



The Hon Chris Bowen MP
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis
President, Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

ALGA MAIL
ITEM No:
DATE RECEIVED: 31-10-12
FILE No:

Dear Mayor Lewis

I am writing to you in response to a letter of 3 September 2012 from former President of the Australian Local Government Association, Mayor Genia McCaffery, concerning resolutions passed by the National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government at their national meeting in June this year.

As a former local councillor and mayor, I understand the unique and valuable contribution of local government to Australia's social cohesion, including the successful settlement of migrants.

The NGA resolutions reflect day-to-day experiences of local decision makers, and I appreciate their innovative and thoughtful approach in response to some of the key challenges and opportunities which arise from Australia's growing migration.

As Mayor McCaffery indicated, local governments play an important role in implementing the principles of Australia's multicultural policy, *The People of Australia*. In launching the policy last year, I described the genius of Australian multiculturalism as being citizenship-based. For many Australians, their first and often most direct experience of Australian democracy is their interaction with local government services. For those migrants who became Australian citizens, the town hall or mayor's office is often where they make a public commitment to Australia and its people.

I look forward to a continuing dialogue with the Australia Local Government Association on the resolutions which fit within my portfolio and encourage you to contact my office.

Yours sincerely

CHRIS BOWEN

29 OCT 2012