



African Think Tank Inc.

WORKING WITH VICTORIA'S AFRICAN COMMUNITY

ABN 68 678 932 201

A: PO Box 2307 Footscray 3011

E: africanthinktank@hotmail.com

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ATT Media Release

The African Think Tank congratulates the Prime Minister-elect, Mr Kevin Rudd, and his family, team and supporters for their victory in the election of 24 November, 2007. We also wish Mr John Howard and his family a happy retirement, with particular thanks for his substantial contribution to public service.

ATT looks forward to consulting and working closely and productively with the new Labor Government, particularly the new Ministers for the respective portfolios of Immigration, Education and Employment. We will strive to be available to consult on matters arising, as well as on residual matters from the administration of the outgoing Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Mr Kevin Andrews.

Meeting with former Immigration Minister, Mr Kevin Andrews

Mr Andrew held a teleconference with leaders of the African communities¹ on Monday, 19 November 2007. Mr Andrews agreed:

- to elaborate his comments about African refugees to ensure his comments are not taken out of context.
- to engage with African communities to incorporate their views in funding settlement programs and to review policies on humanitarian and family reunion intakes from Africa.
- to brief the next Minister about the above agreements reached in the event of a change of government in the election of 24 November, 2007.

ATT's view on Refugee Settlement Services

ATT urges the Rudd government to priorities reviewing settlement services to provide a sensible support for African refugees. ATT agreed with Malcolm Fraser's comment and

¹ Leaders of African communities participated at the teleconference on 19 Nov. 2007 were ATT committee member and members of Federation of African Community Council (FACC).

call for a fully independent review of the effectiveness and quality of service provision to date, with input from the refugee recipients, and a moratorium on further funding pending the outcome of this inquiry.

- Tighter administration and external scrutiny of funding to service providers to ensure greater accountability and real life outcomes, with less reliance on statistical and "on paper" results which, to date, have left the refugees without adequate settlement preparation, particularly in vital education and employment areas.
- ATT would endorse investigation of the language teaching methodology used to fast track diplomats, defense staff and so on into relatively rapid near fluency in a second language, and its potential applicability to speeding up the English-learning process of migrants and refugees.
- Reform of the funding model to prevent monopolies, so service recipients have a choice of provider, and in order that competition improves the quality of service and yields better value for money.
- Reform of the funding model to ensure service recipients are partners in their education, with a real voice in all major decisions, and are fully independently surveyed by funders for their input on the quality of providers' services.
- Adult education funding to be contingent on the provision of quality, academically and educationally sound programs incorporating a functional, step-wise and useful curriculum of immediate relevance to employment and/or further study entry points. We are particularly concerned that the quality of education be in place as an immediate priority. ATT urge the Rudd Government to hold quick consultations with the refugee communities
- That employment network agencies take a proactive, innovative approach, linking African refugee to labor shortage areas across Australia. To date, refugees eager to work have been left unemployed while the resource boom has cried out for labour.
- That employment network agencies take proactive measures to link refugees to members of the mainstream community who can assist them to access the hidden job market, where 70%+ of jobs are advertised.

ATT looks forward to the recommendations of the Report of the African Resettlement Conference 2007 being incorporated in policy discussion and development to the benefit of the refugees and the entire Australian community.

Dr. Berhan Ahmed
Chairperson
African Think Tank Inc.