

OFFICIAL
HOME AFFAIRS
QUESTION TIME BRIEF (QTB)
MIGRANT AND CALD COMMUNITY SERVICES

QUESTION: What Government initiatives support migrants and those from a CALD background to gain access to government services, including programs which support economic participation?

KEY TALKING POINTS:

- The Australian Government's Multicultural Access and Equity Policy places a responsibility on all Government departments and agencies to ensure their programs and services are accessible by all eligible Australians, responsive to their needs, and deliver equitable outcomes for them, regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- There are many examples¹ of effective and innovative engagement approaches by Australian Government entities, through:
 - Services Australia's extensive Multicultural Service Officer network;
 - in-language marketing of Tax and Superannuation basics by the Australian Taxation Office;
 - targeted campaigns, such as Scam Awareness, by the Australian Federal Police; and
 - in-language products and language support in the field, by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the upcoming 2021 Census.
- The Government regularly engages with culturally and linguistically diverse communities and leaders through the Department of Home Affairs' Community Liaison Officer Network.
- The Free Interpreting Services provides eligible groups with access to interpreters to communicate with their clients who have limited or no English language proficiency. Eligible groups can access a credentialed interpreter in over 153 languages, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year.

If asked: What has the Government done to ensure CALD communities understand information about the COVID-19 pandemic?

- The Australian Government is committed to address issues and find solutions for the health needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

¹ Refer **Attachment A** for further details on these and other Australian Government initiatives.

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- The Department of Home Affairs' Regional Directors and Community Liaison Officers have stepped up engagement and collaboration with multicultural community leaders, State/Territory government counterparts and service providers to ensure Australian Government messaging in relation to COVID-19 is disseminated as widely as possible.
- The Government has made COVID-19 public health and vaccination information widely accessible, including through a dedicated *COVID-19 in language* website providing accurate, official Government information translated into 63 languages
- The Department of Health established a national Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group to support an evidence-based response to the pandemic and to improve engagement with multicultural communities.
 - The Department of Home Affairs works closely with the Department of Health and is represented on the CALD Health Advisory Group.

If asked: What is the government doing to support new arrivals settle successfully?

- The Government's settlement programs² ensure new arrivals are provided with the support they need and are connected to relevant Australian, State/Territory and Local Government services. Our settlement programs are critical to enable migrants and refugees to be independent and participate in the Australian community.
- The Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services has been working across all levels of government, industry and the community to improve English language and employment outcomes for refugees and humanitarian entrants.
- The Government invests in employment creation initiatives and supports economic participation for culturally and linguistically diverse people, including through:
 - an \$8 million grant to AMES Australia to partner with Thrive Refugee Enterprise to assist refugees to start and grow a small business through the provision of loans, training and business planning/management support; and
 - the Department of Industry's Incubator Support Initiative includes a focus on first-generation migrant and refugee business founders (to help them reach international markets).

² Refer **Attachment B** for further detail on settlement programs.

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BACKGROUND

- The Multicultural Access and Equity Policy (previously known as the Access and Equity Framework) has been in place since 2006. The policy contains six commitments essential to the effective delivery of government programs and services in a multicultural society.

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