

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE1930

## Babacan, Hurriyet

(1961 - )

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**Born** 1 January, 1961, Turkey

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**Occupation** Academic, Migrant community advocate, Policy adviser, Public servant

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### Summary

Dr Hurriyet Babacan was born in Turkey and migrated to Australia at the age of ten. A long and distinguished career has seen her work as an academic, social worker, policy officer, senior public servant, researcher, author and trainer.

## Details

Born in Turkey, Hurriyet Babacan migrated to Australia with her parents and three siblings in 1971. Her early memories of Australia are of life in an ex-army barracks migrant hostel in NSW. Her father, a middle class academic in Turkey, became a member of the Australian working class when he joined the workforce at the steel mills nearby. Both of Hurriyet's parents suffered injuries due to unsafe work practices in the factories of Sydney and Melbourne.

For the young Hurriyet schooling was a struggle without English language fluency, and the experience of racism added stress. Despite this she did well at school in subjects where English language skills were less crucial such as mathematics and chemistry. Hurriyet went on to complete a Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Social Work, Master of Arts (Social Policy), PhD, Graduate Certificate in Education and interpreting/translation qualifications.

Hurriyet's parents engendered in her an awareness of social issues and social justice from a young age, and this has been reflected in her career choices. Over the last twenty years Hurriyet has worked as an academic, social worker, policy officer, senior public servant, researcher, author and trainer. She was a senior executive in the Queensland Government where she held the position of Executive Director, Multicultural Affairs, Women's Policy and Community Outcomes Branch in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. She has also held lecturing positions in universities across Australia, and worked as a senior public servant in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Victorian Government.

Dr Babacan currently holds a position at the University of the Sunshine Coast where she is the acting Head of Social and Community Studies and also Associate Director of the Centre for Multicultural and Community Development. She coordinates and lectures in courses in community development, gender, cultural diversity and social and human service practice.

She has undertaken extensive research on a range of topics, including immigration and settlement, racism, health, family services, community capacity building, social exclusion/inclusion, child protection, ageing, women, globalisation and human rights. She has published widely and has completed work for UNESCO on gender and development. Her book on death and dying across six non-Christian religions has sold over 10,000 copies. She has also published a well recognised guide for migrant job seekers on addressing selection criteria.

Dr Babacan has been involved with numerous community organisations over the past twenty years, co-founding many of them. The most recent include: DV Connect Inc, a state-wide domestic violence telephone counselling service in Queensland; Queensland Program for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, counselling service for survivors of torture and trauma; Women's Sector Development project, a state-wide program to better connect women's agencies across different service areas with government; Multicultural Development Association Inc, settlement services and case service delivery to newly arrived migrants and refugees which is now one of the largest service delivery agencies in Queensland; Centre for Multicultural and Community Development, University of the Sunshine Coast; Australians for Multiculturalism and Reconciliation; and Women Connect, a state-wide agency for development and mentoring of women for leadership roles in Queensland.

Former Ministerial advisory positions include: Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee to the Premier in Victoria; Member of Legal Aid Commission Review Committee; Adviser to the Australia Council; Member of the National Settlement Advisory Council (to the Minister for Immigration); Member of Child Protection Council, an advisory body to the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care in Queensland; and Multicultural Women's Advisory Council to the Premier (Queensland) and Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Dr Hurriyet Babacan is married and lives in Queensland. Her husband is of Indian descent and the pair travel frequently.

## Published resources

### Report

Investigations into funding of migrant women's re-creation groups: report, Babacan, Hurriyet, 1983

### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Site Exhibition

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

## Author Details

Barbara Lemon

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