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Telephone: (08) 9321 1925 Fax: (08) 9321 1798  
GPO Box K 845, WEST PERTH WA 6870  
E-mail: [wacni@msn.com](mailto:wacni@msn.com) Web Site [www.cniwa.com.au](http://www.cniwa.com.au)

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# Council for the National Interest

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COMMITTEE

### Summer Newsletter

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#### **Persistence Pays Off Once**

##### **Multiculturalism:**

“As we understand our history, all Australians are migrants, long ago the Aborigines, then the Europeans and Asians and we do not condone discrimination against any of them. Indeed without the rich heritage provided by our migrants, Australia as we know it could not have evolved. However if MULTICULTURALISM means many different separate communities each living in their own preferred part of Australia, each speaking their own language and observing their own customs, each manipulating politicians for favours and suffering manipulation for votes - THEN WE ARE TOTALLY OPPOSED TO IT.”

These words are taken from "Immigration Policy - A Recommendation" produced by the CNI

Perth/Pearce Group July 1994. The paper after providing examples of failed multiculturalism went on to say:

“We do not believe that the racist sentiments and behaviour which provided our examples are supported or condoned by the majority of migrants. Most will abhor such behaviour and would join the wider community in condemning it. What the examples show is that multicultural diversity must be encouraged for the advantages it brings to our society but it must be SUBJECT TO THE OVERWHELMING INFLUENCE OF AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP AND ALL THE VALUES WHICH THIS IMPLIES. The continuing integration of all our citizens as Australians is essential to our well being, to our identification of ourselves and OUR HOME.”

and to recommend inter alia

“That immigration policies be developed in the national interest and for all Australians, and that in the philosophy of immigration emphasis is given to Australia, the Australian identity and commitment to Australia.” In other words - Citizenship.

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#### CONTENTS

<b>Multiculturalism</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Development of the North</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Family Impact Statement</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>What's Happening</b> .....	<b>2</b>

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.....and in relation to qualifying for citizenship "Achieving a defined and demonstrated skill in English language and Australian history. Since 1994, CNI WA has, consistently and persistently lobbied federal politicians advocating these and related concepts stressing the importance of citizenship and the qualities needed to be demonstrated by immigrants and refugees to achieve it. It has taken time but results have now come. In May 2006 Federal Parliamentary Secretary Andrew Robb espoused the need for English language skills and knowledge of Australia's institutions and values as a prerequisite for citizenship. He was supported in principle by the Federal Labor spokeswoman, Senator Annette Hurley.

The final "coup" has come with the Prime Minister's Ministerial reshuffle of January 2007 when the "Immigration and Multicultural Ministerial" portfolio became "Immigration and Citizenship" and the word "Multiculturalism" was dropped.

### **Persistence Pays off Twice**

In June 1998 CNI WA issued a policy discussion paper "Whither Australia or Wither Australia" using it as a lobbying medium to federal politicians, the media and many other targets. The paper canvassed a wide range of policy initiatives in relation to the family, unemployment, current account deficit and foreign debt, globalisation and the ageing population and the self sustainability of the nation. As part of the solution CNI advocated the development of the North of Australia including major water and other infrastructure developments illustrating the opportunity for Australia "to become the clean and green supplier of foodstuffs both raw and processed to the Asia/Pacific region."

These and related proposals were reiterated in CNI policy papers "The Crisis Facing Australia" in July 2002, and "Australia Closer to the Brink?" in May 2006. The papers pointed out that if we did not populate and develop the "North" some other nation will do so.

Now the results are starting to come.

The Prime Minister's focus has swung Northwards! On Australia Day 2007 Mr Howard announced a \$10bn plan to take control of the Murray Darling basin and to harness Kimberley Water. There is even media reference ...."the Kimberley could become the nation's new food bowl". And, wait for it, former Western Australian Opposition Leader Mr Colin Barnett is headlined (The West Australian 25/01/2007) "Development North's Water or risk invasion."

This is just a start and many questions need to be asked about how the Commonwealth can take control of the Murray Darling and why spend \$480m on a new bureaucracy "to deal specifically with water issues." This smacks of both centralist control and duplication rather than reorganisation and Commonwealth/State co-operation.

### **Persistence Pays Off Three Times**

As mentioned in CNI Spring Newsletter October 2004 the Family Impact Statement, a concept which was created by CNI WA in 1995 was finally adopted by the Federal Government at the last election. The Government however has refused to make public the Family Impact Statements. Lobbying has elicited a promise from Labor in Opposition to make these public if elected to government. The Question is how long will it be before the Government capitulates on this?

### **What's happening in 2007?**

2007 is a Federal Election year and CNI will continue to lobby strongly on "Australia - Closer to the Brink?" and aspects of electoral reform. Immigration and Citizenship are key electoral issues and negotiations have commenced to attract a keynote speaker for a public forum on this topic. It is also hoped to have a further public forum on the most topical subject of water.

Food safety in Australia is the title of a research paper produced by CNI Central discussion group. This has been sent to Federal, State and Territory Health Ministers along with other relevant Ministers and responses will be followed up.

Work on a discussion paper “The Family Really Does Matter” is nearing completion when it will be released publicly.

New members welcome - for details telephone Anne-Marie - (08) 93212822

New discussion group participants welcome - contact Denis Whitely 0430 147 049