

IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT POLICY 1989

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Congress recognises that as a result of the post war migration program, Australia now enjoys one of the most culturally diverse populations in the world.

1.2 Policies relating to population and immigration are of fundamental importance to the development and growth of Australian society.

2. IMMIGRATION AND POPULATION

In determining immigration policy Congress believes that consideration must be given to the following factors:

- (i) In general immigration is not an effective or desirable instrument in overcoming labour market deficiency.
- (ii) Immigration programs with specific economic objectives, whether permanent or temporary, must be integrated into national labour market planning.
- (iii) Congress affirms the right of the ACTU to be consulted and to be involved in all negotiations related to the immigration program.
- (iv) Policies must be designed to ensure that workers recruited from overseas are not exploited or systematically channelled into low paid, low skilled and unsatisfying work which identifies them within the community as second class citizens.
- (v) Congress recognises the humanitarian responsibilities of Australia's immigration policy and reaffirms the need for special consideration to be given to refugees and families of Australia residents.
- (vi) Policies relating to the selection of people for settlement in Australia should not discriminate between applicants with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, language, or age.

3. SETTLEMENT

3.1 Over 20% of Australia's population was born overseas. Australia is in reality a culturally and linguistic most diverse society.

3.2 Congress believes a continued commitment to the economic, social and cultural implications of a multi cultural, multi racial and multi lingual Australia are essential to the future well being of this country.

3.3 Congress reaffirms that settlement in Australia involves a two way process of adaptation for both new comers and the community at large. Both need to appreciate the different

values, experiences and cultural realities which exist while at the same time respecting the right of people to preserve and share their cultural identity.

3.4 Congress recognises that as a part of the settlement process migrants have particular needs. To address these needs congress calls for increased resources from governments, employers and the trade union movement itself.

3.5 Congress believes that it is a Governmental responsibility to provide services - including health, welfare, housing and education particularly English language learning programs - for migrants which will facilitate full participation in the Australian community.

4. TRADE UNIONS AND MIGRANTS

As for all workers, trade unions have a vital role to play in protecting and the welfare of workers born overseas.

4.1 English Language Training:

- (i) Congress affirms that access to basic literacy and numeracy is vital to all people. Access to English language training is essential for all Australian workers born overseas.
- (ii) Congress affirms that all industrial developments, including the award restructuring process, must recognise the importance of English language training to ensure that Australian workers from non English speaking backgrounds are not disadvantaged.
- (iii) Congress urges continued negotiation to ensure that awards provide for English language training including on the job training as right without loss of pay.

4.2 Participation

Effective participation in Unions will be assisted by:

- (i) establishing effective communication with migrant members.
- (ii) setting up structures such as migrant committees, migrant worker centres, or speciallised staff.
- (iii) utilising the facilities of TUTA, including the expansion of courses which meet the particular needs of migrant members and of union officials who work with them.
- (iv) encouraging the appointment and training of migrants as union representatives including delegates.
- (v) providing multilingual information and interpreters.
- (vi) providing training for bilingual workers in interpretation skills.
- (vii) identifying the particular problems faced by migrant women workers and encouraging union action within the

guidelines of the Working Womens Charter.

- (viii) targeted recruitment campaigns.
- (ix) supporting the maintenance of the Migrant Workers Participation Scheme.

4.3 Recognition of Overseas Skills and Qualifications

Congress affirms that accreditation, including that of overseas acquired skills and qualifications is an industrial issue.

Congress recognises that the processes of recognition of overseas acquired skills, experience and qualifications must be made more effective. Adequate resources should be available for a significant expansion of both vocational and English language bridging courses.

4.4 Occupational Health and Safety

Migrant Workers are over represented in hazardous industries. As a result they have particular health and safety needs which must be addressed. Congress therefore urges Governments, employers and Unions to:

- (i) provide induction and ongoing health and safety training in community languages
- (ii) ensure an expansion of TUTA based courses in languages other than English
- (iii) provide appropriate symbols and multilingual signs and warnings
- (iv) ensure that all guidelines and standards are translated.

5. DISCRIMINATION

5.1 ACTU Congress reaffirms its opposition to all forms of racial discrimination and will ensure:

- (i) That the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 is strengthened by Australia agreeing to Article 4 of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
- (ii) That there is full support to members and officials who are engaged in the campaign against racism, and deplores the actions of those groups seeking to incite racial hatred and violence.
- (iii) That effective policies on equal employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors, to meet the special needs of migrants and to prevent racial harassment, are supported and resourced.

6. ETHNIC MEDIA

6.1 Congress supports the provision of government broadcasting services (both radio and television) to the non-english speaking population of Australia as an extension

of services provided to the rest of the community through the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

6.2 Congress affirms the right of members of ethnic communities to participate in both programme and policy making processes.

6.3 Congress recognising the significance of ethnic media encourages Unions to utilise its services to more effectively communicate with members.