



AUSTRALIAN AFRICAN NETWORK

2 November 2007

The Hon Kevin Andrews MP
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
PO Box 124
Doncaster Vic 3108

Email: Kevin.Andrews.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister

REQUEST FOR MEETING

The Australian African Network (AAN) was established to support connections between African and non African Australians. Our community based organisation is seeking to meet with you as a matter of urgency in an effort to deliver to you a clear and grass roots level perspective on the experiences and lives of Australian African children and their families.

AAN was given a valuable hearing during recent discussions with senior staff in your electorate office. We are now seeking to bring our message directly to you with a view to mutual benefits for many – AAN, yourself in your important roles, the Australian government, and all Australians – to seek a better future living in harmony in this, 'the lucky country'.

Our goal in meeting with you is to provide you with an understanding of the real life experiences of our community with a view to assisting you - in your role as Member of Parliament and Minister of Government. Our unique role in Australian society which promotes, by the very nature of our families and their makeup, a harmonious blend of Australian and African peoples, effectively working as a model for national cultural unity in this great nation.

It is our hope that in doing so we can support your decision-making and advocacy in all future decisions taken by your government in relation to the immigration to Australia of peoples of African descent.

Whilst the media has created a scenario of racial tension based on recent comments made by you about African immigration we would hope to be able to provide a thoughtful and unique perspective from which the government could move forward on this issue - both before and following the election.

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A couple of very poignant illustrations of the impact on, not only our children, but sadly on other children in our Australian community follow:

“Just recently, our friend’s 4 year old child was told by her best friend that she didn’t want to be her friend any more because there were black people at her birthday party and she (the four year old friend) didn’t like black people.”

“A mother told me the other day that her child had been called a ‘nigger’ by another child in the playground.”

AAN has received more than 1700 signatures on a petition (see attachment) to fight racism in Australia and we would seek the opportunity to present this petition to you in person - as one of our first steps towards the commencement of useful dialogue which moves towards greater partnership in the future between our organisation and your government.

I can be contacted via our administration assistant, Jo Comans, Phone 0439402955. I look forward to your agreement to meet at your earliest possible convenience as the beginnings of a valuable dialogue between our community and your government.

Yours sincerely

Annie Stopford

**Annie Stopford
AAN Co-Convenor**

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