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Hellenic News, Culture & Lifestyle



New report on migration and multiculturalism in Australia

Australia is a vibrant multicultural society according to the findings of the Migration Committee report tabled in the Parliament today. The report received bi-partisan support and made 32 recommendations after receiving over 500 submissions and holding 27 public hearings over a two year period.

The report found that Australian multiculturalism is a success story, and stands as a good example to the world on how to build a cohesive society.

Chair of the Migration Committee Maria Vamvakinou (photo) said: "immigration and settlement in Australia has always been a nation building exercise. The committee believes that access to Australian citizenship has been at the heart of the success and cohesion of Australian society. Settlement is a long term and intergenerational process, and we need a whole of government approach and better coordination between all three tiers of Australian government".

The committee's recommendations include: rebuilding Australia's research capacity in this field, especially in qualitative research; factoring cultural and linguistic diversity into the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda, greater flexibility in English language training and support for micro enterprises, especially for women. The Committee found Job Services Australia needs to improve its delivery

of services to people of diverse backgrounds, including refugees.

Deputy Chair Louise Markus said the committee welcomed meeting people at the grass roots where business and local communities were collaborating to improve relationships, and build skills and opportunities for people from different backgrounds.

"In Dandenong, the South East Melbourne Manufacturers Alliance is bringing employers and young refugees together; the National Australia Bank's African Inclusion Program is exemplary; and social enterprises, like The Studio, are inspirational. These initiatives deserve special mention and prove that cooperation, cross-cultural awareness, and commitment provide tangible results," Mrs Markus said.

Mrs Markus said there was "no doubt that immigration has enriched the social, economic and cultural life of our country". Ms Vamvakinou said every society is dynamic and open to the influences of globalisation, wars, and economic crises. We are a resilient society and well placed to meet these challenges.

A copy of the report and information about the inquiry can be obtained from the committee's website www.aph.gov.au/mig or from the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4560. All submissions to the inquiry are published on the committee's website.



Theodorakis in stable condition, to remain in hospital for observation

Acclaimed Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis was reported to be in stable condition and will remain under observation this week after being admitted to the Athens Medical Center on Saturday with respiratory problems as a result of a lung infection.

According to members of his family, doctors suggested that the 87-year-old composer remain in hospital for further observation.

Land-grabbers to eat their cake too

A recent amendment to land registry laws introduced by the Environment Ministry waives the state's claim to public plots of forest and grazing land that have been illegally occupied in the past 30 years and have since been included in town plans, opening up the way for construction on the property.

The amendment, aimed at speeding up the long-overdue national land register by settling cases where trespassers claim they have rights over public land because they have been using it or living on it for at least three decades, further paves the way for large occupied plots to be legalized by abolishing the 2,000-square-meter limit.

Another part of the amendment accelerates the process of registering property on the cadastre by reducing the time it takes for a commissioned technical company to confirm proprietorship.

Names, photos of suspects tougher to publicize

A new Ministry of Justice directive has tightened rules governing the publication of names and photographs of suspects arrested over serious felonies. Under the new law prosecutors must state exactly when personal details can be divulged and which media outlets can do so. Suspects will also have to be notified before their names and photographs are made public.

While agreeing on principle with the ministry's directive, judges and prosecutors argue that notifying suspects prior to releasing their details undermines the objective, which is to help witnesses come forward, especially in terrorism and organized crime cases.

According to the new law, suspects may appeal the prosecutor's decision within two days of being notified of the impending publication of their personal details.