

Culture, citizenship and Australian multiculturalism

The contest over identity formation at the National Museum of Australia

Kylie Message

Figure 4.1 The National Museum of Australia, Canberra (exterior detail).



Photograph courtesy of Kylie Message.

Introduction

Much has been written about the historical allegiance of citizenship and national museums and, although they continue to share the discourse of government, concepts of citizenship have undergone a serious re-evaluation in recent years. This process of revision has also been paralleled in the changing ideas about museum practice that have come to be associated with the new museology.¹ Traditional nineteenth and twentieth-century museums promoted normative approaches to nation-building ideologies and an institution of citizenship that

sought to achieve civic and social reform of the urban masses that were defined in opposition to non-Western and Indigenous peoples (who appeared to be defined by and reduced to ethnographic representations of their 'vanishing' cultures). In contrast, the globally savvy 'new' museums of the twenty-first century are increasingly being identified by their aspiration to contribute to the meta-narratives of civic unity and a common notion of public good by adopting advocacy roles, accepting ideas about the rights associated with 'cultural citizenship' and supporting or developing strategic partnerships with local areas and source communities—Indigenous and migrant. Actually, many new museums (especially those that are national or government funded) endeavour to challenge the idea that culture and politics have a dichotomous relationship. In addition to their aim to preserve culture, they provide a place where culture and identity can be performed, generated and recognised as dynamic and political.

Such museums tend to exist within societies that are pragmatically multicultural, including Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Contextualised by policy ideals that encourage migrants to retain and express their original cultural identity for the enrichment of their adopted home, new museums are quick to recognise that this distinction can itself be a product of the social construction of migrants as 'people of culture'. The assumed 'otherness' of migrants and Indigenous people is what makes them culturally visible and, while this 'visibility' works to reinforce the invisibility of the dominant culture, it also narrows the citizenship options available to groups defined in opposition to the majority.² As such, new museums often seek to represent the complexity and debate about terms such as 'cultural citizenship' and some also take on board Ruth Phillips' caution to avoid 'transmitting a falsely harmonious representation of conflicts not yet resolved in the world outside the museum'.³ While new museums invite us to recognise the continuing function of national government as a social (as well as political) act that affects people's lives in very personal ways, they also insist on the role of museums as technologies that can generate new forms of social interaction and a dynamic form of cultural politics. We can understand these changes to mean that the focus for many national museums in contemporary—postcolonial and multicultural—societies has shifted towards grappling with how to more equitably balance their service to diverse multicultural and Indigenous communities with their traditional commitment to government policy positions and civic reformism.⁴

My purpose in this essay is to bring the debates about museums, citizenship and multiculturalism that occurred from the 1970s to the present day in Australia into a shared frame. Without seeking to contend that there was an explicit alignment between the transformations that occurred in each of these fields (or even that the debates were interconnected, although evidence suggests this was the case), I examine the role that public cultural representations of Australian-ness have played over this period. My discussion focuses on the National Museum

of Australia (NMA). The National Museum was conceptualised in 1975, created by an act of Parliament in 1980, opened in 2001, and was subject to a government-commissioned review of its exhibitions and public programs in 2003.⁵ It was chosen as the venue for 'Australian Citizenship Day' ceremonies in 2008, and this year started opening new permanent exhibitions redesigned in response to the 2003 review. The museum's key dates parallel the development and transformation of multiculturalism in Australia. First mentioned by the Australian Government (by the Minister for Immigration, Al Grassby) in 1973, multiculturalism was presented in 1978 as a long-term government strategy to develop social institutions that would respond to an increasingly pluralist society.⁶ A series of discussion papers and policies pertaining to multiculturalism were published from the 1970s, including: *Multiculturalism for All Australians: Our developing nationhood* (1982), *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* (1989) and *A New Agenda for a Multicultural Australia and Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards inclusiveness* (1999). *Multicultural Australia: United in diversity* was published in 2003, and this policy remains current today.⁷ As the changes in policy indicate, a contraction of political interest in multiculturalism has occurred during this period and national agendas have been transformed in line with the contemporary global appetite for the 'soft' notions of social cohesion and harmony.

Tensions associated with the changing definitions, understandings and experiences of citizenship, museums and multiculturalism were forced to the front of the stage in 2001, when the nation marked its constitutional centenary and when the NMA opened in March as a feature of the centenary celebrations. The festive tone of the centenary was diluted, however, by events that followed later that year, including the 'Tampa affair' in August, the 11 September terrorist attacks, and the 'children overboard' incident in October.⁸ A federal election—which resulted in the re-election of the Howard-led Coalition Government—was held in November. We can understand that it was for reasons associated with fear and expediency as well as enthusiasm that an intensified interest in national unity came to characterise the political spectrum at this time. Although the subsequent 2003 review of the new National Museum's exhibitions and programs was tied to the emergent History Wars, the attack on the museum must also be contextualised against a backdrop of the rise of the New Right (and the radicalisation of the Liberal Party) during the 1990s, which elevated 'political correctness' to a term of abuse and made anything seen as elite-driven or interest group-driven a target.⁹ In some ways, the assault on academic history and multiculturalism had as much to do with the general attack on the perceived process of policy and decision making as it did with the issues themselves.

The overarching aim of this essay is to explore what agency or authority new museums such as the NMA might have in promoting, normalising or challenging

shifting policy positions pertaining to multiculturalism and citizenship. I argue, in the final instance, that government-funded institutions, especially cultural ones, provide a vital opportunity for public policies and community attitudes to intersect and even become mutually informing—a position proposed by the 1982 discussion paper *Multiculturalism for All Australians*:

The dynamic character of multiculturalism naturally calls for changes, not only in attitudes but also in our institutions. This will not be easy and, according to an Australian expert on ethnic relations, 'it is not possible to change attitudes and minimise prejudice if the structural conditions which encourage them are maintained'.¹⁰

Australian citizenship

Citizenship has traditionally been understood to refer to a legal-formal contract between an individual and the state, in which individuals are granted rights to political agency and legal support for being socially and morally responsible. It has often been perceived as a core component of national cultural homogenisation. Notwithstanding the prior rights conveyed by British subjecthood, the formal legal starting point for understanding citizenship in this country is the Australian Constitution (1901), even though citizenship is largely omitted from its terms. 'Citizenship concerned the drafters [of the Act] acutely and they made a conscious effort to exclude the term from Australia's foundational legal document' in order to maintain the authority to exclude non-British people—notably, Indigenous Australians, Chinese and people from non-Anglo-Celtic parts of the Commonwealth (Indians and Hong Kong Chinese), who shared the status of being 'subjects of the Queen'.¹¹ It was not until 1948 that Australian citizenship was first legally defined by the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948* (Cth), which later became the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* (Cth). Despite amendments being made to the legislation over time (including the insertion of a new preamble in 1993 and the 2007 Australian citizenship law reforms), Mark Nolan and Kim Rubenstein have argued that citizenship continues to be used today as a device of immigration control and exclusion.¹² The events and collateral anxieties of 2001 certainly caused a surge of opinion and debate about citizenship to flood the public cultural sphere. Discussion coalesced on issues of national security, the treatment and rights of refugees and asylum-seekers and the 'obligations' (rather than the 'rights') associated with the privilege of Australian citizenship more generally. The reframing of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* into the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* occurred in the wake of these discussions, and the changes made to this legislation have provided a further opportunity and reason to scrutinise the way in which we define and understand citizenship in a contemporary Australian context.¹³ One instance of this re-evaluation was the 2008 Australia 2020 Summit, at which participants debated 'the future of Australian governance: Renewed democracy, a more open government (including

the role of the media), the structure of the Federation and the rights and responsibilities of citizens'. Just a month earlier, a panel of public advocates and intellectuals gathered in Canberra to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the 1948 act and to debate the topic: 'Australian citizenship: is it really worth having?'¹⁴

Constitutional law experts, including Rubenstein cited above, used this anniversary and other key dates (for example, the fiftieth anniversary of Australian citizenship) to call for a re-evaluation of definitions pertaining to citizenship in the Australian Constitution on the basis that the 'failure to engage properly in informed debate about citizenship' has been a key reason for the existence of stark differences between the formal legal status of citizenship (and inconsistencies therein) and the broader sense of the civic value of membership in the Australian community.¹⁵ This insistence on the plurality and diversity of citizenship registers changing understandings of citizenship in public (if not government) cultures globally. It acknowledges that discourses on citizenship are increasingly influenced by growing recognition that the contested norms of conduct and citizenship are themselves impacted by power relations, by the improved understanding that citizenship is more than a legal instrument, and by the subsequent acknowledgment that its cultures and practices are fluid and diverse.

Universal and cosmopolitan human rights initiatives have also contributed significantly to the change in focus from civic to political and social rights, as has the renewed attention to culture (represented as identity, gender, sexuality and race), values and habits as potentially unifying and motivating concepts. This is particularly evident in the United Kingdom, where concepts of social capital and community cohesion—both of which are understood to emerge from communities that demonstrate a shared vision and sense of belonging—have been presented in policy initiatives as features central to the reconfiguration of a healthy civil sphere.¹⁶ As a consequence, singular meanings of citizenship in liberal Western democracies around the globe, including the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, have been challenged by claims for the acknowledgment of difference in and by mainstream cultures, and by calls for recognition of cultural rights that are based on claims of ownership of, access to, and the right to profit from information and cultural patrimony, the protection of intellectual property, and the development and expression of cultural identities via education, custom, language and religion, the protection of heritage, and demands that cultural rights are an important way in which to create equity between different cultural groups in postcolonial multicultural societies.¹⁷ The debate about changing concepts and definitions of citizenship in these particular countries has been echoed by their deliberation about whether to ratify the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (which was adopted by the

United Nations on 13 September 2007 after 143 member states voted in favour, 11 abstained and four—Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States—voted against the text).¹⁸ The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (adopted unanimously at the thirty-first UNESCO General Conference in November 2006) has also influenced these changes insofar as it addresses the implications of globalisation (notably, expansion of debates about the influence of cultural pluralism on social fragmentation) on the territorial, sovereign state.

This essay is contextualised by these events and by the work of citizenship scholars such as Joke Hermes and Peter Dahlgren, who argue that ‘changing sociocultural realities underscore the limitations of strictly legal-formal notions of citizenship; not least, for example, in the face of the social problematics in post-colonial multicultural societies’.¹⁹ Following the interest that Hermes, Dahlgren and other scholars have in examining the relationship between culture and citizenship, I present a survey of instances that demonstrates the role that culture (as a government tool *and* site of contestation) plays in developing and exercising diverse understandings about what it means to hold membership in the Australian national community.²⁰ To come to terms with the purpose and potential of citizenship in a contemporary Australian context, I argue, it is necessary to move away from the narrow legal definition of citizenship and instead focus our attention on the particular practices, cultures and politics of citizenship that play out in everyday spaces—as well as through the museums, policies and institutions that create or challenge dominant cultural imaginaries.²¹

Identity formation at the National Museum of Australia

Contemporary critical engagements with citizenship and museums have centred on the re-evaluation of ideas about power, authority and the dissemination of these ideas into the public sphere—a process that was exemplified by statements that the new National Museum of Australia was to be self-consciously postmodern, postcolonial and pluralist in outlook (Figure 4.1).²² Reflections about the recent history of the NMA demonstrate the urgency through which the exchanges between politics, culture and society were characterised at the close of the twentieth century as a time when, to quote former NMA director Dawn Casey, the issue of ‘Australian-ness’ was ‘being debated possibly more vigorously than in any other period of the nation’s history’. According to Casey, ‘We [the NMA] accept from the outset that there will be disagreements about the way we examine historic[al] processes or about our very choice of themes and stories and issues’.²³ This statement reflects the recommendations in *Museums in Australia 1975: Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections including the Report of the Planning Committee on the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia*, the document that first called for the development of a national museum. Chaired by Peter Piggott (and subsequently referred to as the *Piggott Report*), the report recommended that not only should the museum

'extend the front-lines of knowledge', it 'should enable curious spectators to visit those front-lines and understand how some of the battles to extend knowledge are fought'.²⁴ It is my contention that in the institution's aspiration to engage with the History Wars (that escalated from about 1993), and in its aim to heighten awareness of the contribution that ordinary members of the national community make to conceptions of identity and citizenship (as symbolic ideas and everyday lived reality), the NMA has sought to create 'a more widely shared and more widely available form of "the political" as moments of engagement, of "public connection"'.²⁵ The representation of 'the political' preferred by the NMA is one that is centrally tied to ideas about culture, and linked therefore to a supposedly more inclusive, civics-based notion of citizenship.²⁶

My interest in this essay is not to sift back through the well-known series of actions, recriminations, responses or the wider social implications that followed from the museum's opening and culminated in the 2003 *Review of the National Museum of Australia, Its Exhibitions and Public Programs: A report to the Council of the National Museum of Australia* (henceforth referred to as the *NMA Review*).²⁷ Instead, I want to highlight two particular aspects of the process through which the NMA was conceptualised and then presented to the public that have continued to inform understandings about the social role and purpose of the museum.²⁸ My first point of focus is the intellectual framework or approach that was adopted for the new museum. Seeking to represent identity as unfinished and contested, contingent and continuously negotiated, national identity was represented as a work in progress to which museum audiences were encouraged to contribute. The contributions of audiences and constituents were enabled on the basis that the museum would function as a public forum that aimed to 'speak with many voices, listen and respond to all, and promote debate and discussion about questions of diversity and identity'.²⁹

The second notable aspect is the decision to present the museum as an active agent in the emergent History Wars. As indicated by recommendations made by the *Piggott Report*, the intention for the museum to adopt the role of provocateur was indicated before it opened. These intentions were clearly aligned with an implicit attempt to question old certainties (especially those relating to the history of Indigenous people).³⁰ As early as 1998, Casey publicly commented: 'It is never easy for a publicly funded cultural institution to become involved in controversy, but that is probably inevitable if we are to do our job honestly.'³¹ We can understand that the museum, rather than adopting the position of distanced observer or neutral reflection, sought to provoke and challenge long-held ideas about identity and question what citizenship meant in this country. Casey's desire for the museum to enact a program of social change and political intervention was motivated, in part at least, by the less controversial aim that the institution should incorporate and demonstrate to the Australian

public a self-reflexivity about the general historical complicity of museums in the colonial enterprise.

On the one hand, it is possible to understand the museum's provocative purview to be an affectation associated with the emergent discipline of new museology through which it was designed and articulated (American 'new museologist' Elaine Heumann Gurian was involved in the museum's development phase during the 1990s). Its aim, however, to be politically aware, responsive to contemporary events and to represent the changing place of Indigenous Australians within Australian society was based on the initial concept of the national museum (as recommended by the *Piggott Report*), which outlined a bicultural museum that should concentrate on 'Aboriginal man in Australia; European man in Australia; and the Australian environment and its interaction with the two-named themes'.³² Early exhibitions such as *Landmarks: People, land and political change* (exhibited in 1993 at Old Parliament House, Canberra) presented the reconciliation project as a way to bring these themes into dialogue in order to make the museum appear contemporary and relevant.³³ The exhibition sought to improve the public's understanding of the reconciliation project, which had been formed largely through the media's coverage of events including Indigenous responses to the 1988 Bicentenary of the arrival of the First Fleet in Sydney (problematically promoted as the 'celebration of the nation'), as well as the 1992 Mabo ruling.³⁴

Although commentators sometimes contend that the level of public interest in reconciliation was indicated by the great numbers of signatures (more than one million) that were collected in thousands of 'sorry books' and by the more than 260 local reconciliation groups that were established to mark the inaugural National Sorry Day held on 26 May 1998, the majority of Australians did not sign sorry books or go on reconciliation marches.³⁵ For his part, the Prime Minister, John Howard, steadfastly refused to lead or have any part in offering a formal national apology for past mistreatment of Aboriginal people, arguing that Australians should not be asked to 'accept responsibility for the acts of earlier generations, sanctioned by the law of the times'.³⁶ Further, the Liberal-National Coalition's electoral success at the 1996 federal election was due as much to Howard's 'tough stance' as it was to his ability to tap into and reflect residual attitudes among the 'majority' of Australians—'the battlers' targeted by his 'For all of us' campaign slogan.³⁷ Even despite its varying levels of support, however, the reconciliation project was front of stage in the mainstream media and popular imagination in the period leading up to the NMA's opening and the new museum, widely promoted as offering a 'public forum', was a logical site to host debates of national significance. The debate about reconciliation increasingly became associated with the museum when rumours

started to circulate that the word 'sorry' was written in the Braille transcript that skirted the building's postmodern exterior.³⁸

The Prime Minister famously responded to the new NMA building by labelling it 'very un-museum-like' at its launch in March 2001.³⁹ His suspicion of apologies and postmodern museums was soon allied to claims laid by conservative commentator Keith Windschuttle that the museum's selection and representation of a biased 'people's history' overlooked the contribution of settlers and great Australians to the national project and misrepresented colonial events. Windschuttle derided the museum's commitment to pluralism on the basis that it gave 'equal time for every identifiable sexual and ethnic group'.⁴⁰ His interpretation gained further traction when one of the NMA's own board members, David Barnett—a former press secretary to Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and Howard's official biographer—accused the NMA of presenting a version of Australian history that was 'claptrap' and influenced by 'Marxist rubbish'.⁴¹ Barnett contended that the exhibitions portrayed a revisionist 'black-armband' view of Australian history that was politically partisan in that it championed 'unfortunates' such as workers and stolen children and ignored the contributions of 'founding fathers and prime ministers'.⁴² Of Label 0826-70, Barnett said: 'Heather Rose. Another unfortunate. The way to get a place in the Museum is to have something terrible befall you.'⁴³ Despite the slowly growing public support for a national apology to be made to members of the Stolen Generations, Barnett took particular offence at the museum's Stolen Generations exhibit, denigrating it as a 'victim episode'.⁴⁴

Barnett's complaint about the NMA's depiction of 'biased' accounts of Aboriginal experience and its concentration on the extraordinary achievements and stories of ordinary Australians (at what he considered to be the expense of notable Australians) stood in stark contrast with comments made by Al Grassby 30 years earlier.⁴⁵ In a 1973 conference presentation called 'A multi-cultural society for the future', Grassby asked:

How often do our television screens reflect anything like the variety of migrant groups encountered in a real-life stroll through our city streets, or particularly our near-city suburbs? The image we manage to convey of ourselves still seems to range from the bushwhacker to the sportsman to the slick city businessman. Where is the Maltese process worker, the Finnish carpenter, the Italian concrete layer, the Yugoslav miner, or—dare I say it—the Indian scientist?⁴⁶

Grassby's comments about the poverty of representation offered by Australian television were picked up by the *Galbally Report* in 1978, which lay the groundwork for the establishment of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS).⁴⁷ The multicultural policies developed in the ensuing 30 years also led to the transformation of public culture in Australia. Initiatives such as 'Harmony Day',

the establishment of migration museums in Adelaide and Melbourne, the development of cultural diversity policies by state museums and the leading professional organisation, Museums Australia, as well as the establishment of the Australia Council policy on Australian arts and cultural diversity demonstrate that a significant cultural change has occurred, as do the many community development projects funded by local and state governments.⁴⁸ The NMA was also founded and designed during the early days of multicultural policy development. Refining the general approach outlined by the 1975 *Piggott Report*, the 1982 *Report of the Interim Council: Plan for the development of the Museum of Australia* envisaged that:

The Museum will emphasise that Australian society comprises people of many different origins...pay special attention to events in the peopling of Australia...highlight the effects of cultural diversity...[and explore] how the concept of assimilation of new immigrants is being re-examined and re-shaped by pluralistic philosophies and practices.⁴⁹

The report tasked the museum with enlarging perceptions of Australian nationhood and with providing a space that would invite public scrutiny of the policies emerging in the post-White Australia Policy era. It sought a museum that would enable consideration of the impact of such policies on the everyday experience of ordinary Australians. This was less a revisionist approach to history telling than one that sought to represent those people (Grassby's Maltese process worker, Finnish carpenter and Italian concrete layer, but also the diversity of Indigenous Australians) who had been previously excluded from the national register. It also recognised the role that museums had in measuring and reflecting (as well as influencing) public opinion.

From multiculturalism *for all Australians* to *Australian multiculturalism*

Multiculturalism was initially developed as a program of immigrant settlement and welfare support that aimed to assist migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds to become Australian without jettisoning their previous cultural heritage. In 1977, the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council defined multiculturalism according to principles of national cohesion, recognition of cultural identity and promotion of social equality.⁵⁰ Advocates of multiculturalism represented Australia as being made up of people of diverse cultures that should be given equal status within the Australian mainstream, where Australian citizenship became the glue that bound these different groups into a national unity.⁵¹ This ideal was represented in *Multiculturalism for All Australians: Our developing nationhood*, which was produced by the Office of Multicultural Affairs in 1982 and chaired by professor of sociology and leading government advisor on multicultural issues Jerzy Zubrzycki (who was also a member of the Museum of

Australia Interim Council responsible for the 1982 *Plan for the Development of the Museum of Australia*). At this time, Zubrzycki commented:

The concepts involved in the legal status of citizenship are related to those of multiculturalism through the notion of Australian identity: the question of what it means to be an Australian in our multicultural society. An additional link is provided by the ideal of mutual commitment between citizen and nation—an ideal that is common to both citizenship and a cohesive multicultural society.⁵²

Citizenship, the NMA and multiculturalism can each be represented as belonging to the fields of policy (political positioning), ideology (philosophical belief) and/or pragmatic or everyday experience (cultures of citizenship). Each institution or concept responds to, reflects and is implemented by one or more of these fields (which they can at times also seek to extend or challenge). Multiculturalism, for instance, can be readily understood as having three primary usages. The first is related to the field of policy, where it is used to direct the relationships and institutional arrangements between diverse cultural groups that affect access to resources, privileges and participation in decision making. The second usage, not always distinguished from the first, is related to ideology, where multiculturalism exists ‘as a term for the philosophical basis for a culturally diverse society, i.e. the belief that certain institutional arrangements ought to exist’.⁵³ A third usage reflects the pragmatic multiculturalism of everyday life in Australia, as indicated by the goals asserted by the 1982 *Plan for the Development of the Museum of Australia* and by other evidence, including market research commissioned in 2002 by SBS Television, which found that, ‘in practice, most Australians, from whatever background, live and breathe cultural diversity, actively engaging with goods and activities from many different cultures’.⁵⁴ It is important to acknowledge that the third field of pragmatic or everyday experience provides more than just a context for the first two fields. Recognition of the lived reality and ubiquity of multiculturalism counteracts arguments that insist that multiculturalism is solely a political idea and public policy regime, and allows greater recognition that claims asserting that multiculturalism is a ‘top-down’ project and ‘the work of a small clique’ ignore the reality of considerable demand from within the immigrant communities for improved services and status.⁵⁵

Although citizenship, the NMA and multiculturalism can all relate equally well to each of the three areas just outlined, I have focused this study on the NMA because of its commitment to representing the everyday and non-constant experiences, benefits and challenges associated with citizenship in multicultural Australia. As a government instrument that invites participation by ‘ordinary’ Australians, it has the potential to inform or intervene in the further development of multicultural policy by providing representation of public sentiment about

citizenship procedures and legislation. This intention was evident in the 1993 *Landmarks* exhibition, in which contested public opinion and debate about each of the three national landmarks was represented. A further example that demonstrated the museum's potential to provide a significant space for political advocacy (if not recognition or protest) was the agreement by the Yolngu people from Yirrkala, north-eastern Arnhem Land, to work with anthropologist Howard Morphy to develop a *yingapungapu* sand sculpture and performance as part of the NMA's opening ceremony. According to Morphy, Yolngu leaders 'saw an exhibition in Canberra as a means of continuing to demonstrate to a national audience their native title rights over the coastal waters of Blue Mud Bay'.⁵⁶ The potential the Yolgnu saw for the museum to play a role in their struggle for land rights was reiterated by their subsequent preference for the hearing into their claim to be held at the NMA (as a site they now felt a symbolic connection with) rather than at the High Court of Australia.⁵⁷ This example demonstrates that more than just offering a public space or forum, the museum provides an official platform for people to occupy in order to represent their interests to government. It also demonstrates a challenge to the authority of the traditional notion of citizenship as a legal instrument represented exclusively by the legal apparatus (the High Court). This relationship indicates that the 'national' museum is valued by Yolgnu for its ties to government and that this connection is understood to demonstrate governmental legitimization of the representation being made—at least symbolically. The cultural politics that motivated the decision to include the *yingapungapu* sculpture and performance in the NMA shows that the museum was identified as a site of productive albeit contested understandings of national identity and history by players who had traditionally been excluded by Commonwealth Government policies. Furthermore, in continuing to promote the legitimacy of cultural forms and practices of citizenship, the museum might increasingly become what Morphy calls a 'site of persuasion' to counteract its traditional role as an exhibitionary complex or surface of government.⁵⁸

The intersection between the importance of the nascent NMA as a symbolic national space and the multicultural policies emerging at the time were apparent in the 1982 *Plan for the Development of the Museum of Australia* as well as in the *National Consultations on Multiculturalism and Citizenship* report published that same year. Also chaired by Zubrzycki, the *National Consultations* presented multiculturalism as a 'live issue'. The report focuses on the pragmatically multicultural nature of Australia. To indicate (liberal) public sentiment in Australia in the early 1980s, the document cites an editorial feature from the *Melbourne Age* newspaper, which says:

[Multiculturalism] is not a dangerous new 'ism' to be foisted on an unsuspecting nation. It is not a radical plot to change the nature of

Australian society. It is not a devious attempt to open the immigration floodgates...It is essentially a recognition of reality and an enlightened attempt to respond positively to the changes in a growing community.⁵⁹

Like the *National Consultations on Multiculturalism and Citizenship* report, the 1982 *Multiculturalism for All Australians* discussion paper, as well as the 1989 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* stressed the productive contribution that pluralism made to contemporary society. They advanced a social justice-cum-citizenship model of multiculturalism and argued that multiculturalism should not be limited to issues affecting minority groups alone. On the basis that they also recognised the currency of culture and diversity in the figuration of citizenship and national ideals, these strategies sought to have multiculturalism officially inscribed as a right of citizenship.⁶⁰ Although there is no space in this essay to outline the transformation in policy positions that occurred from this point, there was a notable change in position after Howard's conservative government was elected in 1996.⁶¹ Symptomatic of the Liberal-National Coalition Government's attempt to regulate the citizenship contract between the individual and the state by reaffirming the productive connections between national identity and civic obligation, 'cultural' forms of citizenship and more liberal understandings of contributions made to an inclusive national community were no longer in political favour. Similarly, it was not long before the Department of Immigration, Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs was renamed the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, from which any sense of culture, let alone 'multiculturalism', was removed and in which distinctions between the formal legal status of citizenship and the more inclusive civics-based notion of citizenship were reinscribed.

Unlike earlier policies that had centralised the language and concepts of multiculturalism and promoted the idea (reflected strongly in the NMA's opening exhibitions) that Australian nationhood was 'developing', the national agendas of 1999–2003 relocated Australian-ness as a central signifier and marginalised multiculturalism. Apparent in the shift of terminology that moved to embrace the phrase '*Australian multiculturalism*', these policies stressed the adjective, presented Australian national identity as a *fait accompli* (exemplified by the great nation-building age of the 1890s) and asserted the critical roles of social cohesion and allegiance and responsibility to Australia over pluralism, which, particularly in the post 9/11 era, was identified as a source of social fragmentation. Designed ostensibly to 'update' the previous (1999) national strategy and to draw attention to building fears about social fragmentation, the 2003 *Multicultural Australia: United in diversity* policy called for the public to understand that strategies of social cohesion and tolerance were tied to issues of national security and social integration, claiming: 'Australians now see themselves as directly

threatened by terrorism. In this context, community harmony and social cohesion are pivotal.⁶²

According to sociologist Andrew Jakubowicz, the Australian Government's continuing support for the Harmony Day campaign (established in 1999) was closely aligned with the recentralisation of a singular and unifying notion of Australian-ness within multicultural policy.⁶³ While Harmony Day was initially developed as a program that would privilege 'mainstream' groups and stress inter-group harmony, it has since been refined to balance out the post-9/11 'alert but not alarmed' advertisements developed as part of the Commonwealth Government's national security public information campaign.⁶⁴ Schools, Scout groups and other civil organisations are identified as the primary target of Harmony Day, which effectively makes them (rather than governments) responsible for bringing cultural and ethnic groups into dialogue with 'mainstream Australia' in shared public spaces. Acknowledging the role that cultural difference was perceived to play in the 2005 Cronulla riots,⁶⁵ however, recent Harmony Day events further contracted in focus. Continuing to reflect government suspicions about inclusive multiculturalism, they reassert more traditional notions of citizenship that are based on tolerance and civic obligation, where shared but essentially 'Australian' values are reaffirmed.⁶⁶ Consequently, Harmony Day publicity promotes a firmly depoliticised understanding of culture that evokes colourful concepts of food, fashionistas and festivals (which echoes the 2003 *NMA Review's* promotion of culture as an enrichment or add-on to the more fundamental Australian norms and familiar images of nation—see next section). Tied to its anti-racism and obligation-based agenda, Harmony Day promotes the social capital and community cohesion arising from civic activity and community participation as a salve to the social fragmentation (read racism) that is perceived to have resulted from earlier policies of multiculturalism and immigration.⁶⁷

Concern about the perceived ramifications of cultural fragmentation came to a head in 2006 when the Federal Government proposed the introduction of a compulsory citizenship test to assess English-language proficiency and Australian civics knowledge and to require those applying for Australian citizenship to endorse Australian values. In November that year, Andrew Robb, then Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, told a conference that some Australians worried that the term 'multicultural' had been transformed by interest groups into a philosophy that put 'allegiances to original culture ahead of national loyalty, a philosophy which fosters separate development, a federation of ethnic cultures, not one community'.⁶⁸ Elite 'interest group'-driven politics was as much the target of Robb's conservative critique as the pluralist policies that were seen to endorse these views.⁶⁹ He went on to add: 'A community of separate cultures fosters a rights mentality,

rather than a responsibilities mentality. It is divisive. It works against quick and effective integration.⁷⁰ These statements were preceded by Robb's introduction to the discussion paper on citizenship testing released in September, in which he encouraged new Australian citizens to adopt a singular national identity and represented this as the best way to achieve a sustainable national unity: 'Australian Citizenship is the single most unifying force in our culturally diverse nation. It lies at the heart of our national identity—giving us a strong sense of who we are and our place in the world.'⁷¹

Ultimately, although *Multicultural Australia* promoted the collectivist ideal of 'unity in diversity' (as a phrase that echoed equivalent policies in the United Kingdom, the European Union and the United States),⁷² it aimed to create a federated union that was inclusive of difference but only insofar as citizens demonstrated commitment to the 'framework of a uniting set of *Australian values*'.⁷³ Exemplified equally well by Harmony Day and the recommendations proposed by the 2003 *NMA Review*, this shift is evidenced by the multitude of local 'multicultural' festival-style events that promote national social priorities (cohesive national identity) and align multiculturalism with strategies for economic growth. Rather than being tied to community development as described by the principles proposed by *Multiculturalism for All Australians* in 1982, social cohesion as prescribed in 2003 by then Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, Gary Hardgrave, promotes a 'unified' (singular) version of national identity in which national unity becomes 'our strongest source of national security'.⁷⁴ Critiquing a similar policy shift occurring in Britain at the same time, Jon Burnett contends that community cohesion has become a 'euphemism for integration; and integration a euphemism for assimilation... while assimilation suggests a form of "hyper-inclusion" of certain forms of diversity, it also tells us equally about the forms of diversity that will not be recognised or accepted'.⁷⁵

The *NMA Review*

In the context of the politics and anxieties generated by attempts to regain control of a nation-building program that was ostensibly 'Australian', it was unsurprising that the 2003 *NMA Review* appeared at a loss when it came to actually prescribing or explaining how the museum might adopt its key recommendation to reframe national identity (and thus revisit its methodological pluralism). The review states that '[a] museum must...give some sense of the diversity of views, customs, and beliefs that occupy the shared cultural space that is modern Australia', and yet cautions against 'presenting an assembly of ill-coordinated fragments'.⁷⁶ Consistent also with Howard's commitment to avoiding using the term 'multiculturalism' at all is the *NMA Review's* sympathetic evasion of the term. Of the 86 pages of the document, reference to migrants or immigration is made 13 times, while reference to multicultural/ism is made just once—a mention of the museum's Multicultural Collection.⁷⁷ Given that the

2003 *NMA Review* was widely seen as an attempt on the part of a conservative government to force an end to pluralist models of representation in favour of a more unifying historical master narrative, it was to the surprise of many that the review expressed cautious admiration for the Gallery of First Australians (although this response might equally have been due to a perception that the separate gallery distinguished Indigenous peoples as 'people of culture' in opposition to the majority, who were defined through their relationship with the nation).⁷⁸ On the other hand, the review members were dismayed by the pluralistic and multicultural approach to representing 'nation' that occurred in other parts of the museum.

The Gallery of First Australians was designed as a large dedicated space that would recognise and enable Indigenous Australians to present their own accounts of historical events and experience in their own voices. The distinct space suggested a riposte to the exclusionist and assimilationist policies, mistreatment and marginalisation of Aboriginal people that had tended to characterise relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. The Gallery of First Australians could, however, have been perceived as uncontroversial by the *NMA Review* because the political rights discourse it embodied was not substantively carried through into the *Horizons* and *Nation* exhibitions, which were dedicated to representing Australian history since settlement.⁷⁹ The only exception to this was the rotating theatre, *Circa*, which contextualised Indigenous claims for restitution against the dominant nation-building mythologies of the post-contact period. Demonstrating the growing public taste for reconciliation, *Circa* showed Indigenous and non-Indigenous people interacting in a shared public sphere and talking about what it meant to be Australian at the turn of the century. The *NMA Review* singled out *Circa* for the most vehement criticism. It complained about its 'content and lack of coherence'⁸⁰ and proceeded to offer a series of suggestions to improve it. In a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, historian and former NMA employee Ann McGrath observed that the *NMA Review* represented an attempt to reintroduce into the national imaginary themes of 'great white bloke history' constituted primarily by 'Captain Cook and cricket caps'.⁸¹

In line with the conservative ideologies about tolerance and the underlying economic discourse of comparative advantage and nation-building that was favoured by the 2003 *Multicultural Australia* policy,⁸² the *NMA Review* called for strategies of representation that would re-centre recognisably Anglo-Celtic 'Australian' values such as mateship and the ability to extend a fair go to others, and sought to distil the museum's existing attention to pluralist and inclusive approaches to representation. It ultimately recommended that greater attention be paid to the economic contribution made by migrants and nation-building activities such as the Snowy Mountains Scheme to demonstrate the positive

influence that migration to Australia had had on the great numbers employed by the project.⁸³ Similarly, it recommended that the museum deploy cultural diversity as a form of cultural add-on or enrichment: 'The Panel considers that more could be done to address the concern that the NMA should represent the impact of migrant cultures on Australian ways and customs—from food, to architecture, to café streetscapes, and to footballers hugging in public.'⁸⁴ The attempted depoliticisation and stereotyping of culture strongly reflected the contemporary global backlash against multiculturalism that was sweeping the Western world after 9/11. It is also symbolic of how, in contrast with previous approaches that have seen 'mainstreaming multiculturalism' as a valuable project in economic and social terms, 'any support for multiculturalism on social grounds is now qualified, and conditional on its subordination to "mainstream" Australian culture' that is represented (in the recommendations put forward by the *NMA Review* at least) by a certain national homogeneity.⁸⁵

Re-evaluating Australian citizenship

Rather than 'languishing with the historians, the academics and the cultural warriors',⁸⁶ vernacular understandings and modes of expressing the idea of belonging to the nation have also continued to develop in recent years, regardless of (or perhaps resulting from) increasingly constrictive policy frameworks. This means that although the 2005 Cronulla riots and the assertions of jingoistic parades of Aussie pride that have been a feature of subsequent Australia Days might be taken to evidence the contraction of an inclusive and pluralist public sphere, they can also, conversely, be understood to demonstrate that traditional understandings of citizenship as a normative legal instrument (divorced from everyday life) are being challenged within the public sphere, and to the extent that everyday Australians of different ethnic, racial, religious, sexual and class identifications actively vie over questions about what it means to hold membership of a national community in a postcolonial multicultural society. Responding to the increased levels of public interest in the process of identity formation, and recognising their role as social agents, museums across the country have also increasingly aimed to promote positive and increasingly liberal symbols of cohesive community-based models of citizenship in which, in addition to complying with the basic citizenship duties of voting and reading the newspaper, individuals have the capacity to generate a healthy civic sphere through a range of activities, including voluntary contributions to welfare causes and participation in local clubs, associations, organisations or interest groups.⁸⁷

Rather than providing evidence of a decline of confidence in 'nation' as an effective socioeconomic and political unit, and rather than leading to questions about the continuing role and relevance of central government institutions such as national museums as sites where the nation has traditionally told its story, the conflict over identity that is represented by the *NMA Review* and the Cronulla

riots demonstrates that any pairing of contemporary museums or museum-like activities or events with democracy now requires a consideration of citizenship as a changing concept in itself.⁸⁸ This is vital because citizenship is the essence of a representative democracy that is accountable and responsive to its people and because, despite their association with governments, museums can represent a diverse Australian community that is defined by pluralistic backgrounds, interests and positions. It is also important because in counterpoint to a decade ago, when informal pluralism was one of the defining features of Australian identity, it is 'harder today to be an Australian—an Aussie in a cultural, emotive, gut-instinct sort of way'.⁸⁹ Responding to the Cronulla riots in an article written for the *Sydney Herald Sun*, cultural historian and novelist Hsu-Ming Teo identifies the tensions that continue to result from discrepancies in the way citizenship is defined, on the one hand, as a formal legal notion, and practised, on the other, as a form of national belonging in the realm of pragmatic everyday life. She puts her finger on the challenge when she notes: 'Being Australian is more than formal citizenship; it is feeling like an Aussie as well...A decade ago there were many ways of being Australian.'⁹⁰

Conclusion

I will be arguing the necessity of a robust politics of culture, a politics that is able to negotiate local and global differences. In this way, I am voicing a strategic optimism based on long-term possibility rather than a sanguine assessment of the current state of the nation. By moving in the direction of civic pluralism, we will be making a new social contract.⁹¹

Although Mary Kalantzis argues in this passage for a 'post-national' citizenship for Australia that is based on a pluralist ideology, it is my contention that contestation over the 'national' has itself yielded new and complex understandings of citizenship in official and everyday contexts (even if the complexity has not yet been fully recognised in citizenship legislation). I want to conclude by reiterating my argument that the NMA was not drawn into the History Wars by whim or accident but that the curators and exhibition developers were led by the 1975 *Piggott Report*, by transformations in public policy and by the transformations that museological practice was undergoing at the time to actively stake a position as a key player from the outset. Although no-one could have fully anticipated the events that followed the museum's opening in 2001, Dawn Casey's comments about the need for national museums to involve themselves in public debate might, with the value of hindsight, appear to function more as a statement of intent than a mere coincidence or prescience. Not only did the NMA seek to enact the role of socio-political agent and provocateur, it succeeded, albeit at great cost to many people involved, and with widely contested outcomes. Of greater interest is the seriousness with which

the 'robust politics of culture' proffered by the museum was taken by proponents of the conservative ideology promoted by the government of the day. This means that the government and its representatives (exemplified of course by Prime Minister Howard) had a keen understanding that the NMA's provocation, its demotic approach to representation and its alignment with notions of cultural citizenship were more than rhetorical, and that the traditional utility of culture (where culture is an instrument of government) was being threatened if not explicitly inverted.

It is also interesting to note that the reiteration of instructive ties between national museums and legal formations of citizenship have continued to be reinscribed beyond the NMA's opening and review. Most recently, for example, Australian Citizenship Day (17 September 2008) was celebrated at the NMA with a special ceremony. Having conferred 17 people with Australian citizenship, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, declared, 'Australian Citizenship Day is an opportunity for all Australians to think about the changes that shaped our nation, and to reflect on the role we play in building Australia and our future.'⁹² This 'cultural turn' was consistent with the official and emotional apology to the Stolen Generations made by the newly elected Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, in February that year. While there is much that can be said about the apology, for the purposes of this article, we can observe first the Prime Minister's pre-emptive strike against those who would interpret his words as part of a 'black-armband view of history' and, second, note that it was a discourse of pluralism that framed the apology that also functioned as a rallying call to the nation to, in the words of Rudd,

turn this page together: Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, Government and Opposition, Commonwealth and State, and write this new chapter in our nation's story together. First Australians, First Fleeters, and those who first took the Oath of Allegiance just a few weeks ago. Let's grasp this opportunity to craft a new future for this great land: Australia.⁹³

The speech reiterates comments made in the 2000 report *Australian Citizenship for a New Century*, which eschewed any notion of common national values or shared culture in favour of public acceptance of diversity and abstract civic values. According to the Australian Citizenship Council, it is diverse values that underpin citizenship, and these together define and unite Australians.⁹⁴

In the final instance, should we understand Senator Evans' actions as being a concession to the significant role of the cultural politics that have played out at the National Museum, or as an attempt to recoup the alignment of cultural nationalism and more instrumental understandings of Australian citizenship? I think that both this example and the earlier discussion about the Yolgnu community's use of the museum work to show that while the NMA can be

viewed as a technology that plays a part in constituting legal formations of citizenship (hence being the choice of location for the 2008 Australian Citizenship Day ceremony), its performance cannot be fully understood without a consideration of how it is shaped by the exercise of heterogeneous and everyday forms of agency (exemplified by the *yingapungapu* sand sculpture and performance). This means that the museum continues to be centrally implicated in the processes of identity formation in Australia—as intended by comments made by the *Piggott Report* and reaffirmed two decades later by the institution's inaugural director, Dawn Casey.

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ENDNOTES

¹ New museological responses are often critical of instrumental relationships between national museums and civics and citizenship education as represented, for example, in reports such as Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2008, *From Curriculum to Community—The impact of civics and citizenship education. Report of the National Civics and Citizenship Education Forum*, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra. See Coombes, Annie E. 2004, 'Museums and the formation of national and cultural identities', in Bettina Messias Carbonell (ed.), *Museum Studies: An anthology of contexts*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, Mass., pp. 231–46; Bennett, Tony 1995, *The Birth of the Museum: History, theory, politics*, Routledge, London and New York; Message, Kylie 2006, *New Museums and the Making of Culture*, Berg, Oxford and New York; Ang, Ien 2005, 'The predicament of diversity: multiculturalism in practice at the art museum', *Ethnicities*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 305–20.

² Of this process, anthropologist Renato Rosaldo comments that 'the more power one has, the less culture one enjoys, and the more culture one has, the less power one wields'. Rosaldo, Renato 1989, *Culture and Truth: The remaking of social analysis*, Beacon Press, Boston, p. 202.

³ Phillips, Ruth 2003, 'Community collaboration in exhibitions: introduction', in L. Peers and A. K. Brown (eds), *Museums and Source Communities*, Routledge, New York, pp. 157–70, at p. 166.

⁴ These questions have also motivated several of my other research projects, including studies of Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand and my current investigation into the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. See Message, Kylie 2007, 'Museums and the utility of culture: the politics of liberal democracy and cultural well-being', *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 235–56; and Message, Kylie 2009, 'Multiplying sites of sovereignty through community and constituent services at the National Museum of the American Indian?', *Museum and Society*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 50–67.

⁵ See Piggott, Peter H. et al. 1975, *Museums in Australia 1975: Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections including the Report of the Planning Committee on the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra; Carroll, John et al. 2003, *Review of the National Museum of Australia, Its Exhibitions and Public Programs: A report to the Council of the National Museum of Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. See also the *National Museum of Australia Act 1980* (viewed 4 November 2008, <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/nmoaa1980297/>).

- ⁶ Grassby, Albert J. 1973, *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra. Galbally, Frank et al. 1978, *Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra.
- ⁷ Australian Ethnic Affairs Council 1977, *Australia as a Multicultural Society: Submission to the Australian Population and Immigration Council on the Green Paper Immigration Policies and Australia's Population*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra; Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs 1982, *Multiculturalism for All Australians: Our developing nationhood*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra; Office of Multicultural Affairs 1989, *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia...Sharing our future*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra; Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 1999, *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra; National Multicultural Advisory Council 1999, *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards inclusiveness*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra; Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2003, *Multicultural Australia: United in diversity. Updating the 1999 New Agenda for Multicultural Australia: Strategic directions for 2003–2006*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra.
- ⁸ For further information on the *Tampa's* rescue of 438 primarily Afghan refugees from a distressed fishing vessel in international waters and the subsequent events, and the 'children overboard' affair, which occurred shortly after, and in the lead-up to the federal election, see Burke, Jason, Brace, Matthew and Jordan, Sandra 2001, 'All Australia can offer is guano island', *The Observer*, 2 September 2001; Megalogenis, George 2006, 'They sank the boat, Howard says', *The Australian*, 27 February 2006; Commonwealth of Australia 2002, *Select Committee for an Inquiry into a Certain Maritime Incident*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- ⁹ The backlash against political correctness was indicated by an address delivered by John Howard soon after his 1996 election win in which he stated 'we are not a Government beholden to political correctness'. Howard, John 1996, The Sir Thomas Playford Memorial Lecture, 5 July, in McKenna, Mark 1997, *Different perspectives on black armband history*, Research Paper 5 1997–98, Politics and Public Administration Group, Parliament of Australia, Canberra.
- ¹⁰ Lewins, F. quoted in Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, *Multiculturalism for All Australians*, p. 13.
- ¹¹ Rubenstein, Kim 2000, 'Citizenship and the centenary—inclusion and exclusion in 20th century Australia', *Melbourne University Law Review*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 576–608, at p. 580. See also Rubenstein, Kim 1997, 'Citizenship and the Constitutional Convention debates: a mere legal inference', *Federal Law Review*, vol. 25, pp. 296–316, at p. 307.
- ¹² Rubenstein, 'Citizenship and the centenary', p. 587. For information about the 2007 Australian citizenship law reforms, see Nolan, Mark and Rubenstein, Kim 2009, 'Citizenship and identity in diverse societies', *Humanities Research*, vol. XV, no. 1, pp. 29–44, at pp. 36–8.
- ¹³ Nolan and Rubenstein, 'Citizenship and identity in diverse societies'.
- ¹⁴ Commonwealth of Australia 2008, *Australia 2020 Summit Final Report*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. The Manning Clark House Weekend of Ideas 2008, Manning Clark House, Canberra, 29–30 March 2008.
- ¹⁵ Rubenstein cites a 2000 report by the Australian Citizenship Council as providing evidence of this tension. The report says: 'We must recognise the difference between citizenship in the legal sense and citizenship in the broader sense. That is why throughout this report, when the terms "citizen" and "citizenship" are used with a small "c" they describe citizenship in the broader sense of civic value of our society, relevant to all the people who live here. Not simply those who, under the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* [Cth], have the legal status of Citizens.' Rubenstein, 'Citizenship and the centenary', pp. 578–9, 587 n. 65. See also Australian Citizenship Council 2000, *Australian Citizenship for a New Century: A Report by the Australian Citizenship Council*, Australian Citizenship Council, Canberra.
- ¹⁶ Civil Renewal Unit 2004, *Firm Foundations: The government's framework for community capacity building*, Civil Renewal Unit, Home Office (Crown copyright), London, p. 7. Message, Kylie 2009, 'New directions for civil renewal in Britain: social capital and culture for all?', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 257–78.
- ¹⁷ Delanty, Gerard 2007, 'European citizenship: a critical assessment', *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 63–72, at p. 68.
- ¹⁸ The Australian Government recently indicated that it would rescind its position and endorse the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Australian Associated Press (AAP) 2009, 'Labor to support UN indigenous rights declaration', *The Australian*, 26 March 2009.

¹⁹ Hermes, Joke and Dahlgren, Peter 2006, 'Cultural studies and citizenship', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 259–63, at p. 259.

²⁰ For other relevant work, see Rosaldo, Renato 1994, 'Cultural citizenship in San Jose, California', *PoLAR*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 57–63; Ong, Aihwa et al. 1996, 'Cultural citizenship as subject-making: immigrants negotiate racial and cultural boundaries in the United States [and comments and reply]', *Current Anthropology*, vol. 37, no. 5, pp. 737–62; Young, Marion 2000, *Inclusion and Democracy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford; Miller, Toby 2001, 'Introducing...cultural citizenship', *Social Text*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 1–5; Isin, Engin I. and Turner, Bryan S. 2007, 'Investigating citizenship: an agenda for citizenship studies', *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 5–17; Kymlicka, Will and Norman, Wayne 1994, 'Return of the citizen: a survey of recent work on citizenship theory', *Ethics*, vol. 104, no. 2, pp. 352–81; Stevenson, Nick 2006, 'European cosmopolitan solidarity: questions of citizenship, difference and post-materialism', *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 485–500.

²¹ I agree with Andrew C. Theophanous's estimation that the key challenge for postcolonial multicultural societies is how to 'pursue an idea of citizenship which incorporates one concept of social justice and human rights, in a society which has a diversity of cultural backgrounds and different metaphysical and religious views of the world'. I do not have space in this essay to examine the tensions that exist between the assertion of 'special' group rights (for example, for Indigenous sovereignty) and liberal notions of citizenship based on equality of all. Theophanous, Andrew C. 1994, *Understanding Social Justice: An Australian perspective*, Elikia Books, Carlton, Victoria, p. 122.

²² The pluralist approach was evident in early exhibitions developed by the NMA (even before the new building opened on Acton Peninsula). To celebrate 1995 as UNESCO International Year of Tolerance, the museum developed an exhibition entitled *Tolerance* (shown at Old Parliament House) that used items from the museum's migrant heritage collection. See the exhibition's companion volume: Zubrzycki, Jerzy 1995, *White Australians: Tolerance and intolerance in race relations*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra. In 2002, Dawn Casey defended the NMA's pluralism on the basis that 'the world's newest museums...take a...many-stranded approach to national history'. She goes on to argue: 'We accept that there are few absolute truths in history. We admit many voices to the debate.' Casey, Dawn 2002, 'Modern museum is meant to startle those who visit', *The Canberra Times*, 14 March 2002.

²³ Casey, Dawn 2001, 'The National Museum of Australia', in Darryl McIntyre and Kirsten Wehner (eds), *National Museums: Negotiating histories*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra, pp. 3–11, at p. 9. In a keynote speech presented to the annual Museums Australia conference in 1999, Casey said: 'The date of opening for the National Museum coincides with the celebration of a pivotal event in Australian history. Many Australians will come together to explore our collective cultural achievement through celebrating, examining and debating the 100 years since our passage into nationhood. I have no doubt that many in 2001 will also be debating the newly opened National Museum of Australia.' Casey, Dawn 1999, 'The development of the National Museum of Australia: a museum for the 21st century', Keynote speech at Museums Australia conference, Albury, May 1999.

²⁴ Piggott, *Museums in Australia 1975*, p. 6.

²⁵ Hermes and Dahlgren, 'Cultural studies and citizenship', p. 261. In tracing the development of the History Wars in Australia, Macintyre and Clark argued that after he was elected to office in 1996, John Howard 'took up the prosecution of the History Wars [and political correctness] with a vengeance', adopting the 'black-armband' epithet employed by Geoffrey Blainey in his 1993 Latham Lecture. Macintyre, Stuart and Clark, Anna 2003, *The History Wars*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, pp. 132–3, 220–1. Blainey, Geoffrey 1993, 'Drawing up a balance sheet of our history', *Quadrant*, vol. 37, nos 7–8, pp. 10–15.

²⁶ For further discussion about cultural citizenship, see Couldry, Nick 2006, 'Culture and citizenship: the missing link?', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 321–39; and Dahlgren, Peter 2006, 'Doing citizenship: the cultural origins of civic agency in the public sphere', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 267–86.

²⁷ Carroll, *Review of the National Museum of Australia*. See also Message, Kylie and Healy, Chris 2004, 'A symptomatic museum: the new, the NMA and the culture wars', *Borderlands e-journal*, vol. 3, no. 3, viewed 19 January 2009,

<http://www.borderlandsejournal.adelaide.edu.au/vol3no3_2004/messagehealy_symptom.htm>; and Healy, Chris and Witcomb, Andrea (eds) 2006, *South Pacific Museums: Experiments in Culture*, Monash University E-Press and Sydney University Press, Melbourne and Sydney.

²⁸ For a curatorial account of the new *Circa* and the recently opened *Australian Journeys* exhibition, which replaces *Horizons* and was designed vis-a-vis the *NMA Review's* recommendations, see Schamberger, Karen, Sear, Martha and Wehner, Kirsten et al. 2008, 'Living in a material world: object

biography and transnational lives', in Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott (eds), *Transnational Ties: Australian ties in the world*, ANU E Press, Canberra, pp. 275–97; and Morton, Craddock 2008, 'The National Museum of Australia: have we got the museum we deserve?', *ReCollections: Journal of the National Museum of Australia*, vol. 3, no. 2, viewed 19 January 2009, <http://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol_3_no_2/notes_and_comments/the_national_museum_of_australia/>

²⁹ Casey, 'The National Museum of Australia', p. 6.

³⁰ Piggott, *Museums in Australia 1975*, p. 71 (section 12.8).

³¹ Casey, 'The National Museum of Australia', p. 9.

³² Piggott, *Museums in Australia 1975*, p. 4 (section 2.11).

³³ According to the catalogue, the exhibition attempted to examine land ownership through the lens of Australia's political history, and focused on three recent 'landmarks'—the end of the White Australia Policy in 1973, the Franklin Dam dispute of 1983 and the Mabo High Court decision in 1992—'that have challenged traditional assumptions about these issues'. National Museum of Australia 1993, *Landmarks: People, land and political change*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra.

³⁴ *Mabo vs Queensland (No. 2)* was a court case in which the High Court of Australia recognised native title and in so doing overturned the claims of *terra nullius* that had been used to defend British colonisation. The *Native Title Act* was enacted the next year (1993) and, in a 'citizenship promotion' speech in 1994, then Prime Minister, Paul Keating, said that pluralism 'will guarantee an Australia which is not only culturally rich but socially cohesive and harmonious. Just as importantly, it will mean an Australia which counts among its primary values the capacity to find practical ways to mediate differences—not just ethnic or cultural differences but the differences between men and women, between urban and rural Australians, between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians... The catchword is not uniformity, but difference. It is not conformity, but creativity. It is not exclusive, but inclusive. Not closed to the world, but open to it.' Keating cited in Kalantzis, Mary 2000, 'Multicultural citizenship', in Wayne Hudson and John Kane (eds), *Rethinking Australian Citizenship*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 99–111, at p. 105. Also see *Mabo vs Queensland (No. 2)* [1992], HCA 23; [1992], 175 CLR 1 (3 June 1992).

³⁵ Sorry Day was established one year after the report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families was tabled in Parliament, on 26 May 1997. For details, see Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1997, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. For analysis of the opinion polls published in relation to Indigenous affairs in Australia (including the 1991 establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation), see Goot, Murray and Rowse, Tim 2007, *Divided Nation? Indigenous affairs and the imagined public*, Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton, Victoria.

³⁶ Quoted in Galligan, Brian and Roberts, Winsome 2003, Australian multiculturalism: its rise and demise, Paper presented to Australian Political Studies Association Conference, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 29 September – 1 October 2003. The intersection between the NMA and reconciliation has continued to be apparent. In their submission to the *NMA Review*, for example, the Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation wrote in support of the NMA and its recognition of reconciliation as 'the defining issue of our nation'. See Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation submission (25 March 2003) to the *NMA Review*. A full list of submissions is available at <http://www.nma.gov.au/about_us/nma_corporate_documents/exhibitions_and_public_programs_review/submissions/> (viewed 19 January 2009).

³⁷ Hage, Ghassan 2003, *Against Paranoid Nationalism: Searching for hope in a shrinking society*, Pluto Press, Annandale, New South Wales. Gale, Peter 2001, 'Representations of reconciliation: bridges, symbols and substance', in Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope (eds), *Reconciliation, Multiculturalism, Identities: Difficult dialogues, sensible solutions*, Common Ground Publishing, Altona, Victoria, pp. 123–34.

³⁸ Devine, Miranda 2006, 'Disclosed at last, the embedded messages that adorn museum', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 April 2006.

³⁹ Prime Minister Howard's address at the opening of the NMA, 11 March 2001, in McIntyre, Darryl 2006, 'The National Museum of Australia and public discourse: the role of public policies in the nation's cultural debates', *Museum International*, vol. 58, no. 4, pp. 13–20, at p. 13.

⁴⁰ Windschuttle, Keith 2001, 'How not to run a museum: people's history at the postmodern museum', *Quadrant*, vol. 45, no. 9, pp. 11–19, at p. 16.

⁴¹ In McCarthy, Greg 2004, 'Postmodern discontent and the National Museum of Australia', *Borderlands e-journal*, vol. 3, no. 3, viewed 19 January 2009,

<http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol3no3_2004/mccarthy_discontent.htm> Barnett's political persuasion was described in one newspaper article as 'far-right'. Mitchell, Alex 1999, 'More boys in the jobs', *Sun Herald*, 24 January 1999.

⁴² Morgan, Joyce 2001, 'Howard's man: "These people are not my heroes"', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 June 2001. Morgan obtained the notes through freedom of information. See also Macintyre and Clark, *The History Wars*, p. 193.

⁴³ Message and Healy, 'A symptomatic museum'.

⁴⁴ In Macintyre and Clark, *The History Wars*, p. 192.

⁴⁵ Grassby, *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future*, p. 2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Galbally, *Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services*.

⁴⁸ On the flipside, however, in 2003, Andrew Jakubowicz argued that 'the key institutions over which government has control do not represent the diversity of Australian society at all—the monocultural Cabinet (0/17), the monocultural High Court (0/7) and the monocultural ABC (0/7 government appointees) are the ones at the tip of the iceberg. Public representation on government advisory boards no longer has to reflect cultural diversity, where most participants are selected for their willingness to accept government cultural priorities.' Jakubowicz, Andrew 2003, Auditing multiculturalism: the Australian empire a generation after Galbally, Address to the Annual Conference of the Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia, Melbourne, December 2003. See also Australia Council for the Arts 1996, *Arts for a Multicultural Australia: Policy principles 1996–99*, Australia Council for the Arts, Sydney; Australia Council for the Arts 1998, *Arts for a Multicultural Australia, 1998*, Australia Council for the Arts, Sydney; National Museum of Australia 2005, *Cultural Diversity Policy*, POL-C-027, National Museum of Australia, Canberra; Museums Australia 2000, *Museums Australia Incorporated Cultural Diversity Policy*, Museums Australia, Canberra.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Zubrzycki, Jerzy 2003, 'The place of ethnic heritage collections in the National Museum of Australia', 10 March 2003, Submission to the *Review of the National Museum of Australia, Its Exhibitions and Public Programs: A report to the Council of the National Museum of Australia*. A full list of submissions is available at <http://www.nma.gov.au/about_us/nma_corporate_documents/exhibitions_and_public_programs_review/submissions/> (viewed 19 January 2009). Also see the source document: Museum of Australia Interim Council 1982, *Report of the Interim Council: Plan for the development of the Museum of Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, p. 40 (pars 1–35).

⁵⁰ Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, *Australia as a Multicultural Society*.

⁵¹ Galbally, *Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services*, para. 9.6. Kalantzis, 'Multicultural citizenship', pp. 99–111.

⁵² Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs 1982, *National Consultations on Multiculturalism and Citizenship*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, p. 1. See also Office of Multicultural Affairs, *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*.

⁵³ Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, *Multiculturalism for All Australians*, p. 2. See also Theophanous, *Understanding Social Justice*, pp. 122–47.

⁵⁴ Ang, Ien, Brand, Jeffrey E., Noble, Greg and Wilding, Derek 2002, *Living Diversity: Australia's multicultural future*, Special Broadcasting Service, Special Broadcasting Services Corporation, Artarmon, New South Wales.

⁵⁵ The claims are by Brian Galligan and Winsome Roberts and are discussed in Jupp, James 2008, 'A pragmatic response to a novel situation: Australian multiculturalism', in Geoffrey Brahm Levey (ed.), *Political Theory and Australian Multiculturalism*, Berghahn Books, New York and Oxford, pp. 225–41, at p. 235. See also Galligan, Brian and Roberts, Winsome 2008, 'Multiculturalism, national identity, and pluralist democracy: the Australian variant', in Brahm Levey, *Political Theory and Australian Multiculturalism*, pp. 209–24.

⁵⁶ Morphy, Howard 2006, 'Sites of persuasion: *Yingapungapu* at the National Museum of Australia', in Ivan Karp, Corinne A. Kratz, Lynn Swzawa and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto (eds), *Museum Frictions: Public cultures/global transformations*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, pp. 469–99, at p. 482.

⁵⁷ Howard Morphy, personal correspondence with author, 2008.

⁵⁸ Morphy, 'Sites of persuasion'. See also Bennett, Tony 2006, 'Exhibition, difference, and the logic of culture', in Karp et al., *Museum Frictions*, pp. 46–69.

⁵⁹ Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *National Consultations on Multiculturalism and Citizenship*, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Office of Multicultural Affairs, *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*. Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, *Multiculturalism for All Australians*.

⁶¹ Although the policy change in Australia seemed to respond directly to a renewed 'threat' of cultural difference associated with events including 9/11 and with other local incidents affecting Australia and Australians, it is important to note that political consensus on multiculturalism had really been shattered much earlier. In 1986, Stephen Castles, Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope responded to budget cuts by a Labor Government by publishing an article called 'The end of multiculturalism? (The view from Wollongong)' (1986, *Ethnos* [Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales], no. 54, pp. 4–5).

⁶² Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, *Multicultural Australia*, p. 7.

⁶³ Jakubowicz, 'Auditing multiculturalism', p. 9.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9. See also <<http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/>> (viewed 14 February 2008).

⁶⁵ For details about the series of racially motivated mob confrontations that originated in and around Cronulla in December 2005, see Hage, Ghassan 2006, 'The doubts down under', *Catalyst: Journal of the British Commission for Racial Equality*, vol. 3, 17 May, viewed 14 February 2008, <<http://83.137.212.42/siteArchive/catalystmagazine/magazineissues.html>>

⁶⁶ Harmony Day is managed by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship as part of the Diverse Australia Program. It is celebrated on 21 March each year and coincides with the United Nation's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. See <<http://www.harmony.gov.au>> (viewed 4 March 2009).

⁶⁷ In 1982, *Multiculturalism for All Australians* expressed concern that 'questions have been raised' about whether the 'degree of tolerance, and even encouragement of diversity' that is represented in the discussion paper 'threaten national unity and social cohesion'. The text argues against this on the basis that 'Australia is strong enough to accept diversity'; however, it is precisely the same argument that comes to be used by critics of multiculturalism in later years, from the 'one nation and one future' rhetoric of Howard's 1988 One Australia policy through to government responses to 9/11. Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, *Multiculturalism for All Australians*, p. 11. Markus, Andrew 2001, *Race: John Howard and the remaking of Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, New South Wales, pp. 85–9.

⁶⁸ In Heywood, Lachlan 2006, 'National identity in spotlight', *The Courier-Mail*, 28 November 2006.

⁶⁹ The anti-elitist position characterised by suspicion about cosmopolitanism and political correctness links back to Howard's attempts to mobilise ordinary Australians as 'battlers'. See Flint, David 2003, *Twilight of the Elites*, Freedom Publishing, North Melbourne, Victoria.

⁷⁰ Heywood, 'National identity in spotlight'.

⁷¹ Citizenship Task Force 2006, 'Australian citizenship: much more than a ceremony', in *Consideration of the merits of introducing a formal citizenship test*, September, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Discussion Paper, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, p. 5.

⁷² In his capacity as Chancellor of the Exchequer, just before being named British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown proclaimed the failure of multiculturalism in terms that were reaffirmed by the Leader of the Opposition, David Cameron, who remarked evocatively that '[t]he doctrine of multiculturalism has undermined our nation's sense of cohesiveness because it emphasizes what divides us rather than what brings us together'. The terms of this backlash echo the sentiments expressed by sociologist Nathan Glazer and others who have claimed that multiculturalism has failed and that the United States is fragmenting along ethnic divisions. Glazer, Nathan 1997, *We are all Multiculturalists Now*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.; Cameron, David 2007, 'No one will be left behind in a Tory Britain', *The Observer*, 28 January 2007; Johnston, Philip 2007, 'Brown's manifesto for Britishness', *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 January 2007. See also Message, 'New directions', pp. 257–78.

⁷³ My emphasis. Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, *Multicultural Australia*, pp. 2, 6.

⁷⁴ Hardgrave outlines the services of his government to recent migrants, which include distribution of the 'values-focused publications of *What it Means to be An Australian Citizen*' and a program in which 'migrants are taught about our national symbols, our laws, the significance of important days like ANZAC Day, our political system and even our national heroes'. Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, *Multiculturalism for All Australians*, pp. 14–16, 13. Hardgrave, Gary 2003, Twenty-five years of multiculturalism, National Press Club Address by the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, 23 July 2003, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, p. 11.

⁷⁵ Burnett, Jon 2007, 'Britain's "civilizing project": community cohesion and core values', *Policy and Politics*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 353–57, at p. 355. In their 1986 article, Castles et al. express similar concerns to the government's use of the term 'mainstreaming', which, despite its 'idealistic ring', might also mean 'that special services and institutions, designed to meet the particular needs of non-English speaking background people, are no longer required'. Their concern is that mainstreaming might become a fourth phase in Australia's immigrant policies: assimilation, integration, multiculturalism 'and now mainstreaming'. Castles et al., 'The end of multiculturalism?', p. 5.

⁷⁶ Carroll, *Review of the National Museum of Australia*, p. 7.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁷⁸ Although it must be noted that: 1) Indigenous people's stories were included in the *Nation: Symbols of Australia* Gallery; and 2) that the Gallery of First Australians did represent the political struggles fought by Indigenous peoples in Australia, historically and in a contemporary context. See Note 2.

⁷⁹ For analysis of *Horizons* and discussion about the representation of migration in the NMA and other Australian museums, see Andrea Witcomb, this volume.

⁸⁰ Carroll, *Review of the National Museum of Australia*, pp. 17–20.

⁸¹ McGrath, Ann 2003, 'Diversity lost in boy's own history', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 July 2003. It is of further interest that objects relating to Captain Cook (including a magnifying glass in a silver case and other navigational instruments) and cricket (a baggy green cap and bat belonging to captain Greg Chappell in the 1980s and a cap and gloves worn by wicket-keeper Rod Marsh in the 1980s) feature in the new *Australian Journeys* exhibition, which opened in early 2009.

⁸² Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, *Multicultural Australia*.

⁸³ Carroll, *Review of the National Museum of Australia*, p. 33.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁸⁵ Nolan, David and Radywyl, Natalia 2004, 'Pluralising identity, mainstreaming identities: SBS as a technology of citizenship', *Southern Review*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 40–65, at p. 58.

⁸⁶ Rudd, Kevin 2008, 'Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples', House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra, 13 February.

⁸⁷ Social cohesion has been used for expedient purposes in public policy (particularly in the United Kingdom, where museum funding is often tied to evidence that they can contribute to reduced crime rates, teenage pregnancies, urban regeneration and the like). Social cohesion is, however, also important as a way of representing the impact that the recognition and exercise of diversity at the local level can have on national understandings of identity and lead to changes in the way that Australia's cultural institutions and policies represent 'community' and give greater agency to members of such. For information about a range of community-based models of citizenship that have been produced by or in association with museums, and for discussion about how these function within larger federal and state infrastructures of policy and funding, see Message, 'New directions'; Howard Morphy, this volume; and Mary Hutchison, this volume.

⁸⁸ Yúdice, George 2003, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of culture in the global era*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2003.

⁸⁹ Teo, Hsu-Ming 2006, 'These days it's harder to be different', *Sydney Herald Sun*, 7 December 2006.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Kalantzis, 'Multicultural citizenship', p. 100.

⁹² Evans, Chris 2008, Adding to the Australian family on Citizenship Day 2008, Media release, 17 September 2008, viewed 9 December 2008, <<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2008/ce08087.htm>>

⁹³ Rudd, 'Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples'.

⁹⁴ Australian Citizenship Council, *Australian Citizenship for a New Century*. The Rudd Labor Government has reinstated 'multicultural affairs', albeit as a parliamentary secretarial rather than a ministerial responsibility. It remains to be seen whether the rhetoric of pluralism present in the Prime Minister's speech will translate into policy outcomes or if the Labor Government will continue to deploy the policy put in place by the previous conservative government.