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Kathleen Blair (B Social Science (Hons), Western Sydney) is a PhD candidate at the University of Western Sydney and a Research Assistant on the Challenging Racism Project in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at the University of Western Sydney. Her doctoral work explores marginal vote seeking strategies and the use of anti-asylum seeker sentiment in federal election campaigns. Her research interests include multiculturalism, interculturalism and citizenship, cultural relations, prejudice and discourse analysis.

### **Young Adults Attitudes Toward Multiculturalism in Australia: Tensions Between the Multicultural State and the Intercultural Citizen**

Kymlicka, a Canadian political philosopher, worried the ideal of an intercultural citizen, with strong intercultural skills/knowledge, would not fit neatly or simply into the ideal of a multicultural state. He identified three possible areas of tension:

- 1) intercultural citizens may prefer global interculturalism over local interculturalism,
- 2) groups may dismiss the assertion that intercultural interaction leads to personal growth/enrichment and
- 3) the ideal of an intercultural citizen requires either a superficial or utopian level of understanding.

This paper reports on attitudes towards and experiences of interculturalism through insights derived from five focus groups with young Anglo-Australian adults from Penrith, NSW testing Kymlicka's concerns. The young Australians did not express intercultural values fully, at all times, or on all issues. The data present a difficult situation in which the participants express a fear of 'others' due to a lack of understanding, but also, a reticence to gain an understanding of other cultures. Arguably, Australian multiculturalism has succeeded in creating intercultural spaces where young people are obliged to mix. The data however, begs the question of whether these spaces enable cultural interaction; of whether these spaces are safe for debate and unreconciled disagreement.

