt. Lawley CAE                 |
| A.L. McGregor      | Mt. Lawley CAE                 |
| Judy Caproni       | Catholic Education Office      |
| Neville Green      | Mt. Lawley CAE                 |
| Jim Houston        | Community Relations Office     |
| Marilyn McCutcheon | Co-Ordinator, Comm. Ed. Centre |
|                    | Fremantle                      |
| John Sherwood      | Mt. Lawley CAE                 |

Mr. Jim Houston, Assistant Commissioner for Community Relations (Education) in Mr. Grassby's office in Canberra, gave a resume of the shift in opinion from the concept of 'assimilationism' to the idea that different ethnic groups could live alongside each other and contribute their distinctive cultural backgrounds in an integrated, common society.

The need still remains to educate the Australian nation to accept the Karmel Report of 1975 and 1st. Commission of Schools in Australia Report, Chapter 8 especially. On migrant children this spelled out the need to translate 'amity, tolerance and friendship' into very real terms in day-to-day living.

In addition, Australia is now bound by law in the ratification of the U.N. International Convention on Racial Discrimination in 1975 to put this into effect.

As a result of this legal binding of Australia to the concepts of 'rights' of ethnic groups to express their cultural identities fully and freely, the initiative has been taken up in certain States to looking again at how this is best expressed in the various avenues of society. Partly because of the heavy concentration in numbers of newly arrived migrants in the Eastern States, conferences such as the one envisaged at Mt. Lawley College, have already taken place in Melbourne and Sydney. Also, because of the density of numbers and the concentration of industry, even political lobby groups from these ethnic communities have become increasingly articulate. For instance the Greek Educational Committee in N.S.W. has been able to attract a major educational grant to look into the aspirations of parents, the expectations of the next generation (often Australian born) and to undertake linguistic research.

In the State of Victoria an Assistant Director of Education (Ethnic Affairs) has already been appointed. Partly because of the very different economic factors in Western Australia and partly because of the dispersal of migrants as they settled in the state, up in the north as well as the South West, beyond Perth proper, the situation has become more diffuse and complex. Small communities exist or even are separated out into individual families on agricultural land holdings.

Yet one statistic is highly significant which could mean that Western Australia should be in the forefront of initiating new ideas and thinking about what the sudden arrival of so many new citizens in its midst actually means. The statistic in this, taken from the Government Census of 1976: in the total population of just over a million people in W.A. 51% are either born overseas, or born of parents from overseas. The second statistic, although it is not possible to state exact numbers, is that within this 51% over half (roughly 28%) are migrants from Britain, making a high concentration of British newcomers into W.A., adding to a dominance of partially Anglo-Saxon culture.

In the open discussion that followed it was felt by several of the teachers from the teacher organizations that there is an urgent need for more co-operation and interchange of ideas among four distinct categories.

1. Academic and administrators.
2. Ethnic organizations.
3. Grassroots level where the home and parents are.
4. Aborigines (although members are small) are a distinct ethnic community that should be included in any discussion.

Again, (as in the meeting of the previous day with ethnic groups) the make-up of the conference was welcomed if it became a triangular communications between those in power who make the decisions, those who put into effect the policies (i.e. the teachers) and those individuals and communities who are affected in the wider sense beyond the strictly educational area, such as churches, voluntary welfare agencies as well as government agencies and social workers, etc.

Mervyn Knight representing SSTUWA, and Campbell Rielly of Graylands Training College, both felt that a good deal of realism is needing in approaching this ferment of ideas in a culturally plural situation.

The conference itself needs to look at the nuts and bolts of how to organize the actual manpower available.

1. Where are the resources for language teaching if it is to be realistically expanded to reflect the many different communities?
2. How to rationalise a confusion of aims?
  - (a) Is the getting - together of people for a major conference of this kind to influence 'the authorities'?
  - (b) To persuade teachers to change their attitudes and to be more sensitive of the needs of new curriculums, books, reflection of new cultures in the classroom.
  - (c) To get in-puts and contributions from the communities and parents themselves.

Others also interjected that a concrete suggestion be made that language teaching in college or school cannot be seen as separate from culture. Language and culture are interdependent. Teachers need to look at a wider study.

Following on this point, the question was asked: Should not primary school children in this State, no matter if there were no children at all from overseas, be given the opportunity to learn in a very wide sense a few basic things about a foreign language and its people and culture?

Clarrie Makin, Principal of Graylands T.C., felt that practicalities of the new situation needed looking at. There is the problem of lots of different ethnic groups and their mobility.

A two-part Conference was needed as in Aboriginal Education in order to look at:-

- (a) A philosophy of what one is trying to do.
- (b) How to effect this in the curriculum. There are limitations in a school timetable.

Should the schools reflect the community they serve? What are the rights of communities within a nation, set against teaching about Australia as a whole?

Others present felt that Australia certainly is at a crucial point of change where minority assertiveness is making itself felt. Since October 1975 a different political climate exists, where both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition have espoused the idea of Australia as a country of distinct and diverse ethnic communities. Mention was made also that this is not just peculiar to Australia alone. All major nations because of the new mobility and new technology have many new citizens coming in as migrants.

Ruth Holzman (Commonwealth Department of Education) referred to the two reports:- The Teaching of Migrant Languages in Schools (1976) and the Commissioner for Community Relations First Annual Report, 1976. The thinking had been done. The message is there. Now is the time for massive changes, and action.

Professor Jayasuriya of the Department of Social Work, University of Western Australia, Ron James of WACSSO and Judy Caproni of the Catholic Education Conference agreed and underlined the urgency of action, but within a realistic framework. Quite obviously, not everything can be initiated from one conference alone. This proposed gathering at Mt. Lawley College was the first step towards implementation of new thinking and the legal responsibilities of moving towards the new Australian society emerging in the last decade. Certain principles of equal opportunity in schooling and wider education had already been spelled out. Ron James tabled a paper from the 1975 WACSSO Conference policy statement, some extracts of which are printed at the end of this section.

The format of the Conference was discussed and a rough draft was drawn up along the following lines:-

1. Need to identify what is going on in W.A. schools and curriculum and training of future teachers in new approaches to classroom situation, as well as attitudes to different cultures.
2. Need to identify aspirations and needs of ethnic communities (more research - Prof. Jayasuriya pointed out that no detailed and exact 'ethnic' map existed for instance of Perth.)
3. Identifying available resources (Manpower, Material Resources.) '1st Grade, Day One.' Importance of the very start of school life. Printed materials. Possibility of Correspondence School, run by Dept. of Education, as in Sydney - to help students acquire mother tongue.
4. Plan as an initial conference to provide a feasibility report towards another conference.
5. From this, might arise a permanent consultative body involving the educational world and its responsibilities as seen in the Karmel Report.
6. The other and very important need to encourage people at large to understand the nature of social changes that are now going on. This involved all kinds of institutions beyond the entirely educational system.

At this point Dr. Harry Pearson (Education Department) offered to be of any assistance which the Planning Group might need and hoped to see recommendations come out of the conference which could be channelled into all the relevant avenues - not only the Education Department of W.A. - Catholic Education bodies or teacher organizations but others which were felt to be needed by the conference.

"... the policy of assimilation having been abandoned by most enlightened people, positive moves are now needed to help ethnic groups retain and develop their cultural heritage as an integral part of the Australian environment."

The Hon. W.L. Grayden, M.L.A.  
Minister for Immigration,  
Extract from news release of  
16 February, 1977.

"... the Aboriginal population is growing at a faster rate than the non-Aboriginal population. . ."

"In the 1971 Census it emerged that 51% of the population of Western Australia is composed of migrants and their children. There is, therefore, a tremendous challenge facing educators, teachers, and administrators if the schooling available to the children of ethnic minorities is to match that traditionally provided for the children of the original waves of settlers in the state."

The Hon. A.J. Grassby.  
Commissioner for Community Relations  
Extract from notes for the conference

# PUBLIC CONFERENCE

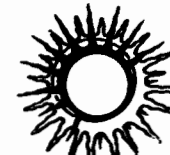
"OUR MULTICULTURAL FUTURE AND THE SCHOOL"

Friday 18 March 1976  
Fremantle Exhibition Hall  
Saturday 19 March 1976  
Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education

## Key Speakers:

The Hon. R.I. Viner, M.P. Minister for Aboriginal Affairs  
The Hon. A.J. Grassby. Commissioner for Community Relations  
Mr J. Giles. Assistant Director (Schools), Education Department, South Australia.  
Mrs J. English, Former Principal, Brunswick Girls High School, Victoria

Convened by the Office of the Commissioner for Community Relations  
Organised by a community-based Planning Group in conjunction with Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education



**FRIDAY EVENING 18 MARCH****PUBLIC MEETING 8-10 P.M.****FREMANTLE EXHIBITION HALL**

Corner William and Newman Streets, Fremantle  
(adjacent to St. John's Church)

**"ABORIGINES IN MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA"**

THE HON. R.I. VINER, M.P.  
MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**"THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CONTRIBUTION  
TO OUR CULTURAL RENAISSANCE"**

THE HON A.J. GRASSBY  
COMMISSIONER FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Performances of music and dancing will be offered  
by ethnic groups and a group of Aboriginal children.

Ethnic food will be on sale afterwards.

**SATURDAY 19 MARCH****WORKSHOPS 9.15 a.m. — 4.00 p.m.****MOUNT LAWLEY COLLEGE OF ADVANCED  
EDUCATION**

2 Bradford Street, Mount Lawley  
(near Alexander Drive)

**WORKSHOPS ON NEEDS AND PRIORITIES IN  
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION**

Chairman: Prof. Brian V. Hill  
School of Education  
Murdoch University.

**TOPICS**

What are the main priorities in education as seen by  
members of Aboriginal and ethnic groups?

How can schools reflect our Multicultural Society?

How can ethnic and Aboriginal languages be taught  
in schools?

How can teacher training adopt to these changes?

What can be done to educate the wider society?

**KEY ADDRESSES****"Needs and Priorities in Multicultural Education"**

Mr J. Giles, Assistant Director (Schools),  
Education Department of South Australia

Mrs J. English, former Headmistress, Brunswick Girls  
High School, Victoria.

**Registration Fee:**

\$4 ordinary; \$2 students, pensioners (covers morning  
tea, lunch and the conference report).

**REGISTRATION FORM**

Please tear off and return with  
registration fee by Wednesday 16  
March to:

THE CONFERENCE ORGANISER,  
MULTICULTURAL CONFERENCE,  
MOUNT LAWLEY COLLEGE OF  
ADVANCED EDUCATION,  
2 BRADFORD STREET,  
MOUNT LAWLEY, W.A. 6050

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

PHONE Home.....Work.....

OCCUPATION/ORGANISATION

**REGISTRATION FEE**

\$4 ordinary, \$2 students, pensioners  
includes morning tea, lunch and the  
conference report.

Registration fee must be enclosed  
with this registration form.

## 5. INPUT: KEY PAPERS

The Conference was preceded the night before by a Public Meeting arranged by councillors in the Fremantle Town Hall. This was on Friday, March 18. About 400 people were present and the meeting was opened by the Mayor of Fremantle, Mr. W. McKenzie.

Between the two main speakers, a half hour of dance and music was presented by the Young Ukrainian Association, the Aboriginal children under the direction of Mrs. Betty Colbung of the New Era Fellowship with Ken Colbung playing the didgeridoo and King Wally directing the young dancers. A solo dance of classical South Indian origin was also performed by Miss Subenora Sellappah. At the end of the evening everyone adjourned into the pleasant open courtyard which the old town hall opens out onto and a great hubbub of conversation went on while people were able to buy Greek, Indian, Ukrainian, Italian and Polish food at nominal costs.

### 5.1 ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS THE HON. IAN VINER AT THE FREMANTLE TOWN HALL, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Aboriginals in a multi-cultural Australia! The thought which underscores this statement would have been spurned not so many years ago. It has been a phenomenon of post-war years that some countries now welcome foreigners to their shores, most of them refugees from discrimination through poverty, politics or both.

America took the lead in the last century, but by and large, it has taken other countries the totality of their history to appreciate that diversity of language, race and culture is not a threat to existence and a cause for divisiveness but an enriching force in the creation of a true maturity in nationhood.

Some still see this diversity as a threat. In Australia today, thankfully, most people see it in quite different terms.

Since World War II Australia has seen the emergence of new attitudes undreamed of in the old days of Empire. Before that, anyone different from us was likely to be referred to in a derogatory way. Even in the early days of post-war migration, the new arrivals were either "Balts", "Reffo's" "D.P.'s" -- none of them were people.

Local attitudes on the whole were "fit in or get out". The policy was assimilation based on a quite false assumption that to forge a nation everyone had to be thrown into the great melting pot to emerge in a uniform straitjacket in the interests of maintaining our British cultural identity.

After a time, however, a growing number of people in Australia began to question this policy. The Government was discovering from the experience of overseas countries that assimilation did not work because it was an imposed solution. More than that, it was seen to deny to people their heritage, the language and customs that gave them spiritual security and social identity.

The rush of Australians on visits to overseas countries in the late 'forties and 'fifties widened this doubt. They returned to Australia seeing that racial and cultural differences were not a problem after all. And if they were not a problem, then no imposed solution was needed. The minds of these post-war travellers had been opened to

the richness of other cultures and the realisation that Australia was welcoming to its shores the very people they had travelled abroad to see.

At the same time, Aborigines, straining under assimilation policies applied more ruthlessly to them than to migrants and dispirited by the realisation that they were losing their own identity, began - fight for the restoration of their birthright -- their land and all that this entailed in the recognition of their own separate cultural identity. Theirs was a culture forgotten and denied.

In the struggle, some ideas were borrowed from overseas, such as the "Freedom Rides" of 1964, staged to draw attention to the discrimination against Aborigines in country towns of N.S.W.

The notion that Aborigines were still a dying race -- as indeed they had been until the turn of the Century -- was dispelled. Aborigines were protesting with a growing vigor which amazed and even frightened many people.

Three years after the "Freedom Rides" had awakened the conscience of the nation, a referendum in which the Australian people votes "Yes" overwhelmingly, gave the Federal Government powers to pass special laws relating to the Aboriginal people; powers previously denied to the Commonwealth by the Constitution due to the pressure of jealous State Leaders attending pre-federation Conventions.

So began a new wave of thinking that swept away old ideas. Aborigines were at last being recognised as having a voice of their own, a culture to be prized and an identity to be respected. They had won the attention of Governments and of people throughout the land to their plight. Even more, they were gathering about them bands of supporters from non-Aboriginal groups to help them plead their cause for special justice and equality with other citizens.

There is no disagreement between political parties on the justice of the Aboriginal cause. There is no disagreement among most people.

Successive Governments have been committed, in fact and spirit, to uplifting the living standards, health and education of the Australian Aborigines and to removing discrimination wherever it exists. The things which divide national Governments on the issue are not differences of principle. They are merely differences of application, of style, emphasis and priority.

In any area of social reform, changes of attitudes have to take place. In the field of Aboriginal Affairs perhaps above others the attitudes to be changed have been deep seated and hard to shift without pain and some bitterness. The problems are not new, indeed they are being grappled with by other countries in the world. How do you change people's ideas, dispel their prejudices and create the climate necessary for social reforms to take effect? It has been dealt with by other countries, notably America during the 60's, when the schools integration program was set in motion. This was effected largely by "bussing", bringing black children into white schools. But is force really the answer? The United States Government, under President Carter, is grappling with a similar human relations problem today, not nationally at home, but internationally with the world in its wish to incorporate human rights considerations in its foreign relations policy. Should

it be done through quiet diplomacy, through public announcements? What a dilemma for statesmanship! But one way or other it must be done.

For me as Minister, and for the Commonwealth in its relations with people and governments, the question is so often not what should be done as how should it be done? Quiet diplomacy? Confrontation?

There seems no doubt that whatever means governments or other administrations use to change prejudices the tactic of constant persuasion must play an important part.

A great deal can be won through legislation -- the introduction of anti-discrimination laws, the granting of land rights, the provision of legal machinery to enable Aborigines to form their own associations most relevant to their needs.

One of the most historic pieces of legislation introduced by a government in recent times was the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, which was proclaimed, appropriately, on Australia Day this year -- 178 years after European settlement.

The Act gives traditional Aborigines inalienable freehold title to land on reserves in the Northern Territory and provides machinery for them to obtain title to traditional land outside reserves.

The Government Parties' policy on Aboriginal Affairs clearly acknowledges that affinity with the land is fundamental to Aborigines' sense of cultural identity. The Government believes the Land Rights Act will allow and encourage Aborigines in the Northern Territory to give full expression to the affinity with land that characterised their traditional society and gave a unique quality to their life.

Northern Territory Aboriginal communities still wanting to maintain and live by their traditional, cultural and social forms involving land in this traditional sense will be enabled by the legislation to do so.

Others will be able to use the land as an economic base for pastoral or other enterprises.

For the first time in our history we have written into Australian law, a law expressing a people's distinctive cultural values. It guarantees in a special way to the Aboriginal people their fundamental right to retain their identity and their culture. The strength of that belief and culture was underestimated by the colonialists and it has been 200 years for us to wake up to it. In our midst we have living cultures that have survived all attempts by outsiders to kill off.

Despite vigorous efforts by administrators and missionaries, Aboriginal languages and customs were not stamped out. They merely "went underground" so to speak, and have now re-emerged with a strength and resolution that puts our so-called enlightened ideas to shame. We in our cultural evangelism, were no match for 40,000 years to Aboriginal history.

And yet, the Commonwealth by its Land Rights Act is accused by some of its detractors of introducing a form of apartheid to Australia, of creating "black states" in the South African sense. Governments of

Australia of my philosophy throughout their history have a long record of opposition to apartheid both publicly and privately to the South African Government, from Menzies to Fraser.

Apartheid is the last thing we would import to Australia, for apartheid imposes political and private restraints and applies force to people who are given no choice. It segregates whilst it pretends to offer equal opportunity where none exists.

What we have done in recognising land rights for Aborigines is to offer the universal freedom of personal liberty and private dignity, inherent in the philosophy of liberalism to Aborigines so that they may choose their own lifestyles, life by their own culture and enjoy the same freedom as all other citizens of Australia. There is no coercion, there is no force. Aborigines are not only free, but are now supported in their efforts to pursue their own cultures and beliefs in the very place where it has real meaning for them: on and in relation to their traditional lands. We do not want them to develop separately from us. We want them to be part of us, as a united nation rich in the diversity of its people. I know that is what Aborigines want for themselves.

However, for all this, the goodwill of all the people of Australia is required. Those who cry "apartheid" or "black state" sow the very seeds of discrimination we seek to root out.

A recent initiative in the field of human cultural relations concerns Aboriginal customary law.

My colleague, the Attorney General, Mr. Ellicott, in close consultation with me, has requested the Australian Law Reform Commission to study whether and how far tribal or customary law should be taken into account when Aborigines are brought before European-style courts.

The Commission will have regard to the welfare of Aborigines, to their right to retain racial identity and traditional lifestyle, and to any desire they may have to adopt a European lifestyle.

It will consider, also, difficulties in applying the European judicial system to Aborigines and to the need to ensure "equitable, humane and fair treatment" under the system to everyone.

The Commission's report will indicate whether the courts should have power to apply tribal laws in the trial and punishment of Aborigines and how far Aboriginal communities should be authorised to apply tribal law.

The Commission will also consider especially the need to make sure that any cruel or inhumane treatment would not occur if customary law were to be applied in European courts.

This latest investigation points up very clearly just how far Australia has come in such a short time to recognising the validity of Aboriginal culture and its importance in our present society.

It does not mean however, that there will be two laws in the land. But, if recommended and adopted, the consideration of customary law by European courts will remove many of the difficulties at present facing judges in criminal cases.

We know that jail is no deterrent to many young offenders. In fact, they seem to rather enjoy the comfortable amenities it provides.

Several communities in Northern Territory have come up with their own solution to juvenile crime and have been taking their young offenders into the bush or to off-shore islands to learn to live off the land and conform to tribal authority.

So far this seems to have proved more effective -- and also much cheaper -- than prison. It also has the positive effect of teaching young Aboriginals important things about themselves as Aboriginals.

The support given to a diverse people in the pursuit of their own culture has led, among other things, to the introduction of a bi-lingual education program in the teaching of Aboriginals which is now in its fourth year in Northern Territory. The move by the Western Australian government last September to amend the Education Act to remove the discriminatory provisions which required teaching in English is to be greatly welcomed. What a strange idea, when you come to think of it now, to have considered it unlawful to teach in any other language than English! South Australia has been encouraging a bi-lingual program for somewhat longer using Pitjantatjara and English.

Work being done at the Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education, financed by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, will play an active part in this program, a program which is designed to provide that important bridge between Aboriginal cultural tradition and formal European-style education.

The importance of the role teachers are now performing not only in bi-lingual programs but in the wider field of Aboriginal culture and history is not to be underestimated; for it is through today's children that tomorrow's adults will bring to our nation the enlightened attitudes -- gained through knowledge, sympathy and understanding -- that lay the foundation for a new society in which there is now room for the sort of discrimination born of fear and ignorance.

As Australians we are undergoing a cultural relevation for we have discovered on our doorstep untold riches in art, music and cultural and spiritual values, belonging to a unique people. We are indeed fortunate that we discovered it before it was too late.

As Professor W.E.H. Stanner said nearly ten years ago in his ABC Boyer lecture "After the Dreaming" which in itself did so much to open our minds:

"We can neither undo the past, nor compensate for it.  
The most we can do is give the living their due".

Teachers carry a significant responsibility in their work among Aboriginal and other young people to make sure it is never forgotten again how much we can learn from each other, living together in a multi-cultural society, our lives enriched by the sharing of knowledge about each other and the enjoyment of each other's unique contribution to a diverse society.

5.2 ADDRESS GIVEN BY THE HON A.J. GRASSBY, COMMISSIONER FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS, AT THE FREMANTLE TOWN HALL

Australia is one of the last monolingual countries in the world. Yet 750,000 Australian children have enrolled in school with a first language other than English. Time has run out for us if we are to avoid the Australian being born tonight being the last monolingual 23 year old left in the world in the year 2000. However, if the initiatives being taken by some educationalists and pioneers in the various states are successful the present Australian school population will be the last to go through the system with only one language.

In the 1971 Census it emerged that 51% of the population of Western Australia is composed of migrants and their children. There is therefore a tremendous challenge facing educators, teachers, and administrators if the schooling available to the children of the ethnic minorities is to match that traditionally provided for the children of the original waves of settlers in the State. In addition, the Aboriginal population is growing at a faster rate than the white population.

The need is now therefore urgent for appropriate forms of schooling to be devised, in full partnership with the minority groups themselves, to provide real freedom of choice in regard to their future, on the basis of respect and dignity.

The recently published report by the Poverty Enquiry, on Poverty and Education in Australia, established that better understanding and communication are essential if schools are to stop dividing migrant families through ignorance of ethnic cultures and open the way to equality of opportunity for minority groups.

"Teachers' attitudes point to serious lacks in their professional preparation. Without bilingual teachers or interpreters, there are difficulties in communication between teachers and families that don't speak English".

There is a great need to reform curriculum which in the past has often demolished the culture, language and heritage of many children and there is no longer any room for the pretence that schooling can change an Aboriginal child into a white one by offering the same curriculum and the same treatment and then blaming him for poor achievements in an impossible situation.

What happens in Australian schools is crucial to the banishment of bigotry, prejudice and discriminations in our society. The school must make good community relations a basic objective and this can be done by ensuring the true continuity of the students past cultural context.

If this context is Aboriginal, Finnish or Yugoslav, it must be fully reflected in the total education experience of the child while assuring his viability in the emerging Australian society.

I have never met a migrant nor an Aboriginal who did not wish to take his full place as a first class citizen in this nation and provide for his family. employability, security and happiness. Apartheid has no place in Australia, nor has the ghetto. Yet the school room and the schoolyard are probably the one place of contact for most Australians

who after school go back to their own socio-economic ethnic and religious groups.

The twin threats to the development of a cohesive society have been cultural obliteration and defacto apartheid. The former has led to the situation where the Italian language has been lost to so many families who today have little appreciation of their great cultural heritage despite their Italian origin. Defacto apartheid is seen in the situation of Aborigines in both rural and urban settings, or even amongst migrant groups such as Russian Old Believers at Yarwun, near Gladstone, who were found by a Government survey a few years ago to have virtually no links with local society.

Both alternatives are totally inadequate in a nation of Australia's cultural diversity, and in a world which increasingly values ethnic identity. Rootless people can make little contribution to the developments of a new society such as Western Australia's with its tremendous economic thrust of the last decade.

Much has to be learnt also from the Aborigines of this State. Here is a culture in the deserts, diverse but always delicately attuned to nature. Their life style was peaceful, their government was by consensus, they lived by mutual support and sharing. Their achievements should be highly rated today by our acquisitive, aggressive, individualistic society that is showing such strain.

Australia's monolingual, monocultural attitudes must respond to this challenge. In this the educational system has a major role to play.

It is clearly vital that more stress be given to honouring the many cultural heritages in Western Australia schools and encouraging true human inter-action on the basis of respect for cultural heritage. This is essential in building sound community relations. We cannot relate to each other unless we know each other and respect our differences.

It is not enough simply to give facts. In one case a class taught about a particular group of Australians whom they regarded simply as "wogs" because they were different from the others reacted to stories of their great achievements as a group by simply regarding them as "clever wogs".

To achieve the understanding needed attention must be given a total reordering of the school curriculum to include the preservation, maintenance and development of linguistic skills, and multicultural recognition in social sciences, history, music, arts and crafts etc.

In too many schools the curriculum is geared to an English village in 1877 rather than Australia in 1977. Yet in many classrooms in our cities the only 'foreigner' present is the teacher! We are increasingly recognising the complexity of the human being, the inter-action between body, mind and spirit, between biology and behaviour. Schooling needs to take account of this as does the building of sound community relations in a culturally diverse nation like Australia. It is important therefore to work at many levels - in the school, the media, the church, government administration, the law and in Parliament but the school is the vital first point of contact for most Australians and it is in schools the battle against prejudice, bigotry and discrimination must be started.

There is much activity in Australia today to translate this goal into educational practice. The Curriculum Development Centre is producing admirable materials on ethnic and racial diversity and its implications for the classroom. These splendid materials are on display in the exhibition of books mounted for this conference and I commend these SEMP materials to you (Social Education Materials Project). I hope that Queensland schools will accept the challenge of using such innovative materials for shaping students' attitudes towards minority groups.

Another federal education body, the Education Research and Development Committee, is making available in the current year \$1 million.

The Committee which consists of eminent educationists from many states, has agreed to grant top priority to Multicultural Education in allocating funds for educational research. At least one Australian publisher located in Melbourne is publishing children's books in several community languages and they too are on view.

It is my hope that the classroom outcome will be not only improvements in developing skills, understandings and attitudes but also a new recognition of the cultural context in which education takes place. In particular this must imply a true continuity with the student's past cultural context.

The great threat to all such idealism is the spectre of discrimination which can stalk a man's efforts to adjust to a new society and can undermine the achievements of many years in the prejudice of a moment. But one must keep things in perspective. The offensive signs on the way from Perth airport "Asians go Home" are the work of extremists a tiny group of extremists who could not fill a telephone book with a mass meeting.

Rejection, exclusion or "putting down" may sap a person's energies, lead to resentment, bitterness and frustration. It is to counter such insidious evils that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 at the conclusion of the most hideous war mankind had known and which had unleashed on the world a fury of nationalism and racial hatred. This Declaration states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights without distinction of any kind as to race, colour and origin.

Since 1975 Australia has been a signatory of the International Convention Against all Forms of Racial Discrimination drawn up by the United Nations in 1965. This Convention requires countries ratifying it to prohibit racial discrimination, to accord equality before the law and in access to human rights and to prohibit discriminatory acts. In addition it obligates signatory countries to adopt measures in education and research to combat discrimination. The present conference is just such a measure and as Commissioner for Community Relations I have great pleasure in declaring it open. May the detailed deliberations of the next two days result not only in an increased attachment to the ideals of equality, social harmony and justice but also formulate a Western Australian program to attain in schools and the community the goals already guaranteed by law. Exciting things are being done and new thinking is opening up a new educational chapter.

I have seen Western Australian primary school children of many backgrounds learning Italian and German, encountered infinitely valuable Aboriginal language and culture studies at Mount Lawley College. I have seen a new and proud recognition of the real diversity of the West whose settlers from Burma form the third largest of the new ethnic groups in the State.

This historic multicultural conference is a further indication that the Australian cultural renaissance has begun.

It brings together a wide diversity of Australians from the founding people to the recently arrived. The Australian family of the nation is a family of great diversity with an ethnic heritage second to none on earth.

There are nearly fourteen million Australians and all of us think an "ethnic" simply means an identifiable group of people, but we are all Australians.

5.3 MOUNT LAWLEY COLLEGE SATURDAY SEMINAR ADDRESS GIVEN BY  
J R GILES, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS (CURRICULUM)  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES, a review of education for the multicultural society in the Education Department of South Australia.

A. Introduction

*I am very much aware in talking to you that I am not an expert in modern language teaching or in curriculum construction or in school-community relationships. I am basically a public servant and my purpose is to let you know in a simple and straightforward manner what the Education Department in South Australia is trying to do for the ethnic children in schools.*

*I want to talk about the facts of our ethnic population, the policies we have developed as a consequence of those facts, the sorts of advice we have access to and the means by which we get that advice, and then the programmes we have developed. In short: population, policy, advice and programmes.*

B. Population

I guess we remain a largely Anglo-Australian state but it is always a shock to some people to find out that over 50,000 students in South Australian schools are first or second generation children from homes other than Anglo-Saxon. That is, one in every five, or 20% of our school-going population, is non-Anglo.

Our major ethnic communities are - in descending order of magnitude - Italian, Greek, Dutch, German, Serbo-Croatian and Polish.

After that, the numbers drop away quite noticeably, and the total of the remaining 20 or so communities is quite small. We have very few people from the Trukish community and differ markedly from Melbourne in that respect. We have an increasing Sri Lankan community, and significant numbers from the Baltic States and Eastern Europe.

We have learned through some experience that smaller communities are very conscious of their differences, and in our relationships with them, it has been a matter of *festina lente*. And we continue to learn: consultation and respecting people's wishes is very important. We are beginning to compensate for our earliest clumsiness.

C. Politics

I imagine that with the majority of the Australian states and government departments we initially felt that the incoming migrant groups had a duty to conform to local rules and behaviour, to become Australianised as rapidly as possible. Certainly our earlier education policies were developed for this purpose. In many schools, earnest and well-meaning teachers laboured at knocking off those embarrassing little differences of language, dress, likings in sport and food and so forth which made the ethnic students so

different from your home-grown fair-dinkum Australian child. I am quite sure it was all done with the very best of intentions.

But it hasn't worked particularly well. It revealed a degree of ethnocentricity which from this distance, looks remarkably like racism. It ignored the fact that culture runs very deep, that you don't make people different by a few hours in school each week, and that families and children actually believed their culture to be superior in many respects to the local variety. And, most fundamentally, it was a policy which ignored the gains to be had by infusion of other ideas, other tongues, other relationships.

So, we have officially at least - discarded assimilation as an educational policy. We are conscious of the good things we have lost, by our narrow views. And particularly we are conscious of the hurt and damage we have caused by trying to squeeze into Anglo-Australian moulds people who have continuous histories of more than 2,000 years, and who have a proud literature and a complex social structure. We are conscious of being more than a little ingenuous.

A second possible policy is that of separate development. We could believe that, as ethnic and Anglo-Australian cultures are significantly different, they should be separately fostered. If we believed this in education, for instance, we should set up separate schools (or classes) for Italian and Greek children, and we should make radical alterations in curriculum, teaching style, and community relationships. We should in fact be fostering a ghetto development where Adelaide would be divided into a series of distinctly different communities. And if we gave this separate development the force of law we would create a cultural apartheid which would then have to be enforced in various unpleasant ways. While separate development as a policy is a bit far-fetched, it is often advanced as a possible consequence of policies other than assimilation. Unless you strive to assimilate our ethnic minorities, say some people, you will inevitably arrive at isolated, ghetto-like communities in our major cities.

To answer this view is to propose a third policy which is in fact one that we as an Education Department have officially adopted and which is currently guiding our programmes. It is the policy of cultural pluralism and cultural interaction.

We believe that policies of deliberate assimilation and separatism ignore the simple fact that people will change but they will change at their own rates and in ways which they prefer. You cannot legislate, or set up timetables, for the human heart.

Can I take this a little further? We are impressed by the fact that although, for instance, Greek children are distinctly Greek and observe their name-days, a "different" Easter, observe particular family relationships and so forth, their "Greekness" is no longer the Greekness of Greece, and the same goes for their parents. What is going on here? We think it is the slow and inevitable blending of differences which leads to the people of a particular country becoming one people in the course of time. What we don't know is how long it will take, what stages it will go through, or what the final product will be like. But if we could venture a guess at the Australia of the year 2,500 A.D. we believe that it will not be Anglo-Australian, or Greek-Australian or Italian-Australian, but a comparatively homogeneous nation to which all groups have contributed something.

That is, we believe that a number of cultures permitted - and indeed, encouraged - to interact will eventually produce a homogeneous nation. We believe in an eventual homogeneity but not on any specific conditions, or according to any pre-conceived plan, or on anybody's terms. The old assimilation assumed that one pattern was right and that it was the duty of migrants to fit the pattern. We now believe that there will be a pattern but we can't guess what it will be. Given certain favourable conditions it will happen. Che sara, sara!

These favourable conditions constitute the major framework of our policy. We maintain that cultural pluralism will be encouraged and cultural interaction will occur and eventual homogeneity take place if:

- . students are encouraged and supported in the mainstream culture of the day;
- . students are encouraged and supported in the culture of their own ethnic backgrounds;
- . students are encouraged to appreciate, understand and tolerate cultures other than their own.

There are pragmatic limits on the degree to which this is possible, but our programmes are based on these three major assumptions and I believe we are making progress.

In concluding this section on policy can I emphasize as strongly as I can that you should aim to have such a policy statement made at the highest level. Our Director-General elect, Mr John Steinle, first enunciated the policy at the opening of a new course for teachers of English as a Second Language. It was also taken up by our Minister, Dr Don Hopgood, and it was published in the Teachers Journal.

Mind you, the mere statement of a policy by the chiefs doesn't of itself bring about change. But it does - and this is why policy statements are important - provide a security blanket (in the Linus sense) for people who want to initiate programmes. Official approval improves self-confidence, makes money easier to find, increases cooperation from other people. You need the nod from the boss!

#### D. Advice

A policy is not valid for all time and for all situations. It must be able to change to meet changing circumstances, and similarly, programmes based on policies need to adapt. As an Education Department we need accurate advice.

We have set up, following recommendation 8.24(b) of the 1976-78 Schools Commission Report, a Migrant Advisory Council which reports directly to the Minister and of which I am chairperson. Getting the Council together was difficult. We first of all set up an Interim Committee which reported and recommended on terms of reference, membership and the method of operation of a final Council. The Minister then set up the Council and we have had three meetings, mainly concerned with information-giving in order that all members might be in the picture of what is currently happening and how programmes are funded and administered.

Membership was tricky. If we were to have representation from all the communities in Adelaide we should have had an impossibly large Council. We compromised and invented two forms of membership: full membership, and accredited observer. The former is available to the six larger communities described earlier. The latter works in the following way: the agenda and minutes are sent to an "*accredited observer*" nominated by each of the smaller communities. If there is something of interest to the community, the accredited observer attends the meeting of the Migrant Advisory Council. He or she sits "*outside*" the main meeting and observes. If he or she wishes to speak, it is possible on the motion of one of the members of the Council carried by a majority of those present. The Minister has invited 19 smaller communities to nominate accredited observers.

The terms of reference are comprehensive - they are as follows:

- a. to suggest research into, and make comments on, current educational programmes for ethnic children;
- b. to inform the ethnic communities about current educational programmes for ethnic children;
- c. to provide administrators with accurate information on the attitudes of the various communities to current programmes;
- d. to suggest representation on relevant committees, particularly the Advisory Curriculum Committee, and to convey Migrant Advisory Council opinions to those committees;
- e. to recommend on new programmes and modification of existing programmes for the education of ethnic children;
- f. to assist generally with communication among schools, tertiary institutions, Catholic Education Office, Education Department, Department of Further Education and the ethnic communities of South Australia;
- g. to make recommendations to the Catholic Education Office and the Education Department on expenditure in connection with the above and to be informed of the funding system which operates;
- h. to make recommendations on special courses (inservice and pre-service) for the preparation of teachers of community languages and of teachers of English as a Second Language;
- i. to suggest an education and sensitization programme designed to reach all teachers in order to enable them to understand and to assist ethnic students in all our schools;
- j. to propose ways and means of achieving higher standards in Ethnic Schools by recommending kinds of assistance for those who teach in them and by establishing permanent liaison channels between Ethnic Schools, and the State and Catholic school systems;
- k. to investigate the feasibility of a scheme for the appointment of principals and teachers with an appropriate preparation and cultural background to schools with high ethnic population;
- l. to advise the Minister of Education on any other matters that might arise.

It should be noticed that, in our view, the effectiveness of the

Migrant Advisory Council will depend very much on the establishment within each community, of an Education Committee. The members of the Council will thus have a definite point of reference and a group with whom they can discuss Council agenda items. The alternative is for Council members to rely upon their own views, or to attempt the impossible task of widely consulting their communities. In Adelaide, the Italian community for instance has at least 30 separate clubs of one kind or another!

The Migrant Advisory Council is currently feeling its way. One obvious difficulty will be how to avoid its becoming a merely token group making pronouncements at a high level of generality. It is proposed therefore that the Council raise important questions with the Minister and recommend that he set up a group to research the question of investigate the feasibility of a suggested programme. The difficulty is to turn recommendations into action.

Another high level advice group is the Ethnic Students in Secondary Schools Committee. This Committee, established by the Minister, came into being as the result of submissions by the Teachers Institute for additional teachers of English as a Second Language in high schools. The Minister, believing that the problem might be wider than this, set up the present committee with terms of reference as follows:

- . to investigate and describe problems experienced by students from ethnic backgrounds in South Australian secondary Schools;
- . to report and recommend on a wide range of solutions to these problems by November, 1977.

This Committee is currently interviewing secondary students, parents and teachers; inviting written submissions and looking through the available literature. It is clear already that the Committee's task is a very difficult one.

Then there are other more informal means: reports by principals and inspectors; written comments and questions from ethnic communities; and suggestions from advisory teachers.

Statistically speaking the annual Child Migrant Survey which asks schools to let us know about numbers, backgrounds and the English language competence of students in schools is extremely useful. The data is punch-carded for computer treatment and the print-out of tables becomes available as a booklet. Next year we intend to change the title of the survey to the School Ethnic Composition Survey, and to include newly arrived migrants from the United Kingdom aboriginal children and Anglo-Australian as categories.

I am not entirely happy about our processes of advice. True, we do a great deal more than we used; but there is always the problem associated with the fact that the advice-giver is often likely to be a successful person in Anglo-Australian society, fluent in English and competent in business. He or she (usually he) is likely to have made good in the standard system, whereas I think we need increasingly to hear from parents who are still finding their way in the mainstream. We have got to solve this problem.

#### E. Programmes

On the basis of our policy, and in relation to the various advice we

get, we institute programmes of one kind or another. These are the real things occurring in schools with teachers, children and parents which give exemplification and body to the fine words.

First of all, the money. Obviously, ethnic children as people who attend state schools are supported by the same kinds of funds as support everybody. Their teachers and taperecorders, readers and resource centres all come from the public purse. However, through the Schools Commission, we in company with all the states have access to additional funds which are specifically earmarked to assist with special programmes. In 1977 in South Australia this is about \$1.3 m. It is these funds which largely make possible the special programmes and I for one am increasingly grateful to the Schools Commission for allowing these funds to be used so flexibly. I am also happy to report that our own state provides additional funds to help with special projects.

Our programmes are of two major kinds: those which support ethnic children in mainstream Australian society, almost exclusively by the teaching of English; and those which support children in their own backgrounds and teach them about other cultures.

(a) Programmes to Support Ethnic Children in Mainstream Society

We believe that the teaching of English be given a very high priority in our programmes. Without competence in English ethnic children and their parents are pretty effectively shut off from mainstream society, and it is vital that they are able to feel at ease, to communicate and to be able to handle the whole system, including government agencies and the various services.

We used to think in terms of withdrawal classes being given structured English lessons based on the Australian situational method. I guess this was in order when children had little or no English, even though some recent research would seem to suggest that children learn English as effectively by mingling with Anglo-Australian peers as they do from formal English lessons.

But we now have an English problem which we categorise as second-phase learning. Children demonstrate very reasonable verbal ability and communicate with ease but in their writing and ability to comprehend written material there are serious deficiencies. I won't go into a detailed analysis here: a number of our teachers have done some pretty intensive investigations and the list of difficulties experienced by ethnic children does show a pattern and is significantly different from the difficulties experienced by Anglo children of, for instance, low socio-economic status.

We are increasingly seeing our teachers of English as a Second Language as resource people available to the whole staff, capable of assisting with planning language programmes, modifying curriculum and upgrading the sensitivity to language of other teachers. This requires a more intensive preparation than we used to give our TESL people and we now put them through an intensive one semester course, (open to all teachers and students) in linguistics, ethnic sociology, socio-linguistics and so forth at the Sturt College of Advanced Education.

We haven't discarded the Australian situational method. One of our current arguments is over the extent to which we should be allowing children to *"talk themselves into new knowledge"* as Britton and Martin would advise, compared with the extent to which they ought to

be drilled in structures. I suspect the answer lies somewhere between. Certainly we need to make it possible for there to be more task-oriented talk among peers, and we are looking at ways of ensuring that this occurs, such as a "*pairing*" scheme.

We produce a number of publications full of language ideas for teachers from junior primary to secondary, and we organize staff meetings where our advisory personnel attempt to sensitize teachers to the language problems experienced by ethnic children. We've commissioned a film from the S A Film Corporation and this should be available soon.

We have a 20 place fully audio-active-comparative language laboratory which takes in non-English speakers of secondary school age and puts them through a variety of courses, the average length of which is 14 weeks. The language lessons are supplemented by other activities such as games, art and craft, science and social studies. Most importantly, the students undertake a two-week "*bridging*" course, at the conclusion of their language course, at a nearby secondary school. Here they learn the routine matters associated with the typical high school, and become familiar with different teaching styles.

We worry about these kids. Fourteen weeks gives them barely communication English. Longer courses are not effective. The plunge from the supportive and intimate atmosphere of the language centre to a huge metropolitan high school and physics and difficult text books and loneliness is shattering for a number of students. So we are attempting to increase the sensitivity of schools to the needs of these students and we are finding strong support from our school counsellors.

I wish I could report great success in the English learning business. But I can't and I'm sure you'll agree that we all have a long way to go here.

(b) Programmes to support groups in their own cultures and to develop understanding and appreciation and tolerance of other cultures

I'm going to give a quick overview of these and if there are insufficient details we may be able to talk about the projects afterwards.

(i) the teaching of community language in primary and secondary schools

We are currently teaching modern Greek, Italian, German, French Spanish, Polish, and Pitjantjatjara in some primary and secondary schools. There are many difficulties in those languages which are not part of the traditional modern language scene, such as modern Greek, Italian, Polish and Pitjantjatjara.

The first and most significant difficulty is to find adequate teachers. Fluency in a language doesn't guarantee competence in teaching it, and besides, the home language of many of our Italian and Greek teachers has been so eroded by neglect and the pressures of mainstream society that they are reluctant to want to teach because of their own inadequacies. Teachers recently arrived from Europe are competent but there are very substantial difficulties in methodology and pupil-teacher relationships. In general our system is vastly more relaxed and free and easy than that from which these people come. Additionally, there are problems about registration and the recognition of European qualifications, especially for primary school teachers.

The Adelaide College of Advanced Education has departments of Modern Greek and Italian, and we are using the opportunity to make it possible for some of our teachers to gain release-time scholarships to upgrade their language ability and their methodology.

A second difficulty is the availability of good curriculum materials, courses and syllabus statements. Adequate textbooks are just not easily come by: those available from overseas may be politically objectionable, and they will certainly not be about the experiences the children actually have but rather about European experiences. The same applies for back-up materials such as pictures and audiovisual materials. We are having a tentative shot at producing curriculum materials and sequential courses and so forth but it is very difficult. In our view the matter of producing adequate courses and materials in community languages is a national priority, and should be taken up by a group such as the Curriculum Development Centre.

We give the teaching of community languages other kinds of support. Both primary and secondary language teaching have curriculum committees which assist with inservice education, methodologies, materials and good teaching ideas.

We have furnished and carpeted two areas to provide a Greek and Italian teachers drop-in centres. These are rather a nice idea. There are coffee-making facilities, tape-recorders, video, library shelves and reference books and comfortable furniture. The centres can be used for meetings, for casual chat, for preparation and so forth. They are having a decidedly positive effect on teacher morale.

We are teaching community languages for two main reasons: first, to support ethnic children in their own cultures; and secondly, to increase the respect for and understanding of each other among different groups. That means, of course, that the languages must be available to all children. In the primary school this proposes organizational difficulties: clearly, non-Greek children and Greek-Australian children have very different levels of competence in modern Greek, and you've got to split the groups in some way.

(ii) The Italian Bilingual Project

This project has two directions. First of all, concerned about the fact that many children start their education in English when their home language is not English concerns us a great deal. To learn in English while learning English means that many ethnic children get away to a bad start, especially in reading, and that initial handicap is very hard to overcome. It seemed sensible to start children off in the language of their homes.

We chose two primary schools - St Morris and Trinity Gardens - to make a bilingual start to education for children from Italian-Australian backgrounds. The project has been managed by Mr L Whalan, Superintendent of Schools, in conjunction with Mr R Rubichi, Head of the Italian Studies Department of the Adelaide College of Advanced Education.

It involves the selection and training of teachers in order to make them bilingual in English and Italian. It involves careful meetings with parents and the development of a consensus about the project among them and the teachers of the schools. Organization is tricky. Appropriate materials have been imported from Italy, and resource people with competence in Italian songs, rhymes and so forth assist teachers.

What is basically happening is that children start to read, write, do mathematics and so forth in Italian and this gradually phases into English until it becomes the major language of instruction at about age 8. Thereafter, Italian will continue to be taught as a means of supporting the home language. I'm delighted to say that the Catholic Education Office also has two schools engaged in the bilingual programme and that we cooperate very closely.

The second direction of the project is simply to increase the number of bilingual teachers, competent in both Italian and English, to help in schools with considerable Italian-Australian numbers.

(iii) The Pitjantjatjara Project

In our system the management of Aboriginal education is in a different area from ethnic concerns, and there is a separate administration, the head of which is Mr John Coker. There are three major groupings of Aboriginal people: the tribal Aborigines who live in the far west and north-west of our state and who belong mainly to the Pitjantjatjara culture; the people associated with country towns and living in reserves once called missions; and the urban Aborigines who live in Adelaide and larger country towns.

This table will show you how many aboriginal children there were in our schools in 1976:-

| School  | No. of Aboriginal students |
|---|----------------------------|
| Metropolitan High                                     | 344                        |
| Country High  | 288                        |
| Area Schools (combined primary and secondary schools) | 403                        |
| Metropolitan Primary                                  | 695                        |
| Country Primary                                       | 691                        |
| Special Aboriginal (Tribal) (all primary)             | 987                        |
| Total   | 3408                       |

The project I have in mind is concerned with the special Aboriginal schools, and they are at Indulkana, Ernabella, Fregon and Amata in the far north-west, and at Yalata in the far west. Pitjantjatjara is the everyday language of communication. It's a preliterate language in its traditional form and linguists have given it written expression only in the past few decades.

In the schools I've mentioned, the children begin their reading and writing in Pitjantjatjara, and - similar to the Italian Project - after they have succeeded there, the skills are turned to developing English literacy. This occurs usually in the third year of schooling, following a build-up of oral English which begins informally in the pre-school year. Each of the communities has a pre-school, and the Ernabella pre-school is run by an Aboriginal teacher.

Teachers have developed Pitjantjatjara readers and spelling books, as well as some small story books prepared by Aboriginal authors using traditional and contemporary themes.

Bilingual education is introduced by using teams of Aboriginal teachers, teacher-aides and non-Aboriginal teachers. Our own people all undertake a language laboratory course in Pitjantjatjara prior to their going out to the far north-west and they and the Pitjantjatjara teacher-aides jointly plan the teaching programmes. Strong relationships of friendship and trust develop between teachers and aides, and as the Aboriginal teachers and aides gain experience, they are asked to undertake more responsibility for the planning and implementation of programmes.

(iv) The Multi-Cultural Education Materials Project

It's all very well talking about supporting children in the culture of their own backgrounds and increasing the understanding of and respect for others of it, but you've got to support positive attitudes with knowledge. We've thus set up the multi-cultural education materials project.

There is a coordinator, Irene Donohoue, and six teachers who are employed full-time on the project. We hope to have it complete by about September, 1977, and ready for trialling. The teachers are from ethnic backgrounds themselves and are Laura Pierracini and Valda Casucci (Italian-Australian); Loula Tsimiklis (Greek-Australian); Irmgard Kundler (German-Australian); Louise Wiggins (Dutch-Australian); Irma Kopcalic (Croatian-Australian); and Henry Duzynski (Polish-Australian). They work in the project room at the Hendon Primary School.

They are working on the preparation of modern, accurate and non-sentimental materials related to four themes; food, family-life, occupations, music and dance, in each of the six major community cultures. There are student work cards, cassette tapes, 100 slides, pictures, maps and overhead projector transparencies. A particularly interesting piece of material is a "*multi-cultural calendar*" which includes the major national days, festivals and saints days of the six cultures. The materials are colourful, accurate and will be beautifully produced. They are aimed at the middle primary school to the lower secondary school.

Importantly they are checked very carefully for accuracy and bias with members of the ethnic communities, and we have had some critical and useful feedback. They are also exposed to critical groups of classroom teachers and modifications are subsequently made.

We've been criticised, and rightly so, for thinking that we can assist the multi-cultural cause by placing a box of multi-cultural materials in schools and leaving the rest to teachers. To do this is to encourage the feeling that you can have a crash course to produce instant Greek understanding, for instance. Clearly, this can be counter-productive - a school can "do" Italian culture in term 1, Greek culture in term 2 and so forth and claim to have developed multi-cultural attitudes in term 3. This makes us very cautious about the way we will implement and introduce the materials. They will be available only to schools in which there has been a change of heart and an adequate inservice programme.

(v) Relationships with Ethnic Communities

In 1976 South Australia staged the first national Italian Festival and a very happy and successful occasion it was. Schools entered the planning in the early stages and as a result they contributed to the events of the Festival and many of them ran their own school Festivals in which teachers, parents and children really got together.

In an attempt to assist school-community relationships, a number of our schools now stock in their libraries an increasingly wide range of books and magazines in community languages. These can be borrowed by parents and taken home by children, or borrowed by parents coming to school. If you're going to do this, take an ethnic friend to the bookshop with you. I ordered some Italian language novels from one of our bookshops, only to find on their arrival that I'd got "*Mill on the Floss*", "*Great Expectations*" and so forth translated into Italian! How silly can you get!

We all know, of course, that real understanding of another culture can only come through knowing the language. Ideally, our teachers in schools of high ethnic density would be at least bi-lingual. Where we can, we staff our schools with teachers who are themselves from ethnic backgrounds. But we're a long way from doing this well. Where we can, we employ bi-lingual teacher aides, and these people make an enormous difference to the effectiveness of communication with parents and to the confidence of parents in approaching the school. I'm proud to report that at last count, 27 of our Anglo-Australian teachers are themselves learning Greek or Italian at night classes of one kind or another. They'll never be expert, but I believe that that's the sign of a genuine attitude change and the communities of the schools where they are teaching are very much aware of what the teachers are doing.

Perhaps the most significant relationship we have as a Department with the ethnic communities is the support we offer for the after hours, or Saturday, ethnic schools. There are 70 or so of these in Adelaide. Most of them are Greek schools. They are used to teach the speaking, writing and reading of the community language, to practise folk dance and song, and to receive religious instruction.

We support these schools by giving them without strings an annual grant of \$9 per head of enrolment and by allowing them to use rent-free rooms in our schools. We are thinking about increasing the grant to \$12. We believe they are good things, but professionally we get a bit uneasy about the standard of teaching which is often pretty grim, (although there are splendid teachers as well). This leads us to think about inviting ethnic school teachers to participate in inservice education programmes, and to consider assistance with syllabuses and an advisory teacher. However, we must be very cautious. Under no circumstances must assistance be able to be interpreted as a government takeover.

(vi) The Ten Schools Project

I think the Ten Schools Project is quite easily the project with the greatest potential. It's also the hardest, and the one most likely to fail. It's an attempt to involve the total, the complete, school in an attitude change so that everything it does supports cultural pluralism and cultural interaction. We believe that the school has an absolute duty to change the way it operates to meet the circumstances of the community in which it is placed. Parents and children, languages and beliefs, customs and attitudes are there as perceptible sociological facts. The school must change its curriculum, its organization, its communication, its techniques of teaching so that it becomes accessible to children and parents. Parents have no responsibility to meet the school's demands. The boot is very much on the other foot.

So we selected 18 likely primary schools and put on a pretty intensive inservice programme to help acquaint people with cultural pluralism and cultural interaction. We gave the schools two months or so to think things over, to have detailed discussions and we then asked them to say whether they would join the Ten Schools Project or not. I had a bet with a friend that we'd only get 10 of the 18. Hence the title, the Ten Schools Project. Actually, 16 schools committed themselves in writing with all staff members signing the Principal's letter.

There is a project team consisting of three principals and three members of the Child Migrant Education Programme. There is an advisory teacher named Sue Wissell and some clerical assistance. Each school has access to \$2000 to expend on materials, equipment or whatever it needs to support its programmes. Schools have to justify their submissions and show that what they want is in accord with the objectives of the Ten Schools Project.

Well, what are those objectives? What is the Ten Schools Project about?

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SCHOOL OBJECTIVES

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General

A school in the Ten Schools Project will have a substantial number of students from ethnic backgrounds. It will reject assimilation as a policy. It will value and support different cultural groups, both in mainstream Australian society, and in the ethnic setting. It will modify its programmes, organisation and relationships in order that ethnic students and parents may be more supported, and tolerance, acceptance and understanding develop among the different groups in the school.

Specific

In particular, a school in the Ten Schools Project will:

- . discover the particular needs of students from ethnic backgrounds (as seen by the people themselves);
- . set up effective and frequent communication between the school, the ethnic parents and the wider community;
- . modify its curriculum in content, methods and materials to profit from, and adapt to, the rich and varied backgrounds, skills and knowledge of students and their parents;

- . put into operation programmes in the teaching of English to allow all students to become more proficient in speaking, listening, reading and writing;
- . put into operation programmes by which the major languages of the student body are taught to all students; and
- . encourage ethnic parents to participate in decisions about school policy, budgeting and programmes.

Schools will hopefully be able to invent programmes which will lead to the achievement of those objectives. We know already that there is a long way to go. We also know that the whole deal is totally dependent on the attitudes of teachers. It's clear that one of the difficult things in practice is the modification of curriculum.

How will it all go? I'll let you know in twelve months time. But one thing is quite certain: the Ten Schools Project is not a one-off exercise, not a gimmick for twelve months. It is an attempt to modify permanently the way in which schools in South Australia regard their ethnic communities and cater for the multi-cultural society which we now are.

#### F. CONCLUSION

I'm very conscious of the inadequacies in everything I've said. We are a little way along the road but the way ahead is confused. Already I've become aware of some backlash in attitudes: and certainly there are many assimilationists in our schools who are barely aware of themselves and who are acting destructively with the very best of intentions.

Attitudes must be changed. It's not an "*us-them*" matter. It is, however, a willingness to be open to difference, in fact positively to welcome it.

Do you mind if I describe how my own attitudes changed? I guess that initially I had the enormous advantage of living with my family for three weeks in a rather obscure French village south of Bordeaux. (In the best of all possible worlds, I'd simply make it possible for all our teachers to spend 12 months in similar situations, I reckon that would fix everything).

There are four stages. First of all, and this takes me back to my adolescence and the arrival in Australia of Baltic people, is the stage of "*bloody wops*" (or "*Balts*", or "*dagoes*" or any other of the charming racial epithets we invent to disguise our unsureness). It's a primitive stage marked by hostility, and an unwillingness to make contact. Many people in this country are still at that stage.

The second stage is one of "*we met this charming Greek couple at Betty's party and they showed us how to do this cute Greek dance*". It is the stage of patronizing paternalism. It is marked by a reluctant concession that although these people will never really speak English properly nor learn our ways, there are some quite interesting and attractive things about them. It's the "*tourist*" stage: people get interest in the folk, arty-crafty and food side of things. Many teachers are at this stage.

The third stage is one of rapid change to a whole-hearted acceptance of everything ethnic as being wonderful. The people are marvellous, the food is exciting, the language is so mellifluous and so forth. At this stage we are reluctant to concede that our ethnic friends can do anything wrong. We start to learn Italian and thank waiters with "*grazie tanto*".

We shout "*ciao*" to our friends as we leave after a party. And so on. It's quite a nice stage because it's innocent, even though it's still very patronizing. Our ethnic friends have got a lot to put up with when we are in this phase. They don't want particularly to have to demonstrate yet another dance (assuming they know it - they might be sophisticated city dwellers), give us a recipe or put up with this over-eager devotee who pesters them for unrelated items of vocabulary.

The fourth stage is one of maturity. We take casually and easily into each other's daily lives aspects of each other's culture, we no longer think of us-them, majority-minority. We argue, we actually develop dislikes and likes for particular people, we stop using the inappropriate word "*migrant*". On the other hand we recognise that our backgrounds are different, and we carefully avoid making judgements related to those differences.

I think we are trying to find ways to reach the fourth stage. I'm fairly sure that attitudes can't be developed in vacuo, nor by reading or learning lists of facts. I am sure that maturity in relationships will come as the result of working together, of making ourselves available to each other, of deliberately seeking each other out.

To finish I should like to introduce Lambros Fotiadis, a young Greek-Australian teacher. Lambros is very interested in the Ten Schools Project. He says that the abiding dangers for it and similar efforts, are tokenism and patronage. He says that for schools genuinely to adapt to the facts of the multi-cultural society is very hard because for Anglo-Australian teachers it means significant and radical changes in beliefs and in behaviour. He says, too, and he speaks with anger, that he can never really forgive the education system of South Australia for successfully cutting him off from his family and his family's culture and language. We taught him shame and self-consciousness, he says. And now that he is painfully re-learning Greek and re-discovering the heritage of his culture, he is determined that other ethnic children will hold their heads high, and that we shall all learn from each other.

Let us join him in that determination.

ADDENDA ONE

MIGRANT ADVISORY COUNCIL (S.A.) OBJECTIVES

- a. to suggest research into, and make comments on, current educational programmes for ethnic children;
  - b. to inform the ethnic communities about current educational programmes for ethnic children;
  - c. to provide administrators with accurate information on the attitudes of various communities to current programmes;
  - d. to suggest representation on relevant committees, particularly the Advisory Curriculum Committee, and to convey Migrant Advisory Council opinions to those committees;
  - e. to recommend on new programmes and modification of existing programmes for the education of ethnic children;
  - f. to assist generally with communication among schools, tertiary institutions, Catholic Education Office, Education Department, Department of Further Education and the ethnic communities of South Australia;
  - g. to make recommendations to the Catholic Education Office and the Education Department on expenditure in connection with the above and to be informed of the funding system which operates;
  - h. to make recommendations on special courses (inservice and pre-service) for the preparation of teachers of community languages and of teachers of English as a second language;
  - i. to suggest an education and sensitization programme to reach all teachers in order to enable them to understand and to assist ethnic students in all our schools;
  - j. to propose ways and means of achieving higher standards in Ethnic Schools by recommending kinds of assistance for those who teach in them and by establishing permanent liaison channels between Ethnic Schools, and the State and Catholic school systems;
  - k. to investigate the feasibility of a scheme for the appointment of principals and teachers with an appropriate preparation and cultural background to schools with high ethnic population;
  - l. to advise the Minister of Education on any other matters that might arise;
- (13) that the terms of reference be varied from time to time by approval of the Minister;
- D. Modus Operandi
- (14) that the Migrant Advisory Council meet at least once each month during the school year.

ADDENDA TWO

SCHOOL OBJECTIVES

General

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In particular, a school in the Ten Schools Project will:

- (a) discover the particular needs of students from ethnic backgrounds (as seen by the people themselves);
- (b) set up effective and frequent communication between the school, the ethnic parents and the wider community.
- (c) modify its curriculum in content, methods and materials to profit from, and adapt to, the rich and varied backgrounds, skills and knowledge of students and their parents;
- (d) put into operation programmes in the teaching of English to allow all students to become more proficient in speaking, listening, reading and writing;
- (e) put into operation programmes by which the major languages of the student body are taught to all students;
- (f) encourage ethnic parents to participate in decisions about school policy budgeting and programmes.

5.4 ADDRESS GIVEN BY MS. JUNE ENGLISH, Former Headmistress of  
Brunswick Girls' Highschool, Victoria

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

I read on the agenda sheet that I am going to talk about Practical Implications. Of what? So I thought "Well it must be the implications of putting theory into practice".

First of all we decided that bilingualism was going to apply to Australians as well as immigrants. An inner suburban school has not only migrants but also good old Aussies, and you have to look after them too. They were going to be able to learn Standard English and they were going to be able to learn immigrant languages. After all, if you work in Brunswick, if you are working in a factory, then you have got to be able to speak Italian or you are isolated. If you want to shop in a range of shops in Sydney Road, then you need to be able to speak immigrant languages. But, of course, we want the kids to move beyond the Brunswick society, or at least have the right to make a decision to move beyond the Brunswick society, so therefore we want them to know the standard variant as well as dialects, which we don't denigrate.

We all have various linguistic styles. Each one of us varies our words according to the occasion. So it isn't just a problem for migrants. The thing is we need all these language styles to move in all areas of society.

It is not enough to say we are going to work on a Greek bilingual program. We have got to know a lot more about it. I was sending out my letters to parents in formal Greek (Katharevousa) when I should have been sending them in the colloquial (Demotic Greek). There is also a lot of sensitivity around the area of dialect. One parent, said, "Oh, my daughter is not going to continue doing Italian. They teach them in Central Italian and I am a Northerner".

I agree with those speakers who have said effective communication is the important thing. Yes, communication is the important thing in all sorts of subjects about all sorts of content. As teachers, if we want to get a message across about a concept, about an idea, then we will ham it, the kids will play act it, we will mime it in drama, we will use all means to get the message across. But it is not enough to merely communicate, I think that we are going to disadvantage all our students unless we teach them also the standard language variant. It is not necessarily better language. One had to listen in to the New Guinea debate about which dialect should be made the official language to know that official language is a historical accident. But we must face up to the fact that the standard language is the official language. Standard English is the language of literature and the educated. So, if we are going to function well, if we are going to get those jobs or go to university, we must be able to speak standard English. If we are going to read the literature of any country we need access to the standard language.

As far as teaching the immigrant language goes, the kids have got to know the standard variant as well as using their dialects from communication in all sorts of ways. If they don't know the standard variant they can't read the literature, they can't get the jobs at the local solicitors typing out formal letters in the standard language. They have got to be able to spell. It can't remain a spoken language.

We also believe all students must be educated. It sounds funny

hearing a Principal saying that, doesn't it, but it is a new thing at Brunswick. Before we just felt that all students should be taught English. It didn't matter if they were taught nothing else. Cut out maths - we don't get maths teachers anyway. Cut out science - we don't get science teachers anyway. We haven't got science rooms either. Forget all that. Give them arts and crafts? They don't need words there. A 'keep them happy syndrome'.

That's now out! We are ashamed of ourselves for ever having been patronizing and having thought that kids were congenitally deficient. We are against withdrawals. They are out too. They have gone. The kids were labelled. We had moved them from the educational scene. They were a damned nuisance anyway. We were glad to get rid of them. But withdrawals are out. Now it is main-stream support. Kids are going to be educated.

Right! So you set up a main-stream system. How does that work? For example, at English time four forms divide into sub-groups with as many teachers as required. We try to match up what the teacher has to give with what the kids need, but we make it so that it is fluid and flexible.

Because we didn't have enough teachers we introduced C.A.T., or Cross Age Tutoring. This is a time when students tutor other students. They do it as part of their ordinary curriculum, they take C.A.T. as one of their options. There are about 90 students involved from Forms 6, 5, 4, and 3. They can tutor their peers but usually they tutor younger students, including students of primary school. They are paid by the hour.

If you have got a diverse student range, and it certainly is diverse, you need more people involved in the program. Don't think you are going to get more teachers, because you are not, so use the students. Sweated labour perhaps, but we are paying them. Student tutors are taught how to teach and help the students in the bilingual program. The kids have got looks of involvement on their faces and feel that they are understanding it all and that they are doing hard work. The librarian has noticed that more kids are borrowing books, that the migrant students are taking home a hard book in the immigrant language usually, and lots of easy books in the English language; whereas the Australian kids are doing the reverse, hard books in English and easy books in immigrant languages. So, there is a balanced situation and no one feels better than anybody else.

In a bilingual program, you want bilingual teachers with methods all over the curriculum. You no longer want specifically a Greek teacher. You want a Greek teacher whose methods are maths and science. We have a maths teacher who speaks Italian and we would like to release her to float across the curriculum so that she can help underachieving maths students with English language difficulties. The maths teacher says, "She is a very intelligent student. She can do the maths. It is just that she cannot understand the linking words".

It is no good even thinking that you are going to teach in the first language (and mainly our bilingual program is used with 65 Form I students) unless you have a lot of resource material. You have just got to spend thousands of dollars on the library, thousands of dollars.

What we are trying to do is, not only to perceive difference, but to really use it and grow it to the point that it becomes a most

superb advantage.

We divide Form I students into forms according to their ethnic groups. We have a Turkish group with a Turkish form teacher, their pastoral teacher. She makes the home visits. She can speak to the parents in their first language. An Italian teacher participates in the bilingual program in the same way. She can communicate with the home. She can see that the kids do homework in their first language.

We were very concerned that we shouldn't create ghettos in the school by dividing kids into form groups on an ethnic basis, so they only work in ethnic groups for ten periods a week. During the other twenty they are divided heterogenously for drama, music, maths, unit studies, arts and crafts, science and religious education.

We have Ethnic Parent Councils where the parents come in and conduct meetings in their first language. The form teacher, the pastoral teacher is at those meetings. We run standard language classes. We have a bilingual creche. We looked for a leader who could speak Italian. I am employing a bilingual office girl who will do accounts. She speaks Italian. She can answer most phone calls. It is important not to have to drag teachers out of class. You should have bilingual staff in the office. You should have bilingual staff in the library.

We are quite straightforward and forthright about saying "Yes, we are educating for careers and we are trying to credential kids for careers". We are determined that the full range of career options will be available to our students.

We believe there is no implicit disadvantage in being a migrant provided that teachers and schools dignify difference and develop new programs to utilize the vast cultural riches of our extensive immigrant population and their offspring. I believe we are mature enough to accept and encourage cultural pluralism. We should not ask people to choose between equally valid lifestyles. There is room for diversity.

## 5.5 FORUM

We thought it important in the preliminary planning of the Conference that young people from various cultural backgrounds, or those who as students whether mature or old were not from the majority established Australian society, should contribute. They have experienced a very immediate and sometimes anguished emotional impact as well as an intellectual experience of alienation and coping in school with being 'different'.

This emotional experience is so often neglected in purely academic or theoretical research yet such emotional factors provide the far reaching motivational impetus for acts of political anger and economic retribution which are dramatically noticeable in the contemporary world. Desires for political decession, for terrorist hi-jacking, for recent kidnappings in Italy for instance, come from a deep emotional sense of being ignored, being dominated by other communities (no matter whether big or small) who manager to retain status or power without sharing there into a wider national society.

Being ignored or people showing ignorance about other peoples' cultures (whether it be the simple thing of asking them on an official form for their 'Christian' name when they may be Muslim, Jew or Greek Orthodox, or denying them thier own mother tongue) can be a positive act of denial against another human beings vital identity.

All Anglo-Saxon societies which have historically been dominant for so long in the USA, Canada, India, African countries at large and even in the mother country of Great Britain, now have to learn that other identities, passionately felt, are represented in their midst and seek acknowledgement of their speech, their social ways of life, their religious beliefs, their ways of dressing, dancing, and their own particular intonation in using the English language.

Nothing is 'funny peculiar' any more, to be looked upon as a source of detrimental judgement from the dominant Anglo-Saxon about the way another person talks or behaves.

The following are three accounts of 'School As I Found It' by Rob Mykytiuk, a teacher of Ukrainian descent, Barry Panos, a Greek law student and Moreen McGlade, an Aboriginal mother of four children who is training to be a primary school teacher.

### a. Rob Mykytiuk - Teacher

I was born in Australia in 1950 of Ukranian parents. For the most part of my schooling I attended the local Catholic schools and later the local State High School. I learnt the English language from my playmates and school peers, and later in the primary school, by reading books at the rate of 3 - 4 per week. This was largely due to my home environment. We had no radio or T.V. and with older brothers and sisters attending school, on most evenings the whole family would sit around the kitchen table and read or work on home assignments. At home I spoke only the language of my parents. This was fortunate because apart from the obvious advantages of being bi-lingual it also enable me to communicate effectively with my parents who had only a limited knowledge of English. Families in

which the children didn't learn the language of their parents and parents were unable to learn English found themselves facing a multiplicity of problems. Apart from the usual generation gap, children were further distant from their parents whose life style in their country of origin was vastly different from the Australian experience. On top of this was a language barrier leaving parents and children with absolutely no avenue of communication. Consequently schools (if for no reason other than overcoming this language barrier and providing an avenue of communication between migrant children and their parents) need to incorporate the teaching of ethnic languages into the school curriculum.

Other studies such as Lambert's have shown conclusively that second language learning (the case with non-English speaking migrants learning English) is related to a person's acceptance of the new culture in which he is now living. Consequently how can educators expect children to learn English successfully if their own language needs and their cultural identity is totally ignored. Of course one may argue that with the diversity of migrant groups within each school, a bilingual and bicultural approach is impractical in the school situation. This however is not entirely true. The committee reporting on the Teaching of Migrant Languages in Schools (A.G.P.S. Canberra 1976) rightly points out that as a result of its extensive survey of ethnic groups, a bilingual and bicultural approach to the school curriculum is possible by incorporating the various activities (including language teaching) of ethnic community centres into the school curriculum and by using adult members of ethnic communities as teacher aides

Q. What effect do you think school life had upon you. Were you made to feel different?

Bob. Throughout my school life I find it difficult to recall any specific instances of discrimination because of my cultural background, although mispronunciation of my name was a constant source of embarrassment. However with a name like MYKYTIUK, who would wonder! Perhaps the greatest single issue which confronted me, particularly as a teenager was the question of identity. On the one hand there was the cultural background of my parents with its own set of norms, values and behaviour patterns, and on the other hand there was the Australian experience with an entirely different set of norms, values and behaviour patterns reinforced by the school. The problem lay in the degree to which I could incorporate the various aspects of each background into my own experience. For the most part this was an unconscious process and because the element of each background had been developed over generations of living and naturally passed on in a natural process to subsequent generations, the choice could not be made by a mere cognitive decision but rather through a period of constant interaction between the two. The process naturally was not without constant tension and confusion, often resulting in family conflict.

Most of the time I found myself leading a double life, each appropriate to the particular situation I found myself in, each constituting a different world poles apart. Despite the demands of this dual existence for the most part there were few real problems. However there were times when the two would inevitably meet, when I had to choose between one and the other. It was on these occasions that the decisions became painful, often leading to unfavourable consequences whatever the choice of action. This problem was further exacerbated, since there was no tangible relationship between my life at home and my life at school. There was no allowance at the school for my cultural difference and often it became necessary to conceal part of my identity

Q. Did that harm you?

Bob. Well no - much depends on strength of personality - but it does cause personal pain. Consequently one cannot over-stress the value of a multi-cultural approach to education, not so much from the point of view of allowing migrants to retain their cultural heritage, or affirm their cultural identity, but merely from the point of view of removing the constant tension and internal conflict experienced by migrant children in a school environment which takes no account of their cultural difference and consequently does not allow for a natural interaction of the cultural backgrounds inevitably clashing in the child. Besides the consideration of migrant children only in terms of their language competence or incompetence, not only denies them the status of individuals (so much emphasised in the current polemics on child-centred education) but also ignores the principles of sound educational practice, which demands a consideration of the influence of socio-economic and home backgrounds (in this case cultural) on the learning potential and performance of the child.

- (b) BARRY PANOS -- student studying for his law degree and born of Greek parents

I am a member of the Greek community of Western Australia. I was born in the mid 1950's. My father was born in Australia and my mother came here from Greece at the age of three years. Basically, my parents were not migrants. They were both born and bred in Australia, as was I.

In the first few years of my life, I was taught a reasonable amount of Greek by my parents. As I approached school years, English took a major predominance. By the time I entered primary school, my knowledge of the English language was equal to others in my class.

I continued to increase my knowledge of the Greek language by attending an ethnic school. These classes were conducted on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between the hours of 4.00pm and 6pm. This time was very unsuitable. I was in school whilst others played. The manner in which the classes were conducted was also very poor. My teacher spoke no English. This made translation very difficult. Only Greek textbooks were used. Each teacher took three grades. This made personal attention more difficult.

The Greek ethnic education system has undergone a rapid change over the years. Today the classes are conducted only once a week. These sessions are on Saturday morning for 4 hours. Each grade is conducted by a separate teacher which allows more chance for specialization.

I went through high school and am currently finishing a law degree at the University of Western Australia. I was unable to do Greek after I left primary school. Programmes are currently being implemented so that the Greek language can be taught both at the secondary and tertiary levels.

To the question about how do I feel about belonging here, I would say this. I have got the best of both worlds. Speaking for myself I am mostly Australian. Having parents who were born here makes a difference admittedly. In fact I might feel differently from recently arrived Greek people, but I shall still feel and act Greek with Greek people. But that doesn't make me any less Australian with native born Australians, does it? Don't people have to get used to these possibilities and the enrichment in being able to be both?

(c) MOREEN McGLADE -- student

Q. To come to your immediate situation, what have been the reactions since you joined college?

Moreen:

I think some of the people here at the beginning may have misunderstood how we got in. But it's more the people outside who make me uneasy. When they know that I'm studying, they think the group of us is doing a 'special' course -- meaning in their mind that we're not capable and that academic standards weren't the same for us to enter as for white students!

"What was it like at school?", I am asked.

Well, I was quite a naive sort of a child, not at all like my own children. I'm sure many things went unnoticed as for instance, I can remember children when faced with a choice saying "eeny, meeny, miny, moe, catch a nigger by his toe" and yet I didn't seem to worry unduly about it either as a phrase. I do remember some of my cousins getting upset about the word 'nigger' though. They used to give the white kids a whack or two. That didn't stop them though as I often heard the chant. Schooldays at primary schools seemed to be pretty lonely for me as I never seemed to have 'special' friends.

My cousins lived on the reserve. They had a house with showers. All they had to do was turn on a tap and presto! there was water. Also they had electric light where our light was a home made fat candle and later a hurricane lamp.

We had a camp made of the queerest bits and pieces one could imagine and that was the home I loved dearly and my darling granny who became my mum from the day my real mother and father parted. My gran built our home. She was about 50 years old when grandad died and I was 3 years old. Grandad didn't cater for my gran and we had to survive the best way gran could manage and manage she did. At first we went over to a place called Tinderden where 'mum' did housework on a farm. When the time came for me to go to school we moved into town where my dad came and helped 'mum' build a home near the town.

I was nearly eight when I began my formal education. My uncle who was 'mum's' youngest child taught me a few basics. He used the ground to write on. He had taught himself to read and write. Today he is an Inspector with the Agriculture Protection Board. Of this I am very proud.

At the Kendenup school I was friendly with the other aboriginal children. They seemed to have been accepted in the town by the towns people.

We didn't stay there long as we came back east to Ongerup where the situation seemed to be less friendly.

As I said, my cousins lived on the reserve and had lots of modern cons compared to me and yet it seemed as if drink had invaded their families which led to brawls and children going to school without any breakfast or lunch.

When my 'mum' did get the pension she was very careful with our money. The princely sum of £5.0.0 (\$10) per fortnight was our allowance. She didn't know how to claim for me so she did without. Food got a little scarce by the second week but I still had a packed lunch. I was quite independent as I used to pack it myself and insist on plaiting my own hair and I know that it used to stick out at odd angles. What a sight - no wonder not many of the white children used to ask me to join in their games.

There were a few who seemed to want to be friendly. One especially was an English girl who used to call me over and give me a piece of her cake and some cold drink. I'll always remember her kindness.

A brother and sister who used to have to ride their bikes about four miles home used to walk with me to near our camp and then they would get on their bikes and ride the 3½ miles home.

I never suffered from the effects of alcohol in any way as my 'mum' didn't touch it and for this I am thankful. Where my cousins had the benefits of a warmer, drier home, I had the benefits of the absence of alcohol and I certainly know how lucky I was.

Because I lived with mum it seemed quite easy for me to be a loner at school as well as at home. If I had come from a large family I would have encountered different joys and sorrows. We didn't live entirely alone as I had a stepmother and a younger sister who were camped about 200 yards from us. They came from Kendenup with us.

I hardly ever had colds, flues or ear, nose and throat infections or such. Any of those illnesses which hamper a child's progress at school. The teacher I had in the upper primary level seemed very interested in helping me and this gave me quite a lot of encouragement. I remember being at the top of the class several times. So much depends on a teacher's attitude. If they encourage you, you respond and do better.

When the time came for me to attend high school, if I were to continue my education, my father refused to let me come to Perth as he was afraid of what might happen to me in the big city. Although he didn't play a major part in rearing me he was always around.

Eventually he relented and I came to Perth and began my high school days at Girdlestone Girls where I started in second year.

I cannot recall having had any racial problems. After all I was only one and there were about 399 of them! I made a few firm friends. I do recall that my friends were sympathetic towards aborigines and migrants, in fact one of them eventually married a malaysian.

For our third year we had to join Perth Girls where my history teacher took an instant dislike to me and not once did I sit a lesson in her classroom. Just before the lesson began she would send me to stand in the corridor. My girlfriend gave me the notes to copy later.

"Are you still decorating the corridor again?" was all the teacher could say as she saw me week after week. There was never any attempt to try and find out about my exclusion - nor did any teacher make any effort even in the beginnings to tide one over the feeling of "being made to feel different". It's not that one wants 'special' treatment, but the whole point of school is to feel you belong along with the other kids, isn't it?

## 5.6 THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITY CHILDREN

The International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination and the federal Racial Discrimination Act 1975.

By passing the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, Australia was able to ratify the International Convention Against All Forms of Racial Discrimination which it had signed in 1966. 81 countries have ratified the Convention including the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada, France, West Germany, Netherlands and the Philippines. The Convention requires signatories to undertake -

- (a) to prohibit racial discrimination in all its forms;
- (b) to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, including equality in the enjoyment of certain specified rights set out in Article 5 of the Convention;
- (c) to declare certain acts offences punishable by law.

The Convention also requires signatory States to provide effective remedies against acts of racial discrimination and to adopt measures in the field of education and information to combat racial discrimination.

The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 represents the machinery by which Australia may carry out its obligations as a signatory of the International Convention. This in turn implies the removal of discriminatory elements in legislation at both Federal and State levels. Consultations have been held with State Governments and to date, all States have complied with this challenge, in respect of racial issues, except for Queensland.

As a result of a referendum held throughout Australia in 1967 the Constitution was changed to permit the Commonwealth to assume from the State Aboriginal Welfare Departments of Aboriginal Affairs. However, Queensland has not undertaken this transfer of powers and its Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs continues to administer two Queensland State Acts intimately affecting the everyday lives of Aborigines and Islanders living on Government reserves. Several provisions of the International Convention are at variance with aspects of Aboriginal and Islander administration.

The International Convention is based in turn on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted unanimously by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948. It proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, without distinction of any kind, in particular as to race, colour or national origin. This declaration is a more explicit statement of the United Nations Charter which states that the United Nations is to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. All member States pledge themselves to take action to achieve this purpose.

The Australian Racial Discrimination Act 1975 came into force on 31 October 1975. It outlaws acts of racial discrimination throughout Australia and her external territories and provides a means of combating racial prejudice.

For the first time the obligations contained in the International Convention were introduced into Australian law. The Convention which is a Schedule to the Act, asserts that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and without any justification.

Legislation has a vital role in the elimination of racial discrimination and the passage of the Act represents an essential step in the combat of discrimination in Australia. Previously, legislation had only existed in South Australia. That State is currently re-drafting its legislation to strengthen its provisions. New South Wales has a strong and wide-ranging Anti-discrimination Bill currently before Parliament.

The Act, in the words of the Convention, declares that it is now unlawful for any person in Australia to discriminate against another, on the grounds of race colour, descent or ethnic origin or to impair the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms. It specifies access to goods and services, the provision of land, housing and accommodation, and the right to employment and to join trade unions.

The Act establishes formal administrative machinery for enquiring into complaints of racial discrimination and for settling complaints by conciliation. The emphasis is on mediation and conciliation as a more satisfactory way of tackling individual instances of racial discrimination and the tensions that are associated with individual disputes. Where settlement cannot be achieved, the Commissioner for Community Relations has power to issue a certificate to enable an aggrieved party pursue specified remedies through civil court processes.

The Act recognises the prime importance of developing programs of education and research, and other programs to combat racial discrimination in the long term and to promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among racial and ethnic groups. The changing of community attitudes is seen as a matter of vital significance in the field of race relations. Both governmental and community-based programs to combat racial discrimination are necessary. This accords with the unanimous experience of countries with similar legislation.

Among the educational and social rights guaranteed under the Convention (Article 5) and thus by the Act are the right to education and training and the right to equal participation in cultural activities. This implies that equality of access is guaranteed to all children in a nation ratifying the Convention, irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin. Under the right to equal participation in cultural activities may be understood. The opportunity to practise, preserve, and transmit a language and cultural values on the same basis as the language and culture of the dominant society.

#### The Unesco Convention Against Discrimination in Education

The Unesco Convention against Discrimination in Education has been in force in Australia since March 1967. Under its terms Australia is required to proscribe any forms of discrimination in education and to promote equality of educational opportunity.

For the purposes of this Convention, "discrimination" is defined, inter alia, as including any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference on the grounds of language, or national or social origin which has the effect of limiting any group of persons to education of any inferior standard. Further, the term "education" is defined as referring to all types and levels of education, including access to education, standards and quality of education, and the conditions under which it is provided.

In Article 3, signatory States undertake inter alia to discontinue any administrative practices which involve discrimination in education, and to give migrant and ethnic children the same access to education as is given to their own nationals.

In Article 4, signatory States undertake inter alia to apply educational policies which will tend to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment, and in particular to ensure that standards of education are equivalent in all public educational institutions of the same level, that the conditions relating to the quality of the education provided are also equivalent, and that training for the teaching profession is provided without discrimination.

In Article 5, signatory States recognise inter alia that education should be directed to promoting understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations racial and religious groups. Further, they acknowledge that it is essential to recognise the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools, and the use or the teaching of their own language, provided however that this does not prevent members of those communities from understanding the culture and language of the community as a whole and from participating in its activities, does not prejudice lower than the general standard, and that attendance at such schools is optional.

#### Current Unesco Action

Unesco is currently considering adjustments to this Convention to strengthen its provisions about educational discrimination against the children of migrant workers. While European guest worker schemes are clearly in view, its consideration has obvious implications for Australia's migration program, settlement facilities for migrants, and the provision of opportunities for ethnic communities. A recent resolution of the Unesco General Conference stipulated that, as far as possible, education should be given to migrant children in their mother tongue.

The current Unesco budget provides for studies on the educational situation of migrants with the aim of drawing up ne programs to meet their educational needs. Unesco funds are being made available for studies on teaching the mother tongue as a way of assisting the preservation of cultural identity. An international meeting of experts was held in 1976 to examine how educational authorities could be made more aware of problems such as the teaching of ethnic languages and cultures, and the teaching of the language of the host country. Special attention was given to educational statistics such as the drop-out rates from schooling and educational attainment.

In Australia the incidence of problems resulting from the classroom adjustment of ethnic children, cultural and linguistic incongruence, and poor educational achievement are serious. Indeed there is irrefutable evidence that the majority of ethnic children suffer educational handicaps in the major Australian metropolitan centres. Furthermore, the majority of these are now born in Australia. Thus vast numbers of migrant and ethnic children cannot derive equivalent benefit from the schooling provided by the authorities. Nor in many cases do they receive an education geared to the needs of their actual lives, their parents' aspirations, nor their own potential.

Thus, measured against internationally accepted norms and in the light of the commitment Australia has made to the world community, our performance in the field of migrant and ethnic education is grossly inadequate.

The problems of ethnic children are therefore;

- widespread and serious;
- the outcome of many years of failure by education authorities to come to terms with cultural diversity;
- so complex that no one strategy can be expected to "solve" them overnight, nor would mere availability of funds necessarily bring about change;
- urgently in need of attention on the grounds both of inherent educational necessity and also of social justice;
- squarely within the context of Australia's international obligations and the new anti-discriminatory legislation.

### Migrant Agreements

There are three migration Agreements made by Australia with overseas countries viz Italy, Yugoslavia and Turkey, which include an educational commitment.

Clauses in these Agreements commit the Australian Government to give access to the teaching of the ethnic language and the preservation of the ethnic culture for the children of migrant workers. For example, Article 22 of the Turkish Agreement states:

"The Australian authorities shall cooperate with the Turkish authorities in Australia in any practicable measures for giving the children of Turkish citizens the opportunity of tuition in the Turkish language."

In the case of Italy this Agreement has been more recently supplemented by the Agreement of Cultural Cooperation. This spells out in more detailed terms the commitments entered into by the two governments. These include the encouragement of cooperation in the fields of education, the arts, and cultural activities; the exchange of books, media programs and educational documentation; the encouragement of collaboration between educational institutions in both countries and in particular the establishment of Chairs at universities and courses in the language, literature and culture of both countries. In addition an exchange of teachers to facilitate the transition of Italian children into the Australian schools, while maintaining their cultural ties with Italy, is stipulated. This exchange should also embrace academic staff, researchers, lecturers and scientists.

### Educational Discrimination Against Aborigines

The dimensions of discrimination suffered by Aborigines in Australian society are pervasive and critical to the development of social harmony in the multi-cultural nation of the future. Unless the problems inherent in the educational experience of almost all Aboriginal children are tackled rapidly, Australia runs a serious risk of racist opprobrium on the part of the international community. As the international movement for the enjoyment of civil rights gathers pace, spurred on by President Carter's evident commitment, it will be clear that Third World countries will become increasingly inquisitive about educational justice for black children in Australia. Contacts already made by Aboriginal activists in such countries indicate that Australia's record in this field is already on the line. The next few years may therefore prove crucial, not only from the point of view of ensuring equality of opportunity for all Australian children, but also from the angle of Australia's foreign policy interests.

At the 1966 Census 10% of Aboriginal children were not attending school and 50% of Aborigines over 45 had had no schooling whatsoever. The 1971 census revealed only a minimal improvement. The retention rate in the secondary school for Aboriginal children was 59% at age 15 compared to 81% for Australian children in general. Moreover the quality of the education attained was markedly inferior to the whites and its relevance to the actual life situation of the Aborigines was minimal in most cases.

The greatest factors in perpetuating racism against Aborigines have been Australian schools and curricula. The image of the Aboriginal people projected has been a cruel and inaccurate caricature. Such attitudes were no doubt shaped in the earliest years of white settlement. Yet even today these reflect community hostility against Aborigines and their true interests. The formulation of policies from afar, by people not always attuned to their real needs, is sadly reflected in standards of housing, health, education .

A telling aspect of this is the situation of Aboriginal languages. The sands of time have been running out ever since 1788. Recent research has established that there are only 202 languages surviving and the majority of these are only spoken by a handful of elderly people whose influence on the young generation is limited or rejected. However 50 or 60 languages are still spoken by groups of people numbering from between 50 to 3,000 in the centre, north-west and far north of the continent.

It is in some of these areas that the Aboriginal Bilingual Education Program has been established in the past few years, on the rationale that to deny a people an education in their mother tongue, if they desire this, is to treat them as a conquered people. To date 13 languages are in use in the bi-lingual program.

Overseas experts have rated the Program "one of the most exciting educational events in the world."

Unfortunately the current restrictions on staff ceiling in the Commonwealth Teaching Service are overshadowing the future of the scheme, since Aboriginal children moving up the grades from the infants level require the involvement of further Aboriginal teachers and aides. This factor could threaten the continuation of the program if it cannot develop as envisaged. With disillusionment will come loss of interest on the part of the Aboriginal communities and frustration for the children.

If Aborigines are to take the place guaranteed them by law within Australian society, a new degree of human dignity must be accorded them. This dignity is indissolubly bound up with language and cultural identity, as well as with development programs for economic and social advancement.

The recently established Aboriginal Education Committee composed of representative Aboriginal community leaders in a hopeful sign that at long last the white man is beginning to listen to the Aborigines and heed their words. The entire future of the Aboriginal race depends on this dialogue.

5.7 EXTRACTS FROM THE POLICY STATEMENT PUT BEFORE THE WEST AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOLS ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE, 1975

SECTION 'H' - EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

H.2 DISADVANTAGES AND COMPENSATION

We believe that schools should provide special programs, designed to meet the needs of the particular students, and that these programs will only be successful where the parents and the community have an understanding of, and a share in, determining the aim and content of such programs.

Action

1. Council requests the Minister for Education to:
  - (a) recommend that the Schools Commission promote a variety of research projects which will:-
    - (i) define the nature and extent of educational disadvantages in Australia;
    - (ii) determine the measure which might best compensate for educational disadvantage;
  - (b) increase the allocation of Federal funds for pilot projects in compensatory education in each State and Territory;
  - (c) constantly evaluate these projects, as a guide for increased government expenditure in the field.
2. Council recommends that schools be encouraged to provide cultural and special enrichment programs and increasing parent understanding and expectations through involvement in these programs.
3. Council urges that additional funds be provided for:
  - (a) the extension of teacher training courses to assist teachers to become aware of the social and cultural traditions of aborigines and migrants;
  - (b) the development of programs for all levels of the community designed to give an insight into the social, cultural and economic backgrounds of aborigines and migrants, and promote a sympathetic awareness of their problems;
  - (c) the employment of bi - and multi-lingual aides to assist the teacher in the classroom and to liaise with parents;
  - (d) the financing, setting up and maintenance of regional resources units staffed by teams of psychologists, social workers and interpreters;
  - (e) the assistance and education of parents to involve them in their children's education;

- (f) the creation and publication of learning material relevant to the special ethnic needs;
- (g) the inclusion of the appropriate ethnic languages as part of the curriculum in Australian schools;
- (h) the early teaching of aboriginal and migrant children to include instruction in their own language.

#### H. 8 ABORIGINES AND ISLANDERS

##### Policy

Council acknowledges that people of Aboriginal and Island descent are socially and educationally disadvantaged and require active support in order to improve their educational opportunities.

Social and educational developments for such communities must be made only after consultation with that community.

##### Action

Council urges that:

1. The Federal Government establish national and regional committees which should include a majority of Aborigines selected by Aboriginal people to advise the Australian Schools Commission and other Australian and State Government agencies at the policy level.
2. The Federal Government support the Schools Commission initiatives in concentrating on increasing participation of Aboriginal people in the formal education of their children and of promoting a wider understanding of Aboriginal social perspectives, cultures and values.
3. Training programs for Aboriginal teachers, ancillary staff, especially teacher aides, teacher educators and administrative staff should be expanded and, as a matter of urgency, further opportunities for special training should be provided in regional areas.
4. The Federal Government follow the recommendations of the Schools Commission in enquiring into and taking action on the health and living conditions of Aboriginal children as a necessary foundation for more effective schooling for them.
5. The Federal Government should assume full financial responsibility for predominantly Aboriginal schools where the school community and States desire it.
6. The schools Commission enquire into the special problems of people of Aboriginal descent which are different from those of tribal Aborigines.

Council refers this policy to an Aboriginal Education policy sub-committee of the Council to be developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Islander Community Groups and that the policy be re-drafted and presented as a policy/action item for 1977 Annual Conference.

## 6. OUTPUT: REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS

### 6.1 REPORTS

The following reports submitted by the Workshops as listed, are the condensation of two sessions in the Saturday programme which were set aside after the two main speakers, Jim Giles and June English, had stimulated ideas -- the former in the specific field of bilingual teaching and the logistics of such teaching; the latter in the deeper rationale of schooling, which now represents a wholly new challenge for contemporary Australia in the present plural situation after the post-war migration programmes.

Workshops were not rigidly structured as it was felt that people attending the Conference and listening to the Chairman and Speakers, might wish over coffee to change their minds. It was left therefore, to the main body of the Conference to suggest the general areas for more detailed discussion. The following are those that emerged:

| <i>TOPIC</i>                                | <i>REPRESENTATIVE</i> |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 School Curricula and Councils             | Merv Knight           |
| 2 Ethnic Schools                            | Barry Panos           |
| 3 Bilingual Education                       | Sybe Jongeling        |
| 4 Language Education Policies               | Dr Susan Kaldor       |
| 5 Teacher Education                         | Marilyn McCutcheon    |
| 6 (a) Community Attitudes/<br>Interaction   | Lynn MacPherson       |
| (b) Media                                   | Louise Hegvold        |
| 7 Monolingual Anglo-Saxon                   | Peter Randolph        |
| 8 Racial Discrimination                     | Rosemary Tang         |
| 9 Urban Aboriginal and Education<br>Centres | Alfred Gorman         |

Report and resolutions of each Workshop group were presented to the full Conference in the final session. Resolutions passed by the whole Conference may be found in Section 8.

Unanimous decisions were taken by the full body of people attending that:-

- (a) The Community as a whole should be encouraged by all the means possible to take a new look at what an 'Australian' is.
- (b) That a statement be made to the Department of Education, emphasising that Western Australia is
  - \* A multi-cultural state
  - \* that this is a priority in education
  - \* that this factor should also involve parents
  - \* that the Good Neighbour Council be used to its fullest extent in the educational field

- (c) A call was made to support the Hon A L Grassby with a voluntary committee to look into aspects of racial discrimination, and to send a letter to newspapers concerning present difficulties in the Aboriginal situation in Perth.
- (d) An interim working party be set up to state a more precise frame of reference in order to recommend the same to the Director of Education.

Suggested members of this Working Party were as follows:-

John Sherwood  
Rosemary Tang  
Dr Harry Pearson  
Ian Malcolm  
John Cattalini  
Robert Chelliah  
Vladimir Mandyczewsky  
Mietka Gruszka

(a) WORKSHOP 1: (REPRESENTATIVE - MERV KNIGHT)

CURRICULUM AND SCHOOLS COUNCILS

- 1 That an implementation Conference be held as a follow-up, with representatives of Education Department, at Directorate level, representatives of Government, representatives of ethnic schools, CAE's, teacher organizations, etc..
- 2 To this end, policy in other States be examined and dialogue initiated to bring situation that exists in WA to notice of administration; and statistics on proportion of migrant children and first generation non-Anglo students in schools.
- 3 That the Education Department/Minister of Education be pressured to make a policy statement on multicultural education.
- 4 That migrant teacher resource facilities be expanded to facilitate research and dissemination of information to wider community.
- 5 That a coordinating body be set up with representatives of ethnic groups to coordinate approaches to government and other bodies concerned with multicultural education.
- 6 That effective means of communicating with ethnic groups, facilitating inter-group liaison and communication, and testing reliability of and support for information from spokesmen for ethnic groups.
- 7 That no assumption should be made that a multicultural curriculum should be imposed by a central authority, but curriculum option in each school should cater for and be relevant to the actual school community.
- 8 That school organization and policies should facilitate and initiate school/community interaction in the areas of
  - (a) curriculum
  - (b) provision of equipment, materials, staffing that satisfy local needs
  - (c) recognition of the pluralist, multicultural nature of the wider society
- 9 That the terms of reference of the Education Department Migrant Teacher Resource Centre be broadened to include ethnic group interests. This centre to be used as a clearing base to provide information to teachers involved in multicultural education programs and to perform functions of a liaison between teachers, Education Department, and ethnic groups, and other education systems.
- 10 That SSTUWA be asked to obtain from its members information about attitudes of members about multicultural education.

(c) WORKSHOP 3: (REPRESENTATIVE - SYBE JONGELING)

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Discussion:

Discussion centred around the definitions of bilingual education and its implications for the teacher. Two areas of bilingual education were noticed.

- 1 True bilingual education -- a total program of bilingual learning from the pre-school to adult education levels, in which parallel subject matter offerings, given in the native and other language, are made available to all individuals in various institutions.
- 2 Transitional bilingual education -- a partial program of bilingual learning at any designated instructional level, whereby the students are offered intensive training in English as a second language while receiving subject matter instruction in their native language, until such time as they were able to function adequately in a normal classroom situation.

The latter definition was more acceptable to the group insofar as it gives the child the opportunity to continue his cognitive development in his native language while at the same time he has the opportunity to develop English as a second language.

Discussion continued whether children should be withdrawn wholly or partially from their normal group. It was felt that withdrawal tends to label children and this was not educationally sound. In general, the group felt that there should be a total program of bilingual-bicultural education, where Australian children participate in the predominant ethnic language(s) -- with the option of transferring from that school to another school if parents requested this.

The group agreed that there are many logistic problems which would impede an integrated bilingual-bicultural education program -- not the least being the diversity of many languages in one particular school. But since at present we are denying all children this opportunity, it was felt that we should make a start somewhere and perhaps concentrate on the predominant ethnic languages in that particular school. It was also mentioned that in several European countries with similar programs, the consulates and embassies of the foreign countries give financial and personal assistance to the education departments and schools to develop these programs.

A major drive should be made to sensitize parents, teachers, employers and the general public to see the educational need for such a program -- since much apathy and ignorance is shown towards the concept of ethnic education.

Recommendations:

- 1 Conduct a feasibility study of ethnic language in high density migrant schools.
- 2 Conduct a feasibility study of the bilingual teachers available to the Education Authorities -- including College students who take a second language study while in training.
- 3 Develop curriculum materials for teachers to use.
- 4 Sensitizing of teachers:
  - (a) Principal's conferences
  - (b) Regional in-service conference.
- 5 Establish a Migrant Advisory Committee with representatives from migrant groups (a need to communicate).
- 6 Short training courses for teacher aides to selected suitable applicants from the ethnic groups to help in schools and classrooms with high density migrant population.

(d) WORKSHOP 4: (REPRESENTATIVE - DR SUSAN KALDOR)

LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICIES

Discussion:

Members of the group emphasized the need for separating language education in languages other than English into two distinctly different areas.

- 1 "foreign" languages, introduced in the schools or in other educational curricula for a variety of purposes (students' motivation also ranging over a wide variety of aims), viz. trade, travel, higher education, general interest, intellectual curiosity, etc..
- 2 "community languages" the inclusion of which in curricula serves primarily the function of improving communication in the society, the maintenance and support of the cultural heritage of Australians who come from a variety of different cultural/linguistic backgrounds. The discussion which followed concentrated on this latter group of languages, viz. the "community languages".

In addition to discussion on the teaching and learning of community languages, members of the group felt strongly that there was an urgent need for more discussion on the teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) and the teaching of Standard English as a Second Dialect (TSED) to children whose only language may be a non-standard form of English.

The role of ethnic schools in the teaching of community languages was then discussed in some detail and a member of the group presented information and arguments in support of strengthening such schools.

Resolutions:

It was resolved that the following recommendations be made to the full Conference for adoption:

- 1 That the Conference recommends to the WA Post Secondary Education Commission that courses in Language Development, Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics be established as core courses in all teacher education programmes.
- 2 That the Conference appoint a Working Committee consisting of Professor B Hill, Dr Harry Pearson, Messrs John Sherwood and Ian Malcolm, Mrs R Tang and three or more co-opted members to implement the decisions of the Conference (viz. prepare minutes, convey resolutions to relevant bodies and organizations, convene further meetings, etc.).
- 3 That the Conference urge the Minister of Education to implement the recommendation of the 1976-78 Triennium Report of the Schools Commission in relation to the setting up of a Migrant Advisory Committee. (this to be interpreted in the broader perspective of all aspects of multicultural education not only those relating to 'migrants').

(e) WORKSHOP 5: (REPRESENTATIVE - MARILYN McCUTCHEON)

TEACHER EDUCATION

Discussion:

- 1 the needs of teachers with regard to multicultural education
- 2 what is being done, any inadequacies, and
- 3 recommendations re improvements.

We noted that there is a tendency for teacher trainees and teachers to conform to the dominant cultural pattern. Therefore, attitude change is necessary, though difficult. However, as research substantiates, integration with other groups will ultimately help to change attitudes. Interaction must be real, longterm, meaningful. To some extent, this is happening, but at the teacher training level. Consistent encouragement is needed; for example, work experience which allows closer association with people with different cultural backgrounds, a 'behavioural science from different ethnic perspectives' approach (this would look at all aspects of life from the perspective of each particular culture, and would involve going into the communities and associating closely with folk), and an increasing recognition of the realities of a 'community orientation' approach.

There must be a concentration on the skills related to the teacher's professional development and the concept of multicultural education must be shown to be advantageous practically to teachers. Intercultural education ought to be part of the compulsory education units in teacher education courses ie. comparative education, educational psychology, etc.. The focus must be on integration, not specialization.

It is recommended that teachers and teacher trainees be positively encouraged to learn a second, community language. Accredited courses should be made available which offer qualifications relevant to the teaching of a second language in primary and secondary schools. Accommodation to linguistic variations, as one important component of cultural variations, must be incorporated in teacher training (and in-service) programmes, particularly in practice teaching (role playing is one practical strategy).

Teacher training institutions must demonstrate a multicultural approach as shown in choice of priority core areas, the provision of places for non mainstream cultures in enrolment, etc..

At pre and in-service levels, all teacher training should be essentially practical. Teaching must be recognized as a social and linguistic process and this recognition must be reflected in authorities' accreditation practices. (The group noted the problems associated with the increased tendency for the CAE's, for example, to ape universities, hence becoming less rather than more practical in approach, also the lack of relevance of content to the WA situation, the difficulty of obtaining release time for practicing teachers, and the largely theoretical content of accredited courses.)

It was agreed that there was a bottleneck at the secondary level, too; for example, the Asian studies courses should be balanced with multi-disciplinary studies of people making up our multicultural society, both at secondary and tertiary levels.

The central focus at all levels and in all programmes must be involvement with ethnic people both within the schools and colleges and outside, a working with and socializing with people of differing ethnic backgrounds in situations in which they are familiar and comfortable.

(f) WORKSHOP 6a: (REPRESENTATIVE - LYNN MACPHERSON)

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND INTERACTIONS

- 1 Interim consultative committee to report to Mr Grassby's department on local issues re discrimination, etc. Meeting of those interested at Chung Wah Building at 128 James Street next Sunday at 2.00pm (March 27).
- 2 Statement to Education Department re multiculturalism in education, recommending that it be considered a priority issue and that parents must be involved in decision making.
- 3 Query the Good Neighbour Council to encourage communication and pooling of resources among ethnic groups.
- 4 Letters from Conference to Mr Grassby and West Australian newspaper with reference to bus stop issue at the Saunders Street settlement where bus drivers have left Aborigines standing at the bus stop.

(g) WORKSHOP 6b: (REPRESENTATIVE - LOUISE HEGVOLD)

MEDIA

- 1 To inform people about/become aware of/the fact that 40% of our population comprise ethnic groups other than white Anglo-Saxon.
- 2 Suggestion:  
  
Committee to be established in Perth to counter negative or discriminative articles in media.
- 3 Entertainment programmes to reflect national origins in the same proportion as exists in our society.
- 4 Ethnic television programmes are needed occasionally.
- 5 Encourage movies from foreign countries as we see at film festivals.
- 6 Approach "The West Australian" and other papers to write positive articles on ethnic groups.
- 7 Educate lecturers as well as students presently studying in the area of the media about the wider responsibilities of journalism in the field of race, minority identity, and migration processes.
- 8 Educate the people in the commercial area of the media that it is within their own interests to cater for that 40% of the purchasing power coming from newly arrived ethnic groups.
- 9 Approach women's magazines, children's comics, children's literature to collaborate in articles about the new communities and about general social attitudes.
- 10 Small 5 minute programmes inserted between regular programmes on some aspect of ethnic group.
- 11 Need to educate ethnic groups in the ways and means of approaching the media.
- 12 Aborigines would like a radio programme of their own or some exposure at least on the air.

(h) WORKSHOP 7: (REPRESENTATIVE - PETER RANDOLPH)

MONOLINGUAL ANGLO-AUSTRALIANS

To enable meaningful discussion of the topic, its obviously controversial and generalising terminology was accepted with the following elaborations and modifications by the group.

A 'mono-cultural Australian' was to be considered primarily as a person; born in Australia, articulate in only the English language and being acculturated in a predominately Anglo-Australian mode - 'Roast beef on Christmas Day, even if it is 100°F in the water-bag'.

'Multicultural Australia' was to be considered as the point on the continuum between 'mono-cultural' and 'plural-cultural' at which we are at present. Such a 'multi-cultural Australia' was seen to be an improving but imperfect intercourse between groups within the community which can be distinguished culturally.

Suffice to say that the 'mono-cultural' aspect of the Australian being considered did not fit him very well for the projected 'plural-culture' or provide a wholly satisfactory situation for our present 'multiculture'.

It was recognized that this could mean such a person could be disadvantaged as the Conference has emphasised is happening to a number of ethnic minorities - we all recall the revealing comments by June English on the social behaviour of the 'mono-cultural Australian' girls at Brunswick Girl's High School where they formed a minority.

Perceived disadvantage of this kind might isolate individuals in this minority position but may also reinforce retaliatory behaviour when the boot is on the other foot and impair social relations between differing cultural groups.

There is also the likelihood that, as the present 'mono-cultural Australian' group constitute the power structure of the mainstream Australian society, prejudices will remain inherent in decisions affecting the whole community. The 'mono-cultural Australian' may not only accept but reinforce this seemingly secure place in the society. It may lead to parochial, myopic views that will retain divisions in our society for some time.

In the light of the above and wishing to take a positive not cynical view we discussed these questions:

- 1 Can we broaden the view of the 'mono-cultural Australian'? and
- 2 Can this be implemented through education?

The questions posed a further problem in this attempt to postulate specific and practical answers: the ultimate aim would be a knowledge of and an acceptance of the 'multi-cultural' nature of the society and its component groups by all citizens. However, neither knowledge nor acceptance would necessarily follow from one another.

Despite this hampering realisation the following suggestions resulted:

- 1 Members of the community could be invited into the school environment bringing with them their own cultural expertise.
- 2 Children could go out into the community to experience a variety of cultures other than their own.
- 3 Bilingual programmes could be instituted for ALL children.
- 4 Teachers could be trained in Language, Culture and Society to be more effective as initiators and catalysts in the field of community relations.
- 5 The media could be encouraged to support these aims through ethnic programmes and be requested to pay more attention to contemporary cultural situations which effect all the communities concerned.
- 6 In all the above, current cultural situations and activities as well as historic heritage is a prime consideration.

NOTE: With special reference to the 'mono-cultural Australian', the AUSTRALIAN CULTURE TODAY should be emphasised.

#### APPENDIX A - COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP

| <i>Employment/Interest</i>     | <i>Place of Birth</i> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Migrant teacher                | Northern Ireland      |
| Migrant teacher                | USA                   |
| Pharmacist/City-Councillor     | Italy                 |
| Teacher                        | Australia             |
| Teacher                        | Australia             |
| Anthropologist                 | Australia             |
| Priest                         | Australia             |
| Linguist-lecturer              | India                 |
| Linguist-post graduate student | New Zealand           |
| Research Forester/Esperanto    | Australia             |
| Educationist-lecturer          | Australia             |
| Businesswoman/Aboriginal Arts  | Australia             |
| Housewife/Aboriginal Arts      | Australia             |

#### APPENDIX B - RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 That the Education Department be requested to review its curricula in order to include:
  - (a) direct involvement of members of the community in classrooms
  - (b) opportunity for children to go outside the school to gain experience of other cultures
  - (c) bilingual programmes for ALL children.

- 2 That all tertiary institutions, particularly those involved in the training of teachers, be requested to include study/training units in Language, Culture and Society.
- 3 That approaches be made to the major media outlets to request more frequent programmes of cultures to be found within Australia TODAY.

(i) WORKSHOP 8: (REPRESENTATIVE - ROSEMARY TANG)

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Discussion:

A few local issues were cited as specific causes for concern, eg. the apparently uncaring official attitude to the anti-Asian graffiti which has appeared recently in the metropolitan area and the reported failure of a number of MTT drivers to provide bus services to aborigines in Middle Swan. The media, educational systems and some government departments were mentioned critically for their lack of sensitivity which resulted - whether intentionally or not - in denial of the right of an individual to identify with the cultural and social values of his own ethnic group. However, it was recognized that racial discrimination is a world-wide reality which needs to be combatted on a number of levels.

Today's anti-discrimination legislation derives from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly - of which Australia is a member - in 1948. In 1967, Australia was a signatory to the Unesco Convention against Discrimination in Education. The promulgation of the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975 and ratification of the 1966 International Convention Against All Forms of Racial Discrimination have provided Australia with the vital legal machinery to combat discrimination.

In addition to the Community Relations Commissioner and his small staff, State and Federal Ombudsmen and Committees on Discrimination in Employment are officially concerned with aspects of the administration of the Racial Discrimination Act are put into practice. They need to be actively supported by committed members of the community.

Resolution:

That interested people meet as soon as possible to discuss the organization of a group dedicated to promoting and supporting community harmony in the spirit of the Racial Discrimination Act.

(j) WORKSHOP 9: (REPRESENTATIVE - ALFRED H GORMAN)

URBAN ABORIGINES AND EDUCATION CENTRES

Our group consisted of approximately seventeen members of various ethnic backgrounds. Two areas were discussed:

- 1 The socio-economic plight of the urban Aboriginal.
- 2 Aboriginal education centres.

In the socio-economic area it was pointed out that urban Aborigines are at a disadvantage in the workforce due to lack of job training (this was mentioned by an Aboriginal employment service employee). The group responded with suggestions for community job training, special technical school programs and concern about severe cuts in Aboriginal education funds for 1977 by the Commonwealth. It was also mentioned that certain state and Federal agreements with Aboriginal tribes concerning a specific percentage of national and state funds obtained through production and trades profits had been illegally discontinued. Suggestions were made to look into this issue.

On the community education centre for Aborigines, much discussion was generated on three levels:

- 1 Aboriginal College
- 2 Aboriginal Community Education Centres
- 3 Aboriginal Pre-School Centres

The Aboriginal College concept received much support but a few felt it was a future goal due to funding, location and staffing. Again the Aboriginal land rights funds issue was suggested to support the college and immediate occupancy of one of the large vacant office buildings in the downtown area.

The Aboriginal community education centre was proposed as a local centre where pre-school, secondary and adult education could be supported on a personal, community needs level. It was recommended that the combined resources of the Commonwealth Education Department, pre-school board, DAA, and Aboriginal community associations might be a way of realizing such a centre.

Small independent Aboriginal pre-school centres already in existence were mentioned and discussed. The programs indicated a successful transition to the state primary school following a year or two pre-school with parental involvement. Furthermore, the group involved here indicated a need for help with the transition from primary to secondary a very traumatic social and educational change for Aboriginal children.

In summary, the group wished to support special innovations for Aboriginal educational programs on the pre-school, secondary, tertiary, and adult education. The big question: What is the Commonwealth willing to accept responsibility for in the way of Aboriginal land rights and allowance for Aboriginal self determination with these funds.

## 7. OUTCOMES

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WORKING PARTY CONSTITUTED FROM THE BODY  
OF THE CONFERENCE ON "THE MULTI-CULTURAL FUTURE AND THE SCHOOL" HELD  
AT THE MOUNT LAWLEY COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION MARCH 18-19, 1977

MEETING WAS HELD ON THURSDAY APRIL 14, 1977

PRESENT:

|                       |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Dr. Harry Pearson     | May O'Brien    |
| John Sherwood         | Rosemary Tang  |
| Robert Chellian       | John Cattalini |
| Mietka Gruzka         | Peggy Holroyde |
| Vladimir Mandyczewsky | Ian Malcolm    |

GENERAL BUSINESS:

1. Workshop Reports

Reports were presented from each of the nine workshops of the Conference. In general discussion of the order of priorities arising from the many recommendations made in these various groups, Dr. Harry Pearson stated that Dr. Mossenson (Director-General of Education, W.A.) expressed interest in the idea of a Migrant Advisory Committee which would incorporate much of the impetus expressed in the resolutions from the workshop. (Relevant sections relating to such an advisory body are enclosed with these minutes - see especially marked sections).

2. Combination of Aboriginal and Migrant Issues

There was some opinion expressed that perhaps the word Migrant or Ethnic should be replaced by that of 'Multicultural'. The Aboriginal participation in the Conference held meant that the scope for innovation and advance in Western Australia would have to be on a wider front bearing in mind, that although certain needs were the same, there were differences in result for Aboriginal people and Migrant or other incoming groups to Australia.

3. Proposal for Multicultural Education Advisory Council (M.E.A.C.)

It was resolved that strong efforts be made to initiate the establishment of an advisory body relating to Aboriginal and Migrant education.

It was resolved that a letter be drafted requesting the Minister for Education to appoint a Multicultural Education Advisory Council (M.E.A.C.) to advise educational systems on the disposition and use of Schools Commission and other funds in multicultural education, including both Migrant and Aboriginal education. (Copies of this draft letter to be pre-circulated).

Reverting back to the first point of the agenda, it was noted that an Implementation Conference to follow the previous one held, had to be clearly conceived, otherwise, (like so many other conferences of this nature) it would be preaching to the converted. How best to do it, what is meant by a follow up, how to reach out

to the unconverted, are questions that a Council such as proposed above (M.E.A.C.) could implement.

#### Bus Stop Issue

The specific matter raised by Workshop 6a and 8 concerning the MTT and the Middle Swan Aboriginal Communities was taken up. It was decided that as the main body of the Conference has requested a letter be written on the wider issues of race relations and while the actual details of what had happened were still not known, a letter be written to The West Australian clarifying the Conference' stand on community relations principles in general.

#### Future of this Working Party

The future activity of the working party was seen as unnecessary beyond one or two more meetings if such an Advisory Council (M.E.A.C.) is set up. The following suggested areas of priority action were listed as guidelines by Ian Malcolm.

- a. Liaison between various levels of Government, institutions and groups (see Agenda, Point 1).
- b. Information
- c. New policy - clarification
- d. New policy - implementation

#### Report on Citizens' Campaign Against Discrimination

A short report was given by Robert Chelliah of the newly constructed group arising from the workshop on Racial Discrimination, No. 8. This is now known as "Citizens' Campaign Against Discrimination" (C.C.A.D.). A more detailed report was to be given at the next meeting.

#### Financial Report

The Financial Report on the Conference would be tabled at the next meeting.

The date of the meeting was set on Wednesday, May 4 at 3.30 p.m. at Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education.

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Consequent to the following meeting a letter was sent to the Hon. P. Jones, Minister for Education, Western Australia, on the advisability of appointing a MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL and the Working Party was disbanded.

MEMBERSHIP OF WORKING PARTY OF CONFERENCE OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Chairman:

Mr. John Sherwood

Head of Aboriginal and Migrant Studies  
Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education

Secretary:

Mrs. Peggy Holroyde

Conference Organiser

Members:

Mr. John Cattalini

Councillor, Fremantle City Council

Mr. Robert Chelliah

Social Worker, Anglican Health and Welfare  
Department

Mrs. Mietka Gruszka

Teacher and Secretary of Polish Association

Mr. Ian Malcolm

Head, English Dept., Mount Lawley C.A.E.

Mr. Vladimir Mandyczewsky

Representative, Ukrainian Association

Mrs. May O'Brien

Teacher and member of National Aboriginal  
Education Committee

Dr. Harry Pearson

Assistant Director of Schools, Education  
Department of W.A.

Mrs. Rosemary Tang

Coordinator, Migrant and Multicultural  
Education, Catholic Education Commission

Letter to 'The West Australian'

2nd May, 1977.

The Editor,  
The West Australian,  
Newspaper House,  
St. George's Terrace,  
PERTH. W.A. 6000

Dear Sir,

At a recent educational Conference held at the Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education which was concerned with the multicultural future of Western Australia and the implications for education, "ethnic" was taken to imply all cultural groups in our society and most especially the original Australian committee of Aboriginal background.

During the Conference the main body in its final recommendations expressed very strong concern for the situation of Aboriginal peoples in this multicultural mosaic society which Australia now is.

The Saunders Street bus stop issue in which several Aboriginal people were left standing as the bus continued on, was cited as a particular instance of harassment and disadvantage Aboriginal people face in our midst. Whilst this case was not specifically to do with education it is an indication of need for education in its widest meaning for all of us in coming to terms with each other.

A working party set up since the Conference feels that until the full facts of the case mentioned above are known (and fully accepted that there may be more complex issues than those appearing on the surface in the press) nevertheless this will not be the last of these kinds of confrontation.

Housing, social hygiene, educational attainment are all very sensitive areas in human relationships. White people all over the world, and not only in Australia, hold the positions of power and the advantages of better housing, education opportunities, all manner of social facilities so that when such instances occur it is the responsibility of those of us in such positions of advantage to take extra care to understand the issues, and to press in schools and educational establishments for a greater understanding of Aboriginal history and needs in this state.

It also shows the urgency for dialogue rather than confrontation in the future.

Sincerely,

Peggy Holroyde  
Conference organizer

### 7.3 REPORT FROM CITIZEN'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

The Citizen's Campaign Against Discrimination was set up as an outcome of the Mount Lawley Teachers College Conference on the Multicultural Society and Education. The first several meetings dealt with problems of an appropriate name for the organization and the setting up of terms of reference. There was a great deal of heated discussion over whether CCAD should work to educate Australians about the problems of discrimination or be a more socially active group. About twentyfive people took part in the early discussions and were rather evenly divided. Some interested people were lost to the group due to lack of early action and there as also a problem of personality clashes. Another problem was whether or not to try to come directly under the auspices of Mr. Grassby's Commission for Community Relations or to stay independent of his office and merely adapt the ideals of the Racial Discrimination Act, which was thought to be too ineffectual legally in the present state. In the end it was decided to define our aim as that declared in the Act but to remain an independent group. The aim of CCAD is to become involved in matters of discrimination where it occurs because of colour, national or ethnic origin. We see ourselves as monitors of discrimination in Western Australia and as we are such a small group (a core of about twelve people at the moment) we hope to direct matters of discrimination on to the proper bodies so they can be dealt with through already established channels.

The organization is split into two basic camps, one dealing with migrants, mainly because of the members' professional positions in education and social welfare, and the other dealing with homeless Aborigines, since this matter is much in the foreground at the moment. The last several meetings have dealt almost entirely with the Aboriginal homeless problem, which has not pleased some members of the group.

The only substantial action by CCAD on migrant issues was to make a submission on the Green Paper, Immigration Policies and Australia's Population, to the Hon. J.R. MacKellar. The submission dealt only with those aspects where discrimination might be involved.

There has been discussion all along about combining with other Perth Groups which are also concerned with Human Rights, but this has not been done since our terms of reference are unique to CCAD and we feel there is a need for our particular group as it stands. We are seeing that Aboriginal and migrant problems can not really be lumped together since there seems to be a lack of mutual interest and support between Aborigines and migrants at the moment.

Many CCAD members feel that the future of CCAD rests on recruiting more members interested in problems of discrimination against migrants and leaving most of the Aboriginal problems in the hands of the now multitudinous Perth committees dedicated directly to their cause. The July 13, 1977 meeting (8:00, 42 Ventnor St., W. Perth) will be to decide the fate of CCAD. Since the last meeting we have had encouragement from Mr. Grassby's office in Canberra and so perhaps there will be a future for CCAD.

## 8. THE FUTURE - WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Brian V. Hill

The conference concludes on a high note of fellow feeling and the participants go home. There have been expressions of generous sentiment and revelations of overlooked facts, especially concerning the proportion of the Australian population now not of Anglo-Saxon origin. There have been resolutions and recommendations, as befits the conference syndrome. But where do we go from here?

The first answer is that we cannot go *back*. The conference was, for *all* participants, a consciousness-raising exercise. It is unlikely that any one person present was aware before the conference of all the facts and findings to be brought to light at the sessions, even though the general level of awareness was already quite high by virtue of the composition of the participating groups. None could return to their customary ethnic associations unaffected by what had transpired.

For example, it was brought home to some for the first time that the shoe of "disadvantage" may be on both feet, that is, that not only the Migrant and the Aboriginal might be set at a disadvantage in present Australian society, but that the mono-lingual Anglo-Saxon might himself be the poorer for lacking experience of the life-forms of other cultures.

Or again, some may have been surprised to find that a former minister in a previous Federal Labour government and a minister in the present Coalition government could be so much in accord on values and policies relating to Aboriginal education, lending support to Ian Viner's contention that "the things which divide national governments ..... are not differences of principle (but) ..... differences of application, of style, emphasis and priority." The conference was admirably free of attempts to interpret and argue the issues in terms of party politics. This is not to say that many of the questions arising do not involve political action; unquestionably they do, but it would be a mistake to let multi-cultural education become a pawn in a political chess game, thereby chaining reforms, recognised by all to be necessary, to the see-sawing fortunes of a particular political party.

It also became evident that we don't know enough at the factual level. June English revealed the complexity of negotiating reforms satisfactory to a wide range of ethnic sub-groups, such that large generalizations about "What Italians want" may short-change the needs of other ethnic groups or founder on regional differences in the very backgrounds of Italians themselves (and likewise for other ethnic groups). Jim Giles described an exciting range of initiatives being taken by the Education Department in his state, but tempered this with the reminder that as yet we know little about the likely effectiveness of these various strategies. In both cases a need for directed research effort became apparent.

Then, too, Jim Houston reinforced our awareness of how schooling on the European model falls short of meeting the particular needs of Aboriginal learners.

One may well question whether putting all our eggs in one basket - i.e., attempting to meet the objectives of multi-cultural education, even for children, mainly through formal schooling - is getting to the heart of the problem. Attempts in various parts of Australia to increase community involvement in education are having a very mixed reception at the present time, but the need for multicultural education for Aborigines, *and* Anglo-Saxons, *and* other ethnic groups, must surely argue for even more strenuous efforts to make community involvement work. There was an exciting flavour of community involvement in the conference itself. The vision that the organisers had of bringing together educationists, members of Aboriginal groups and representatives of Migrant and other ethnic groups, was abundantly validated. A model of fraternalism replaced the customary paternalistic context in which such issues are discussed.

For all of these reasons, none of the conferees can go back to old ways of thinking. This very fact highlights one task for the immediate future: that of raising awareness in the community at large of the multi-cultural perspectives developed in the conference. An example has been set by the past labours of Al Grassby, whose paper at the conference offered us a new vocabulary backed up by relevant demographic analysis. It is for conferees to enlarge horizons in their own groups and in the larger community, so that old concepts of indifference towards other ethnic groups or of assimilation (and absorption) into the majority culture will be replaced by an appreciation of the benefits to be had *by all* from inter-cultural exchange and multi-cultural education. Another answer to the question of where we go from here lies with the format and findings of the conference. The organisers rightly did not expect the conference to solve many problems, since a first step was to become aware of the actual situation. Some recommendations were brought forward soliciting government action at state and federal levels, and continuing effort is needed to maintain the visibility of our cause, given that in times of financial stringency it is easy to slip off the priority list. A continuing work-group was formed to monitor such efforts and to convene another conference at a convenient time in the near future. And other *ad hoc* work-parties were generated in particular discussion groups to carry forward specific lines of investigation and activism.

Australia, often undeservedly a lucky country, has survived a period of very substantial migration with surprisingly little social upheaval. Occasional enquiries at federal level into the effectiveness of Migrant assimilation policies over the years have been remarkable for two things. One has been the admitted paucity of steps taken either to help the new arrival to adjust, or to awaken the local community to the needs and gifts of the newcomers. The other has been the expressions of bemused surprise that in spite of these limitations everyone seems to have settled down quite well. One cannot but wonder at the cruel smugness of such reactions, given the heart-ache caused in many families by the generations drawing apart culturally, the lonely struggle of many youngsters to achieve results at school which represent their true ability, and the suppression of ethnic contributions in the mass media.

But the times are changing. Ethnic proportions in the population have altered and a confident second generation of Australians with non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds has become vocal. Aboriginal groups have also learned to make their voices heard, and cultural re-assessment is

inevitable. There are some who urge hostile confrontation, which I believe to be an over-reaction prompted by examples borrowed from other countries where social cleavage has driven much deeper than in Australia. It is plausible to prefer and expect that increased opportunities for consultation and inter-cultural exchange will flow from conferences such as the one just concluded. We may hope also that governments will co-operate in such moves at least as readily as the federal department did on this occasion, and accept the value of heavier funding of fraternal initiatives in the interests of a qualitatively better Australia.

Let the ground-swell continue, in an atmosphere determined by the resolve to have mutual respect for each other.

